

On the Upgrade

Results of the Tenth Plenum*

AFTER analysing the modifications which have occurred in economic and political life since the Sixth World Congress, the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stated that these modifications completely confirmed the accuracy of the main thesis adopted by the Sixth Congress regarding the dynamics of the third, post-war period: This period "will inevitably lead,—through the further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilisation—to capitalist stabilisation becoming still more precarious and to the severe intensification of the general crisis of capitalisation." (*"Communism and the International Situation,"* p. 6.) Starting from this basis and after completely confirming the accuracy of the theoretical line laid down by the Sixth Congress, the Tenth Plenum clarified and defined the militant tasks of the C.P.s in accordance with the events which have since taken place.

The Tenth Plenum was confronted with many problems; the intensification of the struggle against the Rights and Conciliators; the increase in the War danger; the fascisation of the bourgeoisie States; the transformation of the social-democratic parties into social-fascist parties; the attempt to shatter and drive underground the Communist movement; the rising development of the revolutionary workers' movement as instanced by the increasing number of strikes and the transformation of economic strikes into political strikes; and the preparation for International Red Day—August 1st.

The work at the Tenth Plenum was of a more collective character than that of previous plenums and congresses. It was significant of this that although two reporters were appointed, in reality four reporters, i.e., Kuuisinen, Manuisky, Molotov and Thalman spoke to the first item of the agenda. And these four were not reporters, each defending a different point of view or a differ-

*All quotations of the Tenth Plenum resolutions are re-translations from the Russian.

ent shade of opinion, but reporters who defended one and the same Leninist line in the light of the rich and varied international experience which has been accumulated since the Sixth Congress.

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THE debates on the first item of the agenda, i.e., the international situation, were mainly devoted to an elucidation of the factors disturbing the capitalist stabilisation, and a definite formulation of the militant tasks of the C.P.s as arising from those factors. Parallel with this, a struggle was waged along the whole line against those open and secret cowardly opportunists who gloss over the contradictions of modern capitalism and try to drag the party back, and who are overwhelmed by the difficulties of the struggle.

MacDonald's coming to power; the Kellogg pact; the Paris reparations agreement; all comprise a pacifist smoke-screen behind which a vigorous preparation for war is developing. That smoke-screen affects certain unstable elements in the Communist camp, engendering pacifist illusions in them. The Tenth Plenum dispersed that smoke-screen and threw light on the true position of affairs.

The reporters and speakers unanimously demonstrated that the coming to power of the so-called Labour government of MacDonald would in no sense result in setting aside or mitigating the profound antagonism between the U.S.A. and the British Empire, which the Sixth Congress of the Comintern pointed out as existing. On this question the theses relating to the first item on the agenda read: "No negotiations or even temporary agreements between the MacDonald government and America can avoid the inevitable armed conflict between the U.S.A. and Britain, but on the contrary they will constitute similar stages in its preparation to the attempts at agreement between the imperialist powers on the eve of the world war 1914/1918." The reporters and speakers were unanimous in their opposition to Varga, who had declared that the realisation of the Young Plan would temporarily ease the antagonism between the imperialist Powers, and that they would intensify again only at some future date. The

results of the discussions on this issue were formulated in the theses in the following words: "The fresh regulation of the reparations question by the Young Plan by no means connotes a mitigation of the imperialist antagonisms, as the reformists declare, but will on the contrary lead to a further intensification of the conflicts within the camp of the imperialists (the Anglo-American struggle over the reparations bank, and the Franco-German antagonism) and simultaneously will increase the danger of a financial blockade, and therefore of intervention against the U.S.S.R., in view of the fact that Germany is increasingly being drawn into imperialism's anti-Soviet war policy." The Paris reparations agreement is only one link in the chain of agreements which give aid to the reformists to preach their false, pacifist theory of super-imperialism. In connection with this question, also the Young Plan, the Tenth Plenum again provided a general estimate of this theory: "The international interlockings of monopolistic unifications of finance capital (international cartels, financing companies, the reparations super-bank proposed by Young) not only do not diminish the menace of war, but on the contrary they increase it, by creating the prerequisites to the transformation of the approaching war into a world war, into a war for a fresh partitioning of the world."

Whilst thus confirming the accuracy of the thesis adopted by the Sixth Congress as to the intensification of antagonisms among the capitalist States, the Tenth Plenum, also in full accordance with the Sixth Congress resolutions, emphasised that the chief and most immediate danger was that of war against the U.S.S.R.; a fact which certain opportunist elements in the Comintern are disposed to underestimate, especially now that the renewal of diplomatic relations between Britain and the U.S.S.R. is once more on the agenda. On this question the Tenth Plenum's thesis reads: "The chief world antagonism between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R., as between two fundamentally opposed economic and political systems, is developing more and more. The imperialists' attack on the U.S.S.R. constitutes the chief danger." Even as this thesis was being formulated it

was strongly confirmed by the descent of the Nanking government upon the Chinese-Eastern railway, provoked by the imperialist powers with the object of drawing the U.S.S.R. into war. The filibustering attack not only confirmed the existence of the direct danger of war with the U.S.S.R. It also provided a good illustration of how war these days is prepared under a false pacifist flag: of course it was no accident that the seizure of the Chinese-Eastern railway coincided with the coming to power of the pacifist MacDonald government in Britain; nor was it mere coincidence that those same imperialist powers which had continually been inspiring the provocations of Nanking, among whom France was foremost, her governmental press openly ranged itself on the side of the brigands, expressed their readiness to intervene in the rôle of "mediators" and "peace-makers" between China and the U.S.S.R.

