

Opportunities for Shop Nuclei Work

By ARNE SWABECK.

Article III.

THE system of industrial enslavement of the workers in the United States is reaching ever higher degrees of perfection. Experts are being maintained by the large corporations to work out new fangled schemes to strengthen their grip on the toiling inmates of mills and factories. Socially and politically their domination is as great, whole townships often being controlled by one or a few corporations.

An elaborate machinery using systematic, altho oftentimes crude, methods and operating with the workshop as a basis has been created. It is there the first links of the chains are being forged and by way of suggesting how to approach the problem of organizing the workers for the struggle to break this control it is best for the present purpose to look a little closer at these first links and find out how the shop nuclei can become instrumental in helping break one after the other.

5. Blacklist System, Spies and Special Police.

These are some of the most crude methods of maintaining control. The blacklist has become an institution and works with brutal efficiency. Spies swarm in the shops. "Suckers" are being especially favored to help maintain divisions among the workers. Company guards and special police are being employed to help put

fear into the hearts of those who become rebellious and whip the discontented ones into line. Workers applying for jobs by big corporations are required to submit their whole life history and in many cases swear to never having belonged to a union or intending to join one before their application may be considered. Physical descriptions and finger prints are taken down on specially prepared blanks which are compared to the employment office blacklist. Workers with the slightest spot of rebellion on their record are rejected.

The Montana copper trust perfected these methods to the notorious "rustling card" system. No worker could find employment without having such a card from his former job and the issuance of cards was firmly controlled. Good union men or class conscious workers need not apply.

These are precisely the means which extend into governmental administrations and become the basis of exerting political control by the big corporations. It has so far been a small matter to whip voters into line to follow the capitalist dominated parties and whenever a little extra intimidation was found necessary it was promptly applied. Aided by the power of their wealth the corporations put their own tools into office to let them grind out and execute laws protecting the privilege of exploitation.

When shop nuclei members starting from the practical experiences, in shop, political district or city really

set out to expose the interlockings of this system of enslavement the class nature of capitalist society becomes particularly apparent. The practical examples are so simple that few workers will fail to understand. In addition most of them have felt the effects in their every day life and explanations thus become easier. Of course, plenty of difficulties will arise in taking up a fight against these levers of capitalist control. But Communists learn how to overcome such obstacles and the fight will, when correctly pursued, naturally extend from the shops to an active entry on the field of political struggles. There could be no better way of showing the workers from their own experiences that they must unite to build a labor party and act politically independent as a class.

6. Bosses' Welfare Associations.

These institutions are the first steps toward company unions and thus towards more complete enslavement of the workers. So-called welfare associations of various kinds are organized in all up-to-date factories either for sport, social or beneficial purposes. They are always organized by the bosses with especially fitted agents put in charge. Collections of financial contributions are carried on in their name, bulletins, papers and sometimes magazines are published in their name but under editorial control of the bosses. The object is generally stated to be to promote the good feeling and cultivate a "family

spirit" which in other words means to delude the workers, to make them believe that they are part owners of the plant and thus get them to submit to any conditions which may be imposed.

With the cultivation of this "family spirit" follows various "bonus" systems which enables the corporation to appear munificent and keep wages at a lower level, while stock selling plans, altho possible only to better paid workers, has very much the same object. The United States Steel corporation claims that 60,000 of its employees hold corporation stocks. Such workers naturally find themselves all more obligated to protect the interests of the owners of the concern without having the slightest voice in the management or in determining wages or working conditions in the plants. These workers as a rule obtain little or no additional material gain for themselves but they can easily be turned against their less fortunate brothers in any real conflict within the industry.

Shop nuclei members must turn such hideous schemes inside out for a complete exposure. No matter how cleverly they are devised we must be able to show the workers that it is only by their united class efforts that improvements can be gained and not by false illusions of bosses' generosity. Each battle engaged in by the workers, no matter how small, will help prove this contention.

(To be continued.)