

The 10th Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

(Translation from the German)

THE Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which met almost a year after the VI World Congress, was not only able as a result of the experiences of the course of events in the capitalistic countries as well as in the Soviet Union to reaffirm the analysis made by the Sixth World Congress and the strategy and tactics in the revolutionary class struggle derived therefrom, but was able, considering the rising revolutionary tide, to reemphasize strongly and extend this analysis. Those features in many spheres of the capitalist world economy, in the politics of the bourgeoisie, in the development of the Second International and in the process of the radicalization of the working class which at the time of the Sixth Congress could only be indistinctly perceived, had since then become sharply outlined and had assumed concrete form.

Between the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI occurred the *great strike movements* in almost all capitalist countries, especially the strike in the Ruhr district, the numerous strikes of the textile workers in Germany, further the general strike in Lodz and in the mining districts of Poland, the numerous strike movements of the French working class, especially in northern France, the great mass strikes of the tobacco workers in Bulgaria, in that land of the white terror where every strike movement means a revolutionary struggle against the fascist state power, the general strike of the tobacco workers, railway workers, and seamen in Greece and in other countries, the strike movement in the United States, the textile strike in the Southern States; the gigantic mass strikes of pronounced revolutionary character in India; great strike movements in Japan (textile workers' strike), in Australia, etc. We witness during this period in almost all countries a *strong upward surge of the Communist movement*, which expressed itself in Germany, for example, in the elections to the shop committees. The completely changed character of all of these mass movements as contrasted with the period before the Sixth Congress was particularly evidenced by the bloody May Days in Berlin. These occurrences were the expression of the rising tide of the class struggle, the commencement of the struggle of the proletariat to break thru bourgeois legality (law and order). The barricades of Wedding and Neukollen are indications of the determination of the proletariat to burst the chains of bourgeois "order." The May occurrences which found a strong reverberation throughout

the world, were also the starting point for a *new revolutionary forward surge* of the working class in all capitalist countries.

But just as the offensive of the working masses develop powerfully in the period from the Sixth World Congress to the Tenth Plenum, so did there develop on the other side of the class front the *offensive* of monopolistic finance capital, which is becoming ever more trustified, and of the political spokesmen of its interests in the bourgeois parties and governments, in which the Second International began to assume a more important role than previously. This expressed itself primarily in the rapidly increasing fascization of the capitalist state power almost in all countries, in the increase of terroristic measures against the working class, in the rapid decay and decline of bourgeois democracy and of parliamentary methods of government, and in the amalgamation of trust capital and reformism with the state power. In this connection there belong especially the relegation of the parliamentary system in Yugoslavia and the transition to a military dictatorship, the elimination of parliament by Pilsudski in Poland, the increasing Communist persecution and the intensification of terroristic measures to the point of assassination in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, etc., the mass arrests of communists and the suppression of the communist press in Czecho-Slovakia, France, etc., and finally the monstrous fury of the white terror against the revolutionary movement in China, India, Japan, South America and other non-European countries. The *white terror* breaks up bourgeois legality itself, especially in France, in Czecho-Slovakia and in Poland, by placing the communists "outside of the constitution and the law" without any legal justification and in contradiction to the consitutional "justice" of the capitalist state itself. This was crassly apparent in the mass arrests prior to May 1st in Paris, in Prague and in Warsaw; in the complete suppression of the communist press in Czecho-Slovakia, in the arrest of all the editors of "Humanite"; in the seven week long prohibition of the "Rote Fahne," and in the prohibition for many weeks of other party papers of the C. P. G., and in the extensive confiscation of party literature in all of the enumerated countries. In the period between the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum the bourgeois order in Europe moved forward along the path from *democracy to fascism* at a faster tempo than had ever been the case in any previous period.