ONE of the chief reasons why the danger of an attack upon the U.S.S.R. has drawn much nearer is to be found in the shattered hopes of the bourgeoisie that a capitalist degeneration of the Soviet Union, and its gradual subjection to the capitalist world would develop; this hope is shattered as the U.S.S.R. passes from the restoration to the reconstruction period. Every new success in the work of industrialising the U.S.S.R. strikes a blow at the capitalist system. In accordance with this the Tenth Plenum gave particular attention to the successes achieved in the industrialisation of the U.S.S.R. in their relation to the question of the break-down of capitalist stabilisation. In his speech Molotov gave many clear illustrations to show that the "five-year plan of great works," and in fact the maximum variant of that plan, has not merely not proved to be beyond the strength of the Soviet Union as the doubting right-wingers and conciliators thought, but that on the contrary the reality has already in a number of spheres of industry surpassed the expectations of the five-year plan. So that on the basis of the latest achievements the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. is now systematically overhauling the control figures and laying down higher rates of industrialisation than the five-year plan presupposed.

Molotov gave illustrations of the especially vigorous development of the collective and Soviet farms which had recently taken place and of the general work of socialist reorganisation of agriculture, which has assumed dimensions far exceeding the expectations of the party at the Fifteenth Congress and even those of the Sixteenth Party Conference. In view of the fact that the successes of social construction in the U.S.S.R. are far from sufficiently utilised in the propaganda of the Comintern sections in their struggle against the war danger, the Tenth Plenum decided in its theses: "In the struggle against the menace of war danger, against the attack of the employers and against the slanderous campaign of the reformists, all Communist parties must carry on extensive campaigns to throw light upon the colossal achievements of socialist construction in the Soviet Union (the five-year plan)."

THE enormous achievements in the work of socialist reconstruction within the U.S.S.R. are counterposed by the profound internal antagonisms within the capitalist world, arising out of capitalist rationalisation. The Tenth Plenum gave a good deal of attention to defining capitalist rationalisation and the demolition of various opportunist delusions bound up with this problem.

In his report Kuusinen noted that even during the Sixth Congress the German conciliators and the representatives of the majority of the American C.P. (Lovestone) were identifying the conception of capitalist rationalisation with technical progress, and strongly over-estimating the present-day technical progress in capitalist production, which Lovestone called a "second industrial revolution." Kuusinen pointed out that the comrades who are struck by the latest technical achievements in capitalist production lose sight of the circumstance that they are most frequently associated with the enormous development of war industry, and also that definite limits are set to technical progress by monopolist capital, whose shackling rôle was pointed out by Lenin himself. Kuusinen further reminded the Plenum that even at the

Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. certain comrades fell into the error of being inclined, (despite the opinion of the German delegation) to consider the modern technical improvements as the most characteristic feature of capitalist rationalisation, and proposed to struggle not against capitalist rationalisation as such, but only against its "injurious consequences." Kuusinen proposed that this conception should be made absolutely clear at once. He emphasised that the undoubted enormous technical achievements in capitalist production are in no way bound up with capitalist rationalisation, that the essence of the latter consists not in technical improvements but in the "reorganisation of the labour process" with a view to the intensification of labour and to increasing the exploitation of the workers. And finally he emphasised that contra to the rationalisation of production in the U.S.S.R., capitalist rationalisation has no compensation in the shortening of the labour day, the increase of wages, or the protection of labour power from complete exhaustion (rest-homes, etc.); that on the contrary it goes hand in hand with a lengthening of the labour day and with a general worsening of the conditions of labour. The conclusion arrived at by the Tenth Plenum was the necessity of contrasting the methods of socialist reconstruction adopted in the U.S.S.R. with the methods of capitalist rationalisation applying in bourgeois countries, against which we must wage the most determined and unconditional war.

In connection with the problem of capitalist rationalisation the Plenum considered the question of the workers' living standards in capitalist countries, and in this sphere struggled against the penetration of bourgeois influence into our ranks. Varga put forward the proposal to abandon the formula: "the lowering of the living standards" of the working class, leaving only a more general formula as to the "worsening of the situation" of the working class in the theses, on the ground that the economic situation of the working class in capitalist countries is at present worsening not absolutely but only relatively. This opportunist declaration, which arises from an excessive confidence in the figures provided by bourgeois economists, was reso-

lutely and unanimously resisted by the Plenum delegates, who judged of the situation of the working class on the basis of their own direct contact with the masses, and not merely on that of the writings of bourgeois statistical apologists. It was pointed out that Varga came to his conclusions on the basis of a triple error. In determining the level of existence of the whole working class he left the existence of eleven or twelve million unemployed out of account; then he worked with average figures, not taking into consideration the circumstance that the higher wages of a stratum of labour aristocracy obscure the fact of the low wages of the mass of the workers; and thirdly he did not allow for the extraordinary intensification of labour and the exhaustion of labour power, which everywhere reduces the wage level below the level of the value of labour power. To counterbalance such statements the Tenth Plenum not only recognised that capitalist rationalisation "lowers the level of the masses," but in the resolution on the economic struggle it further declared that "modern capitalism has already arrived at the point in which property relationships have become quite incompatible with a rise in the standards of existence of the working class (although in isolated cases temporary and partial rises in wages are possible.)"

