

# A PLENUM OF PREPARATION FOR DIRECT BATTLES FOR POWER, FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

(The XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

**T**HE theses of the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on the international situation state that "the sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism is proceeding with enormous strides which are carrying this crisis to a *new stage*, that a "definite change" is evident in the development of the general crisis of capitalism, that "*the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism has come*," that "a directly-revolutionary situation has not arisen in the most important and decisive capitalist countries," but that "what is taking place at the present moment is the *transition* to a new round of big clashes between classes and between states, a new round of wars and revolutions."

What are the *new* features in the international situation compared with the situation that prevailed at the time of the XI Plenum, which enabled the XI Plenum of the Comintern to advance the remarkably important and very significant thesis of the end of the partial stabilisation of capitalism.

One new feature is that "in certain extremely

important key-points the antagonistic forces are already becoming unleashed for the conflict."\*

Another new feature is that "in the relation of forces between the Socialist and capitalist worlds there has taken place a tremendous change" The U.S.S.R. has finally consolidated its Socialist position and the Second Five-Year Plan provides for the final liquidation of classes. At the same time, at the other pole, the economic crisis has become so extremely acute that even outside the Communist camp, the masses are beginning to become convinced that the rule of decaying monopolist capital now "makes it extremely difficult for the economic crisis to be solved in the period usual for capital by means of free competition" and that these tremendous difficulties, in view of the growth of the revolutionary upsurge, are now "driving the bourgeoisie along the path of the violent solution of antagonisms both at home and on the international arena."

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\*All the words given in quotation marks are taken from the thesis and resolutions of the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I., unless otherwise stated.

Another new feature is the unprecedented sharpening of antagonisms between the predatory imperialists, so that these antagonisms are now more acute than they were on the eve of 1914. The Young Plan has broken down. The Versailles system is in a state of crisis. Germany, vanquished by imperialism, demands equality in armaments. On this basis, the antagonisms between Germany and France and also between Germany and Poland over the Prussian Corridor and Danzig, are becoming more acute. The seizure of Manchuria by Japan which was the "beginning of a new world imperialist war" destroyed the former agreement between the U.S.A., Japan and England on the distribution of spheres of influence in China. The Washington Agreement has broken down. A military conflict is maturing between the U.S.A. and Japan. A wave of chauvinism and nationalism is sweeping through the whole capitalist world. "A new imperialist war has become a direct danger."

Another new feature is that with Japan's seizure of Manchuria, the preparations for intervention against the U.S.S.R. "have entered a new phase." The centre of military intervention has shifted to Manchuria, which, by the efforts of Japanese imperialism supported by France has been converted into a jumping-off ground for an attack on the U.S.S.R. *The danger of direct intervention hovered and still hovers over the U.S.S.R.*

Another new feature is that the crisis in the so-called "era of bourgeois democracy" is entering a new stage, as is shown by the establishment of "a form of the Fascist dictatorship in Germany."

Another new feature is that "the further strengthening of political reaction and the Fascisation of the state" not only fails to consolidate the rule of the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary is accompanied by "a contraction of the basis of bourgeois rule and disintegrations in it of fissures and manifestations." "In countries where the Fascist dictatorship existed before the world economic crisis, a process of disintegration of Fascism is observed as a consequence of the growing revolutionary upsurge (Poland, Jugo-Slavia, Italy)" and in the countries where the Fascisation of the state is now rising to a higher stage, as in Germany, friction and conflicts are also arising and becoming acute in the camp of the ruling bourgeoisie behind the screen of the Fascist dictatorship. The Papen-Schleicher government is a definite form of the Fascist dictatorship for which the path was prepared by Social-Democracy and the Party of the Centre, and which was established with the help of the Reichswehr, the "Steel Helmets" and the

