

The Communist International at Work

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THE meeting of the Enlarged E.C. of the Communist International, which has just concluded in Moscow, discussed problems and reached conclusions of the utmost interest and importance to Communists everywhere and particularly so to members of the C.P.G.B.

Considerable fuss has been made by some Tory M.P.'s regarding proceedings at this Plenum, and the usual stories about "Moscow's orders" have been trotted out; actually there were present more than a hundred delegates from forty-two countries, the Russian Communist Party (now called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) being represented by only five of these delegates. These figures prove conclusively the international and representative nature of the Enlarged Executive.

The continued decline of British capitalism, the awakening of the colonial peoples, the increasing class-consciousness and activity of the British workers resulting from British capitalism's inability to solve its problems, and last but not least, the tasks of the C.P.G.B.—these questions occupied a prominent place in the discussions, and it is essential that the whole of our membership be made acquainted with the conclusions arrived at, and the reasons put forward, more particularly with those regarding Britain and the tasks of the British Party.

Capitalist "Stabilisation."

The Plenum examined the view expressed at the Fifth World Congress that capitalism had succeeded, temporarily, in stabilising itself, and re-affirmed the correctness of this view, emphasising, however, that the Communist International does not believe this stability to be of a permanent character. Evidence was brought forward to show that the "stability" secured is only relative in comparison with the confusion and weakness during the years immediately following the war.

At the beginning of 1926 European capitalism is again faced with a whole series of new and serious crises demonstrating the instability of the "stabilisation." This partial stabilisation has been achieved, to a great extent, by means of placing the burden

upon the shoulders of the working and peasant masses through increased taxation, higher prices, lower wages and longer hours.

The most marked aspect of the economic life of Great Britain is industrial crisis and chronic unemployment. Coal, iron and steel production remains considerably below pre-war level, and the wages of the workers, far from being raised in proportion to the increased cost of living, have actually been reduced in a number of branches of industry. Economic developments in Great Britain have brought about great changes in the British Labour Movement. The influence of the "labour aristocracy" has declined. The masses are veering to the Left and are seeking new ways and new methods. The changes now taking place within the British Labour Movement are of world historical importance.

Soviet Stabilisation.

With the continued decline of European capitalism and the increasing influence and strength of North American capitalism, a remarkable economic development and consolidation of the economic and political power of the working class in the U.S.S.R. has to be noted. Despite the antagonism of the bourgeois States towards the U.S.S.R. and the terrible inheritance of the civil war, the first Workers' Republic has been able to raise its industry to pre-war level and to achieve considerable success in Socialist construction, which is certain to extend and grow. This progress is already attracting the attention and warm sympathy of ever-growing sections of workers throughout the world. Even Reformist leaders who for years carried on a fierce struggle against the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Power, are being compelled to admit that the U.S.S.R. is becoming strong and is overcoming the great difficulties encountered in its path to Socialism.

Danger of War.

In the present world situation there everywhere exists fundamental differences between two systems, two worlds, between which at present a more or less precarious balance is maintained. On the one hand is the world of capitalism headed by U.S.A., whose hegemony within this sphere is an important fact, and on the other the world proletarian revolution headed by the U.S.S.R. The ranks of international capitalism, however, are not united in a solid bloc: considerable differences exist and are developing, principally between America and Great Britain, as, for example, on such questions as China, Mosul and Mexico.

Economic differences also exist, and have increased during 1925. These are to be witnessed in the Pacific, China, Japan,

Turkey, South America, etc.—differences fraught with the menace of another world war.

The Locarno Agreement is intended to hide the remarkable tissue of contradictory aims and interests existing between the various capitalist States resulting from the world war, and to introduce confusion into the ranks of the workers. The objective meaning of Locarno may be summarised as follows: American capitalism is attempting to consolidate its interests against the whole of capitalist Europe. (The pacification of Europe is a guarantee that the debtor nations will “conduct” themselves properly, and regularly pay interest to America. At the same time, America viewed with great displeasure the first weak attempt of the debtor nations to unite to a certain extent against the U.S.A.) Through Locarno British imperialism hopes to defend its special interests against France, and the French bourgeoisie to consolidate its special interests against Germany by enlisting Great Britain as an ally. British imperialism also hopes, with the support of French imperialism and the help of the Locarno Agreement, to develop its opposition to the U.S.S.R., to isolate the Soviet Republic, and to bring Germany also into line for the achievement of this object.

