

# PARTY . . . ORGANIZER

*Party organizer (New York State Committee,  
Communist Party);*

Our Party can be a decisive force in a country which has a decisive role to play in directing the course of history for generations to come; but we can be such a force only on condition that our Party is large enough and, of course, energetic and alert enough to meet all of its obligations and opportunities at this great moment of world history.

EARL BROWDER

• APRIL • 1943 •

# Party Organizer

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## *Contents :*

Introducing . . . <i>Party Organizer</i> . . . . .	1
May Day, 1943: An Editorial . . . . .	2
The Party Drive: New Perspectives, New Possibilities <i>Gil Green</i>	3
Building a Mass Party in Harlem . . . . . <i>Elizabeth Barker</i>	9
Buffalo Forges Ahead . . . . . <i>Sam Wiseman</i>	12
The New Member and His Branch . . . . . <i>David Goldway</i>	16
Notes on Problems of Personnel . . . . . <i>Bill Lawrence</i>	20
Holding Our Gains . . . . . <i>Al Lannon</i>	24
Build Strong Membership Committees . . . . . <i>Constance Jackson</i>	27
Worker Readers—Potential Members of the Party . . . . . <i>Bob Appel</i>	28
Let's Talk to the People . . . . . <i>Peter V. Cacchione</i>	30

## Introducing . . . "Party Organizer"

"PARTY ORGANIZER" is addressed to the comrades entrusted with the leadership of our Party—its branch and section organizers, its educational directors, its secretary-treasurers, its press directors, its literature directors, its committee chairmen and members—in short, its corps of leading workers in the day-to-day carrying out of Communist policy.

It is the purpose of *Party Organizer*:

- (1) To discuss some of the major problems facing the leadership of our branches and sections;
- (2) To reflect the practical experiences of the Party in solving some of these problems;
- (3) To project new ideas and give new perspectives in organizational work.

Regular, systematic discussion of organizational problems is a major necessity today. Our Party is rapidly becoming a mass party. We are developing new relationships with the communities and industries in which we operate. The political requirements of leadership are more stringent than they have ever been.

Meanwhile, many of our leading comrades are being called into the armed forces. Many are working 60 hours a week and more in war plants. Hundreds of new leaders have had to step into the breach.

It is in the light of these problems that the State Committee offers you *Party Organizer*. We hope that it will be of some help both to our new Party leaders and to the "old-timers" grappling with new problems. If it has a contribution to make, it will continue to appear.

We invite your comments and criticisms. We will welcome your contribution to subsequent issues.



## May Day, 1943: An Editorial

**M**AY DAY, 1943, must be the occasion for hurling back into the teeth of the anti-Soviet conspirators in America their challenge to the independence and the future security of the nation.

Earl Browder has taught us to turn every blow against the people into a counter-blow against the enemies of the people.

The Alter-Ehrlich meeting of the Dubinsky-Jewish Daily Forward anti-Soviet clique was such a blow against the people. It was part of the conspiracy engaged in by Social-Democratic reactionaries and Munichite elements to turn this war into a war for the destruction of the Soviet Union.

That meeting revealed those aims clearly. It also showed the extent of their political influence. It should serve to awaken the great majority of Americans who believe that U. S.-Soviet friendship is indispensable to winning the war and the peace to the fact that they must close ranks and fight back against such treachery now.

On May 2nd, at the Yankee Stadium, the people of New York will have a historic opportunity to repudiate these anti-Soviet provocations. They will show that the political bed-fellows of Vaino Tanner, Hendryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter are properly rejected by the American working-class which confirms its unshakable solidarity with their great Soviet ally.

Browder once compared the sale of a *Worker* subscription with manning a machine gun at the gates of Stalingrad. For placing *The Worker* in the hands of a workingman means enlisting him into active struggle for a United Nations policy, for the 2nd Front, for greater production, for political clarity and action in the battle against the internal enemy.

So, too, we can say that making this May Day demonstration a mighty one is comparable to fighting in the front-line trenches. For it will be a blow struck on behalf of these

vital steps to victory. Particularly will it be a gigantic demonstration for the decisive step—the opening of a 2nd front in Europe.

History has placed in our hands the power to make this May Day the most glorious, the most memorable, and the most decisive in the long list of illustrious May Days. Let's not fail to do it.

## **The Party Drive: New Perspectives, New Possibilities**

By Gil Green

**W**HEN our State Committee set a goal of 5,000 new members to be attained in the recruiting drive, there were more than a few of us who had our fingers crossed. We, of course, knew that a great change was taking place in the thinking of the people. We knew that many of yesterday's prejudices were evaporating in today's sunlight. We knew that the prestige and influence of our Party had grown. And yet we also knew that we were asking our Party in New York to recruit more members in a period of three months than it had previously done in the entire past year.

We therefore felt that the success of this drive would depend:

First, upon our ability to raise the sights of our members to the new perspectives and new possibilities, because the thinking of many of our own comrades lagged behind the great changes occurring;

Second, upon our ability to imbue our members with the understanding of why the building of our Party today is such a vital task for victory in the war.

Third, upon our ability to plan carefully, and to pay painstaking attention to the organizational details.

We can already draw some conclusions from our work since February 1st.

*The first and main conclusion we must draw is that the decision of our National Committee for a mass recruiting*

*drive was a wise and timely one.* Our results in New York State indicate that the goal of 5,000 new members is not a utopian objective, is entirely within our reach and can be reached before the conclusion of the drive on May First. With four more weeks of the drive left we have *already* attained 80 per cent of our objective, or a total of 4,003 new members.

Nearly every section of our Party, whether community or industrial, has participated in the recruiting upsurge, but the results are by no means even. Some places deserve special praise.

### Buffalo and Harlem

It is worth noting that for the first time an upstate section holds first place, thereby effectively destroying the myth that has existed in our state for some time of New York City invincibility. In the city of the Buffalos, the goal of 125 new members has *already been surpassed*. This represents more than 50 per cent increase in Party membership in this important industrial center.

