

The Party's Work

by Verne L. Reynolds

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Foreword.

In the following pages the vice presidential candidate on the 1924 Socialist Labor Party ticket, Comrade Verne L. Reynolds of Baltimore, points to a number of defects and shortcomings with respect to the methods (in some cases lack of methods) on the part of SLP Sections in carrying out the Party's work. Comrade Reynolds, however, does more than merely criticize: he offers suggestions and advice which, if accepted and acted on by the membership, will remedy these defects, and which certainly will vastly increase the efficiency of the Party Machine.

During his coast to coast tour for the Party in 1924, Comrade Reynolds had ample opportunity to study the membership in action. With an admirable forbearance, and a healthy detachment, he lays his finger on the weak spots, and without falling into the scolding attitude all too common with many critics, he shows how the SLP may become a far more powerful agent for working class emancipa-

tion than is the case now.

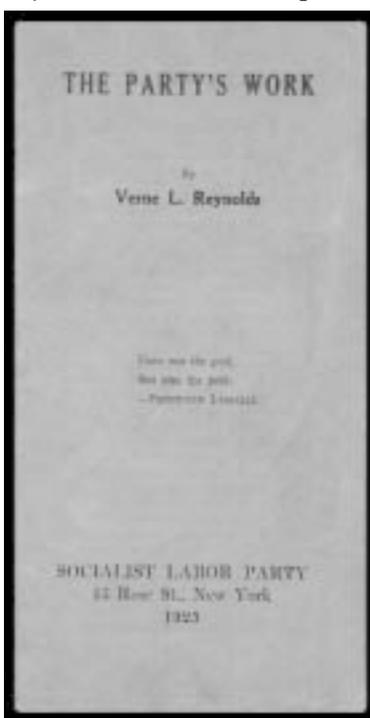
The central point of Comrade Reynolds' theme is his plea for a concrete application to Party work of the principle: division and coordination of labor. As he correctly points out, no one man can do justice to two or more jobs — if there are others who can be broken in to do some of these other jobs.

The membership will do well — in fact, the members can do nothing better than to study with scrupulous care the suggestions of Comrade Reynolds, and having read several times this little brochure no member will, no member really interested in the Party *can* fail to heed his earnest plea for a more efficient SLP.

The NEC, in ordering the suggestions printed in a booklet for free distribution among the members, was impressed with the need of just such a "manual." The NEC likewise felt that what had been submitted by Comrade Reynolds fairly filled that need. And, as stated, it is the desire of the NEC that every member should be supplied with a copy *to be carried in the pocket for constant study and handy reference.*

Clench that SLP fist. Draw the members together for collective action. And see that every blow strikes home.

Arnold Petersen
National Secretary
June 1925



The Party's Work.

The experience of the writer, gained partly in Section Baltimore, partly from his own individual activities, and partly from his activities as a speaker for the defunct WIU and during the recent campaign tour for the SLP, gives cause for the following conclusion:

That the principles of the Party and its tactics pertaining to the revolution are well understood by the membership. But the day-to-day tactics, our methods of conducting the Party work, are given too little consideration. That even our very best Sections have room for much improvement while some Sections are apparently giving no thought whatsoever to systematic planning of their work. Whole Sections in some instances are accomplishing less than the same number of members-at-large would accomplish by their individual efforts. It should be much more. The same principle of "division of labor" that multiplies output in an up-to-date factory is applicable in our Party work. Seven members organized should be the equal of at least twenty members-at-large in the work of agitation. The various suggestions offered below are not offered as inventions of the writer — a great many have been tried out and found successful either by individuals or Sections with which I have come in contact. A few only are from my own experiences.

Continuously keeping one or more organizers in the field is contemplated by the National Office. This will without a doubt accomplish much. It is with the hope that these results can be multiplied several fold for the same amount of energy, time, and money spent, that I offer this criticism and the following suggestions.

Advertising Meetings.

People who have something for sale other than

their labor power generally know something about advertising. It is not logical that such an organization as the SLP should contain any advertising geniuses; yet that we, who, in the parlance of salesmen, have an idea upon which the mass must be "sold," i.e., convinced, advertising *must* be studied. At least, a few of



its basic principles must be thoroughly understood. It is only through knowledge already gained in the past that the human mind can gain new knowledge, absorb new ideas. The most successful advertisers are those who have a thorough understanding of how to apply this to their advertisements. A phrase is inserted that already is known to be a truth and upon this is built the argument of the advertiser. For instance, "Elephants are supposed to be large. We have on exhibition the smallest el-

phant in the world. So small, his trunk is a mere suitcase. For the small sum, etc." Without the first sentence, the balance is not half so powerful in its pull as with it. Again, questions are always in the mind of everyone. Once get a question seated firmly and the answer being promised in the future becomes attractive. Once give, or let them even *guess* the answer, and the advertising value is lost. Good speakers, for instance, will promise to answer but never answer their questioners until they have no further use for advertising — at the close of the meeting. Nor will they until then give the answer to the very problem they are discussing. The following advertisement sentences take cognizance of both ideas presented in the preced-

ing paragraph:

**"Open Forum Meeting.
"DeLeonism?"**

"George Washington was a great man. The whole world knows it. Abraham Lincoln was a greater man. Most everyone will concede it. Daniel DeLeon was a far, far greater man than either, yet how few, even in this country, his home, ever heard of DeLeon or know what 'DeLeonism' really means. Why? DeLeon is dead. DeLeonism is spreading like a prairie fire before the wind.

"What is DeLeonism?"