National Socialists. It is the Fascist dictatorship of the magnates of finance capital, acting in close alliance with the agrarians and with the Reichswehr Militarists. But right from the very start this close alliance began to show serious fissures. A struggle is going on between the heavy industry of the Rhine and Westphalia, and the Chemical Combine, which is comparatively much less affected by the crisis. A struggle is going on between these two and the South German Agrarians. This internal squabbling in the camp of the bourgeoisie found expression in the dissolution of the Reichstag. The elements of disintegration are even more apparent in the mass movement of the national Fascists, which is being washed away on two sides—on the one hand, the bourgeoisie cannot make up their minds to allow Hitler to take power so as not to compromise its reserves, and Hitler, who not long ago was calling for a march on Berlin, is carrying out the will of heavy industry and the Papen Government, which subsidise him. On the other hand, in some of the detachments of the Fascist "storm troops" there is growing dissatisfaction with the big capitalist policy of Hitler, in other detachments there is dissatisfaction with his "legalism," and they are beginning to mutiny against the Hitlerite leadership. At the same time, the heterogeneous Fascist movement which was forged as and still is a sharp weapon for the counter-revolutionary offensive of the bourgeoisie is being affected by elements of disintegration which are weakening the bourgeois dictatorship. "The further development or breakdown of this dictatorship depends on the revolutionary struggle of the working class against Fascism in all its forms."

A very symptomatic feature of the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism is the new process which has arisen in the ranks of Social-Democracy as a result of the undermining of the position of the aristocracy of labour on the one hand, and the growth of the revolutionary upsurge on the other hand. "The mass influence of the Social-Fascists in almost all countries has declined, but the manœuvres adopted by them are all the more energetic and varied," as for example: heading strikes for the purpose of beheading them; in some cases they even declare demonstrative general strikes; their fake struggle against Fascism, for peace in defence of the U.S.S.R.; the resignation of the British I.L.P. from the Labour Party, the talk of the Seine Federation of the French Socialist Party about a united anti-war front with the Comintern and the R.I.L.U., etc.

In addition to these manœuvres in which the "left" Social-Democrats especially excel, Social-

Democracy as a whole in reality supports and ideologically covers up the modern parasitic crisis policy of the financial oligarchy and its increased war preparations. They conceal the policy of state subsidies to bankrupt capitalist enterprises at the expense of the toiling masses in the name of "state capitalism," and the leaders of the Second International even defend the arch-reactionary projects of forced labour, and conceal this with mendacious talk about establishing "Socialism" under the bourgeois state and by its hands. This combination of the vilest reactionary policy with far-reaching "left" demagoguery by Social-Fascism is extremely symptomatic for the end of the stabilisation of capitalism.

*But the chief, the most fundamental feature characterising the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism and its direct cause is the degree of development and the spread of the revolutionary mass upsurge and the forms which this is taking at the present time.*

In his speech at the Plenum,\* Comrade Manuilsky dealt in detail with those *new* features of modern conditions which characterise the end of the stabilisation of capitalism. We should direct our attention most particularly to the character of the present revolutionary upsurge.

"In China there is at present a revolutionary situation." The Soviet movement is developing there. The heroic Chinese Red Army has already repulsed four Kuomintang campaigns against it and is now driving back the fifth. Simultaneously, a mass upsurge of the anti-imperialist struggle is going on in China. "In the near future Japan may find itself in the circumstances of revolutionary crisis." Revolution is taking place in Spain and at the present time the mass movement is seething and showing tendencies to develop into an armed revolt of the people. Poland is "closely approaching a revolutionary crisis." There, "a wave of mass strikes, numerous militant popular actions and the rise of the new wave of national revolutionary struggles" are sweeping the country. Comrade Lensky characterised the situation in Poland in his speech† as follows:—

"A widespread strike movement in conjunction with other acute forms, is now the fundamental link of the revolutionary upsurge. This link has enabled our Party to pull the whole chain of mass struggles. . . . A new period of political strikes interwoven with economic strikes is commencing. And this is now the main feature of the development of the proletarian movement in Poland. It is true that this inter-weaving is still weak . . . but the fundamental tendency which is making its way to the front *puts the question of the mass revolutionary strike on the order of the day, as a*

weapon for the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle of the toiling millions."

