

Notes On Shop Nuclei

By Martin Abern

"IT is, therefore, necessary, by profound, energetic and systematic work to carry out the decisions adopted by the Executive of the Communist International in January, 1924, in furtherance of the decision of the Fourth Congress on this subject, and which the Fifth Congress hereby confirms. The congress regards it as one of the important tasks of the Communist Party in the near future to effect a reorganization on the basis of the Factory Nuclei."

The Fifth World Congress of the Communist International, reaffirming the decisions of the Third and Fourth World Congresses that "the basis of organization of the Communist lies among the working masses themselves, in the factory, at the place of work," that is, in Shop or Factory Nuclei, emphatically stated again that:

Sink Party Roots In Factories.

"No Communist Party can be considered as a serious and solidly organized communist mass party if it does not possess solid communist nuclei in the shops, factories, mines, railways, etc. . . . Especially will the struggle against the capitalist offensive and for the control of production fail, if the communists have not at their disposal solid mainstays in all shops and if the workers have not created their own militant bodies in the shops (shop councils, etc.) The Congress therefore considers it as one of the main tasks of the Communist Parties, to sink their roots more than hitherto into the factories. . . ."

The political situation, nationally and internationally, more than ever demands a change in the Party structure, a Party built on and within the factories, in order to carry on the struggle for the daily economic needs of the workers, and, further, for the conquest of political power by the proletariat. If the Communist Parties did not consider nor understand the importance of the decisions of Shop Nuclei organization, that period is past. There has been discussion and greater clarification among the Workers Party members. Wherever there are possibilities, organization must start throughout the Party. In localities (Chicago, Gary), the work is already begun. But, the reorganization must be fundamental, not superficial. The Shop Nuclei formed must be basic Party units with full powers such as payment of dues, officers, right to send delegates to central bodies, conferences, conventions, etc. Too much emphasis cannot be laid on this.

The Workers Party as a whole now realizes and sees that it is correct that the Shop Nucleus, or the group of Party members working in the same shop, factory, mill, is to be the basic political and organizational unit of the Workers Party. Still, the complete historical, and political necessity for today and the future, for shop nuclei organization is not yet fully grasped. When it is, reorganization of the Party will be swift.

Revolutionary Aim Demands Shop Nuclei

In nearly all countries in the world, Soviet Russia, Estonia, Finland, perhaps a few others, to be excepted, it is

to be noted that both the social-democratic parties and the Communist parties have the same organizational forms. Yet the objective of the Socialists and the Communists are as far apart as the poles. This sameness of the organizational structure in both is contradictory for the political purposes of each. The revolution is not achievable through the social-democratic parties, because of both their organizational structure and political viewpoint; principally and practically, they are the organizations of counter-revolution. The political program and tactics of the Communist Parties are correct. But the organizational form in nearly all of them is inept for revolutionary ends.

The Socialist Parties, purely parliamentary and reformist organizations, require electoral machinery. Their activity is conducted within the limits of capitalist democracy. An electoral machinery, based on residential districts and organizations is therefore built up.

But the Communist Parties, the Workers Party of America, cannot correctly be organized like a Socialist Party. Communists struggle to pull the entire workingclass into the everyday battle against capitalism and its supporters and leaders. The Communists, further, aim thereby in time to get control of the means of production and distribution and to seize political, the State power, for the exploited masses. That means that the communists must have the closest contact with the masses and must be organized among them as Party units. To achieve the slogan and aim of the Comintern: Deeper Into The Masses, requires that the Workers Party organization shall be the party members organized within the shop, factory, railroad, etc. Our influence among the masses cannot be increased, as our Communist propaganda and agitation warrant, unless we remove our social-democratic structural heritage and reconstruct on the shop basis.

We are living under greatly changed economic and political conditions in the United States too, which is now full-blown as an imperialist nation. The world is existing in a period of shrieking militarism, battling imperialism, struggle, conquest, war, starvation, Soviet Russia excepted. The day of the so-called comparative peaceful advocacy and development of Socialist or Communist thought is long past.

