

Opportunities for Shop Nuclei Work

By ARNE SWABECK.

Article IV.

WITH the series of schemes of various kinds of so-called co-operation between capital and labor being constantly devised and perfected to delude the workers, the problems of the active shop nuclei increase. But simultaneously the opportunities for effective work on a mass scale became enhanced.

One rule, which also holds good in endeavors to win the masses of workers, is that experience is the best teacher. The delusive attempts shrewdly worked out by the bosses will succeed only so long until the shred of hypocrisy is blasted away and the inevitable struggle for class interests comes to the surface. This is a task for our live shop nuclei.

"Joint Works Committees"—Company Unions.

One step further into the series of schemes mentioned are the so-called "joint works committees" established in many large factories and which are separated only one additional step from company unions. "Joint works committees," supposed to manage affairs in the plant, are generally composed of an equal number of delegates representing the workers and the bosses. Sometimes the bosses appoint both sets of delegates and get the ones to their liking. Sometimes the former are elected by the workers in the shops. Seldom are these committees permitted to touch any

real issues of working conditions; but if so, final decision always rests with the management. While company unions are outright tools of the bosses both institutions present a double problem to shop nuclei members for negative opposition alone will not be sufficient. Both embrace workers directly or indirectly and demand corresponding tactics. In fact even there it becomes necessary to get on the inside. During elections of the workers' delegates to so-called "joint works committees" shop nuclei members must bring forward their own or progressive candidates and bring forward a program corresponding with the needs of the workers in the shop. Of course, the program cannot be realized by that kind of works committees, but a more complete exposure becomes possible and the workers will learn that such committees cannot function in their behalf and also learn the need of creating real shop committees representing only the workers. The same may be true to a degree even of company unions. Past history has proven that when a few live wires get active inside at the opportune moment, when the workers in general begin to understand the need of real organization, can turn these company unions into instruments for organization of working class unions.

Workers' Shop Committees.

Born directly out of revolutionary upheavals or great struggles the shop committee system has attained particular significance as a major instru-

ment in the hands of the workers in many European countries while here the practical experiences in this field have been very limited. So far reaching was the effect of the struggles of the shop committees thruout the German industries, both against the capitalist system in general and against the corrupt traitorous union officials that the Ebert-Scheidemann government legalized shop committees by law in an effort to clip their claws.

While shop committees can by no means supplant trade unions, they will become a basis of additional strength to the workers in organized industries and will prove an important factor as a means of resistance of the workers in unorganized plants. Moreover, they may become a real instrument of union organization. Shop committees representing only the workers as against fake bosses so-called "shop or works committees" should be the slogan of shop nuclei members. Shop committees composed of delegates elected by the workers directly within each department in an industrial plant, fully empowered to represent these workers in dealing with the management, empowered to call the workers to fight whenever necessary should be the reply to any encroachments upon wages and working conditions by the bosses. Due to the character of shop committees being elected on the job, each delegate being directly responsible to the men in his department, and having daily contact they become ever responsive to the needs of the workers and they

will increase the confidence of the workers in their own ability to resist. The existence of a shop committee in a given plant would be a factor of powerful warning to the bosses.

Shop nuclei members should take the initiative in organizing shop committees. While during the course of so-called normal prosperity the response from the workers may be very small it should nevertheless be propagandized at every opportunity. The method of their establishment and their functions should be made clear. The propaganda should be put into practice whenever the bosses make an offensive, cutting wages or directly deteriorating working conditions. Naturally such a step must be carried further to the complete organization of the unorganized.

The absolute untrammelled labor control by the bosses in many industries as for instance the steel industry makes the approach to organization of the workers a very difficult one. But recognizing that Communists must learn to overcome all such obstacles the establishment of shop committees should provide an opening wedge and a beginning of a solution of the problem. Organization of the unorganized, the means and methods whereby to organize, should be the practical summing up of shop nuclei activities and propaganda in connection with the points mentioned above. Organization of the unorganized is a constant problem facing all Communist Parties.