While thus showing how Poland is "closely approaching a revolutionary crisis," Comrade Manuilsky at the same time correctly emphasised:

*"However, there can be no doubt that the key-point of the extremely uneven growth of the international proletarian revolution is Germany."*

Recently Fascism has grown in Germany more rapidly than the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. But our German Communist Party has succeeded in developing anti-Fascist defence corps on the basis of a broad, united front from below, in which a considerable number of our comrades have displayed remarkable heroism, and as a result of which our Party obtained 5,300,000 votes at the elections. The heroism displayed by our Party cadres in Germany was proved a year earlier by the fact that 18,000 Red candidates were put forward at the elections for the factory committees in response to the Party's appeal in spite of victimisation and tremendous unemployment. That our German Party is lagging behind, however, is proved by the fact that it has been unable to develop a strike movement in reply to the Emergency Decrees. This, in addition to the insufficient initiative shown, was the cause of the fact that, on July 20th, when the Fascist coup took place in Prussia, the call for a general strike which was properly issued by our Party met with no response, in spite of the favourable situation. But our German Communist Party has fully realised its weakness and at the present time a wave of strikes is sweeping over Germany, although they are still comparatively small. The path of the German revolution is not a smooth one. The struggle there will be desperate, because great forces are concentrated on both sides of the barricade. But under the leadership of our Party the German proletariat is already beginning to pass from defence to the counter-offensive. That is why a revolutionary crisis is rapidly approaching in Germany.

In Czecho-Slovakia the wave of the strike movement is rapidly rising. There, a general strike of miners took place in North Bohemia, and a revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants is in progress in Carpathian Ukraine. In Belgium, a miners' strike broke out unexpectedly. In Great Britain the strike of the sailors in the navy broke out in the autumn of 1931, an event unparalleled in British history, which was accompanied by great demonstrations of workers, and now a strike movement has burst out in Lancashire. In France, big strikes occurred in the north. In Holland, the strike at Tvent. In France, our Party achieved great successes in its agitation, in the struggle against the air manœuvres, in the preparations for the

\*See page 600.—Ed.

†See No. 19 (1932) "C.I."

Amsterdam Anti-War Congress, in the agitation in connection with the Gorgulov trial, etc. But our French Party is still very weak in its struggle for the everyday interests of the workers, and has not yet completely eliminated anarcho-syndicalist ideas. Therefore, the movement is still weak in an organisational sense. "In India and the Latin-American countries the development of the revolutionary crisis is delayed above all by the poor organisation of the proletariat and the immaturity of the Communist Parties."

The revolutionary crisis is growing unevenly, but everywhere there is a growth of the revolutionary upsurge. The uneven development of the revolutionary movement and the fact that even such countries as France, Great Britain and the U.S.A. are lagging behind does not mean that the revolution must wait for those who are behind, must keep pace with the slowest, as the opportunists think. Uneven development is the law of imperialism. Comrade Stalin long ago spoke of this law as follows:

"The further development of the world revolution will most likely proceed not by maturing equally in all imperialist countries, but by some countries getting ahead of others, by the imperialist chain breaking first of all at certain of its weakest links."

A characteristic feature of the end of partial stabilisation is the revolutionary form and the intensity of the strike movement which is now sweeping the whole capitalist world, and its combination with political mass actions. The theses on the international situation advance a postulate which those "leftists," who are now concealing their opportunist passivity by sneering at strikes in support of partial demands, would do well to ponder over. The theses state: "*Under the conditions of the end of capitalist stabilisation and the extreme narrowing of the material basis of reformism, the struggle for the elementary needs of the masses brings them into conflict with the very foundations of capitalism.*" It is this that gives the present strike movement the features which were noted in the other resolution of the XII Plenum, which says:

"The economic struggle of the proletariat is assuming more and more a revolutionary character, and combining in many cases with the various elements and forms of political actions is at the present stage in the overwhelming majority of capitalist countries, the *fundamental link* for leading the masses to the forthcoming big revolutionary battles."

The strike movement of the workers is rousing a strong response among the broad masses of the toiling population, owing to its extent and its militant character (clashes with the police, the gendarmes and the troops); it is rousing their sympathy for the fighting proletariat; it is giving an impetus to the development of the revolutionary movement of the peasants (Poland) and is

attracting a fairly extensive section of the urban petty-bourgeoisie to the side of the proletariat (Poland, Czecho-Slovakia).

Under the conditions of the end of capitalist stabilisation, small economic strikes frequently grow into *mass* economic and political strikes. The question of the mass political strike was raised at the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I. But for a long time this slogan hung in the air. It is now far easier to carry it into effect because the working masses in some countries have already been prepared for it by general economic strikes and a number of political strikes.