Extraordinarily stern resistance was put up at the Tenth Congress by the German and Russian comrades to recent articles by Bukharin, in which he declares that owing to the hegemony of monopolist capital the sphere of competition is being constricted within capitalist countries by the development of organised planned capitalist economy, and that the competitive struggle is being transformed outside the State and into international relationships. It was pointed out that this view of Bukharin's is not of recent origin, but that it had met previously with the condemnation of Lenin. In *Economics of the transition period* Bukharin wrote: "Finance capital has abolished the anarchy of production in large capitalist countries." On the margins of one copy of this book Lenin wrote: "Not abolished." And at the Comintern 1st Congress this idea of Bukharin's found expression in a resolution, despite Lenin's

objections; as a member of the 1st Congress, Kuusinen, told us at the plenum. It is highly symptomatic of Bukharin's present position that whilst speaking of the extrusion of the anarchy of production by elements of organisation in capitalist economy, he at the same time reckons on the preservation of free market relationships, unconstricted by superfluous regulation, in the Soviet Republic for some long time to come. Here is revealed his distrust in the strength of the proletariat and an excessive confidence in the strength of the bourgeoisie. The Tenth Plenum provided the due estimate of this theory in the following passage of its theses: "The conciliators' views as to the modification of the internal antagonisms of capitalist countries, and as to the possibility of organising the internal market and retaining anarchy exclusively in the world market, are confuted by all the development of capitalism during recent years, and in fact signify capitulation to reformist ideology."

The Plenum gave considerable attention to the question of the latest evolution of social-democracy towards social-fascism. The rightwingers and conciliators, as we know, deny the social-fascist degeneration of social-democracy. They declare that the methods of violent suppression of the workers' movement are by no means new to post-war social-democracy, that they were applied widely by Noske and Co. in their time, and yet no-one called them fascist then. The object of this declaration is to prove that there has been no essential modifications in social-democracy recently, that it remains what it always has been since the war, and that correspondingly the new course for an intensification of the struggle against social-democracy is quite unjustified. Such a position is really a direct support to social-democracy, who still to-day represent themselves as a "democratic" party, ostensibly carrying on a struggle on two fronts, against Communism and against Fascism, and that fascism itself struggles not only against the communists but against the social-democrats also. They are supported in this attitude by the rightwinger and conciliators. It cannot be said that the discussions at the Tenth Plenum exhausted this question, but it clarified the issue to a certain extent. The shooting down of the workers by Noske and Co. does

not constitute a final manifestation of social-fascism, but it was one of the essential elements of fascism. It was transformed into social-fascism when social-democracy began systematically to fuse with the bourgeois State machinery, when it began systematically to preach "industrial peace" and "economic democracy," endeavouring to paralyse the class struggle of the proletariat, and when simultaneously it not only resorted from time to time to armed force in order to suppress the revolutionary movements of the proletariat, but declared with cynical frankness that it took on itself the task of achieving an open bourgeois dictatorship. (Wels at the Magdeburg Party Day). The Tenth Plenum noted that the German social-democrats were swiftly accomplishing this revolution before our very eyes, with the other social-democratic parties following hard on their heels; that the British Labour Party had not yet succeeded in transforming itself into a social-fascist party, but that all the elements essential to that transformation were already present within it and that it would swiftly take the social-fascist road as soon as the class struggle intensified in Britain, which in turn would inevitably occur in the immediate future with the coming to power of the Labour Party.

Whilst recognising the transformation of social-democracy into social-fascism, the Tenth Plenum simultaneously emphasised the especially injurious and dangerous role which the "left" wing of social-democracy is playing. In the theses we read: "The E.C.C.I. Plenum proposes that particular attention should be turned to the intensification of the struggle against the "Left" wing of social-democracy, which retards the process of the decline of social-democracy by spreading illusions as to the opposition of this left wing to the policy of the leading social-democrats, whilst in reality supporting the policy of social-fascism in every way."

THE question of a new rise in the workers' movement occupied the central place in the Tenth Plenum's deliberations. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern made mention of the leftward movement of the working class, but during the period which has elapsed

since then the workers' movement has acquired such dimensions that the Tenth Plenum recognised the existence of a "growth" of a new rise in the revolutionary workers' movement, as Molotov emphasised. This development of a new rise is particularly noticeable at the present time in Germany, France, Poland, and, among the colonial countries, in India. But there are elements of the new rise in all other countries, not excluding Britain.

In Britain, the depression which set in among the workers after the defeat of the General Strike and the Miners' Lock-out has now come to an end, and MacDonald's accession to power opens prospects of a swift development of class struggle. On this point the Theses adopted by the Tenth Plenum reads: "Only now is a swift political differentiation of the masses and their abandonment of the bourgeois 'Labour Party' beginning." But whilst noting the objectively favourable prospects for the movement in Britain, a number of comrades emphasised that the realisation of these prospects will to a considerable extent depend on how far the British C.P. is able to rise to the enormous tasks with which it is confronted, after straightening the distortions in the tactical line which it allowed to develop by yielding to the depression in the working class after the 1926 defeat.

In accordance with this view, the Tenth Plenum stated that a swift shedding of the parliamentary pacifist illusions by the British proletariat, was conditional on the C.P.G.B. resolutely eradicating all the vestiges of right-wing and opportunist deviations in its ranks, on its carrying out a genuinely Bolshevik policy, and intensifying the workers' struggle against the so-called "Labour government."

