

ORGANISATION

Nuclei and Local Organisations of the Sections of the C. I.

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It is nowadays difficult to meet an active Party member in the sections of the C.I. who is openly opposed to the organisation of factory nuclei or declares himself against them. Factory nuclei have won themselves a position in the local organisations of the sections of the C.I. Here and there they have even come into being without the instructions and direction of the local organisations.

In France, Germany, Bulgaria and Italy the factory nuclei have brought more life into the Party organisations. More than that, in these countries the parties have, through the factory nuclei got into touch with the broad masses of workers in the factories and works. This is indicated by the recent great Labour demonstration in Berlin—for the amnesty of the political prisoners and on the anniversary of the murder of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht—and the magnificent demonstration of the Parisian proletariat on the day when the mortal remains of Jaurès were conveyed to the Pantheon. The discipline shown by the demonstrators and the wholesale participation of the workers in this demonstration are, to an appreciable extent attributable to the work of the factory nuclei.

The development of factory nuclei must be continued in all countries as energetically as hitherto. Our essential task now is to help the nuclei to strike out on the right path and to give them concrete substance. Otherwise the activity of the Party members, which was roused by the masses, will soon be exhausted and the nuclei will not fulfil the functions for which they were created but will become empty forms. An example: in Czechoslovakia our Party is carrying on an energetic campaign against the rise in prices. The working class women are holding street demonstrations, whereas in the factory and works nuclei (according to official statements the CP. of Czechoslovakia has about 500 nuclei) the question of the rise of prices of articles of necessity for wholesale consumption is not treated and discussed, as though this question did not concern the workers in the factories and works.

There are in Czechoslovakia several central trade union organs; there are parallel associations in one and the same branch of production, of which some are affiliated to Amsterdam and others to the Red Trade Union International. For this reason the forces of the proletariat in Czechoslovakia are split up. For this reason it is not in a position to combat successfully capital in its own country. Surely the broad masses of the workers are interested in the unity of the trade union movement both in Czechoslovakia and on an international scale. This question can and must be discussed in the nuclei. The Party nuclei in the factories can do much for the unity of the trade union movement and towards attracting the workers to the trade unions, whereas at present in Czechoslovakia, according to the official report of the CP. of Czechoslovakia at the last Party Conference, we judge that about 30% of the members of the Party are not members of the trade unions at all.

Is it impossible to discuss the question of Leninism and Trotskism in the nuclei? As a matter of fact, it is not only a Russian but an international question, and it will therefore be very difficult for us to become real Bolshevist Parties unless the broad sections of the Party members, especially the workers in the nuclei, rightly understand the question, accept it as their own and solve it. Nevertheless many Parties have been satisfied with accepting resolutions submitted to them by the Central Committee and with printing a few articles in the Party Press.

Apart from the question connected with the life in the nuclei, the nuclei can and must discuss the questions which are connected with the campaigns carried on by the Party: the platform for the election of the factory councils and municipal councils, of Parliament, the Party's motions for an amnesty, the fight and the motions of the Party for the taxation of the bourgeoisie and against the taxation of the poorest of the peasants, finally the policy of the Party in the national and agrarian question—all these are questions which also concern the nuclei.

All the questions mentioned can only become slogans for the broad masses of the workers if the members of the Party, especially those working in the nuclei, who are in daily touch with the non-party workers of both sexes, make the slogans their own. Only thus will the slogans of the Party be realised as slogans of the broad masses.

Plenty more questions could be enumerated with which the nuclei can and must concern themselves, whereas in many places their only occupation is that of discussing the affairs of their factory, and even that insufficiently, or of collecting membership fees. It is easy to understand that this state of affairs is unsatisfactory to the members of the nuclei. It would not have been worth while to form nuclei for this purpose alone. A communist factory and works nucleus can and will only work well if it really becomes the fundamental organisation of the Party for the place in question, with all the functions which appertain to an organisation of this kind.

It is therefore necessary for the local Party organs to see that the nuclei are well administered, to establish close connection with them and to prepare material for the discussion both of questions of internal interest to the Party and of those which at the moment agitate the masses of the workers.

In conversations with the leading comrades in some of the sections of the CI. we learned that these comrades attach great importance to the nuclei with regard to the organisation of street demonstrations and similar actions, but consider that the nuclei are unsuitable for carrying out parliamentary election campaign, for the elections of municipal councils and Parliament. They therefore allow the former district electoral organisations to exist side by side with the nuclei.

These views cannot stand any criticism. Why should the nuclei in the factories not be able to carry out election campaigns? Is it not mainly the workers who vote for the Communist Party? Is it not chiefly for the workers that the Communist Parties publish their appeals, broad-sheets, posters and newspapers in the industrial districts? They are most easily and best distributed where it is most important, in and around the works. And surely it is easier for the Party members to carry on the agitation for the election slogans of the Party according to a plan mapped out by the nuclei in the works, factories and workshops, in the mess-rooms during meals, in trains when the workers are travelling to and from their work and finally in the districts where they reside. Since these nuclei are able to rouse and mobilise whole works demonstrations, why should they not be able to lead these works to meetings, even if they are not held in the works or in their immediate neighbourhood?