It would be absolutely wrong and opportunistic to regard the present growth of the revolutionary upsurge *only* as a spontaneous process. The rapid growth of the influence of the Communist Parties has been especially characteristic and especially noteworthy in the past year. The membership of the Communist Parties is rapidly rising, the number of votes obtained by Communists at elections is rapidly increasing, and, what is particularly important, *the organisational rôle of the Communist Parties has begun to grow appreciably.* The numerical strength of the sections of the Comintern, not counting the C.P.S.U., has practically doubled in the course of a single year, from 550,000 to 914,000. Still more rapid has been the increase in the number of votes cast for Communists at elections. In Germany for the three months, April 24 to July 21, the number of votes given for the Communist Party increased almost by a million and in the Reichstag elections, when the Party had to fight under most difficult conditions and was under threat of suppression, it polled 5,300,000 votes. In Bulgaria, our Party has already won over the majority of the working class and a considerable section of the peasants. In Sophia, it received a relative majority of votes at the municipal elections and an absolute majority of seats. In Greece, our Party gained many victories in the elections, etc.

As we have already mentioned, far more important is the fact that some of our Parties, during the last year, have successfully come forward in the rôle of *leaders of the developing mass movement.* In regard to China, Comrade Van-Ming explained at the Plenum amidst thunders of applause that the successes of the Chinese Communist Party are measured not merely by the increase in the membership, but by the rapid growth in the number of divisions in the Red Army and the victories obtained by it on the battlefield. The Red Army of the Chinese Soviets already consists of twenty-six army corps in addition to fifteen independent divisions of local garrisons and mass military organisations and

also a well-armed G.P.U. The successes of our small but heroic Japanese Communist Party are of an especially specific character. Under the conditions of Japan's war against China, our Party courageously put forward defeatist slogans and led the militant activity of the workers, peasants, soldiers and students, in spite of the military and police terror. This is a new and unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the wars of Japanese imperialism.

In the majority of capitalist countries where there is not yet a revolutionary situation but where the prerequisites for a revolutionary crisis are maturing, and where there is no war, the measure of the success of the Communist Parties is their leading rôle in mass activity. We have already noted the great success of the German Communist Party in its anti-Fascist campaign organised on the basis of the united front from below. We should especially note the heroic mass self-defence work in Altona. But the most distinctive and promising examples are those Communist Parties which have undermined the influence of the Social-Democratic Party and reformist trade unions and which for the first time are heading and successfully leading mass strikes, and raising them to a higher level. *In this respect, our Polish Communist Party undoubtedly holds first place. It has not only contrived to take advantage of a very favourable situation to obtain the leadership of a number of big strikes developed by itself or developed by the Social-Fascist Polish Socialist Party for demagogic reasons, but it has also developed great work in the Polish villages where the elements of the agrarian revolution are already maturing. In this sense our Party in Czecho-Slovakia has also obtained great success in leading the general strike in Brucks. Even our little Belgian Party, by taking an active part in the general miners' strike, succeeded in increasing its influence among the masses to such an extent during the short time the strike lasted that it doubled its membership and increased the circulation of its paper sevenfold.*

Of course, if we leave out of account the Ruhr strike in Germany and the strike of the Berlin metal workers in 1930-31, these are only the *first successes* in obtaining the leadership of the mass movement on the basis of the capable application of the tactics of the united front from below. If we compare these successes with the possibilities which exist and the enormous tasks which now face our Party, these successes must be regarded as unsatisfactory. Up to the present, we have not yet taken root in the *big* factories where the decisive masses of the industrial proletariat are

