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## The Session of Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International

By C. E. Ruthenberg

**T**HE Second Session of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International since the Fifth World Congress was held in Moscow from February 17 until March 15. In addition to the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the additional delegates which the constituent parties are entitled to send to the Enlarged Executive Committee sessions there were present large delegations from the German, French and American Parties which gave the sessions in some degree the character of a small world congress.

The agenda of the Executive Committee included the questions:

1. The present political situation and the tasks of the Communist Party.
2. The trade union question.
3. Work among the masses.
4. The reorganization of the apparatus of the Comintern.
5. The German question.
6. The British question.
7. The French question.
8. The American question.

C. E. Ruthenberg, the General Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party, was one of the delegates of the American Party to the Enlarged Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and took part in its deliberations. He was elected to the Presidium of the Executive Committee.

### The Political Situation.

The principal debate took place on the general political situation and the tasks of the Communist Party,

theses on which were submitted by Comrade Zinoviev as chairman of the Communist International.

At the session of the Enlarged Executive held early in 1925, the Communist International gave as its estimate of the situation of world capitalism that in comparison to the situation which it faced in the years immediately following the end of the imperialist world war capitalism had achieved a certain measure of temporary stabilization. This frank admission was hailed by the capitalist statesmen and the social-democratic supporters of capitalism as an admission by the Communist International that world proletarian revolution was an illusion and that capitalism had overcome the forces let loose by the war and was re-established on a firm foundation.

The thesis of the 1925 Enlarged Executive of the Comintern, of course, was not what the capitalist and social democratic enemies of the world revolution tried to make it out to be. The Enlarged Session of the Communist International did not say that capitalism had succeeded in overcoming the forces of disintegration brought into existence by the world imperialist war and that a period of world revolution and the overthrow of capitalism was at an end. What the Enlarged Executive Committee of 1925 did say was that relatively to the situation which existed in the five-year period immediately following the war, capitalism had achieved a breath-

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ing spell thru partial and temporary stabilization.

This estimate of the situation of world capitalism was confirmed by the 1926 Session of the Enlarged Executive Committee. However, the Enlarged Executive Committee, while confirming the estimate of the year before, took note of new developments of capitalism which, tho not indicating the end of the period of partial stabilization, indicated a weakening of the stabilization.

This weakening of the stabilization of capitalism found its expression in the economic and financial condition which existed in a number of the major capitalist countries.

In **Germany** the improvement industrially which followed the adoption of the Dawes' Plan had been succeeded by new industrial crises and unemployment reaching into the millions with no apparent way for German capitalism to overcome the situation in which it found itself.

**France** was facing a continuous financial crisis, government after government disappearing from the scenes because of their inability to find a solution for the French financial problems. The financial situation is an ever threatening factor which may at any moment develop to a deep crisis undermining the whole structure of French capitalism.

**Poland** is in a period of deep-going economic and financial depression. The hardships and suffering of the Polish workers as a result of the crisis in Poland have already resulted in the shooting down of workers in the streets because of their demand for relief from intolerable conditions.

The tendency of capitalism in **Great Britain** is distinctly downward. Production in the British industries has not regained its pre-war level. British capitalism has a permanent army of unemployed of 1,200,000 workers. These facts indicate that British capitalism has reached its apex and is now in a period of decay.

This view of British capitalism was considered too gloomy by some of the British delegation. They pointed to the improvement in the profits of certain British corporations and to the policy of British capitalism of exporting capital to the colonies and building up the industries there and taking the profits from these industries. It was the opinion of the Enlarged Executive Committee, however, that the latter process would hasten the downfall of British capitalism by creating competition in the colonies for British industry.

#### Blows at Imperialism.

Another factor weighing against the temporary stabilization of capitalism is the revolt in the colonies and imperialistically exploited countries against imperialist capitalist domination. The successes registered by the people's revolutionary movement in China and the struggle

against French imperialism in Morocco show how insecure is the basis of capitalism.

In this field, the year that has gone by has shown a definite strengthening of the movement against capitalist imperialism by the colonial peoples which has had the effect of weakening capitalism internationally.

#### The Soviet Union.

The continued favorable progress of the Soviet Union in rebuilding its economic structure and giving a higher standard of life to the workers is also a powerful factor operating against world capitalism. The year since the previous session of the Enlarged Executive has been notable for the number of workers' delegations who have visited the Soviet Union. From all over Europe these workers' delegations had come to investigate the conditions in the Soviet Union and to return to their home countries and spread among the workers the fact of the achievements in the Soviet Union.