The existence of a new rise in the revolutionary workers' movement is denied by the right-wingers and the conciliators; Serrat particularly has done so in his latest extremely opportunist pronouncement. Their main argument is that in 1926 there was a General Strike in Britain, in 1927 there was the Chinese revolution; but no such clear facts are observable at the present time. At the Plenum, Molotov replied to this line of argument by justifying the view that we were now living through a new stage. He observed that although at the moment no such clear mani-

festations of a revolutionary movement were to be observed as were the British General Strike and the Chinese revolution, on the other hand the rise in the movement was on an international scale, and embraced great masses of the working class. The characteristic features of the growth in the new rise were: "From being bourgeois offensives the class struggles were beginning to pass into proletarian counter-attacks and in part direct offensives." The struggle waged by the proletariat is of an extraordinarily stubborn nature, and in its course the economic struggle is developing into a political struggle, in certain places being accompanied by sharp clashes with the police and military. "The strike movement revealed the active part played by the unorganised masses, who not rarely surpass the organised reformist workers in their militant mood." A number of strikes of solidarity and protest against the reactionary persecutions of workers have arisen. In a number of countries (Western Ukraine, Poland, Greece, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, France, Holland, etc.) the agricultural labourers and peasants have been drawn into the movement. In some places, France for example, the movement is to be observed even in the army. The fact that the economic struggles are everywhere passing into political struggles "confronts the C.P. with the problem of a political mass strike as the decisive problem of the present time."

There is not a direct revolutionary situation as yet. At present there is only a continuation of the new rise in the revolutionary workers' movement; but as Molotov remarked at the Plenum, there is no need to represent the position as though after the third period of post-war crisis in capitalism there has to follow yet a fourth period; there is no need to represent the matter as though the present situation is cut off from a direct revolutionary situation by a Chinese Wall.

The May Day events in Berlin were highly symptomatic of the present period. The barricades which the Berlin workers spontaneously began to build in Neukoln and Wedding were precursors of the approaching decisive class struggles, and confirm the soundness of the view that we are not cut off as by a Chinese Wall from a direct revolution-

ary situation. Therefore it is not a matter for surprise that the Tenth Plenum gave special attention to the May Day events in Berlin. The Plenum confirmed the declaration of the German C.P. that the "May Days in Berlin constitute a turning point in the class struggle in Germany, and will accelerate the tempo of the revolutionary rise of the German workers' movement." The Tenth Plenum wholeheartedly condemned the view that the May Day events in Berlin "connoted a defeat of the working class," as all the defeatists and renegades of the Comintern maintain. The Plenum recognised that these events laid bare the "strength of the influence enjoyed by the German C.P." It completely approved the tactics adopted by the German C.P. during the May days, which consisted in "not yielding a single step before the reaction and at the same time not allowing the bourgeoisie to provoke it into an armed rising in the existing situation." The Plenum noted the political importance of the May demonstrations, which "repulsed the bourgeoisie's and the social-democrats' attempts to deprive the working class of its May Day and forced the German bourgeoisie and its social-democracy to capitulate before the pressure of the working class on the question of the prohibition of the demonstration, which in other countries found expression in the struggle for the street, and which within Germany brought the proletarian masses to their feet." In conclusion the Plenum "associated itself with the heroic proletariat of Berlin, the valiant defenders of the Neukoln and Wedding barricades," and expressed its complete agreement with the tactical line adopted by the German C.P. during the Berlin events. The Tenth Plenum recognised that the self-revelation of the social-fascist character of the social-democrats, especially when they find themselves in power, and the existence of a new rise in the revolutionary workers' movement, together "establish the conditions for a serious crisis of social-democracy within the proletarian masses." Hence the Plenum drew the deduction that in a number of the most important countries we are confronted with the task of winning a majority of the working class. The Plenum resolution on this issue says: "The E.C.C.I. Plenum emphasises that in the con-

dition of a new and developing rise of the revolutionary workers' movement the winning of a majority of the working class is the central task of the C.P.s." Manuisky's report was devoted preponderantly to that task. On the basis of Lenin's writings and an estimate of the special conditions in the leading capitalist countries Manuisky gave concrete formulation to what we have to understand by the phrase "the winning of a majority of the working class" in these countries. He observed that in these countries there could be no talk of the organisational capture of the majority of the working class before the conquest of power, but only of the C.P. winning immediate influence over a majority of the working class through their guiding reins: the T. Unions, the factory committees, strike committees, etc.; that in distinction from the reformists we understand the word "majority" not in a formal sense, not statistically and not on the basis of the number of votes cast, but that our criterion was the leadership and direction of the class struggles. From this aspect he noted how important it was to the success of the revolution to have "an overwhelming preponderance of strength at the decisive moment and at the decisive spot." (*Lenin.*) This means that strike centres have to be set up among the decisive strata of the working class; it means that the C.P.s have to reinforce their positions organisationally among the metal workers, the miners, chemists, electrical industry workers, war industry workers first and foremost; it means the possession of the chief positions in the most important strategic points: the postal telephone and telegraph services, the shipyards, the railway centres, at the right moment. It means that in the factories themselves those groups of workers have first and foremost to be won over without whose participation in the production process a normal functioning of the factory is unthinkable."

In order to carry out this central task in accordance with the decisions of the Plenum a number of other tasks have also to be accomplished. In the first place, the struggle has to be intensified against "the most important resistant-points of capitalism," a "resolute intensification of the struggle against social-democracy and especially against its 'left-

wing' as the most dangerous enemy of Communism in the ranks of the workers' movement and the chief dam to the growth of military activity among the worker masses," is indispensable.

Secondly, the other barriers which the bourgeoisie are now trying to erect across our path to the masses have to be broken down. Quite aware that the C.P.s are already confronted with the task of winning a majority of the working class, the bourgeoisie are trying to drive the C.P.s underground by terrorist methods. This confronts the C.P.s with the problem of co-ordinating the methods of illegal work with a still further development of the mass struggle. In present conditions it would be equally as dangerous, equally as opportunist for the C.P.s to be passive and procrastinating in the adaption of their organisation to the conditions of illegal existence, as to be passive in the task of developing the struggle against the attempts of the bourgeoisie upon the parties and in that of extending the open mass struggle generally. In order to guard the parties against both these opportunist tendencies, the Tenth Plenum decided: "In view of the threat of deprivation of legality, which is hanging over a number of the parties which hitherto have been working legally, the E.C.C.I. Tenth Plenum obliges these parties unconditionally and immediately to take all necessary political and organisational measures in order by all means to develop a mass struggle against this threat, and to ensure the continuance and even the extension of their mass work also in the illegal circumstances, and at any time to be ready to connect up the legal and illegal methods of work."