concentrated. We have not yet succeeded in converting these enterprises into "fortresses of Communism." In the reformist trade unions also our work is still extremely weak. We must not allow ourselves to become dizzy with success, because certain of our Communist Parties, for example, the American Communist Party, are now showing some improvement. But there can be no doubt that a certain change and a *big change*, has taken place in this respect during the past year. And it would be just as opportunistic to deny this great advance as it would be to rest on our laurels—Comrade Piatnitsky illustrated this advance extremely vividly at the XII Plenum. Referring to the speech delivered by a Czecho-Slovakian comrade, he said: "Compare his speech at the XI Plenum with his speech at this Plenum. Can the two speeches even be compared? In this matter it is life itself which is speaking." And with regard to the speech of an English comrade, he said: "Formerly, it was we who talked and he who listened (and not only he), but now it is he who is speaking and we who are listening with satisfaction. . . ." The conditions which we have described and which are summed up in the words: "the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism" caused the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. "to raise with the greatest sharpness the question of the fulfilment of the *fundamental* task of the Communist Parties at the present time: *The preparation of the working class and the exploited masses in the course of the economic and political struggle for the forthcoming fights for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.*" The theses of the XII Plenum emphasised that this fundamental task—the preparation for the fight for power—will be decided "*in the course of the economic and political struggle.*" And this idea is repeated time after time in the theses. In connection with the task of winning over the majority of the working class, the theses say:

"The main link which the Communist Parties must seize upon in solving this problem, is the struggle for the everyday economic and political interests of the broad masses, against increasing poverty, against oppression, violence and terror . . . only by relying on the everyday interests of the masses can the Communist Parties defend and strengthen the position of the working class, and lead it up to ever higher forms of struggle and to decisive battles for the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the proper conditions exist, the preparation and calling of a *mass political strike* is one of the most essential and immediate links in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat."

In conclusion, in connection with the fierce offensive of the counter-revolution and the preparations for intervention, the theses say:

"The sections of the C.I. must answer this challenge of the world bourgeoisie by intensifying to the utmost their Bolshevik work, by hastening the revolutionisation

of the broad masses, developing and leading the class struggles of the toilers on the basis of the united front from below, by leading the working class to mass political strikes, etc."

Is it a new idea in the Communist International to carry on a "struggle for the everyday economic and political interests of the broad masses" and "to develop and lead the class fights of the toilers"? No, this idea is not new. But it was a new idea when the Plenum in putting forward the preparation of the proletariat for decisive struggles for power as the main task at the present time, emphasised in its resolutions, and it was emphasised in the speeches of many of the delegates from various countries, that *at the present stage the chief link in the preparations is the development and organisation of the economic and political struggles, which are interwoven, and raising them to the higher level of the mass political strikes, subordinating our propaganda to this aim.*

From the very beginning of the third post-war period, in view of the sharpening of the internal and external contradictions of capitalism, the Comintern advanced the slogan "class against class," and, at the same time, the slogan of the "independent leadership of class fights." However, our Party's successes in the independent leadership of class fights for a number of years were very small indeed. Therefore, in 1930, at the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the reporter of the Russian delegation in the E.C.C.I. raised this question in his concluding remarks with great sharpness and clearness. He said:

"The facts show that in a number of countries our Parties have learned quite well how to organise the mass political actions and demonstrations of the workers. However, in the leadership of class battles, commencing with economic strikes, the successes of the Communist Parties are still insignificant. But, the organisation of class battles under the leadership of the Communist Parties is the *basic task* of the present period. Formerly, the work of the Communist Parties consisted mainly of *agitation and propaganda*, but now the centre of gravity has shifted to the *organisation of class battles* under Communist leadership. Only on this basis, on the basis of the Bolshevik organisation of strike struggles and other forms of class struggles against attacking capital, can (and must) the Communist Parties win authority among, and the confidence of, the workers for Communist leadership in the whole of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat."

This was said in 1930. But little progress was made after this. A great deal was said, but very little was done in this sphere. This is noted in the thesis of the Plenum:

"There must be determined dissociation from right opportunist 'tailism' and from 'left' opportunist subjectivism which wishes to substitute for the necessary difficult work of the Bolshevik education and the mobilisation of the masses: empty phrases about developing

revolutionary struggles; instead of the real development of these fights."

Is there any reason to expect that the necessary decisive change in this matter will take place in the sections of the Comintern after the Plenum? Yes, there is every reason to expect this, because, now a *new* situation has arisen, because the end of partial capitalist stabilisation has arrived, because "only a short period remains for the maturing of the revolutionary crisis," because, at present, "it is necessary, without losing a minute, to *strengthen and accelerate* Bolshevik mass work for winning over the majority of the working class." We see that in some Parties, (e.g., the Polish and Czecho-Slovakian Parties) a considerable *advance* has already taken place in this respect.

