

SHOP NUCLEI EXPERIENCES

By *Martin Abern*

ONE thing is certain, the Workers Party must be a Party of shop nuclei. With that feeling prevailing, the tasks before the Party are the steps to be taken in that direction.

Even the meager experiences of the Workers Party give some idea as to better ways and means for shop nuclei reorganization. Under pressure of the Party, some Party units have organized shop nuclei; other places on their own initiative have proceeded to organize.

It would be well for purposes of education and encouragement if various district organizers would report some of the results in their districts.

300 Members in Shop Nuclei.

IN District No. 8 a start has been made. There are some 24 shop and street nuclei in existence, as follows: Chicago, 7, composed of clothing, railroad, machine shop, printing. Gary, Ind., 2, a steel mill and a street nucleus. Pullman, Ill., 4, in steel mill and automobile factories. Hammond, Ind., steel nucleus. South Bend, Ind., automobile. Dowell, Zeigler, Valier, West Frankfort, are mine nuclei. There are approximately 300 Party members organized in these nuclei as follows: Chicago, 50; Gary, 60; Pullman, 46; West Frankfort, 40; Dowell, 9; Hammond, 15; Valier, 10; Zeigler, 75. This is about 10 per cent of Party membership in this district.

THESE figures in themselves do not mean so much, but in their possibilities, they are a good deal. The nuclei are organized in the large and basic industries, coal, mining, railroad, etc.

Gary, Ind., and Zeigler, Ill., Set Pace.

Gary, Indiana is completely organized on a shop nucleus basis. There are two nuclei, one a shop nucleus and the other a street nucleus. The shop nucleus has some 38 members at present. The comrades in Gary after a couple of educational meetings organized on their own initiative, and it is worthy of note and congratulations that the first city organized wholly on

the shop nucleus basis is Gary, a main stronghold of the steel trust. All the language branches there are only auxiliaries to the Party and have no special Party powers.

PULLMAN has over 50 per cent of its members in shop nuclei and there is no reason why Pullman should not be altogether organized into shop and street nuclei in the next thirty or forty days. Only unnecessary objections which need not be taken up here can prevent that.

In Zeigler the 75 members in the shop nuclei, one of 65 and one of 10, are made up of the former language and English branches with the exception of a few language members who, it is reported, have refused thus far to enter the nuclei. Persuasion and education, not extreme measures at this time, will solve such difficulties.

IN Chicago the best functioning nucleus is the nucleus in the print shop, not because it is in the DAILY WORKER shop, but because the members are thoroly alive to the possibilities of nuclei organization. I do not wish to go into detail here on experiences of the various shop nuclei, but only to point out a few generally important facts which must be noted.

Greater Encouragement from Federations Needed.

First, as to the question of reorganization itself. There is the problem of getting the language federations to encourage reorganization to a greater extent than they have. In the writer's view, laxity of some comrades in getting into the nuclei, where they have been organized, is not due to their own unwillingness, but because they felt that their bureaus were not any too anxious to get them into nuclei. Leading comrades in Zeigler, for instance, report this, in their opinion, as one of the reasons why the handful of comrades yet remain outside the nuclei.

FURTHER it can be said, without any intention of discussing it from that angle now, that the factional sit-

uation in the Party has not contributed toward speedier shop nuclei reorganization. Where the nuclei are organized, with some few exceptions, the comrades report themselves satisfied with the change and lay plans for nuclei work.

The English speaking comrades nearly everywhere take the initiative in reorganization and the lead in the work and are most enthusiastic for shop nuclei.

Too many comrades approach the question of shop nuclei reorganization mechanically. They assume that reorganization is a matter of a Party edict or mandate, a sort of an affair where the Party rubs Aladdin's lamp and nuclei spring into existence. Some assume, too, that shop nuclei reorganization is a matter of setting a date in which the reorganization must be completed and the latter is over with. Shop nuclei cannot be organized after the fashion of a hen scratching for food. It must be more systematic and planned, with an understanding of Party history, its composition, kind of work our members are in, etc.

THERE are comrades who feel that in the reorganization and in the work of the nuclei, too much stress is laid upon the economic problems and that the political character of the nuclei does not come out. But it is a truism that the problems of wages, working conditions, etc., are the matters which first engage the attention of the workers, of the Party members. There is nothing terrible about that. Quite the contrary; these are closest to them and form the base of political development of the nuclei. Party guidance, meetings of Party functionaries with nuclei, will soon result in development of these primary issues into channels which result in nuclei developing these issues politically.

In a Party like the American Party, with all its diverse language elements, one of the first things in the nuclei is to get acquainted with one another to talk, to feel that the language differ-

ences are no barrier in the Party reorganization. In some localities the first contact of all comrades with one another has been thru nuclei. Discussion of shop problems is a first step toward getting acquainted and laying a sound basis for complete nuclei activity.

Organization Must Be on Large, Swift Scale

BUT if there is reason for care and planning in shop nuclei reorganization, there is, nevertheless no reason for slowness in reorganization.

Shop nucleus reorganization in the various districts shows this fact, thru reorganization cannot be on the style of the junk dealer, done on a second hand basis. Party reorganization must be on a large intensive scale, taking in large working areas at a time. Spotted organization, that is, organization of isolated nuclei here and there, instead of helping reorganization tend to hinder, discourage and, perhaps, for a time destroy possibilities of reorganization.

ORGANIZING in isolated fashion, which has been pretty much the case thus far, only results in most of the comrades not participating in the reorganization, in being by-standers, watching the parading shop nuclei, who are perhaps not all in step as yet, and who have not yet learned to drill or to function as they should.

Reorganization, to be effective, must begin with the close of the party convention, be sweeping in its form. Cities must be chartered out into sections. Sections registered accurately, meetings called, sections reorganized into shop and street nuclei, shop nuclei branches wherever possible within the sections, formed, etc.

In the large cities the method of reorganization will vary in accordance with the kinds of towns and industries. In small towns the problem is simpler. But the question of organization in the different towns is subject matter for another time.