"The working class has tried everything else. Is DeLeonism the answer? Section _____ of the Socialist Labor Party has procured Mr. _____, an enthusiastic DeLeonist of _____, and an extremely interesting, able, and witty speaker who will speak on 'DeLeon and his "ism."' Discussion follows in which you may take part."

Add what you will, but answer no question nor let them guess the answer. Play up in black type your question or questions.

If possible, state your subject in the form of a question which *now* interests *them*. One of the most successful meetings the writer ever addressed had this as its subject: "What will 'Labor' *do* about the Open Shop Drive?" and it was advertised by giving a dodger to everyone who worked in a large railroad shop — all three shifts — while the newspapers were full of "The Open Shop Drive" — while things were *hot*, not later.

Again, there are certain "special attractions" to be found. When found, they should never be neglected by the advertiser. For instance, national candidates. People who will go to no other political meetings will often go to hear a national candidate. With such a speaker routed to visit your town you should play up the office for which he is running in the boldest and largest type — *not his name*. This mistake was common throughout the whole trip which I have just finished. No one ever heard of Verne L. Reynolds, and when the names meets their eye it means nothing to them. Nothing but the bold type may *ever* meet the eye. If it finds an answering thought in their own minds they will walk several feet to pick up the ad even from a sidewalk.

Now the constructive suggestion I have to offer is that each Section delegate, as soon as possible, some *one* man — the best material you have for the job — to do *all* Section advertising. Instruct him to master, as far as possible, the general principles of advertising.

Let him choose an assistant if he needs one, but make him a "committee of one" and hold him responsible for failure while giving him due credit for success. Public libraries have plenty of books on the subject of advertising. It's the general principles only with which he must spend his efforts. As he feels the collar he will pull better, too, and develop into a still better worker. I feel that this method would be lots better than the usual one of electing a committee to make all arrangements and having each time different — entirely untrained — members do the advertising.

One thing more. Open air meetings should be as well advertised as indoor meetings. It pays and pays big. There are hundreds of people in every big city who would like to hear our speakers but are afraid to be seen in a hall at a Socialist meeting. They are safe in going to a street meeting. No one can criticize. They should be reached with advertising. I have found several hundred waiting for a well advertised street meeting before it started where I would have expected to see thirty or forty in a hall. True, a crowd can be had on a street corner at a busy section without advertising, but a few who come purposely will purchase more literature than the balance of the crowd put together. Which brings us to the subject of *Open Air Meetings*.

First: Don't ever let your speaker have to hunt his own soapbox. An experienced soap-boxer can usually find his own box in a few minutes in any city. That makes no difference — he shouldn't have to, yet most of the time he does. He, even if he is a local man, should have *nothing* to do, nor to think of, but his speech that evening. Even when speaking regularly he wants *all the time possible* to group his thoughts together before the meeting.

Second: Don't talk to him at all if you can help it. If you *must* talk, don't give him any controversial argument at least. And never, never give him any bad news before a meeting. Save it till later.

Now, more about the soapbox. Delegate *one man* to have it there in plenty of time. Let it be four feet high if possible — the higher up a speaker is the better. The listener can't turn his head at all if thrown back — *try it*. The attention is better. The speaker is therefore better. Heads thrown back and eyes wide open — mouths half open — help *him*. Don't ever let the soapbox be lower than two and one-half feet high. A shoe case is fair only. A higher box much better. If

you have a *low* speakers' stand, *leave it home*, and get a big box. If you take it with you your speaker will use it — against his will — rather than to offend you by criticism or discussion just before he talks, but it will detract from his speech.

Now as to literature. Find out if possible what method your speaker uses to dispose of literature. If he has a method, conform to his method if possible. In the absence of any plan of his, use this as your own plan. Group your literature — economics in one pile, say, *What Means This Strike*, *Watson on the Gridiron*, *High Cost of Living*, etc.; historical in another, say, *Two Pages from Roman History*, *Crises in European History*, etc.; unionism in another, say, *Burning Question of Trades Unionism*, *Craft Unionism vs. Industrial Unionism*, *Industrial Unionism* by DeLeon, also a few *Socialist Reconstruction* principally. *Two Pages from Roman History* fits here also. *Socialism* by Holmes, etc., in another group. *Taxation*, *Berger's Hit and Misses*, *Reform or Revolution*, etc. On the revolution in another. *Russian Soviets*, *The Revolutionary Act*, *Revolution* by Mrs. Johnson, etc. Have a few *Americanisms* also and, for the question period on religion (i.e., the church in politics) have *Fifteen Questions* and *Father Gassoniana*. Have this literature grouped — at least in your own mind.

[At this point Comrade Reynolds suggests that the literature agent commence selling the pamphlets, etc. — that is, while the speaker is speaking. The NEC Subcommittee does not believe that this procedure at all times is a good one. It undoubtedly causes annoyance to the listeners. Comrade Reynolds recognizes this, for he says: "He [the listener] will likely buy it, for nothing more than to be rid of you. *He wants to listen to the speech.*" Precisely. It does not follow that the listener will always buy. He is, however, always annoyed at interruptions, especially when he is trying to follow the speaker closely. Nor does it follow that a pamphlet purchased is a pamphlet read. In fact, the irritation that pamphlet caused him may remain with him and prejudice him against it. Such is human nature. If we picture to ourselves DeLeon addressing a crowd, who would tolerate interruptions while, during intense silence, he is developing his theme?

The conclusion is that conditions and circumstances will have to determine whether literature should be sold during or after the speaker's talk. *And in any*

case the speaker of the occasion must be consulted and his judgment should prevail. This must be so for this addition reason that many speakers cannot continue speaking if such interruptions take place.]

