

Comrade Piatnitsky:

There are still many comrades who do not understand how to capture Trade unions. How is this to be done? Not by demanding a rise of 80 pfennig per hour as soon as reformists demand a rise of 60 pfennig. That is not work. Every worker with any Trade Union experience can see that this is certainly a "radical" but not a feasible demand. Workers are not going to fight for things which are unobtainable. It is only by persistent everyday work that we can capture the Trade Unions. If our comrades will do this work and can show that they are doing it well they will win the confidence of their fellow-workers. But if workers know a Social Democrat, who although he betrays them

in political questions, helps them in economic questions, and if they see at the same time a Communist who does nothing but criticise, then the workers will elect the Social Democrat for his petty daily work and not the Communist who does nothing but criticise.

There is also another task. We have in Germany in our hands a number of local trade union administrations and councils. These must serve us as a basis for the work of Communist fractions, not only in one locality but in the whole region. They must bring forward demands and criticise in a way to show up shortcomings of the trade unions in everyday life, and they must use methods and bring forward demands which the other Communists in this Union can make use of for our agitation. This is a task which we must take upon ourselves.

Comrade Lies said something which is very much to the point: Our ideological influence is greater than we can cope with organisationally. This is certainly a pitiful state of affairs within the Party. If in 1918 and 1919 when we attracted the entire working class we had had good organisations, the Social Democrats, the Amsterdam International would not perhaps be so strong numerically at present. But the Parties were too young and too weak organisationally hence the inadequacy of the auxiliary organisations of the Party — the fractions. What is the use of forming fractions if the Party does not consolidate and lead them, if it does not give them directions for their activity. We have had in fact a loose Social Democratic Party organisation. But how is it that the Social Democrats can manage with organisations which are there only for the elections? Because they have in addition the Trade Unions which with their cadre of officials have permeated the factories and have firmly established themselves there. Our Party had the same organisation as the Social Democrats but no firm hold in the factories — no Trade Unions. This is what made it weak and unable to utilise every possibility. Reorganisation has been taken up in our sections, and not on a fraction but on a nucleus basis. I will say quite openly that nuclei were set as the foremost task and Trade Union fractions came next. Fractions cannot be formed without a foundation for them in the factories. The foundation is the nucleus. It is there that the initial work of the Trade Unions lies. It is there and there only that workers can be got hold of and educated. We must create this foundation. And wherever this exists already to a certain extent we can concentrate more extensively on fraction work.

The French comrades have said that fractions are only necessary in the elected organs of the trade unions. This is only partly true. The fractions consist naturally of all the Communists in the organisations and organs of the Trade Unions including the Communists who are elected to the Trade Union Congress etc. But who is the fraction executive for the respective union in the interval between the Congress? Well, naturally the Communists who were elected to the managing committee of the Union. Why? Because in their capacity of committee members they receive all the material, because they are informed about the entire activity of the managing committee, because all the time they must concern themselves with Union questions and because they have an insight into the entire work of the Union. Our French comrades have very much simplified this matter for themselves. They want to recognise as fraction only the amalgamation of comrades in the leading bodies of the Unions. Can this be done? This would perhaps make things very easy and comfortable for the Party, as in times of campaigns, of trade union elections, etc., it would be of course such an easy matter to set tasks for the comrades in the leading bodies of the unions. But how is it really possible to carry on campaigns in the Trade Unions without bringing into this work in an organised manner all the Party comrades belonging to the respective Trade Union? No results whatever can be achieved without trade union work by the fractions in the lowest trade union units and in the factory nuclei. Therefore the French comrades make a very great mistake by limiting the term "fraction" to the Communists in the leading trade unions bodies.

Comrade Lies said that there are still Parties which are against Trade Union work, and that this is an obstacle. I admit that this is so. It is said for instance: how can it be tolerated that our comrades should pay contributions to the reformist trade unions, they use them for Social Democracy etc. Well, in one respect this is really so. We help the Amsterdamers: but by supporting these organisations we are bound to extend our influence provided we work hard. Such an ideology is quite explicable if one takes into consideration how our Communist Parties

were formed. To a certain extent they are workers who have left the Social-Democratic Parties, because they saw that the latter were betraying the working class. There was a time when these comrades who formed the Communist Party did not want to help the Social Democrats with their Trade Union contributions. I do not mean to say that this was correct, but psychologically it is comprehensible especially if one takes into consideration the split and expulsion activity of the reformists. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, we have different organisations, the Red and the Amsterdam Trade Unions and others. We have the same in France. The reformists split the C. G. T. and the C. G. T. U. was formed. To-day one still hears the cry that all the comrades should leave the C. G. T. and join C. G. T. U. At the time when the split was conjured up by the reformists this may have been correct, but it would be very bad for our further struggles. Our comrades must remain in the reformist trade unions.