Special mention must also be made of the tremendous achievement recorded by our Upper Harlem section. From the outset, Upper Harlem was selected as a concentration section. Some *real concentration* took place—not by outside forces going into Harlem but *by the local forces themselves*. The Harlem leaders of our Party set themselves a high quota: a section with a total membership of 425, they set themselves a goal of 300 new members. The Upper Harlem section has just fulfilled its quota, recruiting 302 new members, the vast majority of whom are Negro workers.

The composition of our new members also represents a step forward. 48.5 per cent of our recruits are women; 19.8 per cent are Negro. This latter percentage is really an important achievement if we bear in mind that our registration at the first of the year showed a Negro membership of only 5.2 per cent of the total. 51.7 per cent of our recruits are industrial workers as compared with 35.7 per cent of our registered membership.

At this point let me issue a note of warning. It is true that we have reached 80 per cent of our goal, but we still do



not have the guarantees that the drive will be fulfilled 100 per cent by May Day. Not only that, there is a real danger that some important sections and localities will fall so far behind that they will be unable to catch up with the rest of the Party.

### Over the Top by May Day

How are we going to guarantee a successful conclusion of the drive? First, we must bring about the closest integration of our political campaign for May Day and our work to complete the recruiting drive.

In the work for May Day we will find the most favorable conditions for completing our recruiting drive. Our Party must help make the Yankee Stadium rally a demonstration that will long live in the memory of this city, a powerful action for the opening of the Second Front *now*.

The successful completion of the drive furthermore depends upon our ability to activize a much larger section of our membership. The results we have obtained thus far have come from but a minority of our Party members. The overwhelming majority of our Party members have not yet been reached by this drive, have not yet been convinced of the possibilities, are not yet ideologically won for the campaign and are not yet being given the concrete assistance necessary to help them recruit their shopmates, neighbors and friends. How much greater would be the total results today if we had only succeeded in mobilizing a larger portion of our membership.

Let us arrange for personal guidance especially to those comrades who are employed in the most important shops and factories. Let us try to get every member to make a pledge and let's try to help every member fulfill his pledge. Let's make recruiting contagious throughout the ranks of the Party. Let every Party member have the ambition to recruit at least *one new member by May First*.

The new members who have entered our ranks since February 1st are also a vast source of energy and a vast field of new influence. We have already seen examples where new members have put old ones to shame by recruiting in large numbers. Undoubtedly one of the secrets of Upper Harlem

has been its ability to utilize the new members for the building of the Party, especially by recruiting from their own families.

There is another large group of people from whom we can recruit thousands into the Party. I refer to the subscribers to *The Worker*, especially to those subscribers who have been reading the paper for the past six months and whose subs are up in April. There are 7,224 such renewals to be gotten this month. Where our branches have organized to visit these subscribers they have not only been able to receive renewals, but a very high percentage of new members. In one place *seven out of seven* renewed their subscriptions and *all* of them joined the Party. There is a minimum of 2,000 new members among the 7,000 *Worker* subscribers that have to be renewed in the month of April.

### Holding Our Recruits

Our recruiting drive will end sharply on Saturday night May First. But in a larger sense our recruiting drive will only have begun. After all, our objective in recruiting members into our Party is not to fulfill paper quotas. It is to build our Party, to build it firmly and permanently. Why do I say this? Because over the years our Party has learned that its attracting power is far greater than its holding power. In 1934 our Party in New York State had 5,500 members. For the nine-year period up to January 1, 1943 our Party in New York State recruited 61,439 members. That should have given us in this year's registration a total membership of 66,900, that is, if we had held all our recruits. But our registered membership at the beginning of the year was 20,562. This means that 45,000 members who joined our Party since 1934 did not stay in its ranks. Experience has shown that the largest losses occur in the first year of membership. Out of the 4,600 new members recruited last year, only 2,400 were accounted for in our registration this year. Experience further shows that we lose a larger percentage of members recruited during drives than those brought in as a result of normal recruiting. The reason for this is that when members come into our Party in large numbers, our ordinary difficulties in holding them become even more



aggravated. We must bear this in mind. In Buffalo our Party is today a new Party in composition, especially in the Fifth Ward. In Upper Harlem our Party is also a new Party. This is certainly true of many branches that doubled their membership in the course of the drive. Thus the problem of maintaining our new members arises as problem *number one* to be tackled by our Party organization even before the end of the drive itself.

### Signing A Card Is Only a First Step

First, we have to eradicate the habit of thought which mechanically views the problem of recruiting as solved when the signature of the new member is affixed to his application card. To sign a card and to receive a party book is a great leap forward for the average worker. It indicates a desire on his part to become a Communist, but it does not automatically make him a Communist. It is on that desire that we must build our foundation and erect our structure. If this is understood, then the signing of the application is not the end of the process but only the beginning of one. *All too frequently is it considered the end of the process by the very comrades that did the recruiting.*

In order to begin to tackle this problem, a few things are necessary immediately. First, a new member must receive as much consideration and attention after he has joined the Party as during the period in which he is wooed. He must be thought of not as another numeral added to the membership roll, but as a human being, as a worker with problems, as a new and equal member of our Party family—a comrade. And the word comrade must be vested with its real meaning.

We are suggesting that the branches and clubs have special people assigned in their membership committees for watching over the needs and welfare of the new members. The best results can be obtained if the new member is followed up by the person that recruited him. If you have recruited one or more into the Party in this drive, make it your business to guarantee that these recruits will be in the Party six months from today and a year from today as well. You who know them should see to it that they are introduced to

other comrades, should see to it that they feel at home at branch or club meetings, should see to it that they are brought into activities and responsibilities that will not overburden them, but at the same time excite their imagination and add to their feeling of oneness with the organization. Knowing the person recruited, you should also know what special literature he needs, whether it is possible for him to attend some class in the Workers' School, or whether he has studied Earl Browder's *Victory—and After*, the book for the duration.

### The Daily Worker: Our Best Educator

The most important thing that we can do for the education of our new members is to convince them to become regular readers of the *Daily Worker*. This is the only guarantee that the influence of the Party will exert itself not merely once every two weeks at a meeting, but every day of the week. The *Daily Worker* is the best educational medium that our Party possesses and the new member must be impressed from the first day of his membership with the importance of this paper, not only as a purveyor of news, but as a political guide in interpreting the news of the day and providing an answer to what must be done.