For the very reason that the whole situation has greatly changed during the past year, and especially because our Parties have gained a certain amount of experience since the 11th Plenum, these tactical slogans met with a ready response at the XII Plenum, and the whole attention of the Plenum was concentrated on them.

The Plenum concretely discussed how to lead the working masses in the factories up to a strike so that the working masses themselves realised that this was the only way out, and how to organise the broad united front from below under the leadership of the Communist Party when conducting a strike. The Plenum discussed how to combine economic battles with political battles. Even now, economic strikes, which very frequently lead to conflicts with the police and the gendarmes, give an impetus to the organisation of political demonstrations of sympathy, or political protest demonstrations. On the other hand, the Plenum especially in connection with Germany, where the strike movement up to the present time has lagged behind political activity, discussed how it was possible to make political activity the starting point for a strike movement. Speaking of the well-conducted campaign of the united front of struggle against the Fascists in Germany, Comrade Piatnitsky put forward, among other things, the following task:

"We must extend and consolidate the united front of the workers which commenced in the streets in fights with the National-Socialists, by transferring it to the factories, inside the reformist trade unions, and the labour exchanges among the unemployed."

In this same connection, Comrade Knorin said:

"Half the industrial proletariat of Germany, and this half is the revolutionary half, have been thrown onto the streets. The streets, as well as the factories, have become an important location for the united front. We must combine the struggle in the streets with the struggle in the factories. The streets must help to rouse the factories; street clashes and demonstrations must help to develop strikes, must be combined with strikes."

The Plenum discussed how partial economic and political battles are to be raised to a higher stage when preparing mass political strikes. Comrade Thaelmann said in his concluding remarks :

"We must pass from agitation and propaganda to the genuine development of mass actions and fights. The mass strike and the political general strike must be regarded as the chief and most important weapons of struggle at the present stage."

The Plenum discussed how we should now subordinate our agitation and propaganda to the organisation of mass activity and class fights. In the proposal of the French delegation regarding the methods of putting the decisions of the XII Plenum into practice, we read, among other things, the following :

"In this situation, in order to stand at the head of the mass movement, in order to lead it and organise it, in order to hinder the policy of war and armed intervention in the U.S.S.R. pursued by French imperialism, the French Communist Party must focus its attention on the problem of partial demands, must formulate in every case the minimum economic and political demands of the workers, peasants and all the exploited so as to win the confidence of the masses, to draw them into the struggle and progressively to raise these partial battles (strikes, unemployed demonstrations, peasant activity, etc.) to the level of big revolutionary battles. This calls for a determined change in the work of the Unitary Trade Unions, in the work of the parliamentary fractions and the municipal fractions, and in the work of the mass organisations under the influence of the Party."

Further on, it says :

"'Humanite' and the provincial press up to the present have been chiefly weapons for agitation. They, especially 'Humanite,' must now become the organisers of the mass movement."

Finally, the Plenum discussed what organisational tasks arise from this tactical line.

It is evident that this tactical line under the conditions of a rapidly growing revolutionary upsurge can and must have a powerful effect on the work of the Parties and on their achievements. Our Parties at present are suffering from fluctuating membership and from the weakness of our cells in the factories, especially the big factories. One of the chief causes of this weakness lies in the fact that the cells merely hold meetings and discussions, and that the workers who are not satisfied with this, do not wish to be thrown out of work in the midst of widespread unemployment, merely for the sake of this. There is no doubt that when our factory cells receive a fighting lead, the Communist workers willingly join them without fearing to make the sacrifice.

Our Parties are suffering from the weakness of their work in the reformist trade unions. There is no doubt that when the principal tactical line of organising class fights is really applied, our Parties will be compelled to penetrate more deeply

into the reformist trade unions and other mass organisations.

The line for the direct organisation of class fights will greatly facilitate our struggle against Social-Democracy, because it is easiest to expose them to the masses in the process of the fights, that is, if we do not drop into right opportunist errors and forget that Social-Democracy is the chief social buttress of the bourgeoisie, or into "left" opportunist errors and identify the Social-Democratic workers with their leaders, and the Social-Democrats with the Fascists.