When sub time comes, just as soon as the speaker makes the "paper talk," have your sub cards ready and hit the crowd while it's hot. Have them always in your pockets when literature is being sold. The speaker may quote the PEOPLE, or statistics which have been printed in the PEOPLE, a fine chance to get a sub talk over yourself to the ones who have bought literature. Another thing — see that there are questions when the speaker calls for them. If they don't come from the crowd, let the comrades start them. Then they will come from the crowd. That's when the literature and subs *do* sell.

And while on questions: While the chairman should call for questions, the speaker himself should answer them. This, of course, is usually the practice, but where it is not the procedure should be changed.

Now about the collection. Listen to the collection talk and be ready with your hats to take it up *at once*. A few seconds may mean a difference of many dollars.

Whatever else the above means to you, there is one thing I want to drive home, viz., *plan your meetings*. Figure out first before the meeting just what you are going to do and *who* is to do it. See that your chairman is on the job. It's an unnerving crime against your speaker and the Party whose message he carries for a chairman to be late. If our Party membership would only *plan* well in advance, the work of the speakers, whom the same membership is willing to dig deep in their pockets to send on the road, would result in much greater benefit to the Party and speed the day of victory.

There are some cities still where no permit is necessary to hold a street meeting. There is no city where SLP speakers are not entitled to police protection. For more reasons than the above, every Section, even where ordinances are most favorable, should notify the Mayor and Superintendent of Police that certain meetings are to be held at such and such corners — and that we wish the usual police protection, etc. then, in closing, thank them briefly for past courtesies extended, etc. This will avoid much trouble and should be attended to at the beginning of every "open air ses-

sion” or before a speaker comes if your meetings are not a regular occurrence. In cities where such has been the rule in the past, “the cops are friendly.” “We don’t need permits, just notify them” is the usual answer to questions concerning permits. Where such work has been neglected in the past even permits are sometimes hard to obtain.

Wherever open air meetings have been held regularly for some seasons past, the literature sales, subs to PEOPLE, and collections have been the best, and the size of the crowds most excellent this past season. This emphasizes the value of open air campaigns. The banner of the SLP should fly regularly and on the same corner every Saturday night, at least, in every city in the United States. This is possible now in most places where a Section of the Party exists. There is a great cry, “The Party needs more speakers;” “we need a speaker here all the time” is another. *Sure*. Right, of course. Let’s have them. Now, where can we get them? Has it ever occurred to you that everybody now “rolls their own”? The places where we are best fixed for speakers have *turned out their own* speakers. I have found several comrades on this trip whose ambition is to be able to speak for the Party. Most all of them have been members of the Party long enough thoroughly to understand our position. They will die without ever becoming speakers if they never start speaking. Good speakers develop from poorer speakers. There are two things which seem to stand in the way of our having more speakers. First is the desire on the part of nearly all the members to have their very best speaker or speakers do all the speaking. With such a message as ours to deliver this is easily understood, but it should not be allowed to hinder the *development* of new speakers. The second is that we have no Party literature that can aid the prospective speaker in learning how to speak. The result of the above is that we have several speakers now who have not a bit of stage fright; who like to speak, but who cannot deliver a *convincing* talk after years of effort. They are even discouraged by their own efforts, and only use when no one else can be had. Both these and those who never have spoken in public, but would like to, could be made into good speakers if they would study the “art of speaking.” Every Section has the material for one or two good speakers. I think the Party is losing much by not having their services, therefore I shall offer the following:

The very best training ground — the first, second, and third grades of a school of oratory for SLP speakers — is the “Good and Welfare period” at the Section meetings. The dearth of speakers can largely be accounted for by the dearth of “Good and Welfare” and the fact that so few take part in it. This, in turn, can be accounted for by the lack of time, and this by so much business discussion (wrangling over little things some call it), and this, in turn, by poor chairmen. It is the writer’s experience that chairmen, like speakers, are made, not just “born that way.” The first thing to do, if you want good speakers, is to get good chairmen. The usual way is for a chairman — a different one each meeting — to be elected by the members present. A second way is followed by some Sections almost always, to elect the same member — a good chairman. The first results in a poor chairman, always and forever. The last doesn’t train the membership. I think a better way would be to elect a chairman for about three months — twelve meetings at least, and elect him three months before he is to serve. Let him be loaned the Section’s copy of *Robert’s Rules of Order* and study it for the three months prior to serving. Then he will be in position to learn quickly how to hasten through the business, getting down to “Good and Welfare.” Anything of minor importance the chairman can dispose of by “If there are no objections the following will be done,” etc. The Section can always “refer back” to, “for consideration” anything that it wishes. If systematically handled, the business of a meeting can be disposed of usually in one hour, leaving one and one half to two hours for “Discussion.” It’s “Discussion” that taught me what little I know of speaking ere I first mounted the soapbox. That is why I have such faith in its doing the same for others. And it’s “Discussion” that both members and visitors come down to hear in Section Baltimore.

A timely topic should be selected for discussion. This should be done at the preceding meeting, and a certain comrade (preferably one particularly qualified to handle the chosen topic) should start or “lead” the discussion. Also, cards should be sent out to all the members (and, if thought desirable, also to sympathizers) announcing that such and such a topic will be discussed at a special time set aside for that purpose — giving other particulars.

When the first comrade is through, another is

recognized by the chairman, later another, until lastly come the older members, who cover the subject from perhaps a different angle than any other former speaker. When we leave the subject it has been as thoroughly covered as the combined knowledge of the Section can cover it. We each leave with that combined knowledge our own. We leave with more than we came. Sometimes we differ — differ greatly. That is where speakers are trained. If I am wrong, the other has to prove it, not only to me but convincingly to the others present. If I am right it is up to me to *prove* it — prove it by speaking. The result of the past years of such work is that if every speaker here were to leave town there would be another speaker on the soapbox next Spring at the “SLP corner” every Saturday night, and the banner and the literature would both be on the job as well. Not only that — but he would soon be a *good* speaker, too, since he is trained in a school whose motto is “prove it.”