It is becoming more and more evident that attempts to consolidate peace through the League of Nations are really only methods for the preparations of new wars. Pacifist illusions connected with the activity of the League of Nations, particularly with regard to Locarno, are still prevalent, even among the workers, thanks to the reformist leaders who are accomplices of the League of Nations in the deception of the masses, and have converted the Second International into one of the links of the League of Nations. The whole trend of events, however, goes towards dissipating these pacifist illusions and to exposing the duplicity of the League. Economic developments in a number of the most important capitalist countries, leading to a still further deterioration in the conditions of the mass of the workers, and the proven inability of capitalism to solve the problems facing it, are leading to large numbers of the workers revising their views as to the value of reformism. This is bringing a strong desire for unity based on the class struggle. In this sense a wide basis for a real application of the United Front tactics is now being created.

Working Class Unity.

The Communist International and its sections must meet with determination and sincerity these honest endeavours amongst the masses of the workers to secure greater unity. These new and tremendously important phenomena, have among other things

led to the formation of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, to the success of the Minority Movement in Britain, to the joint struggle of the Communists and Social-Democrats in Germany for the confiscation of the Hohenzollern property without compensation, and so on.

While the reformist leaders, Right and Left alike, are being forced, by the pressure of the masses, to pay attention to this strong desire for unity, they continue to slander the Communist International and to attempt to turn the workers away from the idea of a united working class on a world scale. This is done in various ways, one of which is to depict themselves (the reformist leaders) as being even more definitely "supporters of unity" than the Communists, and to urge that real unity can only be created in the event of the Communists renouncing the idea of an independent political party and agreeing to join the Socialists.

On this point the Plenum declared that there can be no question whatever about any amalgamation of the Communist Parties with the Socialist Parties. Such a thing would be open treachery to the cause of the proletarian revolution, and a complete renunciation of the great historic role of the proletariat. The most important victory of the working class during the past few years is that despite all difficulties it has succeeded in forming, in various countries throughout the world, independent Communist Parties openly opposing the treachery of the reformists, defending the idea of a proletarian revolution and making preparations for it. Only within the ranks of the Communist Party can the entire proletariat be united—and in due time such unity will undoubtedly take place.

The Enlarged E.C. of the C.I. at the same time declared its willingness to form a united front with the reformists on specific issues facing the workers, and to press this policy with greater energy than before. All sections of the Comintern are urged to welcome fearlessly and sincerely, every endeavour of the mass of the workers to achieve a united struggle against the capitalists and to join with the Socialist rank and file in carrying out various practical activities, even on moderate slogans, and to display a friendly and co-operative spirit towards the Socialist and non-party workers so that a united march against the capitalists may be secured.

Beware of Disruption.

The Comintern has no doubt at all that the majority of the reformist leaders will sabotage the united front of the workers as in the past, and as they are doing now in Germany. But the changing situation is creating a different mood among large masses of the workers, and this must be the first consideration in conduct-

ing the united front tactic. The united front tactic is by no means the same as a parliamentary bloc with the Socialist leaders, nor does it mean the merging of Communist Parties with Socialist Parties, or the renunciation by the Communist Party of its independence in matters of propaganda and agitation.

The reformist leaders, opposing the united front, often assert that Communists in reality do not sincerely desire a united front. Such statements are absolutely false. The united front is for us primarily a means for realising the real class mobilisation of the workers in the struggle against the capitalists for their immediate needs and demands. If at the same time, Communists continue to criticise the reformist leaders, this is due to the fact that the latter hinder the union of the workers in their struggle for the bare necessities of life.

At the same time as the mass of the workers, feeling the imperative need for greater unity, are pressing the reformist leaders towards a united front with the Communists, the capitalists of the European countries are attracted towards the American imperialists, seeking salvation among them, and the Social-Democratic leaders are also casting their eyes towards America, seeking inspiration from those typical agents of capitalism in the workers' camp, the leaders of the American Labour movement.