The Comintern and all of its sections had to decide what position, tactically and strategically, they were going to take in this new situation against these fascist terroristic measures. The tactic and strategy of the Communist World Party as the party of the proletarian revolution can only be one of an accentuated class struggle

and the answer to the white terror by the mobilization of the proletariat to smash through bourgeois law and order. Under these conditions the Comintern and its sections mobilized the entire proletariat for the revolutionary *Red Day against imperialist war on August 1*. The bourgeoisie and its lackeys, the social fascists, answered the campaign of the Comintern with the frenzied cries of the unloosed white pack which were intensified against the communist movement. It was in this atmosphere that the Tenth Plenum met and received thereby an especially revolutionary character.

In the period between the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum the capitalistic contradictions and antagonisms sharpened perceptibly. They were reflected particularly in the negotiations of the Paris reparations conference, which dragged along for months. The result of the conferences of the imperialist world robbers does not signify an alleviation of the antagonisms inherent in world imperialism, as some theoreticians even in our own ranks have sought to demonstrate, but on the contrary on *accentuation of the antagonisms* of the imperialists among themselves, especially of the class antagonisms—in a decidedly pronounced degree in Germany. The offensive of German trust capital in the repression and increased exploitation of the German proletariat received a new powerful impetus, proceeding from the result of the reparations negotiations. "Work more and eat less!" that is the program of the imperialist robbers and of the lackeys, the social-fascists, as the result of the Paris negotiations.

Despite all the sharpening of the antagonisms in the imperialist countries, the Paris Conference as well as all the other facts of the immediate war preparations, especially during the past few months, showed that the organization and mobilization of the forces of the imperialist states are directed to a single end: *the war against the Soviet Union*. The contradictions between the imperialist world and the Soviet Union have become more acute because of the rapid development of socialist construction, and especially of the heavy industry, in the Soviet Union; the bloc of the imperialists to a common attack against the Soviet power has become appreciably strengthened. This appears clearly in the rapid orientation of the Hermann Mueller government towards an alliance with the big European powers in the struggle against the Soviets.

This tendency toward the encirclement and isolation of the Soviet Union has been strengthened especially because of the great successes which the *Five Year Plan* already shows after the first year. Because of the socialist competition in the factories in the Soviet Union, which strive not only to maintain the Five Year Plan but to

surpass it, it came about that the figures of the Five Year Plan could be repeatedly revised and that greater goals could be set. Astonishing results are also apparent in the agriculture of the Soviet Union through the orientation towards the collective economy of the cooperatives and of the collective farms.

All of these favorable facts in the socialist construction of the Soviet Union frighten the imperialist powers as much as the sharpening class conflicts within their own countries. The extension and advance of the imperialist anti-Soviet front have already led to direct war activities thru the robbery of the Eastern Chinese Railway by the murderers of the Chinese workers and peasants, directly supported by the imperialist powers. This occurrence which showed the *immediate danger of the outbreak of war* broke in the midst of the proceedings for the Tenth Plenum and was of great significance in bringing about through the conclusions and decisions of the Plenum the sharpest clarity and unanimity in the position which the revolutionary advance guard took in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and social fascism.

The Tenth Plenum settled the work before it in a conference period of three weeks duration, from the 3rd to the 20th of July, 1929. If the Sixth World Congress accomplished the important ideological change in the strategy and tactic of all communist sections, corresponding to the change in the economic and political world situation in the transition stage between the Second and the Third Periods, so did the Tenth Plenum exercise control over and practice a sharp self-criticism of the various sections in regards to the manner in which the change decided on by the Sixth World Congress had been carried out. The Tenth Plenum was especially characterized by the *hard and pitiless language* with which the mistakes and faults, the deviations and the insufficiencies of the section of the C. I. were criticized as they had been during no previous session of the International. That was a sign of the rapid internal development of the World Party, of the will and power to make the greatest efforts to perfect and bolshevize the parties in the face of the dangers threatening the world proletariat, in the face of sharpened exploitation and of the acute war danger. That was the most important and conspicuous characteristic of the Tenth Plenum.