Finally—and this is a most urgent task—a fundamental purge of their ranks must be undertaken by all parties.

The Communist Parties are entering upon a period of battles which demand a bold initiative, enormous energy and endurance and great self-sacrifice. In order that they can accomplish their tasks in such conditions they must first and foremost declare a ruthless struggle against opportunism, vacillations and waverings in their own ranks. This is a most necessary preliminary condition, which the Tenth Plenum formulated in the following

words: "Without a cleansing of the C.P.s from both open and secret opportunist elements they will not be able successfully to move forward along the line of accomplishing the new tasks set by the intensification of the class struggle in the new stage of the workers' movement." The Plenum noted with satisfaction the successes achieved by a number of parties (Germany, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and America, especially the first three) under the leadership of the E.C.C.I., during the last few months. On this issue the rightwingers and conciliators raised a howl about the "disintegration of the Comintern." The Tenth Plenum contemptuously ignored these howls of the right-wing renegades, which have been taken up by the conciliators. It emphasised that this cleansing of opportunist elements indicated not the disintegration of the Comintern, but the "consolidation of the C.P.s on the basis of the political and tactical line laid down by the Sixth Congress." The Plenum recognised that this struggle with the right-wing conciliators had to be waged still more sternly. On this lead the Plenum resolution says: "The E.C.C.I. Plenum considers that the defence by certain of its members of the views of the rightward deviation condemned by the Comintern as an anti-party course and one highly inimical to the interests of the proletarian revolutionary movement, is incompatible with party membership." Simultaneously the Plenum recognised that "conciliation, which emerges as a cowardly opportunism concealing utterly liquidatorial tendencies, has recently gone over to the rightwingers' positions on all the main questions of the Communist movement, and inside the Comintern had assumed the role of the rightwingers." In accordance with this view the Plenum made the following demands of the conciliators in the form of an ultimatum: "(a) the conciliators must openly and resolutely differentiate their position from the rightward deviators; (b) they must carry on an active struggle not in words but in deeds against the right-wing deviation; (c) they must incontestably submit to all the decisions of the Comintern and its sections, and actively put them into force. Failure to fulfil one of these conditions will place the transgressor outside the ranks of the Communist Inter-

national." The Plenum has now raised the question of the struggle against the right-wingers and conciliators on a still wider basis. Its theses: *On the international situation and the immediate tasks of the Communist International* end with the following words: "The Plenum considers that the greatest danger at the present period is that the C.P.s should lag behind the tempo of development of the mass revolutionary movement. The Plenum calls upon all sections of the Comintern to wage a most resolute struggle with such tendencies, which are a reflection of social-democratic vestiges; and unless they are overcome the C.P.s will be incapable of playing their role as the advance guard of the workers' movement leading the working class on to new revolutionary battles and victories."

THE second item on the Plenum agenda was devoted to the economic struggle and the party tasks bound up with it. The Tenth Plenum gave exceptional attention to this question, on the ground that the development of a new rise in the revolutionary movement is now proceeding on this very basis of economic struggle. In accordance with this view the Plenum resolution on the economic struggle recognised that "in the new conditions the economic struggle of the proletariat is more and more acquiring a clearly expressed political character," and goes on to say: "In this very period the role of the revolutionary T.U. movement consists first and foremost in the organisation of struggle for sectional demands—from the aspect of the prospects of the struggle for political power."

The Italian comrades accused the Plenum resolution on the economic struggle of being "too German." Thälman rightly remarked that this accusation arose out of an unsound general attitude to the given issue, from an underestimation of the international importance of the experience of the economic struggle in Germany, and that it was somewhat reminiscent of the accusations which were formerly made against the Comintern resolutions generally that they were "too Russian."

It is just because Germany, with its highly developed industry and enormous proletarian basis, has witnessed the most ruthless applica-

tion of capitalist rationalisation with a view to extracing further surplus from the working class on behalf of German capitalists and the victor countries, that the new rise in the revolutionary workers' movement has had clearest expression there. In so far as the German C.P., on the basis of the rise in the workers' movement in Germany, has been more thorough than other parties in carrying out the new tactic laid down by the Fourth Congress of the Profintern and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, and called for a resolute struggle with the right-wingers and conciliators, it has achieved comparatively big successes in this realm. Consequently the latest German experience in the economic struggle is the most indicative at the moment and has the greatest international significance, which does not in any way exclude the necessity of other parties introducing such sectional changes or modifications in the tactics of the German C.P. as are rendered necessary by local conditions. It is just because the German experience of the economic struggle of the last few months is of exceptional importance that two reporters were appointed to speak to the second item on the agenda of the Tenth Plenum: Comrade Lozovsky from the Profintern; and Comrade Thälman, from the German C.P.

The resolution adopted by the Tenth Plenum on the economic struggle notes the following characteristic features of the new revolutionary rise of the workers' movement: "1. The transition from small sectional struggles to larger struggles having a more mass character. 2. The increasing change from the defensive to a counter attack. 3. A continually increasing activity among the unorganised masses. 4. The breaking-down of T.U. legalism. 5. A growing tendency to give strike struggles a political and revolutionary character. 6. The international nature of the movement: the movements in the colonial countries and of Britain, which has hitherto lagged behind."