As the Soviet Union overcomes the difficulties arising out of the breakdown of Russian industry in the imperialist war and the years of revolutionary struggle and improves the standard of life of its workers and peasants, its influence as an inspiration to the workers of other countries grows, thus serving to strengthen the will to struggle against capitalism on the part of these workers.

#### New Developments Among the Workers.

The effect of the foregoing factors upon the working class can be seen in the new developments which have come to light among the European workers.

The letter of the Executive Committee of the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain urging the amalgamation of the Second and Third Internationals is an expression of the pressure from the working masses for a more favorable attitude towards the Soviet Union and the Communist International. A speech by Otto Bauer, leader of the Austrian Social Democracy, in which he very materially modified the position he had taken at the Marseilles Congress of the Second International, and adopted an almost friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union, expresses the growing sympathy and support of the Soviet Union among the working masses and further the growth of the will to struggle against capitalism, which forces even such an enemy of the Soviet Union as Bauer to trim his sails.

#### The United States.

The exception noted to this general viewpoint in regard to the situation of international capitalism was the United States. The Enlarged Session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern which has just recently completed its work will be notable for the fact that for the first time the role which the United States is playing in relation to world capitalism was given

adequate consideration.

The Enlarged Executive Committee recognized the fact that so far as the United States was concerned capitalism was still on the upgrade, that is, that it is still developing and strengthening itself.

The role which American capitalism is essaying in Europe is that of the savior of capitalism. More and more, the European capitalist countries are dependent on the loans and investments of the American capitalists. Their financial dependence upon American capitalism has its reverse side in the growth of the influence of the United States as the dominant imperialist power.

As a means of fighting the imperialist domination by the United States the Enlarged Executive Committee raised the slogan, "A Socialist United States of Europe."

The economic and financial strength of American capitalism and the fact that American imperialism is now looting the entire world has found its expression also in the working class movement of the United States. The view of the Enlarged Executive Committee is that the labor movement of this country has taken great strides toward the right. In expressing this estimate of the situation, the Enlarged Session did not overlook the fact of crises in certain industries due to special developments in these industries, such as textile, mining, needle trades, and consequent left tendencies among the workers in these industries. However, the main line of the development of the labor movement in the United States has been towards the right and the Communist Party in this country must reckon with this in formulating its policy.

#### The Work of the Communist Party.

The conclusion drawn from this estimate of the world situation by the Enlarged Executive Committee was that the condition for the building of the influence of the Communist Party was more favorable than the year before. The new developments among the working class movement favorable to the Soviet Union and the Communist International required, in the opinion of the Enlarged Committee, more energetic action by the Communist Party in applying the united front tactic and thru this tactic approaching the broad masses of the working class movement and drawing them into common struggle with the Communists. In the European countries where strong social democratic parties exist, the Communist Party must in this situation approach closer to the social democratic workers and endeavor to win them from the influence of the social democratic leaders. The conditions are favorable for success by the Communist Party if it adopts the proper tactics in this field.

The work of Bolshevization which the last Enlarged Executive Committee emphasized as the task before the Communist Party in the period of stabilization has made considerable progress during the year past and must be carried to conclusion. This includes the task of reorganizing the party on the basis of the shop and street nuclei.

This summary of the situation of international capitalism and the situation in the labor movement was accepted by the delegates present with the exception of Bordiga of Italy who opposed strongly the viewpoint of the Enlarged Session on the question of reorganization and in regard to the inner party situation in a number of the parties and on this account voted against the thesis on the political situation.

#### The Trade Union Question.

The trade union question was the second important point on the agenda of the Enlarged Session. No vital differences of opinion developed in the discussion of the work of the party in the trade union. The theses on this question proposed by Comrade Losovsky summarized the achievements of the Communist International in this field, emphasized the fundamental importance of the work in the trade unions, told in detail the progress that had been made in the campaign for world trade union unity and made a survey of the errors in the various parties in their tactics on the trade union field.

The theses adopted urges all the parties to more energetically than in the past take up the task and carry on the propaganda for world trade union unity and for establishing the influence of the Communist Party in the trade unions with the view to making them fighting organs of the workers in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

#### Work Among the Masses.

The Enlarged Session set up a special commission to study the question of approach to the masses and methods of drawing them into common struggle with the Communists. The experience of such organizations as the International Workers' Aid, the International Red Aid and the rest indicate that masses of non-party workers can be organized together with the Communists for special campaigns on issues arising out of the class struggle. The fact that the International Red Aid has been able to build up an organization which includes millions of members who support the victims of the class struggle indicates the possibility of non-partisan organizations of this character.

