

The Communist Press and Shop Nuclei

By MARTIN ABERN.

ANYONE who reads the glowing history of the Spark, the Russian revolutionary newspaper of years ago; anyone even remotely acquainted with the history and development of Pravda, organ of the Russian Communist Party, and its powerful connection with, and influence over the masses of Russian workers, need not be told of the gigantic importance of the press. For malevolent influence, consider the scorpion capitalist press of America! How did the Spark, Pravda, and other working class newspapers attain such immense influence? Because they were working class papers? That is not enough. There are working class papers that do not, nor are ever likely to have any real hold on the hearts and minds of the workers. The success of the revolutionary organs in Russia lies in their close contact and sympathy with the daily needs and aspirations of the struggling workers. Pravda succeeded because it spoke the needs and aims of the workers. But more important: The workers themselves spoke in Pravda. They made the paper their own by writing always in it of the lives they lived and worked. Hence, Pravda was, or is, not just a paper. It is the blood, bone, muscle, brain and body of the workers. Pravda is the worker. The famous "Workers'

Columns" or "On the Job" columns made a living paper.

Shop Nuclei Will Invigorate Communist Press.

Yet not even Pravda could succeed so well without something else. That is, the Communist Party organization. But, further, a certain type of party organization: The shop nuclei, party units organized in the shops, at the place of work. That spells permanent mass contact. The party in Russia is completely organized on the basis of shop nuclei, to do all party work. The Communist press gives concentrated propaganda and daily direction to the work in the shops. Communist nuclei units in the shops. Communist things, report the conditions of work, their struggles and lives, all the little things which arise daily and which mean so much to them. These are written in and commented upon by the press and result in building the press and party.

The DAILY WORKER, our American Communist daily, tries in every way to reach the masses of workers. It wants the workers to write about themselves and their work in the DAILY WORKER. Real success in this field will come when the Workers (Communist) Party is a party of shop nuclei. Until our party, moreover, has its base and absolute majority of membership in the large and basic industries, steel, coal, railroad, etc. dangers in the party and in its press will

be present to a degree in the direction of petit-bourgeois deviations (yielding to the ideas of those in small industry, shop-keepers, etc.) This would not be necessarily conscious or premeditated, but determined by material objective and mental considerations.

In organizing shop nuclei, we aim to establish our party in the basic industries and thus reach the living material for bolshevization of the Workers (Communist) Party. The influence, circulation, content and viewpoint of the press are automatically thus affected.

Even now our press does not give sufficient reading matter on conditions in the workshops, not due to the unwillingness of the press to print such information, but quite the contrary. Our party members must first be in the large shops, a condition which lays the basis for a workers correspondence. When dealt with, the cases have been concerned, too often, with individual or special cases of exploitation or with those employed in isolated or small shops. If there is nothing better, there can, of course, be no objections. But, obviously, it will be more important and striking for our Communist press, for the DAILY WORKER, and our Communist cause, when shop reports will come mainly from the big industries, mines, mills, etc., thus making a single illustration of shop struggle common to thousands of workers in the same

industry. Then, too, letters from the workers "On the Job" stuff, have been dependent on chance and on a few "willing" comrades, or, let us say, loyal and energetic ones.

Shop Correspondents Thru Shop Nuclei.

With Communist shop nuclei organized, every shop will have a regular and special shop correspondent. Such news of workshop life will interest broad masses of workers. They will feel it is their story that is being told, that it is their paper. The shop nuclei will be another direct link between the workers and our Communist press, and also inversely so.

Plainly, we are but in the sheerest beginnings of our work in the field of shop nuclei and a GREATER COMMUNIST PRESS. Still we must build right, rest our foundation solid—in the shops. To organize shop nuclei is to lay the best groundwork for increasing systematically the circulation of the DAILY WORKER and other Communist papers; is to make it possible for the DAILY WORKER to become in fact the written expression of the workers' drudgery, wrongs, hopes and aims. To build our Communist press thru the shop nuclei is also to build more shop nuclei and to get increasing contact with the workers. Thru shop nuclei and a Communist press—hopes translated into deeds—a mass Communist Party.