The sharp self-criticism which the Plenum directed at the entire work at the center of the Comintern as well as at the work of the individual sections, was complemented by a number of decisions, proposals and measures for the organs of the Comintern as well as for the criticized sections for the elimination of the ascertained faults. Correct as it is that the development of the

phenomena peculiar to the third period is an uneven one in the various countries and that, generally spoken, in the more highly developed industrial countries the imperialist antagonisms and difficulties are present to a higher degree and therefore the class struggle assumes more acute forms in these countries; correct as it is that in a number of imperialist countries of the second and third order the class antagonisms have not yet reached the acute stage as for example in Germany, and that therefore the class struggle is carried on at a lower stage, which of itself creates certain differences in the tactic and strategy of the Communist Parties,—just so *incorrect*, however, is the point of view, which has actually been expressed, that the fundamental line of Marxist-Leninist theory and of Bolshevik strategy and tactic can differ in the various countries. It was ascertained nevertheless at the Tenth Plenum that far greater differences exist in the ideology of the Parties, as well as in the consequent strategic and tactical measures, than could be justified by the uneven development of the economy of capitalist society, of the class antagonisms and class struggles.

These differences were especially obvious: 1) In the estimation of the nature and character of imperialist development in the individual countries; 2) In the attitude of the sections of the C. I. to the bourgeois parties, especially to the Social-Democracy; 3) In the strategy of the economic battles and in the tactic of trade union work; 4) In the attitude of the Communist Parties to bourgeois legality, that is, bourgeois parliamentarism, and to the bourgeois state power. A great number of documents from the individual sections, dealing with the political point of view of the Party press in the sections, and the attitude of the parliamentary fractions in the various countries; important decisions regarding a series of international and national actions of the sections exhibited a substantial divergence in the political stand taken by the individual sections. All of these great inadequacies in our World Party are caused in the last analysis by the very insufficient energetic execution of the decisions of the highest organ of the World Party, especially of the Sixth World Congress.

It was generally recognized that the great strategic and tactical *change in the line* decided on by Sixth World Congress *had been executed most vigorously and most determinedly by the German Section of the Comintern*. But in regards to the German section the fact was also established that the Party cadres remained behind the development of the radicalization of the working masses in the most diverse situations. The more vigorous and more inclusive revamping of the entire Party, the winning of new unused forces for the expansion and strengthening of the Party organization, the firmer

foundation of the Party, especially in the big factories, were set as the chief tasks for the C. P. G. This gave the occasion for the German delegation, despite the success which had been achieved, to practice the sharpest *self-criticism*. This open self-criticism also justified therefore, as was recognized by all sections, our participation in the criticism of those sections in which there existed an opposition against the execution of the change in the line which had been decided on.

Next to the German section the greatest efforts for the execution of this change in line were made in the French brother party, with similar satisfactory results. Nevertheless, the power of the leadership and of the basic Party cadres of the C. P. F. was insufficient, in the face of the capitalist offensive and especially of the aggressive attack of the state power against the revolutionary movement, to mobilize the masses of the proletariat so strongly that the terroristic measures of the state power could have been repulsed satisfactorily or warded off. Here was primarily apparent the insufficient foundation of the Communist movement in large scale industrial enterprises which constitute the basis for a mass mobilization against the policy of the counter-revolution.

Thirdly must be mentioned the C. P. of Czecho-Slovakia where was accomplished the greatest and most obvious swing toward the Bolshevization of this Party which was afflicted to a high degree by social democratic traditions, a complete change as well in the leadership as in the lower organs of the Party. If the successes in the C. P. Czech were not so substantial as in the C. P. F. or even in the C. P. G., the reasons for it are to be found in the old conservative power of social-democratic traditions. As in the C. P. Czech an attempt was made in the American brother party under the leadership of Lovestone to cultivate a national "bol-shevik" line on American soil. The significant factor in the development of the C. P. Czech lies in the fact that for the first time an energetic effort was made in the development to bolshevism.

Next to the C. P. G. the change in line decided on by the Sixth World Congress was carried through most vigorously and most obviously by the *C. P. of Poland*. This Party also has been able to record successes to an ever increasing degree: mobilization and increasing reliance of the proletarian masses in Communism. In contrast, however, to the C. P. G., the C. P. of Poland has also succeeded in winning the poor peasant masses for the Communist line. In this group of parties which have, most obviously, made efforts and achieved successes in the execution of the decisions of the Sixth World Congress, though in different degrees, there

must be included a number of smaller parties which have concluded this change in line more or less successfully as, for example, the Communist Parties of Norway, Austria and of several Balkan countries.