The fundamental tactical line of the direct organisation of partial class struggles, and the raising of them to a higher level under the present conditions of revolutionary upsurge is the basis of and the shortest path to the fulfilment of our strategic tasks—the winning over of the majority of the working class and the attraction of allies to the side of the revolutionary proletariat, i.e., the masses of toilers and the exploited. But, in order to carry out this tactical turn, there must be certain prerequisites, above all, a capable manner of approach to the masses. Comrades Kuusinen and Gottwald spoke of these necessary prerequisites in detail in their reports.

These prerequisites are formulated as follows in the thesis of the XII Plenum :

"The successful accomplishment of this task requires that every Communist Party shall establish, extend and strengthen permanent and intimate contacts with the majority of workers, wherever workers may be found. For this it is first of all necessary : (a) to organise on a sound basis constant Bolshevik work among non-Communist workers in the factories, in the reformist and other trade unions, and among the unemployed, and to systematically expose the treachery of the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders, and to win over the workers who have come under the influence of the Fascists ; (b) to defend the everyday interests of the workers, to be able to respond to every attack of the class enemy, always putting forward concrete slogans as will effectively mobilise the masses for struggle ; to systematically pursue the policy of the united front from below, to establish an alliance between the proletariat and the small farmers, to draw into the struggle the office workers and exploited sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie under the leadership of the proletariat ; (c) to strengthen the Communist Party itself, by training cadres, who are closely connected with the masses and trusted by them."

The Plenum paid especially great attention to the tactics of the united front from below. The Czecho-Slovakian and German comrades spoke in great detail of this, on the basis of the extremely rich experiences which they had already accumulated. The question of how to win the Social-Democratic and non-Party workers on the widest scale for the united front of the class struggle, while avoiding right opportunist and "left" sectarian mistakes and not hiding the face of our Party, and while exposing the Social-

Democratic leaders in the process of the struggle, and *raising the struggle to a higher stage*, was dealt with in a most concrete manner in the discussion and was summarised in the concluding remarks of Comrades Gottwald and Thälmann.\* These summaries of the discussion, which contained the richest concrete material, must be well studied by the broadest circles of our Party activists.

In view of the fundamental task of the present time—the preparation of the working class for the forthcoming decisive struggle for power—the Plenum advanced a number of important tasks of an *organisational character*. Among these tasks we should take special notice of the “avoidance of *super-centralism*, naked domineering, the overloading of the central apparatus, and stripping the forces of the local and lower Party organisations. The idea behind this presentation of the question of “super-centralism” is as follows: as the revolutionary crisis rapidly matures, and as the Fascist and police terror and the danger of war increases, the situation may change with great rapidity, so that responsible decisions in the localities will have to be made very quickly. It is quite possible in these conditions that not only will our Parties be temporarily cut off from the leadership of the Comintern, but the local organisations may be temporarily cut off from the Party centres. Under these conditions, the Parties will be able to function properly and avoid the danger of being too late only if the local and lower Party organisations are given the right to *revolutionary initiative* to the widest extent, and if they have sufficient cadres capable of displaying revolutionary initiative correctly.

Touching on the tasks of the individual sections, the Plenum paid *particular* attention to two Parties—the German and French Parties. This was due entirely to the fundamental task of the present time—the preparation of the proletariat for the forthcoming struggles for power. Our German Communist Party is the largest and strongest and most influential of all the Parties in capitalist countries. Germany may very soon enter the zone of revolutionary crisis in view of the extreme intensity of internal class antagonisms in that country, and in view of the fact that it is the weakest link in the chain of the imperialist powers. Revolution in Germany will be of decisive importance for the world revolution.

As for the French Communist Party, it occupies an extremely responsible post, since French imperialism is the most aggressive imperialism in Europe and the main organiser and inspirer of intervention in the U.S.S.R. That is why the

Plenum paid particular attention to the preparations of these two Parties. That is why Comrade Piatnitsky devoted the greater part of his speech to a detailed analysis of the work of these two Parties, naturally arriving at different estimates of their respective achievements, their shortcomings and the methods of overcoming these weaknesses. That is why Comrade Lenski analysed the situation in Germany, and Comrade Knorin analysed the work of the German Party. Comrade Thälmann, and all the German delegates discussed this in great detail. The French delegates at the Plenum drew up detailed instructions as to how the decisions of the XII Plenum were to be applied in France.