Another example. One must say to the workers who see every day the Catholic Trade Unions in common cause with the bourgeoisie and betraying the working class at every opportunity that, they must get out of the Catholic Unions. But a Party comrade must not only remain there but should even endeavour to get into such a union. This is not an easy matter. In the factory as everywhere else he is against religion and the bourgeoisie, and then he is to join of his own accord a religious bourgeois trade union. This is easier said than done. In this connection considerable work will have to be done if Communist activity in the Christian National-Socialist Amsterdam and other organisations is to be carried on systematically. This requires ideological preparation. By whom can this be done? By a good Party organisation. If we have only a loose Party organisation unable to get hold of the members of the Party, a Party in which only 30% of the members participate in Party work, how can we with such an organisation carry on Communist work in the Christian National-Socialist and Amsterdam Trade Unions when there is a Red Trade Union organisation just round the corner. But if one does not work in these trade unions the workers suffer. As for example, there is at present a struggle in the Czechoslovakian textile industry, which has already lasted many weeks. What results do we see? The Amsterdamers and the Christian and Amsterdam workers go back to work? What can our Red Trade Unions do? They will have to go back to work on the same conditions, otherwise they will be dismissed from the factories. One could give more examples of this kind. Communist Parties must overcome the objections of the comrades who do not want to work in the Christian and Amsterdam Trade Unions. This must be done everywhere by means of an ideological and organisational struggle on a large scale, under the slogan of Trade Union Unity.

Now I want to deal with what interests us most: the organisation of fractions. Their organisation is very complicated because the organisation of Trade Unions is very complicated. In connection with this there is a tendency among some comrades to make the Trade Union Department of the Party responsible for trade union work. The Trade Union Department in the French Party is only a sub-department of the Org. Department and there are also trade union commissions. The latter practically do the work which the fractions should do, and this is bad for the work of the fractions. What should the trade union departments of the Parties do? Party organisations must first of all issue directions for work and the tactics in the trade unions. Secondly they must select capable comrades well able to carry out the work. Thirdly the Party must control whether the existing fractions or the comrades serving on the elected bodies really carry out the work. This means that the Party Executive must hold consultations with these comrades giving them all sort of support, but must on no account do the fraction work itself.

The next question is: The question of connection between the Party Executive and the trade union fraction. How is this to be done? Through the trade union departments of the Party Executives. The fraction is not an independent organisation. It must carry out the directions of the Party. The Party lays down the general lines, but must not interfere with the daily work of the fractions. At any moment different tactics will perhaps have to be adopted. Different methods will have to be used at different meetings and conferences. Party organisations and even the trade union departments themselves cannot lay down fixed rules how the directions of the Party are to be carried out in all concrete cases. But the directions themselves must naturally be

issued. This is the work of the trade union department. You know that we have no trade union department here in Russia. Why? Because the fractions in the trade unions are very strong. The comrades working there are well informed, they are fully aware of the will of the Party, all they need are directions which they carry out. But there is control and consultations take place. It is rather unfortunate that abroad we have no Communists on all the elected bodies. The question arises are we to replace the fraction by trade union departments of the Party in those elected bodies which do not include Communists? Certainly not. Let us take for instance the A. D. G. B. where there are no Communists. What is to be done in such a case? Comrades to be found in the elected bodies of various central unions should be amalgamated by the trade union department of the Central Committee into a provisional A. D. G. B. fraction. If there are no Communists in the Central Committees in the various unions, the trade union department of the central organ should get together the most capable Communists in this union and must form them into a provisional executive for all trade union committees with a presidium or bureau. The trade union department should give instructions to these provisional fractions and control their work, but it must on no account itself do the work which the fractions should do, for it does not know the conditions as well as the trade union members themselves. The trade union department may know the situation in general, the relations between the various groups of manufacturers and the various tariffs, but it cannot know the ordinary everyday work.