The Tenth Plenum noted that the growth of the workers' movement is accompanied by the fascisation of the reformist Unions. In the intensifying economic struggles the social-fascist T.U. bureaucracy goes over entirely to the side of the great bourgeoisie, insisting on

compulsory arbitration, striving to harness the working class in the yoke of capitalist rationalisation, and transforming the T.U. machinery into strike-breaking organisation.

The Tenth Plenum further noted that "in the process of the swift fascisation of the reformist T.U. machinery and its fusion with the bourgeois state the so-called "left-wing" of the Amsterdam International, (Cook, Fimmen, etc.) play a particularly harmful role; under the pretext of opposition to the reactionary leaders of the Amsterdam International these leaders seek to hide the real purport of this process from the workers, and constitute an active organic link (and one far from being the least important) in the system of social-fascism." The new economic programme adopted by the Plenum of the E.C. of the Amsterdam International in June this year constitutes a new step in the process of fascisation of the reformist Unions. This programme, which is adopted on an international scale, is a purely capitalist programme. It demands "the Unions' co-operation in the work of preparing and carrying through measures of rationalisation." It pronounces in favour of the establishment of "economic councils," (i.e., of compulsory arbitration and the renunciation of any strike and struggle by the proletariat.

The fascisation of the T.U.s taken in conjunction with the rise of the workers' movement is leading to a growth of the crisis in the reformist T.U. movement. On this crisis the Plenum theses say: "This growing crisis in a number of countries has found expression in the stagnation of the reformist Unions (Britain) and in the mass growth of revolutionary unions. (India, Latin America and the U.S.A.) It has also found expression in the strong distrust of the T. Union masses to the reformist bureaucracy and in an offensive of the social-fascist T.U. bureaucracy against the revolutionary T.U. opposition, in an increasing practice of expelling members of the revolutionary opposition from the reformist unions and in threats to expel tens of thousands." This growing crisis is expressed in the liquidation of the last vestiges of T.U. democracy, in the presentation of ultimatums to the revolutionary opposition, and so on. The crisis in T.U. reformism is particularly

clearly expressed, as Thälman illustrated with statistical material at the Plenum, by the tendency to make the unions more aristocratic in composition, in the increase of the comparative numbers of members paying heavy membership dues.

This crisis in the reformist T.U. movement, evoked as it is by the rise in the workers' movement on the one hand and the fascisation of the reformist T.U.s on the other, rendered it possible for the Fourth Congress of the Profintern, and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, to map out new tactics in the T.U. struggle. The essential features of the new tactics were as follows: the winning of the independent leadership of strike movements by the C.P.s; the break-down of T.U. legalism; the formation of Committees of struggle elected by the entire factory masses and directing the strikes despite and in opposition to the T.U. bureaucracy; and the mobilisation of the unorganised.

Since this new tactic was mapped out the Communist Parties have accumulated considerable experience in its application, and this experience has revealed the weakness of our movement and thrown up new tasks in the application of the tactical line. The Tenth Plenum had accordingly an opportunity to work up an extensive definite programme of the methods of independently leading the economic struggle. This programme is formulated in the Plenum theses: *The economic struggle and the tasks of the C.P.s*, and it deserves the most diligent study. Here we confine ourselves to a short exposition of the main instructions of the programme.

In order to make contact over the heads of the reformist T. Unions, with the general proletarian masses of organised and unorganised workers, and to lead their movements independently in the conditions of the present rise in the revolutionary workers' movement, it is necessary to organise "Committees of struggle" and factory committees not subservient to the reformist unions, and indeed, quite independent of them.

"Committees of struggle" have not to be appointed from above (by the T.U.s) but have to be elected at general town and delegate meetings. They are to be non-party mass organisations. But by no means must

they be politically neutral. They must be elected on the basis of a definite economic and political programme. Only under such conditions will they be able to direct the struggle despite and against the social-fascist T.U. bureaucracy. The Italian comrades expressed the opinion that in certain conditions, in those of the European Latin countries for instance, "Committees of Struggle" would become permanent organisations replacing the Unions. The Plenum expressed itself against this view, and recognised that the Committees of Struggle as organs of mass action must be temporary organs, ceasing existence when the strike or the other mass demonstration which they had directed had come to an end. This does not exclude the possibility that in order to consolidate the results of the struggle the "Committees of Struggle" can and ought to take the initiative in concluding wage agreements, in setting up wages commissions and organisations to control the carrying out of the agreement. Nor does it exclude the possibility that the "Committees of Struggle" can be transformed and developed into permanently functioning revolutionary factory committees where such do not already exist, or into permanently functioning revolutionary plenipotentiaries.

In distinction from the "Committees of Struggle," the factory committees are permanent organs. But they also "are not and cannot be replaced by T.U.'s (so long as organisations of unions by industry do not exist)." In certain countries, during the initial period of partial capitalist stabilisation, the factory committees were retained, having degenerated into organs of class collaboration, being so transformed by the employers and the social-imperialist T.U. bureaucracy. Newly created, or newly elected, factory committees must be transformed into revolutionary organs, into organs of class struggle. To this end, during elections to factory committees, it is necessary that there should be "resolute renunciation of any form of election agreement with the reformists, and independent lists should be put forward despite all the regulations of the reformist T.U. rules." To this end, it is necessary that when factory committees are being set up they should be "transformed, breaking down all the legal

barriers, into organs concerned with the task of struggle for the everyday economic interests of the proletariat, and organs conducting the political struggle in the enterprises (the struggle against war, the struggle with fascism in the enterprises, the organisation of workers' defence, etc.)" The utmost resistance has to be put up to those opportunists in our ranks who consider that "the factory committees have no political tasks, but must do only what is prescribed for them by the State," and also to those who are disposed to regard the factory committees as parliamentary types of representation whose function is "to defend the workers' interests against the employers." In order to establish close contact between the factory committees, the revolutionary unions, (where such exist) and the revolutionary opposition within the reformist unions on the one hand, and all the workers in the enterprises on the other, "it is necessary to take the initiative in setting up organs of plenipotentiaries in every enterprise."

