

The Key to Our Central Problem —The Winning of the Majority of the Working Class

By F. BROWN

(*Pre-Convention Discussion Article.*)

THREE is no doubt that the pre-Convention discussion can be considered as a turn in the method of discussion, in raising the consciousness of the Party to the fundamental tasks to be solved in this period. It can be seen in the growing interest of the Party members in the reading and discussion of the various resolutions, and in the raising of a whole series of problems. However, the old mechanical approach which prevents the comrades, especially in the lower units, from facing the fundamental problems, still prevails. Especially in discussing the draft resolution of the Party, many comrades ask themselves: How can we solve the many problems with which the Party is confronted—the problems of building the Party, the revolutionary unions, the oppositions in the A. F. of L.; of broadening out the unemployed movement; of developing the struggle against fascism and war? How can the united front tactic be correctly applied in order to draw the masses to support our various objectives? Above all, how can we strengthen and build the Party in the basic industries and equip it to take leadership for the future gigantic struggles in order to lead the American working class to power?

Facing so many problems at once, some of the comrades find themselves lost, failing to grasp the relationship between the various tasks and looking at them as separate problems and not as parts of a whole. For this reason, they are searching for the key to the solution of the individual tasks, instead of looking for the main key that will help to solve the central problem and thus unlock the various parts. That central problem is the task of winning the majority of the working class.

The draft resolution of the C.C. states correctly: "The central task of the Party is to organize and lead the fight against the offensive of the capitalist class, against developing fascism and the threat of imperialist war, to develop these struggles on the basis of the fight for the immediate partial demands of the workers in the general class battles for the overthrow of the capitalist dictatorship and the setting up of a Soviet government. This requires a quickening of

the tempo and an improvement in the quality of the work of the Party, to fight for winning *through the decisions of the Open Letter with regard to rooting the Party among the basic strata of the proletariat in the most important industries and factories through the application of the policy of concentration*".

In other words, in order to win the majority of the working class and to solve the problems pointed out above which are a part of this task, the Party must organize and lead the fight against the offensive of the capitalist class as the pre-requisite to the building of the Party into a mass proletarian party. The key to the solution of this task as embodied in the Open Letter, which remains the fundamental document before the Party, must be discussed together with the Thirteenth Plenum Resolution of the E.C.C.I. and the draft resolution of our Central Committee.

Why is it that so many months after such a document was issued and discussed, the results of our work along the line of the Open Letter are still weak? Why is it that it requires such great effort to solve the problem of building a mass Party through concentration work?

At this point, it is necessary to investigate the causes for such slow development, because only in this way shall we be able to put our fingers on the weak spots.

One of the causes that I want to deal with is to be found in the gap existing between the political understanding of the problems by the lower organizations and the top leadership. Let me illustrate:

Let us take the various resolutions of the C.I., the C.C., or the District Committees. What happens to these resolutions when they reach the units? We know from experience that often they are not fully understood, or they reach the units in a distorted manner.

The documents, many times, remain in effect the property of a few. Moreover, it is interesting to note that on the basis of such documents, the district or section leadership takes steps to mobilize and activize the Party along the line of such documents working out the concrete tasks. But how do these steps take concrete form? In many cases, it is only the mechanical part of the decisions that reaches the lower organizations; the political reasons for the practical tasks are lost, particularly if the section or unit organizer is unable to explain the why of the steps to be taken. This explains also the lack of enthusiasm for carrying out many of the decisions, and the little effort made by many of the Party members in finding and applying the best method in the concretization of the task.

This happened also to the Open Letter, which, only to some extent, was concretized; but for the most part, remained at the discussion stage. This was clearly shown in the last wave of strikes.

While the struggles were going on, the Open Letter was still being discussed, and only part of the Party understood the application of its line to the struggles and to the daily tasks of the Party.

From this example, we see immediately that to solve the problem of concentration and the other problems correlated with this fundamental one, we must simultaneously solve the basic political organizational problem which in a nutshell can be expressed—"make the units conscious of their nature"—which calls for the solution of the second problem—the *development of the unit and section leadership to politically developed leaders*. This is the key to the solution of the problem of improving the life of the units and their activities.

How can this be done? Through more frequent functionaries' meetings at which the experiences of the work of the sections and units are exchanged, at which the fundamental political and organizational problems of the Party are discussed, and at which suggestions for improvement are made—improvement of the training schools, national, district and evening courses, etc.; through more political discussion in the units, etc. It is only through the development of the unit organizers and unit bureaus into political leaders that the units will understand their function and their tasks; that each individual Party member will act as a conscious Communist and not as an automaton; that the discussion in the units will improve and the Party members will be better equipped to convince the workers of the correctness of our daily activities and of our program.

At this point it is evident that the Central Committee and District Committees, visualizing this basic problem, must be instrumental in giving the correct guidance for its solution. All steps taken in this direction: visiting of the units, studying of their life, help in the understanding of their nature, help in showing how the practical steps of concentration should be taken, improving of the Party press, especially the Party Life in the *Daily Worker*, the *Party Organizer*, in treating the manifold program raised by the units, by individuals, on how to improve the unit life—must be further developed.

It is on the basis of continuous and thorough study of the problems facing the lower organizations, in showing not only theoretically, but practically how to apply the Party line in the various places and situations that the C.C. and District Committees will exercise their leading role in the solution of this basic problem.