Besides recruiting 5,000 new members for the Party, we are also pledged to aid the Y.C.L. in recruiting 2,500 new members for its own ranks. The Y.C.L. drive started a month later than the Party drive and the Y.C.L. to date has already 1,250 new members. Quite a few Y.C.L.'ers have been recruited through Party efforts, but hardly enough to boast about. We would suggest that every Party club and branch organize a young people's evening for April or the early part of May for all the sons, daughters, young brothers and sisters, or friends that Party members may have of Y.C.L. age. If we want to organize the whole family around the Party as Harlem is doing, then the young people must be won for the Y.C.L.

(Excerpts from a report to the Party Builders' Congress,  
Sunday, April 4.)

# Building a Mass Party in Harlem

By Elizabeth Barker

**T**HE Party Builders' Congress witnessed a dramatic, last-minute success by Upper Harlem when 302 recruits, out of a quota of 300, were reported an hour before the close of the Congress. 100 of these were recruited in the single week preceding the Congress. Of Upper Harlem's 302 new members, 288 are Negroes. Half of these are Negro women. The majority are workers in such industries as railroad, metal, longshore, shipyard, fur, and garment.

One branch, the Railroaders' Club, led by Comrades Charles and Frances Loman, recruited 92, or 230 percent of its quota of 40—thereby tripling its membership! The 11th A. D. Branch, led by Ethel Rainford, is second, with 56 recruits out of a quota of 45, which doubles its membership.

Upper Harlem has challenged Chicago's strong South Side Section to match its recruiting, member for member. The achievement of the 300 quota a month ahead of time fully confirms the soundness of what may have seemed a daring objective and raises the perspective of a real mass Party in Harlem. For our 32 new comrades are but the advance-guard of many hundreds in Harlem who seek our Party's guidance in solving the new problems which the war has raised for Negro workers, and who recognize in it the most uncompromising champion of the struggle for equality as essential to our nation's victory. They await only the invitation to join. Since but 99 comrades in Upper Harlem were able to recruit these 302 new members, it is obvious that if the entire membership were reached with a real understanding of the recruiting drive as a big win-the-war job, these hundreds of ready workers could be invited and would join.

In speaking of the methods used to recruit these new comrades of ours, we must, simultaneously, speak of their remaining in the Party. The process of keeping our new members, of training them and of receiving from them the ex-



perience, talent and enthusiasm which they bring to us, begins the day they sign an application card.

We have no special "tricks" or flamboyant methods to report. The essence of the approach of our comrades in asking our friends to join consists in:

(1) individual, person-to-person discussion of the great political issues of the war and the Negro people's struggle for liberation, showing how our Party enables *each individual worker* to understand and to find his place in the movement;

(2) concrete *action* around immediate issues in which our friends and new members find that they have something to *do*, a contribution to make;

(3) the development of plain, old-fashioned personal friendship and warmth between Party members and non-Party friend.

We feel that if these simple essentials of recruiting are carried over (as too often they are not) and become the basis of the relationship between members *within* the Party, the real guarantees for continued and healthy Party growth, in which our new members remain and themselves help build the Party, are present.

In what practical ways has this approach found expression?

1—*The mass work of the A.D. Clubs and Branches*, standing on their own feet, responding to issues, making their own plans and carrying them through on a modest, neighborhood scale. This, as against mass meetings, petition campaigns, conferences and such actions on a Section-wide or "top" basis purely, is a new development in the recent period in Harlem, under the leadership of Ben Davis and Audley Moore. The clubs are reaching the individual householder and worker as never before. The 21st A.D. Club is deep in a Child Care Project.. The 13th A.D. Club has held its own conferences around price control and around the Burrows case. The Railroaders Club has responded to the "crime smear" campaign against Harlem. The 11th A.D. Club initiated a community conference of several organizations which resulted in a permanent Price Control Committee in its neighborhood. In each of these actions friends of the Party have participated and have joined as the result of their

experiences. These immediate domestic questions must be more profoundly linked with the great issues of the war and made telling actions in the campaign for a Second Front, in which, indeed, their solution will be found.

2—*Person-to-person discussions of basic Party policy, through home visits and, especially, small house meetings.* Our friends want to know our Party's policy and history of struggle, *not only* on the immediate burning issues of jim crow, high rents, high prices, etc. Here our record is usually well-known. The basic, universal concepts of Marxism-Leninism upon which our Party is founded, the world-wide political issues of the war, are questions for keen discussion, not so much at general meetings, but on an intimate scale in home visits and particularly at small meetings, arranged often by the non-Party friend in his own home. Comrades of the branch and section executive are invited to lead discussions and answer questions.

3—*Subscribers to "The Worker"* constitute our first reserve of new members. A large percentage of our 302 recruits were simply visited by teams of comrades and invited to join. These steady readers seldom raise any political questions in accepting Party membership and, indeed, seem to take joining the Party as a natural step for which they have long been prepared. Many look upon the Party as, first of all, the Party of *The Worker*—which places upon the branch a responsibility to live up to the political richness and fighting tradition of the press in its everyday work and discussion.

*Teamwork* in canvassing subscribers is the key to organizing this type of recruiting, as it usually results in each team remaining in the field until at least two are recruited, on a "one for you—one for me" basis. The getting of renewals must be integrated with this work so that we do not, in signing up recruits, fail to ensure our new comrade's continued reading of *The Worker*.

4—*Family recruiting.* The winning of entire families, unto the in-laws and cousins, has been a feature of a new kind in our drive. It makes *immediate* full use of the fact that each new member brings with him a whole new circle of friends and contacts for the Party. It helps to solidify

the membership of our recruits on the most natural basis, that of the whole family finding mutual interests, activities and friends *together* in the Party. It raises the possibility of discussion circles and other forms of new members' training on a family or house basis, following the natural pattern of the life of the people.

The Railroaders Club has excelled in "family recruiting." It has become the custom in this club for the new member, as he gets that once-in-a-lifetime thrill of receiving his own Party book to experience a second thrill in signing up *his* first recruit—his wife, his brother or sister, his best friend.