Any SLP member who can convince a man he is wrong in any argument, or even convince the listeners who take no part, can prove the same thing to a crowd of several hundred. That is all there is to speaking for the Party. That and plenty of practice.

The only difference between a speech and an argument is that a speech contains a number of arguments all of which are set forth to prove some main contention.

For the benefit of any who are now able to convince individuals in an argument, and with the hope that this will help them in constructing their first few speeches, I will give my own method of construction in a separate place. To be quite frank, I cannot as yet follow my own theory as further practice will enable me to do, but it has aided me much to have it, as a goal in view — “the perfect speech.”

One thing which hurts the SLP is this: I referred already to “division of labor.” The SLP Section should be a regular factory for manufacturing revolutionists, revolutionary sentiment, SLP members, and first class agitators. There are few Sections where a majority of the membership is active. Usually a small minority does the Party's work or most of it. While their dues and contributions are valuable to the Party, the activities of these idle members are needed as well. In some few places I have found Sections of several members where *one man* was really all that should be counted. As a

rule this man had been the one who built the Section in the first place. He has been a regular dynamo for energy and also perhaps a miniature mint of the Party. His work has been valuable to the Party, but of not half the value it should have been. There are few instances of this kind, but they so well illustrate the point I wish to make that I must use them. As members-at-large they gathered subs, sold or gave away literature which converted a few into comrades — then they organized. These new comrades have never been put to work, in some instances hardly permitted to work, by the original member. Yet there are few who are not exactly suited for some particular job within the Party's activities. These comrades mean well, but are not accomplishing the results by such efforts that could be accomplished by each Section finding a job for every member and letting him become expert in that job. Every Section needs a literature agent whose set and compulsory duty is to see that there is always a supply of such literature on hand as there is ever a call for. He should keep a book that will tell him at all times just what is on hand and what is on the way. What he is out of. How much has been sold. What the profits are and be able to figure out the cash balance in a few minutes. He should at *all* times have a sub list for his locality and see that expiring subs are renewed. These can, before the meeting, be copied on small pieces of paper and handed to some member who lives close — preferably a good salesman who will call promptly, two or three weeks before expiration, upon the subscriber. Only a small percentage of subscribers renew their subscriptions without such a call. They mean to but put it off or forget it. This should be the job of the literature agent: to *see that it's done*. He will usually have enough to do in an active Section of any size *without being obliged to do it himself*. But hold him responsible.

The job of organizer carries with it conducting the correspondence with the National Office and calling all Section meetings to order until the chairman is seated. This is enough to *require* of any one man. If he volunteers for some other work, all right, provided the Section wants him to do it. The same may be said for the secretary. The Section that will permit one or two men to hold down two or three jobs each is unfair to them and they will, in consequence, be unable to do justice to either. The man who will, of his own free

will, assume such responsibilities is injuring the Party by not getting the maximum of effort out of each Party member.

I can call to mind right now one instance where one man in a Section of eight or nine members carried on all the correspondence regarding the meeting of nine, procured the hall, did the advertising, met me at the depot, put me up at his home, took me to the hall, acted as my chairman, took up the collection, and sold the literature.

This man thought he was doing fine work for the Party — in fact, he told me so, going into details — yet he could not possibly have been the best member for *all* those jobs — not when there were seven or eight others. He did his best work for the Party before he organized — he has fallen down as to the rest. He has no “organization” yet. Just a few dues payers, valuable as dues payers and as nothing else. Yet I know there are others of the Section — I met one of them — who are keenly anxious to “get into the harness” in some manner or other for the Party. There will be no regular “Section” there until *all* who will pull are in the harness. Then we will hear from that Section. Subdivide the work. Let each become an expert. Then we get results.

A good job for one member of each Section would be to keep a card index of prospects. Wherever tried this has been a grand success. The prospects pile up until they soon have to be classified into two or three categories. The best of these should be as religiously followed up as if we were trying to sell them a piano. It should be the job of the card index tender to see that it's done, done right, and at the right time — to plan this work — not to do it. He can't do it — there is too much of it. The public library has books on this subject also. As soon as a prospect's name gets into the card index, a record should be kept of every pamphlet he reads and his reaction thereto. What his “bug” is, if any. Whether religious or irreligious or any other information of aid in telling *how to handle* him. Whether or not he subscribed. Keep a record of every cent he subscribes to the Party's funds. Keep a separate list of cards for contributors of funds. In campaign times you will know where to *find* funds. When you have hall or street meetings you will have a valuable list of people to notify by mail, or, to call on first, to aid you in getting funds to hold the meeting.

