

I. Bill Gilbert: (Philosophy of Elections)

Organizing people is basic to the human race. Here we are talking about organizing people to an election.

You can lose an election even with a good in-plant committee, but you cannot win without them. You need good inside leadership. If you have good inside leadership, you can lose the election but you have not lost the Union.

Many tend to substitute pamphlets, slogans, radio, etc. in massive amounts for the hard work of inside leadership. Those can help, but they are no good without inside leadership.

Organizers will frequently say, "The workers are scared", and use this as an excuse for failure to organize them. How do you overcome fear, in a campaign? The answer to that question is the answer to the question, How do you communicate with the worker? You cannot communicate with a worker who is scared. If the worker is afraid, he or she does not even hear you.

You have to break down the fear. In doing so, recognize that fear is healthy -- nature gives it to us as a means to protect us, both as individuals and in groups. The way to overcome fear is to get people so angry and mad that they overcome it.

There are lots of ways to get the worker angry. The best way to find out is from the workers themselves. This is why an in-plant committee is so important! They know what bothers the workers, what to appeal to in order to get them angry -- steel pigeons, racism, favoritism, whatever. Getting them as a group to overcome fear is to develop militancy. You cannot be a good organizer if you are not first a good agitator. St. Thomas described Jesus as a great agitator.

The workers themselves have to be brought into the campaign as much as possible.

Frequently, one of the major mistakes in an election campaign is in timing. If you peak your campaign too soon, it is dangerous. The campaign gets away from you. You build expectations to a high point, and cannot sustain them.

II. Alan Kistler (Structuring the Campaign)

In talking about the structuring of a campaign, it is very difficult to be specific enough to be really useful, since every campaign has its own elements. You could have the same organizing approach in two apparently identical situations -- one succeeds, the other fails. The approach that worked last week may not work this week. The organizer, therefore, must have the sense of what is today.

There has to be a plan to have a program. And you need a program. All of this requires a great deal of insight, and of knowledge. You have to know your opposition, your own strengths, your liabilities and assets, etc. This Union already knows much of this.

But you have to systematize this knowledge. Hence, you need some kind of central coordination. This will assure a uniform knowledge of what is taking place, and a uniform understanding of what the Union policy and program is. It is different when planning for an election than when planning for a movement or a demonstration. Extremely important here is having an information gathering apparatus.

To get information, you need to locate and develop local leadership. This cannot be overstressed or overemphasized. You must dig in and find the local leadership.