As we have said, in accordance with the decisions of the Tenth Plenum, the "Committees of Struggle" and the factory committees are on no account to replace the unions. Then what attitude have we to take to the reformist unions, which are becoming more and more fascist in character before our eyes? In view of this transformation, have we then to renounce all work in the reformist unions? Not at all. Communists are obliged to work wherever the masses are to be found, and the reformist unions still unify large masses, despite the fact that a profound crisis in the reformist T.U. movement is now developing. Our task is "to win the Unions by conquering the T.U. masses." How are we to interpret this formula of "winning the Unions"? There was some disagreement on this question at the Plenum, and so the theses on the economic struggle definitely explained the formula: "The present period confronts the Comintern, not with the policy of withdrawing from the reformist unions or with the artificial establishment of new revolutionary unions, but with that of struggle to win the majority among the working class, both in the reformist unions and in the organisations dependent upon the wider masses (Committees of

Struggle, factory committees.)" And how are the majority of the workers to be won in present conditions, when the reformist T.U. machinery has closely fused with the bourgeois State and with the employers' organisations? Under such conditions can we count upon the conquest of the reformist T.U. machinery? The theses categorically deny this: "It would be an injurious and opportunist illusion to think that in present conditions we can obtain the mastery of the reformist T.U. machinery, even though the T.U. mass membership is on our side. But this by no means indicates that the Communists and the revolutionary opposition are to be passive at elections of the T.U. leadership. On the contrary, the struggle to expel all bureaucrats and agents of the capitalists from the unions, the struggle for every elected post in the union, especially the struggle for the lower T.U. delegates, has in our hands to serve as a mighty weapon for the unmasking of the rôle of the social-fascist T.U. bureaucracy and for struggle against that bureaucracy." The second "important means of struggle for the conquest of the masses of the reformist unions (in countries where an independent revolutionary T.U. movement does not exist) is the intensified attraction of new workers into the unions, on the basis of the programme of the revolutionary opposition, and united around the "Committees of Struggle" in mass demonstrations." The slogan of the right-wingers and conciliators in the conditions of a rise in the strike movement says: "Workers, join the Unions!" (i.e., the reformist unions, where revolutionary unions do not exist.) The Plenum theses resolutely repudiate this opportunist slogan. They propose not simply to call the workers into the unions, which would mean reinforcing the reformist unions, but to call them in only "on the basis of the programme of the revolutionary opposition," with a view to intensifying the struggle inside the reformist unions against the social fascist T.U. bureaucracy.

How are we to react to the splitting policy of the reformist unions, to their policy of expelling the revolutionary opposition en masse from the unions? By no means by adapta-

tion to T.U. legality: "It is necessary to wage a resolute struggle against all capitulation." We have to reply to the method of expulsion with an intensified "struggle for readmission into the union under the slogan of unity, on the basis of the class struggle." (and not of unity in general!) Furthermore, starting from the general assumption that "the present period does not confront the Comintern with the policy of withdrawal from the reformist unions," the theses issue a warning against the expelled T.U. organisations becoming assemblage points for workers expelled from other T.U. organisations. "The struggle against the T.U. bureaucracy's splitting policy, not by the organisation of expelled communists and members of the revolutionary opposition in new unions, but by the intensification of the struggle for proletarian democracy within the unions, against reformism, and for the elimination of the T.U. reformist bureaucracy."

As we have seen, the Tenth Plenum theses reject the course for withdrawal from the reformist unions for the present period. Does this mean that they have declared in principle against the splitting of the reformist unions and against the formation of new unions? By no means. "The communists cannot be against the splitting of the Trade Unions on principle." But the theses point out that a number of conditions are requisite to the establishment of new unions. It goes without saying that the establishment of new unions "is recommended first and foremost in those spheres of production where trade union organisations are altogether non-existent, and then in those cases in which, as the result of the workers' revolutionary demonstration and owing to the treachery of the T.U. bureaucracy, the masses have abandoned the unions and a break-up of the T.U. movement has occurred." But in cases where the reformist unions have survived, the Plenum theses consider it possible to form new unions under the following conditions: "The establishment of new unions is possible only during a rise in the strike wave, only where the political struggle has become extremely acute, where considerable masses of the proletariat have already realised the social-fascist essence of

the T.U. bureaucracy, and when those masses have actively supported the establishment of a new union. But even if all these conditions be present, the establishment of new unions in countries where hitherto an independent revolutionary T.U. movement has not existed (Germany for instance) has to be undertaken only as the circumstances dictate and in accordance with the entire objective situation."

Such are the chief instructions. We shall not stop to consider the questions connected with the illegal T.U. movement, with work in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and a number of sectional definite instructions. We refer the reader to the theses to acquaint himself with all these questions. In conclusion one may say that the Plenum's theses on the economic struggle are pervaded with one idea and pursue one end: Communists must win the independent leadership of the economic struggle in order to shatter the social-fascist T.U. bureaucracy, to win influence over the majority of the working class, and to direct the struggle into becoming an immediate struggle for political power.