Last of all by a follow-up system, and your card index to guide and refresh your memory, you will be able to judge just when he has read enough of our literature to be expected either to join the Party or show why he cannot now join. Where such lists exist, outside agitators have little trouble getting at least a few new members when they are called to your aid. There is much more to be said in favor of card indexing your prospects. This will occur to you after starting. One Section, which has an excellent card index, also has a printed card which they hand out at street meetings for all to sign who wish further information or to be notified when our speakers come to town. Sometimes a dozen will hold up their hands and procure the card, turning in their names as soon as signed. Many of these turn out to be good material to work on. Others can soon be culled out of the index, etc., etc. *But your system must fit your circumstances. Do not create systems that defeat the very purpose for which they were designed.*

There is one most important thing. Few Sections have any system for obtaining new subscribers. Here is a plan that will work. Particularly well should it work where the membership has one or two who have selling ability. It combines follow-up advertising of the Party and our own principles with a systematic *effort* to get subs. The two branches can be done by different types of individuals. More advertisers are required than sub solicitors. It is limited by the number of solicitors and the hours they can spend per week at that work. First have a small slip of paper gummed at one edge for pasting to a leaflet, printed with something like this:

“This leaflet was at some time past printed as an editorial or special article in the WEEKLY PEOPLE, the official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. The Socialist Labor Party is a Working Class Party, this paper is therefore a strictly Working Class paper. It is owned, managed, and edited entirely by workingmen and women — members of the Socialist Labor party. As workingmen and women we are proud of our six-page newspaper. We always speak the truth. Newspapers which depend for their existence on advertisements cannot do so. It is said no newspaper can live which does not accept advertisements — we have not missed an issue for thirty years. We have cause to be proud.

“No agent, but one of our regular Party members, some young man or woman, will shortly call upon you with the idea in mind of securing your subscription to our paper. If you are interested in a paper which contains, as a regular thing, just such articles please give him or her your courteous

attention. You will find us equally courteous. Our paper is not expensive.

"Signed Section _____
"Socialist Labor Party."

Now for the plan. Have at least four different leaflets. Start with the simplest, since these are *new* beginners who will receive them. Paste one of these to *each leaflet*. Then find out the weekly capacity of your sub solicitors. If it's twelve houses he will guarantee to canvass each Saturday or Sunday, or say Monday night, plan for twelve. Perhaps he can take one side of a whole block. Anyway, find out. That's *his* job. The job of the advertising crew is the same size first week, twice as big the second, three times as big the third, and four times as big the fourth week.

They cover his territory with the first leaflet. Next week the second leaflet — also with the printed slip glued on — follows it, while the same number of houses further on are given number 1. The third week number 3 leaflet goes to number 1 houses, number 2 leaflet goes to number 2 houses, and number 1 leaflet goes to a new set of houses, etc. Right the door bell and hand the leaflet to the one who answers — if at home. After four leaflets — or five — experience will tell which brings the best results — the residents are to be called on by the solicitors who are already expected and therefore little time need be wasted. If they greet you well, a sub can be gotten. If the door is slammed in your face or they sic the dog on you, waste no time. This plan only calls for one or two good sub-getters, yet can put the others to work advertising and all are *getting subs*. Such is the value of *organized effort*. This plan will work. Try it. Caution: Don't overdo. Start small. You can easily increase. You would have trouble *decreasing* your efforts. A little work *every* week will accomplish marvels.

Now a few words about what to do once a sub has been gotten. Usually *nothing* is done. We never even know if the subscriber reads the paper.

About three or four weeks after the paper first reaches him, have some good sound member who can answer questions call upon the subscriber. "Personal touch," "our paper," "want to know how you like it," etc. You become his friend. Have both pockets full of literature. Left pocket *other* free leaflets — something to *give* him.

You can leave them with just such a message as

the printed slip contained, "Published in the PEOPLE," "Won't appear again," "Thought you may like to read them." You may — you will — find a larger and larger percentage, as time goes on, who are *red hot* after reading three or four issues of the PEOPLE, even hotter than they will be later — it's new to them. This is the great moment to dispose of the literature. Don't sell it to him. Tell him the package (in right hand pocket) is for someone else. Just show him and tell him what it contains or some can merely tell without showing, of the wonderful library of "lectures" — not "pamphlets." *Get his order*. Deliver later, but say nothing of literature the first visit unless he's hot after it. In case he is not, *give* him something free. Do it again later. The idea is to *keep him a subscriber* until he *does* want literature. The PEOPLE advertises the literature; if he reads the paper he *will* want literature he has seen advertised. Then sell it. Now you *know* the man. You have called in a friendly way, *given* him something, aroused further interest in both the paper and the Party, perhaps answered some question. Later, within two or three weeks before his sub expires, when you or someone else calls on him, he will renew much more readily than if you never went to the trouble of the first call. This is worthwhile work and will result in Party membership gains. A goodly number of subs were obtained this campaign from perfect strangers. This would be a good way not to lose them. There are always new subs coming in. It's easier, if done right, to keep an old subscriber than to get a new one. Let's do it right. The above has been successfully applied by myself. You can do as well.

Now a few words about how to handle a prospective member. Those who study and master our philosophy have a tendency to be rather intolerant of ignorance. So quickly do they forget that at one time they were ignorant themselves. We should never forget that these prospects, no matter how mature they are in other fields, are children, kindergarten pupils, on our subject. They should be treated accordingly. You can't teach mensuration to one who has not yet learned his multiplication table. The thing to do is to teach him his tables first — not to sneer at him because he just *can't* seem to understand mensuration. One or two sneers are enough for most people. No matter how well they may later understand our movement they may never again want to associate with such a person-

nel as repelled them in the first place with sneers. I have particularly in mind a phrase applied most often to arguments presented by myself when I was in the kindergarten stage. "It's nonsense." Of course it was nonsense. What else could I talk but nonsense until I learned sense? But why *call* it nonsense? It made me feel like a fool and discouraged me a great deal from taking the floor. A man can be convinced of his ignorance regarding a subject in such a way as to stimulate his desire for knowledge upon that subject. This is constructive work. To tell me bluntly I talked "nonsense" or "like a child" was of course telling me the truth, but the arguments against me were all that did me any good anyway, the balance could better have remained unsaid. Use tact — all the tact you can use. *Always* be polite even in the most heated discussion with one you are trying to educate.