Perhaps the largest family group to join our Party in Harlem came in at an International Women's Day reception with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, where tribute was paid to Mother Jackson, a member of our Harlem Party who died recently at the age of 99. Six members of Mother Jackson's family joined the Party that night to carry forward in the tradition of their mother and grandmother, America's oldest Communist!

## Buffalo Forges Ahead

By Sam Wiseman

**A**T THE time of the Party Builders Congress, the eighth week of the Victory Recruiting Drive, the Buffalo Section of the Party has gone over its quota of 125 new recruits, with a total of 134.

For those who are acquainted with the history of Party activity in the Niagara Frontier area, the results in this present recruiting campaign are pleasantly surprising, if not startling. However, what is being proved by the results of Party building is that Buffalo is no exception to what our National Committee estimated as to the great possibilities of building our Party. In the fullest respect Buffalo reflects the sentiments and thinking of the workers in the great war production centers of the nation.



## "United We Attack"

Every test proves that the people of Buffalo overwhelmingly support the war effort and recognize the war as a People's War, their war. The various campaigns, such as blood donation, scrap collection, bond sales, etc., are above par in their results. In the past months the people have turned out to patriotic demonstrations to the number of tens of thousands. Only a few weeks ago, under the slogan "United We Attack," a demonstration of over 100,000 Buffalonians took place in the downtown area of the city. All sections of the labor movement participated jointly with the employers to stage this colorful patriotic demonstration. "United We Attack" symbolizes the sentiments and the desires of the people of Buffalo for the strengthening of United Nations collaboration through an offensive to the heart of the enemy in Europe.

There is an ever-growing consciousness, particularly on the part of the workers in the steel, airplane, metal and other plants, of the problems necessary of solution and the tasks to be carried out for a speedy victory.

This is evident in the growing clarity reflected in the ranks of the trade unions: the speedy reaction to the Rickenbacker hoax, the many resolutions adopted calling for an over-all centralized control of the war economy, unanimous opposition to the reactionary legislation being pushed in Congress, increased activity against discrimination against Negro people, condemnation of the anti-Soviet incitement campaign, and the persistent demand for the opening of a Second Front in Europe by the United States and Great Britain. Our Party is, of course, in complete harmony with these sentiments and activities and is playing an active part in supporting and leading the workers on the above issues.

What we had failed to recognize was that large numbers of workers not only recognized our active participation in these important war activities but appreciated the Party for its participation. It was the manner in which the National Committee placed the question of the possibilities and need for building the Party as part of the war effort that, so to say, shook us up, to grasp the link that could intensify and

strengthen labor's contribution to the war. With this recognition we planned our drive. We set our quota as double that which the State adopted as an average. For us this meant to increase the Party membership by more than 50 per cent. We did this because of the need of constantly closing the gap between the Party Up-State (which is so small) and the mass Party in New York City.

### Planning the Drive

The leading committee of the Party was confident that the Party membership would recognize the need and the opportunity. The first meetings brought pledges which gave us greater confidence. The plans called for stages in the drive in which minimum accomplishments were to be established: first, to open the drive with 25 recruits; reach 50 per cent by the middle of March; reach 100 by April 1; and wind up with a bang in the last month of the drive. We met each schedule successfully. The membership felt a serious responsibility to meet the needs of each period. With each accomplishment the confidence and activity of the Party grew.

The Lenin Memorial meeting was the opening gun. This was the best occasion to show the role of the Party in the war, and why the building of the Party helps to bring speedy victory. International Women's Day was the occasion for a meeting at which the 50 per cent mark was reached. This helped to show the need for recruiting women into the Party.

The Frederick Douglass Memorial meeting served the purpose of proving to the Negro people present why joining the Party serves their best interests. At this meeting Comrade Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. made an excellent contribution, with the result that 14 Negro people joined that night. Most of these recruits were brought to the meeting through activity in the shop; six from one auto shop were among the recruits that night.

The recruiting started out with a small group of comrades, so to say, acting as the stimulators of the rest of the Party. In the first weeks of the drive only five comrades were doing the recruiting. Although their accomplishments were ex-

cellent, recruiting some 30 comrades among them in two weeks, we used this as a lever for involving a larger number of comrades. By the end of the fourth week 30 comrades had recruited one or more new members. We then set our objective of doubling the number of recruiters to 60. At this writing some 45 comrades have joined the brigade, with the top recruiters continuing as an inspiring example; three comrades with seven each; and three with four each. The competition is increasing as well as the number participating.

### Analyzing the Composition

The composition of the recruits has some strong and weak points. The industrial composition is about 80 per cent. This is good, but also understandable here in Buffalo. We also have recruited 70 Negro people. We consider this also very good, as we set ourselves a goal to recruit 25 Negro people. In the main this is a result of the activity of our Party in the struggle for the rights of the Negro people for a full and equal participation in the war effort, particularly in the shops and trade unions.

Of the 134 recruits only 48 are women. This is much less than we hoped for, as we planned to make 60 per cent of our recruits women, because of the important role women are playing in the war. Only 24 of the women are in industry, the rest housewives. This weakness we hope to overcome. Our recruiting among the Polish people, the largest single national group, is also pitifully weak, only 10 so far. This reflects our lack of activity on specific issues concerning the Polish people. This failure to recruit more Polish people continues to be the most basic weakness of our Buffalo Party, and must be overcome.

A serious lesson from the recruiting is the fact that most recruiting is being done by the newer comrades in the Party. For instance, in one branch which has more than doubled its membership, not one recruit was gotten by the members who are considered the "old" members. The boldness of the new members in recruiting and the acceptance of the logic that what is good for them is also good for their friends and families stands out in contrast to the isolation that many of



our older comrades must shake themselves out of to help in building the Party.

Another lesson we have learned is the fact that the majority of the people who have joined the Party have either had some contact directly or indirectly with our various activities through the past years. And there must be thousands more. Above all, our recruiting is proving that workers are ready to join the Party only for the asking, if we spend the time and effort to get out amongst the people and confidently place our program before them. We feel we have made an important turn towards becoming a mass Party which will be able to contribute much more to our nation in its struggle for survival and victory over our enemies.