There is no doubt that theoretically, the problem is understood by all the leading comrades; it is in the practical solution that we find the weakness. The reason is to be found in the lack of systematization and simplification of the organizational work, in the center itself, and in the districts, in the lack of division of work. It is known how the organizational commissions are overburdened by

a tremendous amount of technical problems, details, campaigns, requests of fractions in mass organizations, by individuals seeking guidance on problems, many times out of the jurisdiction of the organizational commission, so that the main organizational tasks are submerged.

Yes, many of these problems are important and must be solved. The organizational commissions, however, must be equipped in such a way (through a better division of work), to be able to carry on its main tasks: *the improvement of the organization of the Party for a better, more efficient concretization of the political line into practical tasks.*

We must break the old conceptions, that the organizational work of the Party is merely mechanical office work and raise it to its full political significance.

To solve the problem of concentration as the key for penetrating the basic and most decisive sections of the working class, especially at this period, *we must at the same time bring our agitational and propaganda work to a higher level.* This is an absolute necessity if we want to enlighten the great masses of our program and of our aims. More than ever before, we must go before the masses not only with the program of the immediate aims on the basis of which we will rally the masses and lead them into struggle, but we must connect the program of the immediate demands with the Communist program of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. Today, if it is true that large masses are still prejudiced against us, it is also true that larger and larger masses are wanting to know what the Communist Party proposes to do to solve the problems of the working class, the problem of the crisis. And we must give them an answer.

In this respect, the pre-Convention discussion is not only of tremendous importance for the raising of the consciousness of the Party to the basic tasks of this period, but it is also instrumental in making of the Party members and sympathizers an army of tens of thousands that will speak to the masses, will mobilize, organize, and lead them in the struggle.

It is only by strengthening the Party, by making clear its role in the present period and in the near future, that we shall be able to lead the daily struggles and be equipped to lead the future battles that will bring the working class into power in the United States.

To achieve this aim, we must simultaneously solve some of the basic organizational problems. *One of these is to strengthen the District and Section leaderships and to bring them closer to the lower organizations, i.e., to divide some of the districts and sections. (Districts 10, 11, 19, and others.)* It is simply impossible for districts which cover such areas where units are hundreds of miles away

from the center to give proper guidance and leadership. It is impossible for the sections where the units are scattered over a large territory to reach the units weekly, to raise the political understanding of the problems which the units face, etc.

The solution of this problem, however, calls for the solution of another problem of the utmost importance; *the development of new cadres*. Hundreds of new section and unit organizers must be trained to become political leaders. The center of the Party located in New York, situated at one extreme of the country, finds it difficult to give leadership, especially to the districts west of the Mississippi. And here again, we have to solve the problem of how to bring the center—in the form of a Regional Bureau of the C.C.—or in the form of organizational instructors, closer to these districts and the problems of the West and South.

An annual National Training School cannot solve the problem of cadres. When we take into consideration that our movement is spreading rapidly all over the country and that the Party is pressed with the building of new districts and sections, this problem can no longer be ignored, and cannot be solved by National Training Schools which are held once a year. This becomes one of the vital problems upon the solution of which the development of the Party depends a great deal. In the Party budget, therefore, the financing of national and district training schools must take a prominent place.

While the policy of concentration in the five most important industrial centers is absolutely correct, and it is primarily there that the best forces must be concentrated, since it is through the development of the movement there that we will insure the guiding role of the proletariat in bringing into motion the exploited masses all over the country in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat—we cannot ignore the struggles of the masses in the West, which, in turn, also have a repercussion in the key concentration points. While concentrating in the five major industrial districts, more attention will have to be paid to the vast territory of the West and the South where workers are aroused and are asking for the leadership of the Party.

There is no time to be wasted. The effects of the N.R.A. are here. The masses of employed, of unemployed, poor farmers, etc., feel them. The masses are stirred and ready for struggle. The second wave of strikes, this time against the effects of the N.R.A., has already been started. The masses are more and more affected by the rising prices, which are ultimately lowering their wages and their standard of living. The illusions of the first period of the N.R.A., to a great extent, are over. The masses do not strike any more for the enforcement of the codes, nor do they believe in the “protection”

of the president. But their struggles take on a more and more open political character. The strikes are against the effects of the N.R.A., against the N.R.A. itself.

In this situation, one of the vital points for the broadening of the struggles is the correct application of the united front tactic through which we will not only succeed in uniting large masses in struggles for immediate common issues, but put large masses into motion and unmask the treacherous role of the social-fascist leaders. For this reason, while concentrating on and developing the daily struggles, while bringing forward the working class program of the way out of the crisis, we must at the same time vigorously smash the attempt of the renegades and of the new so-called "American Workers' Party" to split the workers' ranks and, in this way, to help the ruling class in its fascization process. *The building of a united front from below is the way of strengthening the Party position among the masses; to mobilize, organize and lead the working class armies against the offensive of the capitalist class, against developing fascism and the threat of imperialist war; and to develop the struggles on the basis of the fight for the immediate partial demands of the workers in the general class battles for the overthrow of capitalist dictatorship and the setting up of a Soviet government.*

Building the united front means bringing forward our Party as the only vanguard of the working class and winning into its ranks large strata of the best fighters. This is the way to build our Party into a mass revolutionary Party; this is the way to equip the Party to lead the American working class on the road to power.

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