Bear in mind that there are literally hundreds of erroneous ideas that must be killed in the mind of your prospect before he is a sound SLP man. Then plan how *best* to kill *each* of those ideas. I have succeeded, for instance, in landing several members of the SLP who were hopelessly religious — some Catholics, others Protestants — when I first met them. They are good comrades now, undoped by the "opium of the people." Here is *my* method. For perhaps weeks I make no mention of religion at all — talk strictly economics and unionism, the bread and butter question. Next I get the materialist conception of history into his head — I stay with it. If he mentions religion I brush it briefly aside. "Your religion is your own," "mine may differ from yours," "but on this bread and butter question our interests are alike," or something else to bring it back to the same subject.

Always discourage arguments on religion. Such argumentation is futile and disruptive. Moreover, it is antiquated — it belongs to the Eighteenth Century. Let the Eighteenth Century keep it. *Encourage discussion on economics, on sociology, history, etc.* GET THE RECENT CONVERT TO STUDY. And let the combined result of these discussions and such study dispose of whatever superstitions may encumber the prospective or newly acquired member.

[At this point Comrade Reynolds suggests the publication of a book to be sold, this book to cover the entire subject of Socialism, and to contain illustrations, etc. As the details are of no practical value to the

members these are eliminated here. It need only be added that the National Office is planning to bring out such a book at the earliest opportunity.]

Leaflet Distribution.

A few leaflets and what followed them brought me into the SLP. Had it not been for the systematic distribution — even *Sunday* — of SLP leaflets at the Open Forum in Baltimore, I would perhaps never have found the Party. That is why I feel that greater stress should be laid upon systematic distribution. A committee of one, a "captain," should be elected to plan steadily and always the campaign, and see that it is executed. He will soon have an efficient crew who can carry out his plans and at least aid him every week in the distribution work.

Every Section now has or should have someone who is already good at this work. Make him *boss* of the job. Fire him if he doesn't boss well. Get a good boss for this job as well as all others and then let his assistants, chosen by himself, do as they are told. If you *can't*, then tell him so first. One or two Sections plan their big distribution campaigns — such as during political campaign times — so that two men work together, one on each side of the street. They divide the city into wards or districts and cover the whole city or town at once and in a few hours — the same hours. Every Section member takes part. This is the ideal way in campaign times. But a plan should be made of some kind for steady year-round work of this kind. Don't plan too much. But do plan, plan, plan, and do what you plan to do. Let one man have the job. The smaller the committee the more you will find you get done. *One* man is best. If the sub-getting plan outlined previously is put to work, that takes care of a large share of *this* work. But besides this, regular meetings, such as forums, or educational societies of various sorts that appeal to workingmen or women should be covered. But do your *own* planning.

All of the above suggestions offered in one bunch such as now may cause one to think that it is beyond the power of one small Section — or even a large one — to accomplish. Not on your life. One man plans each job — his job. He calls on each of the others for assistance when needed and is in turn called on by them to aid them. If he plans too much work and each

does the same thing, of course, it won't work. If, however, each plans within the possibilities of the Section, good results will come from this placing of the responsibility for each job onto one pair of shoulders. If mistakes occur let them. Only the man who does nothing makes no mistakes. We need of course make no mistake of the same kind twice.

Advertising *The People* by the National Office.

I believe some sort of a sales talk like the "personal" *touch*, referred to in a former place, could be used to advertise the PEOPLE on each of our leaflets. Don't quote the price. Let that be found out later. Have them write in for sample copies "sent on request," etc. Then about a week after the request is sent in for samples, not longer, but not at once, send the name and address to the literature agent if there is one; if not, to some active comrade in the same town who will call on him and *get* his sub. With this advertisement well written — get an advertising man to do it if necessary — and cooperation between membership and the National Office this plan will produce results for the PEOPLE. I *know* it. It has the further merit of being almost costless. The present PEOPLE ad is poor because of the fact that it doesn't produce follow-up work for the comrades. This is offered as a substitute.

Trading Prospects.

Some comrades do no agitating where they work. It would before long be fatal to their jobs and they know it. Yet every once in a while a man will be met on the job who shows signs of human intelligence. He should be in some manner traded off to some comrade, who works elsewhere, who will take him on as a prospect and work on him for all he is worth. He could be introduced. Lay your plans well and this works fine. I have tried this myself. Of course the opportunity doesn't often arise. When it does, use it. Here is the way I have worked it. "I know a man who works at ——— who knows a lot about that subject. You ought to meet him. I'm going to see him Sunday and see if I can't fix it." I've always managed to make it work. Try it.

Just Before a Comrade Joins the Party.

I think there is a very valuable work that can be done for the Party in preparing the new member for membership, that is being done by very few among our entire Party membership. Of course new members have not recently been flocking into the SLP. Just the same, when a member does join a few things can be done, in some instances just prior to, in others as quickly as possible after the time he joins. The new member is usually full of "pep." He has found something good. He of course wants others to get it and get it quick. There are a few expert cold-water-artists in the Section who dampen the ardor of the new member as quickly as possible. "Oh, we tried that nine years ago, and it won't work." Perhaps very quickly the new member makes up his mind we are a bunch of "old fogies," "dead heads," "armchair philosophers," or worse, at the same time the Section may be considering that they are doing the most valuable work they could do by merely training the new member in the principles and tactics of the Party. They brook no criticism from the new member. Beat him down on every score. He loses confidence in the "personnel" of the Party and a certain percentage will soon not be attending meetings.