The Communist World Party and the Red International of Labor Unions have achieved enormous successes outside the boundaries of the European countries, especially in the *South American states*, in which a congress of all South American trade unions, held shortly before the Tenth Plenum decided to affiliate with the R. I. L. U.

The powerful forward surge of the revolutionary class struggle in *India*, the first firm organizational forms of the Communist movement in India, despite all the persecutions and repressive measures of British imperialism and of the Indian bourgeoisie, also show the great change in line which the Communist movement has carried through in that country. The strong influence of the decisions of the Sixth World Congress is apparent in China, if not to the same extent as in India, in the renewed advance of the revolutionary movement.

Besides the objective causes of the process of radicalization of the working masses, the offensive tactic of the enumerated sections of the Comintern constitute the impelling factor in the new revolutionary advance.

A harsher language had to be spoken against a number of sections in which the execution of the line of the Sixth World Congress was *defective* in part, and had in part met with resistance. Two groups must be distinguished here: first, such parties in which the execution of the decisions was attempted, but was not carried on energetically enough. In this group belong especially the C. P. of England, the C. P. of Italy and a number of smaller sections. Secondly, the parties which reacted the least to the decisions of the Sixth World Congress, as for example, the C. P. of Sweden, and such sections as resisted the change in line decided on by the Sixth World Congress. The C. P. of Switzerland is included in this group.

The period, about which the Tenth Plenum had to decide, was occupied in almost all sections by the fight for the execution of the decisions of the Sixth World Congress. Concomitant with the change in line decided on by the Sixth World Congress, *opportunism within the World Party* concluded its change in line to revisionism, and the more the change in the individual sections was carried through the more severe did the struggle against opportunistic tendencies become. That led in a number of sections to

the expulsion of the opportunistic fractions which everywhere developed rapidly into liquidationists and renegades. Thus the Brandler-Thalheimer-Walcher group in the C. P. G., Jilek-Hais-Neurath in the C. P. Czech, the Lovestone group in the C. P. U. S. A. The same struggle led to the elimination of the "centrist" opportunists, of the *conciliators*, i. e. in the C. P. S. U. the Bucharin-Rykov-Tomski group, in the C. P. G. the Ewert-Meyer-Gerhard group, in the C. P. of Italy, Serra, in the C. P. of Switzerland, Humbert-Droz-Wieser. It was interesting that at the Plenum none of the group of those combatted at the Plenum, of whom a number are members of the E. C. C. I., even appeared, with the exception of Comrade Humbert-Droz, and he avoided taking any position in the discussions. The Plenum decided to relieve this group of all functions in the presidium and in the political secretariat of the E. C. C. I.

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Despite the great significance of the fight against opportunism which was carried on between the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum, and the result of which was the complete ideological clarity and unanimity of the World Party, the deliberations concerning this question were reduced to a minimum, in order to be better able to permit the greatest room for the treatment of the practical tasks, of the bolshevik approach of the sections to their work.

In both reports of Comrades Kuusinen and Manuilski on the first order of business: "*The international situation and the tasks of the Communist International*," it was pointed out how the line of the Sixth World Congress had been substantiated in practice by a great number of occurrences in all capitalistic countries and especially in the colonies. The reports of Comrade Kuusinen, from a theoretical point of view, and of Comrade Manuilski, form a practical point of view, in the delineation of the basic tendencies of the development in the capitalist countries on the one hand, and of the socialist development in the Soviet Union on the other hand, were exceptional accomplishments. The speech of Comrade Molotov constituted a strong backing for the reports, and contained important theoretical and practical supplementary material for the participants at the Plenum.