Get Mass Contact With Shop Nuclei

Our Party, as well as its brothers, must fit its party structure to the need of the hour—a party basis which can mobilize the party membership for any action in quick notice. That structure is the shop nucleus. The factory or shop nuclei, are the form of organization must likely to ensure the permanent contact with the working masses, while the strategy of the united front, on the concrete issues and needs arising among the workers, such as strikes, unemployment councils, general labor councils, injunctions, etc., is at this stage the best method of stirring up the masses for the fight. The Workers Party must shift the center of activity

from our territorial branch, our place of living or rather sleeping, to the factories. Go to the masses—the best of many ways is thru the shop nuclei organization—that is the best way to Bolshevize or to Leninize our Party. This is the experience of the Russian Communist Party, of the German Party, the Czecho-Slovakian Party. That will prove to be true also in America. Through factory or shop nuclei organization, the social composition of the Party will be improved. We shall be in a better way to gain the industrial proletariat in the basic industries in America. The aim shall be that the “absolute majority consist of industrial proletarians, so that the overwhelming majority of the party members may be included, in the factory, workshop and farm nuclei.”

Mobilize Members Quickly and Effective

The effects of the existing territorial branch on the Workers Party are too glaring to need much elaboration. The slowness and difficulty with which any party campaign, parliamentary, industrial, relief, educational, Daily Worker drive, strike, etc., is carried through, is patent even to the blind. But shop nuclei organization means speedy mobilization of the party membership for any activity or emergency. An order or instruction issued to the party membership through the territorial branches as today takes at least two weeks before meetings are called and an attempt is made to carry out the program. Hence generally a bad delay, incomplete results, even failure sometimes. Instructions or programs issued by the national office direct to the secretaries of the factory nuclei can bring action within one day, within one hour if necessary. The parliamentary campaign of the party of 1924, if carried on by a shop nuclei organization, would without a doubt have mobilized the membership with far greater ease, efficiency and results than the decadent party structure did. For other actions in unions, strikes, etc. the shop nuclei form is strikingly superior.

The Workers Party, has decided now to begin reorganizing into shop nuclei on a practical basis, selecting the places most suitable to the change. In the process of organization on the shop nuclei basis throughout the world, many lessons have been learned, from which the Workers Party of America will profit greatly.

No one under-estimates the problem of shop nuclei organization in America. With a small party, with the existence of seventeen language federations in the Workers Party, we have plainly one of the most difficult problems in the Communist International. Yet it can be solved to the satisfaction of the entire Party. The Party must keep uppermost in mind that it shall not destroy the old, the territorial branch, before the new, the shop nucleus, is functioning well. Every care and precaution must and will be taken not to destroy or hinder the language propaganda work. In fact, during the transition period, from the territorial branch to the shop nuclei and also during the time of shop nuclei organization only, the work of conducting the communist work among the foreign workers can, must and will be increased. Propaganda, within the factories among the foreign workers, carried on in an organized manner will be far more productive than the present unorganized, in fact, activity. It must be remembered by all that every measure attempted now by the Party to organize on a shop

nucleus basis is a **transition measure** until the party is completely reorganized. The transition program proposed below will undoubtedly be subject to change in the course of practice, though many features are basic and permanent. Every precaution is being taken not to harm in any way, quite the contrary, the most of the federations.

The Shop Nucleus, The Shop Committee, The T. U. E. L.

In proceeding to carry through the shop nuclei reorganization, the party members must also keep clearly in mind the types of organs employed by the working class in the struggle against capitalism. The three main organizations to be remembered are: the shop nucleus, the shop committee, or council, and the trade union committee, or T. U. E. L., or minority movement within the trade unions.

The shop nucleus is the political unit of the party based on the place of work and is the leader of the work among the workers. The shop committee or council is the organization, the delegated body, of all the workers, party or non-party members, conducting directly the job problems in a given factory, and aiming for the control of production. The Shop Committee also forms the basis of the industrial unions of the future. The trade union committee, the T. U. E. L. in America, is the organized minority movement within the trade unions with a program for revolutionizing the unions. None negates the other. All connect with each other. The shop nucleus, the political unit of the party is the mainspring and leader, properly, of the shop committee and trade union committee. It conducts the political struggle in the shops, leads the shop committee work. The existence of the political organization on the job cements properly the political and industrial work among the masses. The trade union committee, the T. U. E. L. carries on the political and industrial revolutionary work within the trade unions. The three together unify, solidify with one another, and make certain of revolution.



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID FEEDING STRIKERS' FAMILIES IN GERMANY