The Communist Party can and must seek out the workers in the factories, organise them there, formulate their demands, lead the daily fight for the improvement of the living conditions of the workers in all their forms, and on the same spot do their Party work and carry out the Party slogans.

Factories and works must become the citadel of the Communist Party.

In the discussion as to the reorganisation of the Communist Party on the basis of factory nuclei, voices have made themselves heard both in the American and English Party Press and at the conferences called by the local Party organisations in Czechoslovakia and other countries to discuss the same question, maintaining that with the organisation of factory nuclei and the transference to them of the functions of the Party, the local Party organisations would be destroyed and cease to exist, while the nuclei would not be capable of carrying out the manifold Party work in the whole group of cells, in urban districts and in the town.

This is complete confusion and a misunderstanding of the nature of the resolution of the ECCL as to the construction of the sections of the CI.

What has been up to now (and it still exists in many places!) the structure of the Party organisation of a large town in Czechoslovakia or Germany? The Party members of one residential district were periodically, about once a month, called to meetings with the object of hearing this or that report which was put on the agenda by the district or local leaders of the Party. These leaders were elected at one of these meetings of the Party members, usually once in six months.

The local directors (committee) distributed the Party literature, collected the members' subscriptions and conducted the

election and other campaigns. With such a structure of the organisation it cannot be said that the members of the Party are overburdened with Party work (in Czechoslovakia less than 20—25% of the members of the Party have up to now done Party work). The members of the Party were according to their place of residence, divided into groups of ten with an elected or nominated comrade at their head only in those Parties which were illegal (for instance in Italy) or semi-legal (in Germany) or in those with regard to whom the government was able to apply exceptional laws (in Czechoslovakia). This was of course already a progress in organisation. But it cannot be said that the activity of the members of the Party increased with the existence of the groups of ten, as these were not employed in active, regular Party work. As a rule they were mobilised for great Party campaigns, for street demonstrations or for the distribution of literature during the elections etc., but where no campaign was carried on, the groups of ten succumbed and disintegrated.

In many urban Party organisations in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria and other countries, the permanent institution of "functionaries" still existed (party functionaries, trade union functionaries, functionaries of the cooperative societies, members of the fractions of the town and district Soviets etc.). They were periodically called together by the Party leaders of the towns to discuss and decide the most important Party questions, although they had not authority from the Party members to do so, and although they were not sufficiently in touch with the latter; as the result of this the members of the Party tended to drop out of active participation in Party affairs, and were less and less employed in active work and in carrying out definite Party functions.

Is it true that the local Party organisations are destroyed and annihilated by the organisation of factory nuclei? By no means!

What is it which is changed in the structure of the local Party organisations through the comprehension of the members of the Party in nuclei at their places of work?

In any given district of the town of Prague there are factories and works, offices etc. All the communists of every one of the enumerated concerns are grouped in communist nuclei (according to their place of work). The members of the Party in these districts who are not in work (housewives), are, on the other hand, if there are not too many in the district, attached to the existing factory nuclei or, if there are very many, to nuclei according to the streets in which they live. As soon as their organisation is completed, all the nuclei get into touch with the Party leaders in the district in question. When all or the majority of the Party members of the district have been grouped in nuclei and the latter have begun to function, the leaders of the district call a conference of representatives of the nuclei at which the leaders of the district Party are elected or re-elected.

What has been changed? The leaders of the district Party have, through the nuclei, come into immediate touch with the basis of the Party — the workers and employees in the factories and works. These latter distribute the work of the Party among all its members, issue directions and see that they are carried out by the members of the Party.

All that is necessary is to dissolve the groups of ten and do away with the old institution of "functionaries" and, in their place, to discuss important questions more frequently in the meetings of the nuclei, to provide good speakers and good material with regard to those questions which are put before the nuclei for discussion, to hold more frequent conferences with the delegates of the nuclei (in parties which are legal) for the discussion of important questions which are not urgent, after they have been discussed by the nuclei and resolutions passed with regard to them.

Needless to say, the leaders of the groups, towns and local districts can call (indeed it is desirable that they should) councils of the secretaries or the directors of the nuclei, of the secretaries or the directors of the nuclei of the existing communist fractions, of the comrades who work among the women, the young, the peasants, etc.; these can be called either all together or separately according to the branches of the work of the Party, as seems desirable. These conferences however neither can nor should take the place of Party councils of groups of nuclei in the town or local districts.

The comrades in Paris grouped all members of the Party in the Paris districts into factory nuclei, and then dissolved the old organisations. In this way they were eminently successful in developing the Party, came into touch with the working masses and brought new life into the work of the Party.

This is how all local organisations of the sections of the C. I. should proceed.

To sum up:

1. The organisation of nuclei must be continued energetically as the necessity of their existence has been demonstrated in all the countries in which they already exist.

2. The nuclei can fulfil their function if the existing Party leaders direct and control their work aright, if they discuss Party questions with them and prepare material for the questions raised.

3. The nuclei must engage all members of the Party in Party work, must give each individual a special piece of work in accordance with his capacities, his gifts and his strength.

4. As soon as the nuclei are organised and have got into touch with the local leaders of the Party, all previous organisations are dissolved.

Only when all this has been carried out can the right foundation for the construction of the Party be laid, and a part of the task of Bolshevising the Party be realised.