## The New Member and His Branch

By David Goldway

WHEN the Party Building Drive is over and we have recruited our 5,000 new members, one out of every five in the Party will be a new recruit. In some branches well over 50 per cent will be new members. In one branch at least, the Railroaders Club in Harlem, the new members will outnumber the old by two to one.

These facts suggest how great a problem we face with respect to the assimilation of new members. What we must look forward to is not simply an increase in numbers, but a change in the character of our membership.

In order to solve the problems raised by this prospect, it is not sufficient merely to pay attention to the special forms of new members' education: the conferences, the classes, and so on, extremely important as all these things are. No, the key to the problem of new members is to be found in *the branch, the very heart of our Party organization.*

Let us look at our branches with the eyes of a new member.

The new member very correctly looks upon the branch

as the living embodiment of the Party. As such, it is the place where he expects to see in action that wonderful organization about which he has heard so much before he joined. He expects to find there the answers to his political questions. He expects leadership for his work in his union or neighborhood organization. He expects the drama and excitement of a fighting political body, giving clarity and inspiration to the working class and the whole people in their struggle against the threat of Nazi slavery. He expects to learn about the glorious Soviet Union, a Communist state, whose epic power was forged under the leadership of a Communist, Joseph Stalin. He expects to discover the secret of the strength, knowledge and courage of Communists everywhere. He wants to learn our science, our Marxist-Leninist theory.

He also looks for friendship; he wants to be a comrade among comrades.

### Measuring Up to New Standards

What are some of the specific things a branch must do in order to begin to measure up to the requirements of our vast new membership?

By its *political stature*, in the first place, will the branch win the confidence and respect of the new member. The branch must be a *political body*, playing a role in its community or industry equivalent on a local scale to that played by our Party nationally. It must discuss political questions. It must make decisions. It must organize their execution. The ideas about branch life developed by John Williamson (*The Communist*, Sept. 1942 and Jan. 1943) are crucial for the solution of the new members problem.

The *educational discussion* in the branch must in large measure serve to teach the new members the important things they must know about our Party. These discussions, dealing with the immediate political problems of the day, must be planned in such a way as to explain not only questions of current policy, but *fundamental questions* as well.

*We must never forget the new member when we organize our discussions.* We must not take things for granted.

If we have a discussion on May Day, for example, we just cannot assume that everyone knows what May Day is. We must give background. We must help to enrich the discussion of the current significance of our May Day demonstration with a sense of the rich working class tradition of the Labor Day of the world.

### New Members Thirst for Knowledge

Every occasion must serve to deepen the content of our discussions. We should discuss commemorative occasions, such as the Jefferson bi-centennial and the 125th anniversary of Marx's birthday (May 5). At such times we can bring right into the branch some of the great treasures of our Marxian and our American working class heritage. The new members thirst for this knowledge. The questions they ask, the literature they buy, shows this. At a recent reception given by the New York State Committee to our new members, of the 100 or so pieces of literature sold, all but two were basic pamphlets by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

*Our new members must find our meetings readily understandable.* The private jargon which we still lapse into must be scrapped. We must find new terms to replace such terms as "buro" and "org. sec.," which are meaningless to the uninitiated. We must be careful to explain our procedures and methods of work, so that the new member attending his first or second meeting can get into the swing of things quickly. I attended a meeting recently where there was a fairly lengthy discussion of the "campaign for renewals." After it was all over, a new member, one of six at the meeting, got up and asked, "What is a 'renewal'?"

*Our meetings should be thoroughly democratic in character.* All too frequently the branch executive committee does its job so zealously that the branch members find no occasion to participate in the shaping of policy for the branch. The new member should see the whole branch taking part in the making of decisions. He should feel that his contribution is welcome, that it is sought for. There should be ample room for the raising of questions and the expression of differing points of view. The meeting should resemble, *in form*, the meeting of a trade union or a com-



munity organization, with which the new member may be already familiar.

## Warm, Friendly Meetings

*The atmosphere of the meeting should be warm, friendly, informal, without losing any of its efficiency.* With large numbers of new members coming into our branches, special steps should be taken to get acquainted. A committee of hosts and hostesses should use the few minutes before the meeting opens to make sure that comrades know each other. Wherever possible, refreshments should be made a regular feature at our meetings. Good and welfare should be on the agenda of meetings, and the little things of Party life should be aired and settled.

*Above all, we must avoid the dismal routine of some of our branch meetings.* We must be careful to avoid dizzying agendas, with such a multitude of organizational details as to frighten any but the most hardened Party worker. We must not allow endless announcements. We must find a way to handle such things as "assignments" and "check-up" elsewhere than in the meeting itself.

*We must use imagination in building our meetings.* Little ceremonials, such as the formal reading of the pledge for new members, the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner," etc., are extremely important. We should seize every opportunity to make the meeting exciting and dramatic. We must vary the form of our meetings. We must make wider use of cultural aids, such as skits, films, film strips, songs, debates, etc.

Finally, a branch with large numbers of new members must have strong, functioning *membership committees* and *activities committees*. The new members will be kept in the Party to the extent that we develop personal contact with them. This is possible only through the functioning of our branch committees, particularly the membership committee, which in branches with many new members must be large and politically strong. Its members must visit those who don't attend meetings, discuss their problems with them, sell them literature, make sure that they read our press, and

establish the closest bond possible between them and the branch.

If we accomplish these things, we will help to consolidate the position of the new member in our Party and send him forward on the path to leadership.

## **Notes on Problems of Personnel**

By Bill Lawrence

**A** SUPERFICIAL examination of our branches and clubs reveals frequent turn-over in leadership in the branch and club executives. This problem assumes particularly sharp form because of the mobilization of many comrades into the armed forces of the nation and because of long hours of work in industry. The problem is not new, nor is it necessary to belabor the fact that the absence so far of a positive cadre policy on our part has seriously accentuated the situation.