The estimation of imperialist development in the third period layed down in the theses of the Sixth World Congress, of capitalist stabilization, of capitalist rationalization, of class antagonisms and class struggles, of the process of radicalization of the working class of the entire world, of the fascisation of the capitalist state

power, of the development of the Second International into social fascism, etc., was interestingly and most significantly enriched and supplemented in the report of Comrade Kuusinen. His political statement of the question from a broad point of view stood in sharp contrast to the conception derived from a purely economic point of view, which was represented by Comrade Varga. The conceptions of Comrade Varga which deviated from the line of the Comintern were seen in the estimation of the effect of rationalization on the standard of living of the proletariat (theory of stable real wages), in a peculiar theory of the reserve army (unemployed) in capitalist countries, in an opportunistic conception of the elimination of the contradictions between the rapid development of the productive forces and the lagging and narrowing of the market in the capitalist world and in a similarly deviating conception of the bridging of imperialist contradictions in consequence of the Paris negotiations. The opinions of Comrade Varga were fought in the sharpest manner from the most diverse sides of the question by almost all the discussion speakers who stated their position concerning this point on the order of business.

The theoretical expositions in the report concerning these questions were supported and supplemented by practical evidence in the most diverse spheres offered by the discussion speakers. The discussion attained an exceptionally high theoretical level, as a result of pitiless self-criticism, criticism of the Comintern work in its entirety and of the work of the individual sections. The participation of almost all sections in these discussions, despite the fact that difficult and complicated questions were discussed, shows the vast ideological growth of the entire Party. The times are now passed, in which once the discussions at the sessions of the Comintern were left to only a small group of extremely well trained able bolsheviks. Almost all sections have brought in their ten year development a smaller or larger staff of well trained, able theoreticians into the leadership. This helped to make the Tenth Plenum strong and determined.

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While we must classify the first point on the order of business: "The international situation and the tasks of the Communist International," as on the whole the work of the Plenum dealing with the *inner-party* front, the second point on the order of business, "The economic struggles and the tasks of the Communist Parties," which was reported on by Comrades Thalmann and Losovsky, dealt with the external struggle against the capitalist profit system, against reformism in the trade union movement. The Fourth R. I.

L. U. Congress and the Sixth World Congress pointed out the political line for the struggle of world Communism in the sphere of economic struggles and of trade union tactics, as the most important sphere of work in the present period. In the time between the meeting of those Congresses and the Tenth Plenum the practical test had to be made whether the strategic and tactical change in line decided on by those Congresses were correct in these spheres. Here it was also necessary, as in the case of the first order of business to criticize the manner in which the most important tasks were executed. While the report of Comrade Thalmann dealt exclusively, on the whole, with the problems in the European countries and with the trade union strategy against the Amsterdam International, it was the task of Comrade Losovsky to show the new forms which had developed in the class struggle in the colonies, the successes of the entire world movement in this field. A number of ambiguities concerning the nature, character and forms of the organs and organizations of the class struggle which had arisen in practical activity in the individual sections had to be overcome. Since the strategy in the economic struggles and the tactic of the trade union movement are just that part of the practical work in all capitalist countries and in the colonies which occupies the Communist sections the most in the class struggle, it was obvious that especially in this practical sphere, the most active exchanges of opinion and the most stimulating discussion was brought forth. The result of the discussions regarding this point are embodied in a resolution which brings clarity in a most concrete and extended form regarding the points of controversy which arose here.

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The third order of business was introduced by a report of Comrade Barbe concerning the International Red Day of the struggle *against imperialist war* (August 1). The report and discussion, which devolved from the decisions of the Sixth World Congress, were tackled from the practical point of view, and were designed to bring about the greatest possible activity in the campaign for August 1. The reports of the individual section concerning their preparatory work to mobilize the broadest working masses for August 1 constituted the basis for the decisions in this sphere which were formulated by the Tenth Plenum.

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All in all, the Tenth Plenum was one of the most fruitful and one which exerted the greatest influence on the sections of the C. I. to the bottom, and whose results in the various sections have a

very great influence on the bolshevik turn of the Communist parties to a more accentuated class struggle on a world scale against capitalist domination and against reformism. The Tenth Plenum can with its basic analysis of all sections be recorded as a great step forward in the revolutionary mobilization of the international proletariat.