The leaders of the American Federation of Labour are systematically seeking ways and means of transforming the Trade Union organisations into tools of American capitalism. To this end they support the formation of company unions, workers' banks, etc., etc., and their efforts are regarded with envy by reformist leaders in Europe, many of whom, particularly in Germany, are advocating "American methods" for the European Trade Union Movement. The "Right" leaders of Amsterdam see in the A.F. of L. salvation from the Bolshevik danger. Together with the "blessings" of the Dawes Plan, the "blessings" of "Gompersite Americanisation" of the Labour movement are also to be imported.

Tasks of the Comintern.

The objective conditions for the victory of Socialism in Europe are becoming more mature, more favourable for the working class struggle for liberation; it has, therefore, become a matter of pressing importance that the subjective factor, *i.e.*, the degree of readiness of the Communist Party for executing the historic mission with which it is entrusted, should receive much more attention.

The most important task of the Communist International during the coming years is to give more attention to the political training of the various Communist Parties, to see to their organisational defects, and generally to assist in their all-round improvement and capacity to approach the masses.

The United Front tactic should be developed extensively in view of the desire for unity which is now the main feature characterising the present mood of the workers everywhere. The united front tactic should change its form in accordance with the changing situation and in accordance with circumstances of place and time.

The centre of gravity in carrying out the united front tactic is the trade union movement. The characteristic peculiarity of the Left-wings now being formed in the Labour movement of various countries is their trade union nature. Hence the increasing importance of the work of Communists in the trade unions. Assistance to the Left elements in the trade unions, support of their efforts to rally the forces of the working class, the struggle to establish trade union unity in each country, the first for the formation of one International of trade unions based on class struggle, constitute the main lever in the work of conducting the united front tactics.

In connection with these tactics the failure to understand the part to be played by Communists in the existing Labour Parties, or those that might be formed along the lines of the British Labour Party, will do serious damage to the united front tactics as a whole. The most important task of the Communist Party in this comparative lull of revolutionary struggle at present is to penetrate still more into the every day struggle and life of the workers. *They must win the majority of the workers to their side* and at all costs become, if not the only, at least *the main and most influential workers' party in the country.* If the united front tactics are correctly carried out, this task is quite possible of realisation.

The Communist Parties must also pay some attention to their internal organisation. In many places Communist nuclei are organised in small or medium-sized industrial enterprises, whereas the influence of the Party in the large enterprises is weak. The larger industrial enterprises must become the object of our special attention and should be made the centres for the formation of the strongest Communist nuclei.

The re-organisation of the Party on the basis of factory and works nuclei has completely justified itself and the objections to this principle have been proved to be incorrect. At the same time,

in organising the Party on the basis of factory nuclei there must not be excessive rigidity. Modifications should be made, where necessary, for the organisation of Communists according to residence.

The Tasks of the British Party.

This necessarily brief outline of the Comintern's analysis of the world situation and the tasks of the Communist Parties in relation thereto indicates the main lines laid down for our work in the immediate future, and brings to the forefront a number of important tasks facing our Party in Great Britain.

The Plenum emphasised that while it is not possible to say whether the "tempo" of the revolution is becoming quicker, that revolutionary crises are near, or whether the tempo will be slow and the final struggle deferred, the Communist Party everywhere must prepare itself for the first eventuality, for a rapid development towards revolutionary struggles.

In Britain we must garner the fruits of our past work, taking advantage also of the Leftward movement developing among large sections of workers (resulting from their growing realisation of capitalism's inability to find a way out of its difficulties except by increasing the burdens imposed on the working class), by recruiting new members to the Party on as large a scale as possible.

This is an essential preliminary to the extension of our work.

The numerical smallness of our factory nuclei and our trade union fractions in particular, as well as of our Party units in general, together with the neglect of organised work in the trade unions, constitutes a great handicap to the development of our activities and the successful accomplishment of our task.

The education of the Party membership must also receive great attention, as well as internal Party organisational problems.

The tactic of the united front must be energetically practised wherever and whenever possible, not formally, but as a concrete method of uniting the largest possible numbers of workers in a struggle to secure even elementary demands.

Great opportunities are facing us; we must take the fullest advantage of them, realising the immense importance of our work; and the great responsibility placed up our Party in Britain, where the class struggle is growing more and more intense as capitalism's difficulties increase.