This problem will not be solved fundamentally if the Party organization, state, county, section or branch, thinks of potential leadership only when pressed with the need of immediate replacement. Such a policy of emergency often results in placing people in jobs they are not always fitted for. What is necessary is to place the question of cadres on the same level as we do urgent political campaigns. In the last analysis the success of the practical application of our correct policy depends on the people into whose hands it is entrusted. Once we look upon this matter as a fundamental problem and not as a by-product that must be handled when it comes to the surface, we shall be taking the first step toward the solution of this problem.

### **A Personnel Director**

The membership director is supposedly the personnel wizard. But the accumulated details, both in the section and branch, prevent the membership director from discharging his duties as personnel director in the true sense of the word. It may be well to consider the selection of a com-

rade on the club and section membership committee whose sole responsibility will be to know and search for talent, if I may put it that way, to search out the new comrades who, though shy or hesitant, show potentialities for political growth and leadership; to encourage these comrades; to train them; to see that they are placed in positions they like best.

Examination of the composition of leadership in the Party organization reveals the following figures:

Out of 20 branch and club executives, picked at random, but representing all counties in Greater New York, including such sections as Yorkville, Washington Heights, Lower Harlem, 17th Kings, and similar sections, and comprising in all 106 comrades: 43 are male, 63 female; 80 are Jewish, 26 non-Jewish; 102 are white, 4 are Negro; 30 proletarian, 50 white collar.

### A Positive Cadre Policy

The conclusions from the above figures are obvious. We are always working at top pitch; we are invariably striving to achieve some sort of quota; we are continuously in the midst of some campaign. All this I am sure will continue. But because of the absence of a planned cadre policy and the strain under which we work, we are still following the road of least resistance on the question of leadership. Thus we tend to select what we consider the most aggressive, most articulate person for a job.

At times it does not occur to us that a Negro comrade in the branch, though quiet and not as aggressive as some white comrades, if elected to the executive and consciously guided, will emerge as an excellent Party leader. How else can we explain that out of 106 comrades on branch executives, only 4 are Negro comrades? How can we explain that outside of so-called Negro communities, there is not to be found a single Negro branch organizer? Surely there are in the ranks of the Party in New York, Negro comrades capable of functioning as club leaders. The fault lies with us and not with the Negro comrades. The fault is the absence of a positive policy of training and developing this type of comrade for leadership in the branch. True, we do not consciously plan it that way; but that is no excuse.

Frequently our standards for selecting people for branch and section executives are entirely too high. We set up pedestals and judge from above. We limit the circle of selection, unconsciously of course. We swiftly run over the membership lists and select those who speak up at meetings or are known to us. Unconsciously and unwillingly we disregard good potential leaders.

### Selecting Leadership

Often a problem of leadership is created because of placing comrades in positions they are not best fitted for. Thus Mary Jones may be offered one day the position of org. secretary, and the following day switched to educational director, without regard for the special inclinations and abilities of Mary Jones.

The figures on composition cited above also reveal the special problem facing our State leadership with regard to the training and drawing into the leadership of non-Jewish comrades. The Party, of course, is very proud of its Jewish comrades. Considering the size of the Jewish population in New York, there is still plenty of room for improvement from the point of view of recruiting Jewish workers into our Party. This fact, however, does not contradict the imperative need of making sure that our Party's leading organs reflect the composition of the community in which they work.

To cite an example, the population in the Chelsea area on the West Side is at least 25% of Irish origin. Surely it is advisable that the leadership of the Communist Party Club in that area reflect that population. What is necessary is that the Chelsea Club executive, composed of say 7 comrades, have 3 or 4 Irish comrades. Of course, efforts in that direction have been made, but after a couple of attempts, with many campaigns pressing, they were given up in the hope of accomplishing the correct principle some time in the future. The timid Irish comrade is thus glad he is not pressed; the branch organizer is happy that he finally has an executive to get down to work; but the correct principle of training Irish cadres is not realized.

What should be done? There will be no disagreement on the need for Irish comrades on the executive of this



branch. The section organizer, with the aid of the club president, should select three or four of these Irish comrades. A little get-together should be arranged where the section organizer attempts to answer the problems raised by the Irish comrades, which make them hesitate to accept a post on the executive. Our club executives, in addition to being political media for leadership, can serve as training grounds for potential leadership. If that requires increasing the executive, by all means this should be done. It seems to me that this principle should also be applied to Italian, Puerto-Rican, and other communities.

### Training Leadership

Our Org. Department in session the other day submitted the proposal that we select some 75 to 100 comrades of the type we have discussed, people who are not on branch executives today but who attend meetings regularly, who are shy and need a little encouragement. It was proposed that we enroll these people in a few classes and give them a month's training under the supervision of the State Org. Department. After training, these comrades should be recommended to the clubs for various posts.

As more and more women comrades come to the fore as branch and section organizers, it is not amiss to note that these women comrades, in addition to their activities in the movement, have house-work to do which some of us men comrades do not have. It may appear trivial or non-political, but the fact is that a woman branch or section organizer, working in a shop or office all day, and running to meetings immediately after work, when she does get home at midnight, has some house-work or washing to do. At times, without a moment's thought, we proceed to arrange meetings on Sunday, thus often shattering the hopes of the woman comrade to clean the neglected house. It creates problems at home. Many of our women comrades, observing these things, hesitate to assume responsibility. A correct approach to the cadre question must take these matters into consideration. Failure to do so hinders the work, as it results in personnel as well as personal problems.

Above everything else is the problem of political growth

of all of our cadres. Because our meetings are numerous and unnecessarily long, our leading personnel in the Party organization get very little time for reading and studying. I was amazed to learn after speaking to a few section and branch organizers how many of them fall behind in reading *The Communist*, how few have a chance to read or re-read a theoretical book, let alone some novel which may be of interest to them. The result of such a situation is too much administrative work, and not enough individual and collective political thinking. The full-time functionaries of the Party can set an example by learning the art of saying the maximum in the shortest possible time. Too often speeches at branch meetings go into all hours of the night, discouraging workers who must rise early, from attending meetings. We could well dispose of some repetition practiced at meetings. Above all, it seems to me that we should dispense with the idea in practice that "another meeting" will solve our problem. Mercilessly cutting down on the number of meetings and making our meetings shorter will enable our personnel to do some reading and study, and spend more time with non-Party masses.