The Enlarged Session gave its unqualified approval to the continuation of the work of the Communist Party in this field. It urged the necessity of finding new instruments to spread wider the influence of the Communist Party over the non-party workers. It endorsed the organization, in addition to the existing non-party or-

ganizations, of such organizations as the Friends of the Soviet Union, the Friends of the Colonial Peoples, Organizations in Opposition to Wars, etc.

The co-operation of the Communist Party in building these and similar organizations which draw large masses of workers into active struggle against the capitalists presents an opportunity for establishing and extending the leadership of the Communist Party. They must use these instruments to the greatest possible extent.

### The Reorganization of the E. C. C. I.

One of the pressing problems before the Comintern as viewed by the Enlarged Session was in the question of drawing the sections of the Comintern into greater active and responsible participation in the work of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The question was raised at the Congress of the Russian Communist Party and placed on the agenda of the Enlarged Session. A special commission was created to study the question and its report was adopted by the Enlarged Executive.

The report emphasizes the importance of active participation in the work of the Comintern by all parties and provides for organizational changes to achieve this end. Under the decision as adopted all the parties of the Comintern are required to have their representatives permanently in Moscow and these must take an active part in guiding the work of the Comintern. An Enlarged Secretariat of the Comintern is provided for thru which a Special Secretary is given charge of each country, or a group of countries, and a sub-secretariat formed under his guidance to carefully follow and direct the work of each section of the Comintern.

In place of a Presidium of the Executive Committee made up of members who are rarely in Moscow a new Presidium has been elected consisting of representatives of the parties in Moscow who can actively participate in the work of the leading body of the E. C. C. I.

### The British Commission.

The British party was made a special point on the agenda not because, as is usual when some party is placed on the agenda, there was a factional struggle or controversial political question at issue in the British party, but because the British Communist Party had, thru its work in the past year, extended its influence to such a degree that its activities could serve as a model to the parties of the Comintern.

The report of the British commission called attention to the fact that the downward tendency of British industry created the economic basis for the revolutionization of the British working class. Another factor tending in the

same direction was the experiences of the British workers with the Labor government.

The mass of the British workers have moved toward the left. This expressed itself at the last Trade Union Congress in the stand taken against British imperialism, in the growth of the Minority Movement in the British trade unions, and in the development of a left wing in the Labor Party and the growth of the influence of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party was a vital factor in developing this left movement thru its correct tactic in the trade union work, that is, thru insisting that every member of the party participate actively in the trade unions and endeavor to win the strategic positions there. Thru participation in the day to day work the party has built up a powerful influence in the trade union movement. The party has also correctly applied the united front tactic in relation to the struggle of the British workers thus establishing its prestige and leadership in the everyday struggle.

The tasks of the British party were declared to be: (1) to carry forward its work in the trade unions; (2) to support further the already great achievement in relation to world trade union unity; (3) to bring about the development of solidarity between the British workers and the workers in the British colonies in a common fight against British imperialism; (4) to carry on an active struggle against the illusions of liberalism in England and against the idea that the general strike could achieve the victory of the working class without developing into a struggle for control of the governmental powers; (5) to carry on an active campaign to double its membership during the present year, and thus develop its organizational strength in proportion to its influence among the masses of workers.

### To the Right or Left?

The three main commissions dealing with the parties in the various countries in addition to the British commission were the French, German and American commissions. The work of the American commission will not be dealt with in this article in view of the fact that the decision itself will come before the membership of the Workers (Communist) Party in another form and the question of any discussion of the decision will be determined by the Central Executive Committee at a later date.

The issue in the French party was that of certain right wing deviations in the party. And in the German party the struggle was against the ultra-left tendency within the party.

The commissions which dealt with the situations in these parties brought in decisions which sharply criticized the right wing in France and

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the ultra-left in Germany. What was probably the most bitterly contested debate of the whole Enlarged Executive Committee developed during the report of the German commission. The ultra-left attacked the resolution of the commission as indicating that the Comintern was moving to the right. This view was supported by Bordiga of Italy, Hansen of Norway, Ruth Fischer, Scholem and Urbans of Germany.

An editorial in the Pravda sums up the actual position of the Enlarged Executive Committee on this subject as follows:

"The conference pointed out that the question of fight against deviations must always be put concretely, that it is dependent upon the circumstances and on the situation of the country and party in question. In France, the deviation to the right is the more dangerous and it is therefore at this that the blow should be aimed; in Germany on the other hand, fire should be concentrated on the left deviation, for there the deviation of Scholem and others is incomparably more dangerous."

The Enlarged Executive Committee followed this policy; it dealt a blow at the French right and at the same time hit hard at the German ultra-left.