A little preliminary work on the new member would have prepared his mind for anything he is liable to meet in the Section. If some one comrade would take him aside for one or two hours and explain things to him, as they were explained to me by a tactful comrade of Baltimore when I first joined the Party, all the "old fogies" throwing "cold water" at once would never cool them off. They would simply stay with it until the cold water was somewhat warmer. Some of our most valuable philosophers — valuable because they can most quickly clarify the minds of the new member in arguments under "Good and Welfare" — are worse than useless for planning the Party's work. They have a few fine slogans which they work overtime on: "It can't be done," "It will bankrupt the Section," "If we couldn't do — how can we be expected to do...?" Now if the new member *expects* to get learning from a comrade and knows he will get "cold water" thrown on his plans for work *before* it is thrown, he is prepared in advance. He lives through it. The best kind of workers will be found among new members. Let

us, while training the new member, get the value of his enthusiasm. Also, he should be well prepared in advance to expect *slow growth*. Then, if no one joins soon, he will not lose heart. New members obtained won't hurt him — neither will *no* new members. He must be, as was I, given the understanding that “we must do our work, do it well, and let results take care of themselves.”

Again, he should be thoroughly given to understand the seriousness of belonging to an organization the purpose of whose whole existence is to “overthrow a ruling class.” Paint the picture black to him in this private conversation. “There will be nothing in it for you as long as you remain with us, but *give, give, give*. Of your time, of your energy, of your money, of your very self. There is never any take,” etc. “If you do good work for the revolution — even the best of work — you will receive credit only from a very small handful of revolutionists; nothing but damnation from everyone else. The better work you do for us the worse hated you will be by others.” “Another thing, my boy. Our liberty, our very lives depend on correct tactics. We must if possible remain alive until the revolution, and outside of jails, so we can continue the agitation. We must for that reason always do the *right thing*. Never make a serious mistake. The SLP carefully considers every big step, and most of the small ones, very carefully. For that reason we move rather slowly sometimes. Also because we must be sure there is a real light ahead and not a will-o-the-wisp, we do not gain members, nor lose them, quickly as do the freak organizations that adopt false notions and fool slogans from day to day. Our feet are always on the ground.” “We may grow slowly, move slowly, keenly criticize every new plan offered, however small, and turn down many a thing that you or someone else may be certain is a fine thing to do. Get used to it.” “If the majority of the Party is against you, *you must submit*. On that one thing you *must* be clear. Our liberty, our lives, and the revolution itself depends on a strict Party discipline.” “While we are opposed to our present political form of government, we have our own government, the Party officials, to which we owe the strictest allegiance. If we don't like them we have a constitution of our own which provides a way to get rid of them and install other officers, but while they are there, we must all submit to the discipline which they are put there to

enforce.” “Many a tight place has been squeezed through due to this strictness and discipline. You may find it hard to submit at times but learn how,” etc. The idea is to have a heart-to-heart talk with the new member as quickly as possible, either before or immediately after he joins the Party, about the Party itself, the personnel of the Section, the past bitter experience of the Party, etc., and *prepare him for the worst*, even if it never happens. Much trouble, future splits, etc., can be avoided by just this little thing done to and for each new member in a tactful manner. With me it lasted from about 8 p.m. until nearly 1 a.m. on a street corner. Many a time it has led me straight. “The revolution is the *big* thing. The SLP will be the organization to blame for it. If anything happens to the disadvantage of the SLP, it hurts the revolution.” “Always remember that, my boy, and you will never go wrong.” Try this out, comrades, and see if you don't get better results from the new comrade. Again, throw as little cold water on his plans for activity as you can. Better by far try something in the way of agitation that you feel sure will fail, and then fail at it, than to have the heart taken out of your new member. I don't mean by that to let him make a fool of the organization — just don't kill off *all* his ideas. Encourage him in every way possible. The big thing that will *hold* him and keep him active is, as quickly as possible, to find a job for him that he can do better than anyone else in the Section — better still, if feasible, let him find that job for himself. As soon as he gets to work he is safe, as a rule.

My Method of Outlining a Speech.

I promised to submit for the benefit of any comrade who has ambitions to speak for the Party, or to improve his speaking, my method of construction. Let it be understood that I cannot as yet follow my own method any too closely. Yet since I *have* a method, “a plan,” I have a goal in view, viz., the kind of speech I would *like* to deliver. You may evolve a method of your own once you start, that for you would bring much better results — if so then cast this aside. This is submitted solely to give you the advantage of what experience I have had. What I have not yet learned would fill up much more space, but to give you this little may aid some.

First, and most important, have something to prove even in the shortest speech, or stay off the platform.

Second, know before you mount the box or platform *how* you aim to prove it. As an aid to the foregoing I suggest that a speaker formulate his subject — at least to himself, as a question, viz., “What do I aim to prove tonight?”

Third, *prove* it so conclusively that none can deny it, if such is possible and in you. At least do your best. For instance, let us suppose you are limited to a five minute speech introductory to someone else. Not much time in which to prove anything, is it? Just the same, in five minutes you can prove in some way or other that the speaker you are introducing is entitled to speak upon such a subject as chosen and your five minutes' talk wouldn't be wasted that way on any audience. If you have more time you might also prove that the SLP trains its members which increases the prestige of the Party as well as of the speaker, but even in the shortest speech prove *something*.

Fourth, speak slowly. Speak to your slowest mind, not the fastest nor even the average. Some people think very slowly and for them not to be able to follow one small argument contained in the speech might be fatal. Don't *ever* speed up even when most enthusiastic and heated.