Finally, it is suggested that our Educational and Org. Departments prepare a pamphlet to be known as "The Party and the Individual," composed of quotations by Comrades Stalin, Browder, Dimitrov, Zhdanov, and others, on the question of cadres in the Party and the individual in the Party, and that we make this pamphlet a "must" reading and a guide to action on questions of personnel for every member of a branch, section, county and state executive committee.

## Holding Our Gains

By Al Lannon

THE major problem presented by the registration figures is the problem of fluctuation. This is not only an organizational problem, it is a first-rate political problem. The solution of fluctuation would eliminate one of the chief obstacles to the development of the Party into a mass party.

Registration figures show that our Party is not only a young party, 60 per cent of whose membership is below the age of 35, but our Party is also a new party.

Sixty per cent of our State membership have been in the Party five years or less. Our losses are in the first place among the new recruits, and next to that among the newer members in the Party.

In 1942 we recruited 5,697 new members. We lost during that year 2,915, but not all of the loss were new members. Therefore we can assume that the fluctuation among new members was below 60 per cent. To explain the question of fluctuation, I want to mention just a couple of examples: For instance, in 1938 we recruited about 12,000 new members, of whom we have left, after five years, only 4,000 or about one-third. Or let's take one example of Negro recruiting—in 1937, 1,400 Negroes were recruited. Of these 59 are left after five years, meaning that 1,341 are lost.

The full political meaning of these figures is that the attracting power and political influence of our Party is far ahead of the ability of our Party to assimilate those people whom we attract. Therefore, when we speak about the discrepancies between the influence of the Party among the masses on the one hand, and the numerical strength of the Party on the other hand, the solution consists largely of holding the gains which the Party is able to make from year to year.

We have yet to analyze the basic causes of fluctuation and to draw some bold conclusions from such a study. In the present recruiting drive the problem of fluctuation confronts us with full force in the problems of keeping the new members who join our Party.

Three conclusions seem to me obvious:

1. That the heart of the question lies in the proper kind of educational activities. This education should be closely related to the struggles and the problems of the new members, which should explain the broad issues relating to the present war situation, and should give the new member some background of our Party history and Party methods and structure.

2. It is obvious that we have to focus the attention of the whole Party and particularly of the comrades who do the recruiting on the question of sustained attention to the political development of the new members. We have to extend the conception of recruiting beyond the preparatory period which culminates with the signature on the application card.

We have to create the understanding that it is precisely at that point when the signature is gotten and the initiation fee collected that real Party building begins.

Our press circulation and literature distribution would increase substantially if in the first three month of membership in the Party, the new recruit would be aided to become a systematic reader of our press and an appreciative reader of our Party literature.

3. We have yet to solve the problem of inner Party life and inner Party atmosphere—on the principle that some activity by a large number is of much greater value than when everything is done by a few.

It is still a fact that when a Branch Organizer and Branch Executive get through making up their agenda on the basis of State, County and Section directives, there is very little time indeed for consideration of the specific branch problems relating to the shop or neighborhood.

The problem is not limited to the question of cutting down the agenda. It is rather a problem of orientation of the best forces of the Party toward helping the branches develop that issue and create that kind of inner life which will establish the closest possible merger between the branch and the community in which it operates.

The demands of our State, County and Section organizations, as well as of the Party as a whole, will best be met through leadership and assistance to the lower Party organizations in the solution of the specific problems immediately affecting them.

*(Excerpts from the Report of Al Lannon, at the Meeting of the New York State Committee, March 20-21, 1943.)*



# Build Strong Membership Committees

By Constance Jackson

**T**HE NEED of strong membership committees in large clubs cannot be overemphasized. A brief survey of our branches indicates that the branch executives are beginning to tackle this question seriously. In all branches of over 100 members, committees of from 7 to 15 have been established. However, *the problem is the stabilization of these committees for efficient work.*

The lack of stabilization of these committees is reflected in the dues record, which shows about one-quarter of the New York membership in arrears for January and one-third for February. When we recall, at this point, the loss of about 3,000 members during registration, the need for steady contact with all the membership of the branch becomes a matter of vital importance.

Check-up on dues is not, however, the only major function of the membership committee. The committee must be as much concerned with the guidance of the individual work of all Party comrades. This attention to individuals will result in a high degree of political work of the branch and will stimulate mass activity. An efficient membership committee concerned only with dues will not guarantee Party building. This is exemplified by one branch in Manhattan and one in the Bronx where though membership committees function well in the matter of dues check-up, they have failed to develop the Party building campaign.

The present political crisis demands a high degree of independent action and thinking—more so than in any previous period. Our membership committees have to be the skilled engineers who unleash the springs of thought and action that lie in our membership. While they cannot actually go through the A.B.C. of carrying on activities in every field of work, they can and must be able to discuss politically and analytically work in all fields.

We consider planning the work of the membership committee the first major organizational job of the branch and

section executive committees. The major task of the membership committee is to work with the Party personnel. Consequently, it should not be burdened with every other so-called "little" task that falls to the branches. To attempt to do everything means to neglect its main work. The committees should be set up along territorial lines with the entire membership covered. Attention should be given, as far as possible, to seeing that the older comrades are mixed in with new members, etc.

Sometimes we seem to be overwhelmed by the problem of what to do with the new members. Where our work is poorly organized, this is especially true, for then the recruiting is poor, and attention to the new recruits even poorer. Our new members have as much right to the Party as the older ones. The membership committee has the responsibility, together with the educational committee, of making the new members comfortable in their new home, and seeing to it that the surroundings are home-like and conducive to the best work, and that they get some basic education.

The efficient member of a membership committee who is responsible for say 10 to 15 comrades, will try to activize the comrades by sharing the work of contacting, dues collection, etc., with them. In this way the comrade in charge will not be overburdened and will be able to concentrate with the membership committee on those members who do not attend meetings regularly.

This is just a brief presentation of the problem. The comrades will have new experiences every day, and should report them for the benefit of all of us. There is no doubt that the successful handling of this problem is also the path to becoming a real mass Party.