THE third item on the agenda of the Tenth Plenum was devoted to the question of the International Red Day against imperialist war. This is the most actual question of the moment, and in consequence was brought forward in its position on the agenda. The international bourgeoisie, the social-fascist and the renegades of Communism, the Trotskyists and the right-wingers have, as we know, developed a frantic campaign against the International Red Day. That struggle was not confined to the general arrest of communists and members of the red unions and the closing down of Communist newspapers, but was also waged on the ideological front. The social-democrats, who are gathering on August 4th, the anniversary of their treachery, are playing out their pacifist comedy, and simultaneously, in order to frighten the working masses out of participation in the August 1st demonstrations, are reiterating in all keys that the Communists propose to gather on this day to the glory of "red imperialism," to organise an "adventure," a "putsch," a revolt, and so on, and the renegades of Com-

munist (Trotskyists and Brandlerites) take up the refrain. It is false. The Communists quite frankly admit that they are working for an armed insurrection, but only in the conditions of a direct revolutionary situation. No such situation exists as yet. Consequently the Comintern wishes to give the demonstration of the international proletariat on August 1st against imperialist war and in defence of the U.S.S.R. merely the character "of a militant review of the revolutionary proletarian forces." This militant review is to take the form of mass street demonstrations, mass meetings, and wherever possible mass political strikes. These demonstrations must be closely connected with all the economic and political struggles of the working class, with its revolutionary struggle against capital, fascism, fascist social-democracy, and especially against its "left wing." The whole movement has to be directed into the struggle against imperialist war and in defence of the U.S.S.R.

It is to be a militant review of the revolutionary proletarian forces. None the less, according to the Tenth Plenum resolution, the August 1st demonstration will be "an event passing beyond the bounds of customary demonstrations of the working class against war." The first of August has to raise the movement to a higher stage, inasmuch as on this day the various streams of workers' movement have to flow together into one international flood, inasmuch as the Red Day demonstration has to be of a clearly political nature, inasmuch as it is directed to the struggle against the chief danger, the danger of war against the Soviet Republic, the Fatherland of the International Proletariat and the centre of the International Proletarian Revolution.

But the International Red Day is of great importance in one other sense; it is to be a test of the work and the fighting-power of our Communist parties. In connection with the preparations for August 1st, the Tenth Plenum carried out a preliminary examination of the achievements and the weaknesses of the various sections of the Comintern on the basis of what they had done in order to prepare for the International Red Day before the Plenum met. The results of the examination revealed

that the most serious work had been done by the German C.P., then by the French and Polish C.P.s, and also by certain illegal C.P.s; in the other parties the work had been less effectively done, in certain cases being quite inadequate. The preparations for August 1st enabled the Plenum to reveal the weaknesses and defects and deviations from the general line in various sections of the Comintern. Comrade Piatnitsky's speech was devoted to our organisational gaps, and Com. Manuilsky's closing speech on his report was to a large extent devoted to our gaps and errors in the realm of political tactics. In particular, a good deal of attention was devoted to the weak features in the work of the C.P.G.B., which is now confronted with enormous tasks, in the work of the Swedish C.P., and in that of the Young Communist International. Regarding the work of the Y.C.I., the resolution to the first item on the agenda reads: "During the past year the Y.C.I. has fulfilled its task of carrying through the Comintern line in the struggle against the right-wingers and the conciliators. The state of the mass work in the Y.C.L.'s and their organisational development have however remained absolutely unsatisfactory, and strongly show the necessity of effecting that change in the direction of work among the masses which the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern demanded." Regarding the Swedish C.P. the reporter on the first item on the agenda pointed out that it had achieved great success in the sense of a swift numerical growth and in regard to the position of the organisational work, but that it had committed considerable political errors of an opportunist character, which found especially clear expression in its pacifist demonstration in parliament and in the passivity which it had displayed on May Day, and its postponement of the demonstration for meteorological reasons. In accordance with this situation, we find in the resolution to the first item on the agenda: "In a number of Comintern sections, the Swedish for instance, rightward vacillations are still widespread, and these constitute a great danger in the practical work also." Regarding the C.P.G.B. it was pointed out that

during the general strike it had passed its political examination. But afterwards it yielded to the depression which had possessed the working masses as the result of their defeat in 1926, and had not made sufficient of the incipient new rise, of the process of differentiation now occurring in the British workers' movement. Correspondingly it had not carried out the slogan of "class against class" thrown up by the Ninth E.C.C.I. plenum consequentially enough, submitting more to discipline than from internal conviction; this was most clearly expressed in the inadequate struggle against the left wing of the Labour Party (Cook, Maxton) and also in a number of other vacillations, especially in an insufficiently active participation in the international struggle against the right-wingers and conciliators. But the hope was expressed at the Plenum that the C.P.G.B. would find sufficient strength in itself to eradicate all the vestiges of the right-wing and opportunist deviations in its ranks, without any severe party crisis.

The Tenth Plenum dispassionately and in true bolshevik fashion occupied itself with self-criticism, revealing all the weaknesses and defects of the various sections of the Comintern, doing so not in order to throw the blame for these errors on "objective conditions" and not in order to reduce the tasks to conform with the weaknesses of the party. When one comrade proposed to allot more modest tasks to the first of August, his proposal met with resolute opposition. The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. was occupied with self-criticism, and revealed the weaknesses and defects in the various sections in order to raise the activity of the sections and their revolutionary initiative, in order to cure them of the least symptom of leadership from the tail of the workers. During the past year certain sections which have traversed this Leninist road have achieved great successes in the bolshevisation of their ranks (for instance the German, French and Polish C.P.s) and the others will follow them under the firm leadership of the Comintern, and will forge themselves into a steely power to meet the coming decisive class battles.