

A Call network grows inside Midwest steel mills

From a steelworker—

I have worked in a large steel mill in the Midwest for the last five years. Over the years, *The Call's* influence has steadily grown among the workers in my mill. In the department where I am working I now sell *The Call* to about 30 workers on a regular basis, and this number is growing.

I would like to share with *Call* readers some of my experiences in building *The Call* in the mill and the lessons I have learned. After several years of persistent work, many workers come to me on their own, asking, "Has the new issue come out yet?" But it wasn't this easy at first.

The first lesson in being a good *Call* seller is to have firm faith in the masses and their desire to read revolutionary material. For a long time I only sold to Black and Latino workers in my department, although I am white. I had the view that whites weren't interested in revolutionary ideas.

Many of the workers, both Black and white, pointed this out to me. They would ask, "Why don't you ever talk to whites?" or "Why don't you ever take up the struggle of a white worker?" What they were asking me was how could I expect to build multinational unity and unite the workers against the common enemy without winning the white workers.

SELLING TO WHITES

I began to make a special effort to talk to and bring *The Call* to white workers. Immediately I found a number who were very enthusiastic both about *The Call* and revolutionary ideas. Now one-third of my sales are to white workers, and the number is increasing.

Second, *The Call* must be linked to the ongoing struggle in the mill so that workers can see how it gives leadership to the day-to-day struggle as well as an analysis of the world situation. This means that we must be summing up and reporting on a



SELLING CALLS at the plant gates supplements sales inside the mill. (Call photo)

regular basis the everyday struggles we are involved in. It also means we need to study articles in the paper to help map out our fight on the shop floor.

Articles on the crisis in steel, the report of the USWA convention and the recent Weber case all helped to increase the readership among a broader section of the workers. Also articles that related to the struggles in my mill particularly won the workers' interest.

WRITING FOR CALL

Still, in my department there have been several racist firings and a struggle against speedup and harassment that were never reported in *The Call*. One goal I have set is to get the workers to begin writing about their experiences for the paper.

Third, we must turn our distribution of *The Call* into a lasting network throughout the mill. It is not enough just for me to sell. Often I ask myself what would happen if I got fired tomorrow or laid off? Then who would get the 30 *Calls* to the workers?

We need workers in every department who can build *The Call* network into a real communications system in the plant, where we can find out quickly if some-

thing happens and get the word out about any action we want to take.

I am now trying to get a few workers to take small bundles each week, buy subs for their friends and sell with me outside another plant.

We can use our *Call* networks to sell other revolutionary literature, too. For example, quite a few regular buyers have also bought "The Crisis in Steel" pamphlet and seven workers in my department have bought copies of *Black Bolshevik*.

And last, we must build our networks along secret lines, that is secret from the bosses and their agents. I never sell *The Call* in front of a boss, a bureaucrat or a very reactionary worker.

There are a lot of ways to get *The Call* in the plant—having free distributions at the gate, leaving extra copies around the locker room, pinning articles on the bulletin board. The main thing is to get the workers involved in studying, selling and writing for the paper themselves, so that *The Call* can really help lead the workers' struggle.

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