## **"Worker" Readers — Potential Members of the Party**

By Bob Appel

**D**RAMATIC event after dramatic event has occurred to prove that our renewal campaign, if properly organized,

can be used to make the recruiting campaign the most fruitful our Party has ever witnessed. In a natural manner, asking them to renew subscriptions, we can now see thousands of people who have subscribed to *The Worker*, and discuss with them their joining the Communist Party.

We can illustrate this best by giving a number of examples of what is happening. The first example is one that has already been well publicized in the *Daily Worker* through a letter written by the branch organizer of the Astoria Communist Party Club, Queens County:

"What seemed an arduous task, renewing subscriptions to *The Worker*, has become an effective means of building the Party in Astoria. When we received the list of 113 subscriptions in our territory expiring during the next few months, we took the 70 expiring the first two weeks of April for immediate visits. This work has only just started, but in one week four comrades have recruited six new members."

The second example, from a letter received from the 12th A.D. of the Communist Party of Manhattan:

"To date we have 18 renewals. We also have 25 recruits, 18 of which are directly from renewals. The other seven recruits is a story in itself. . . . We have an Armenian comrade who speaks the language fluently. We assigned her to see Armenians in the neighborhood. A leaflet in Armenian invited them to attend a party given by the Communist Party to meet their neighbors, discuss common problems, etc. At this party we invited them to attend our next regular meeting at which we got seven Armenian recruits."

The third example—Elizabeth Barker, the organizational secretary of the Upper Harlem section, reported to the State Committee that out of eight subscribers seen by a team of which she was part, all eight were recruited. (Due to the failure of the Harlem section to tie up the renewal campaign with the recruiting campaign, although the Harlem Section has gotten most of its recruits from subscribers, very few renewals have been obtained.)

In some areas the rate of recruiting from renewals will not be as high as in others, for a number of reasons. *The pri-*

mary reason will be the ability of the canvasser who is sent out. The people who go out on renewals should be capable of convincing the individual to renew the sub and join our Party. We urge that this point be given the most careful consideration. Give this job to the *most advanced* members of the branch. We would urge branch organizers to go out at least once to convince themselves of what the possibilities are and the necessity of selecting the right people for permanent assignment to this work.

The renewal campaign does not end in April. It continues indefinitely. If we maintain the same consciousness for seeing our subscribers, we can constantly recruit them into the Party. We should not make the mistake that the Upper Harlem section made, however, in going out to recruit the subscribers and forgetting to renew their subscriptions to *The Worker*. If we fail to get these new recruits to continue to read our press, the problem of maintaining these recruits in the Party will become an insoluble one. We therefore again propose that the canvass of the subscribers for *The Worker* be carefully organized, that we approach them first for a renewal to the paper and then we discuss with them the necessity for their joining the Communist Party. We have to see that eventually every subscriber will join the Communist Party, even though at first visit he renews the sub but does not join. The necessity for seeing the subscriber at least every six months for a renewal will force us to come back and finally recruit the individual into the Communist Party.

## Let's Talk to the People

By Peter V. Cacchione

**I**T STRIKES me that now is the time to speak about open-air rallies and meetings. The fine weather begins usually in April. I believe that next to our press, there is no better way to reach the people with our message than through open-air rallies,



Why am I so much sold on open-air meetings? I have always argued as follows: An Assembly District of our Party will schedule an indoor meeting, pay for a hall, put out leaflets, engage a speaker, and have the membership canvassing for several weeks to build up this meeting of 500 to 600 people. But after we put in this work and analyze the attendance, we usually discover that not more than 10 per cent of the people who came, can't be reached every day through branches, clubs, groups, etc. But a group of eight or ten members of a club, carefully preparing an open-air rally, can speak to three, four and five times as many people, 90 per cent of whom are people who have never attended one of our indoor meetings.

Workers are eager to get an analysis of an international or domestic situation, and of many things that puzzle them. We are the only political party that can provide the answers to many of these puzzling problems.

When I first became a party member ten years ago, it was almost a standing rule that each party branch should run one open-air meeting a week. But now many comrades within the last number of years have grown to believe that we have become "respectable" and that open-air meetings are beneath us.

We are the party of the people, and our party must be seen in action. One of the best methods of reaching people is through open-air rallies.

Such rallies can be used to introduce our press, to sell our mass pamphlets and to obtain signatures on petitions on any particular campaigns we are engaged in, such as staggering work hours to ease the transit problem, etc.

The trouble with most of our sections is that they do not plan open-air meetings, and because they do not have these meetings, we are not developing Party speakers. In fact there are fewer speakers in the Party today with 25,000 members than there were ten years ago when our Party membership was about 7,000.

In Brooklyn, we plan to have a minimum of 800 open-air meetings starting in April and ending in November. But just to say that we are going to run that many meetings does

not guarantee that these meeting will be held. The following must be done:

1. A person in each Assembly District must be put in charge of a speakers' bureau, and one of his jobs must be to discover other speakers in that district.

2. The person in charge should call all the speakers together immediately to discuss the plan of the Assembly District for holding these rallies until the fall.

3. Every speaker should be ready to give one or two or three night a week for this purpose.

The speakers' bureau in the Assembly District should consist of the person in charge, the people assigned to take care of the platform, the flags and other decorations, the press, literature and the sale of war savings stamps. In this way there will not be a meeting called where the speaker does not find a platform, literature, *The Worker*, or other necessary paraphernalia to make a good meeting.

5. Every meeting held should sell war savings stamps. In this way we are demonstrating to the people that we not only speak about the war, but also that we are doing something constructive to aid in the war effort.

6. A speakers' conference should be held in each county, once a month, with a leading Party official taking up the immediate problems of the day and how to handle these problems from the platform. Many of our young comrades would be only too glad to speak if they listened to such conferences and could learn from experienced speakers how to convey these things to people.

7. Each county should have a research committee whose function is to feed factual material to the speakers.

We could become a much more effective force in hundreds of communities by such activities and win hundreds and hundreds of people into the ranks of our Party.

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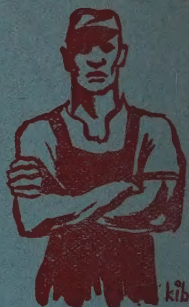
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