The agenda of the Plenum included the question of the war in the Far East and the tasks of Communists in the struggle against imperialist war and military intervention. In pointing out the concrete tasks of the various sections in this struggle and in the defence of the U.S.S.R. the Plenum at the same time pointed out what the Parties have left undone in this sphere:

“While recognising the undoubtedly favourable results in the work of the C.P. in imperialist and colonial countries in the matter of mobilising the masses against imperialist war and against preparations for military intervention, the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. declares that the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries have not been able by their revolutionary actions, to prevent the transport of troops to China and military supplies to Japan, that they have not been able to rouse the broad working masses employed in munition factories and in transport for the struggle, that the mass anti-war campaign has developed slowly, partly because of an opportunist under-estimation of the war in the Far East and also because of a leftist-fatalistic, frivolous attitude to the war. The XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. calls particular attention to the impermissible weakness of the contacts of the C.P.’s with the principal munition factories, with the chief ports and with the key-points on the railroads, and also to the fact that the work of the Communist Parties and the Y.C.L. in the army, the navy and the special Fascist semi-military organisations is in an intolerably neglected condition.”

In conclusion, the Plenum heard a report, delivered by Comrade Manuisky in the name of the Russian delegation, on the subject of: “The U.S.S.R. and the World Proletariat.” See overleaf. Comrade Manuisky himself summed up the fundamental idea of his report in the following words:

“On this background (of capitalist decline and reaction—Editor), the achievements in the development of the land of proletarian dictatorship during the last few years stand out with particular clearness; these achievements *have to an enormous extent fostered the revolutionary upsurge of the working class*. . . . This is the significance and the idea behind the report on the achievements of the First Five-Year Plan and the perspectives of the Second Five-Year Plan. The significance of the fulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan lies in the fact that we have created a powerful material basis for the world proletarian revolution, that the

\*See No. 19 (1932) “C.I.”

relative importance of the smallest Communist Parties will tremendously grow as a result of this victory of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R.; that the proletariat in the capitalist countries, by relying on this firm support, will find it easier to destroy their own bourgeoisie, to overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat as the condition for the success of Socialism. *And though the rôle of the First Five-Year Plan in causing the workers of capitalist countries to turn towards Communism has been enormous, the rôle of the Second Five-Year Plan must and will be decisive.*"

In describing how the C.P.S.U. is marching from victory to victory, overcoming the numerous difficulties in its path, Comrade Manuïlsky spoke in detail of the rôle of its leader:

"In the minds of the toilers of our country, and of the world proletariat, the whole period of Socialist construction and its victory in the U.S.S.R. is linked up with the name of Comrade Stalin. On the basis of the law of the uneven development of imperialism, he worked out and carried into operation the Leninist teaching of the building up of Socialism in a single country. In this Stalinist position, which is understood by the whole of the Comintern, the task of preparing the international proletariat for the new round of wars and revolutions is actually being carried out and fulfilled."

By mobilising the sections of the Comintern in preparation for decisive fights, the XII Plenum reminded them of the necessity under such conditions of strengthening iron discipline more than ever before, and to carry on more than has been done hitherto the determined struggle against

right opportunism, and conciliation towards it, as the chief danger, and against every kind of "left" sectarianism. It condemned the right tendencies of certain Parties which were formulated in the platform of Humbert Droz. It likewise condemned the numerous manifestations of sectarianism which especially affect our American Party, and the anarcho-syndicalist tendencies in the Spanish Communist Party. It exposed and branded the attempts to unite all the fragments of the various oppositions under the unprincipled ideological leadership of the renegade Trotsky (Poland).

Comrade Ercoli, who closed the Plenum of preparation for decisive struggles, made a short and concise résumé of its work.

The XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. gave a clear estimate of the present international situation, characterising it as the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism, and clearly indicated the fighting tasks of the sections of the Comintern at the present extremely responsible moment.

Our sections, "without losing a minute, must strengthen and accelerate their Bolshevik mass work for winning over the majority of the working class, for raising the revolutionary activity of the working class," because "a very short period remains before the maturing of the revolutionary crisis."