Fifth, enunciate every word plainly. If you have a foreign accent of any kind or an impediment in your speech, remember that it makes it just that much harder for some of your crowd to understand you. They *must* understand you or your work will likely be injurious rather than beneficial. If they can't understand you, they will likely leave thinking *you* are crazy and ignorant and belong to a sort of *fanatical* society. They *must* understand you, that's all, even if they disagree with you. For that reason a foreign comrade or one with an impediment in his speech should speak slower still and take further care in his enunciation. These general rules should never be forgotten.

Now, regarding the structure of the speech, here is the way I map it out to myself before I start:

HAVE SOMETHING TO PROVE.

(Somewhere in a complete SLP speech must be elaborated “Form, Tactics, and Goal.”)

* **INTRODUCTION** (Short as possible to state the subject matter completely)—

For instance:

1. Show there are several viewpoints.
2. Show that it is necessary to adopt the correct viewpoint.

ARGUMENT (in which you prove your main contention by making and proving several points)

Point 1:

- a. Introduction (short, bringing out subject discussed in point).
- b. Argumentation (omit oratory).
- c. Climax (oratory or impressive statement of the proved fact).

Point 2: — (Ditto).

Point 3: — (Ditto).

* **APPEAL** —

Opening Statement — Show that you have conclusively proved what in your Introduction you set out to prove, and in turn try to get audience to respond.

Final — If pleading for funds, literature, or subscriptions, use all the oratory you have.

Note — In Whole Appeal speaker should use oratory. A verse of poetry is not bad in the Appeal.

* Introduction must “tie together” with the Appeal to be a forceful appeal.

The general idea of the above is to divide the speech into three main divisions — Introduction, Argumentation, and Appeal, and in turn to divide each into definite parts — as many as necessary to accomplish the desired results, viz., prove a case and get the listener to act in some way in response to the appeal. I believe that any comrade who can convince his listener in an “argument” which is of course upon one point, can tie various points together and build a speech if he will take the trouble to practice planning on these lines of which he aims to say in his speech. A good

way to memorize in advance the points in the “Argumentative” period is to *name your fingers* and at first attempts make but three main points — later he can use perhaps four. There will be of course small “side points” that will occur to you while speaking. Don’t bother to memorize them. Just the main points should be covered on the fingers. The “Introduction” part is most important in that you show in some way what you are driving at — attempting to prove. This gives you a fine opportunity to appeal strongly for their support, or for subs, or for whatever it may be, having proven your case. I recommend strongly the study of the pamphlet *Reform or Revolution* as illustrative of this “tying together” of the introduction and the appeal.

Now, just as the introduction and appeal of the man speech tie together, so must the first and last (introduction and climax) sentences of each argumentative point be made. Study the same pamphlet, paying particular attention to the paragraph “Reform,” and the few words preceding it, to understand this. Study the whole pamphlet, then the whole of DeLeon’s pamphlets from this new angle, viz., How did he build his speeches? Try and find out how he introduces and leads up to each succeeding point and how he presents his climax to that point, once proven. If you have a statement to make, such as “the SLP is a revolutionary party,” make it after showing what “revolutionary” means. I mean for you to *prove* the SLP is revolutionary first, then you can state it so as quoted for your *climax*. The mere statement is valueless otherwise, and convinces no one either as to its truth or as to the necessity of having a revolutionary party in the first place. Prove everything. Caution: don’t try to prove too much in one speech. This has been one of my own

troubles so I know whereof I speak. Lay out little and prove it well, is a good motto. I could go on and say more on the subject but this briefly outlines a course of study on public speaking, using the finest kind of textbook written by a master of the art, both the argumentative and the oratorical, viz., Daniel DeLeon. Every paragraph should be studied from this new angle. The new or prospective speaker, after getting the fundamentals down “pat” by such study, has only to practice to make a speaker and a good one of himself. Try and follow this outline in Section meeting under “Good and Welfare.” It will surprise you how easy it will be once you have studied the art somewhat. One thing more — if you are afraid to speak at home, on account of a job you dare not play ducks and drakes with, arrange with some neighboring Section to trade speakers with your own Section — even raw material like yourself. You have to have practice — get it somewhere. The SLP needs speakers badly. It is your duty, comrades, to *make them*. They can be had in no other manner.

One thing I have forgotten that I consider essential. It is splendid practice for the speaker, either professional or amateur, after mapping out his speech as per the diagram, to sit down and write his whole speech. This clarifies his whole subject and he can cut out much unrelated material he would otherwise use and will find new material in his mind that is better related and can prove his points better. The reason for this is that the mind works much faster than the pen can move along.

Finis.

Regular Attendance at Section Meetings.

There is an old axiom to the effect that no chain is stronger than its weakest link. There is no denying the truth of that. The Socialist Labor Party is no stronger than its weakest link — and that link may be your particular section.

That it is a duty to attend Section meetings nobody will dispute. To do so is one of the particular obligations undertaken upon admittance to membership. Some attend to this duty religiously. Others regard it merely as something to be dodged as often and as carefully as possible.

Members who habitually stay away from meetings, very often, and naturally so, become lax as regards Party affairs. Important matters that come up from time to time are allowed to escape their attention and, accordingly, wrong conclusions are often drawn from events but partially understood.

It is important to realize that the Section meeting is a place to train the officers of future society. If the social revolution is more than a game, if the Party is more than a sport, then the time is bound to come when the revolutionists of today will have to fill places of importance in the new social structure.

Training in organization is one of the great essentials. An understanding of the working of the political and economic machinery is extremely important. The Section meeting is a training school second to none.

The members of the Party should take this matter with more than usual seriousness. If proper attention is paid, a morale is built up that will withstand all the insidious and destructive influences of the present age of degeneracy and demoralization.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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