On the Road to Power

Communist Fractions Pave the Way

Building shop fractions is at the center of our party’s activity. The example of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Marx and Lenin correct when they pointed out that the working class was the only revolutionary class. It’s the working class that has the vision of the working class, and without the leadership and strength of the working class those other groups would have no revolutionary outlook — no goal.

One of the main lessons of the Russian Revolution, however, is that there are many lessons to learn, that communists who are serious about revolution need to have a vast base amongst the workers. However, this base cannot be merely an economic base, that is, a base built by only participating in and leading shop struggles and strikes. Having a communist base amongst workers means, in the first place, winning workers to the need for revolution. We must win workers to the need for struggle. If you don’t win the immediate problem, and you won’t lead to revolution. So the chief job of communists is not just to be inside.-sided or limited in approach to workers, which in many cases goes outside the momentary boss-worker relationship. The job is to not just work directly with the party, but not to aggressively participate in the reform struggles. It simply means that limiting the work to the reform struggle is futile.

Marxist socialists have long understood the development of capitalism in pre-revolutionary Russia. If at that time one of the main features in organizing for revolution was to win the fight on the shop — especially large shops — it is triple today. This is true, not only for manufacturing enterprises, but for all sorts of service industries. This is particularly true in areas like, insurance, hospitals, etc. As a result of historical lessons and today’s reality, our work, as much as possible, must be based on concentrating our forces around shops, especially the large ones. The key shops are in basic industry like steel and auto.

In the fight to win the party to the struggle, the party must be able to establish many party clubs as possible in important work locations. One of the crucial jobs of a club is to focus most of its efforts on getting workers on boards or on the job on board. This means getting our lives to the people who are trying to win. It also means getting to know the issues on the shop, and becoming familiar with the various forces in the shop. It also helps to know something about the nature of the industry and shop you work in. This would include a wide spectrum of issues from production methods to profit making. But above all, the club must be the political center for the party in the particular shop. And the politicalerve center for the workers. This means that party shop clubs cannot simply be tactical centers for discussing how to fight grievances and organize for strikes. The party club’s first job is to figure out how it can grow. It must discuss Marxist-Leninist questions. It should be able to summarize its tactical experiences so as to draw political conclusions from them, in order to chart the next steps.

The club should have a planned educational program which includes: dialectics, political economy, Lenin’s State and Revolution, What Is To Be Done and other selected works. Some questions to be dealt with might be the politics of the leftist party vs. Politics of Revolution: what is a communist, what is the essential nature of a communist party, what is communist leadership, what is the dictatorship of the proletariat. We should follow and study PL literature on these questions. Naturally, there are many questions which workers need guidance on the ranks of the working class in order to win them to revolution!

Without close communist ties to the working class, the party will inevitably sink into opportunism.

of solving the needs of workers. A couple of examples of this: the nature of the electoral system, using particular campaigns as an example; expose the function of foreign policy of the state.

The paper can explain racism as a key tool of the bosses to exploit and split workers.

Another thing one can organize to win workers to the left is a constant barrage of leaflets, dealing with a variety of questions. These leaflets should be short. They should usually deal with one thing. And they should try to tie it to the need to building the party and revolution. The fraction should be the main arm of the party club for getting PL literature to as many workers as possible. We should always be trying to win our base to carry out party activities, especially selling Challenge Desafio. Finally, the fraction should try to build party actions, like May Day. If we work correctly, the party should involve an ever-growing circle of forces who build the party, and join it. As the work proceeds, the fraction should be able to move most of the workers to the left by helping them draw the proper conclusions from the reality’s experience. The fraction can help make the party’s line a MASS question in the shops.

Essentially fractions should be shop groups, not industry-wide or city-wide. While in some smaller Party areas it might be necessary to bring workers together from different shops to have a viable collective, even here Party members should not be part of the fraction without bringing a non-Party person to it. And the immediate goal must be a shop fraction of at least one Party member and one or two other non-Party workers. (To be continued.)

Detroit: Auto

30 for 40 = More Jobs

DETROIT—When PLP members in the UAW fought to win a 30-hour work week for 40-hour pay — as the number one demand in the ‘73 contract fight, UAW boss Woodcock and his henchmen threw cold water on this as “pie in the sky.” No sooner had the ‘73 sellout been signed, when the auto companies laid off nearly 250,000 workers in less than six months. The SLUB pay (supplemental unemployment benefits) fund ran dry at GM and Chrysler. A hue and cry was raised about fighting for job security in the next contract. Now the “next contract” is here.

Again PLPers are raising the demand for 30 for 40, along with uniting the workers by fighting racism in the plants. Without unity of minority and white workers, we can never win such a major advance as 30 for 40. This time Woodcock & Co. are hard pressed to put down the 6-hour day at 6 hours pay as the way to press for more jobs. Instead, they’re trying to side-track it by dreaming up tricks which cost the company nothing and do less to fight layoffs.

An example of the kind of “time-off” demands (continued on page 3)