

The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

Organisation necessary to carry out decisions

(Letter of the Organisation Department of the E.C.C.I. to all Communist Parties, endorsed at the session of the Polit-Secretariat, September 2nd, 1929.)

DEAR COMRADES,
The severe criticism of the shortcomings and weak points of the organisational work of the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries meted out at the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., was fully vindicated by the events of August 1st. The preparatory work and the carrying through of the demonstrations on August 1st in all countries were a vivid illustration of the existence of great defects in the organisational work of all Communist Parties.

I. Weakness of factory nuclei and very inadequate work in general by Communist Parties in factories. As a rule, in all countries, preparations for August 1st took place not according to factories, but to residential districts. In a few countries, conferences of factory representatives were called, but owing to the inadequacy of the work of the Communist Party in factories, it was frequently impossible to get delegates to these conferences elected through general factory or delegate meetings. The inevitable result of this state of affairs was—that although various meetings and conferences called in connection with preparations for August 1st as a rule passed excellent and fundamentally revolutionary resolutions, it frequently happened that there was no organ in the factory capable of putting these decisions into practice.

This weakness of factory nuclei and the inadequacy of Party work in the factories are the principal reason of the poor results of the strike movement on August 1st.

August 1st is a vivid example to all Communist Parties that it is impossible to carry out

the decisions of the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. re preparation for the new revolutionary wave without making factories the pivot of all the work, and factory nuclei the main lever. This question is now confronting all the Communist Parties as the most urgent organisational and political problem, delay in the solution of which will jeopardise the most important decisions of the Sixth Congress of the C.I. and of the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. re the new line.

II. In order to as soon as possible achieve serious changes in factory work, the Organisation Department of the E.C.C.I. suggests that all Communist Parties of the capitalist countries should hold during the next three or four months organisational conferences in the biggest organisations of the industrial districts of the country, as well as a general organisational Party conference. At these conferences, the recent concrete work of the most important factory nuclei, as well as the work of Party committees directly responsible for the work of these nuclei, should be submitted to searching self-criticism. We propose that the starting point of this self-criticism should be the preparation and carrying through of August 1st.

The Organisational conferences should be organised in a manner to include: (1) representatives of the most important factory nuclei, taking care that these representatives should not be only nucleus secretaries who are of course inclined to under-estimate the errors and weak points in the work of their factory nuclei, but also rank and file members of the respective nuclei who have distinguished themselves in the course of industrial and political demonstrations

of the proletariat as capable organisers well able to form factory nuclei, committees of action organise strikes, demonstrations, etc.

III. When discussing the work of factory nuclei, one should pay special attention to such practical questions as contact between the nucleus and the mass of the workers of the given factory. The main function of the factory nucleus—as laid down in the statutes of Communist Parties—is to serve as a liaison organ between the Party and the non-Party masses. The nucleus can meet regularly, it can discuss regularly all questions within its province, but if it is not instrumental in spreading Party influence among the masses, it will not fulfil, in spite of all its other positive qualities, the fundamental functions of a genuine factory nucleus. The most important concrete tasks in regard to contact between the nucleus and the masses are: (1) Every nucleus member carries on regular recruiting work to secure new members and sympathisers for the Party among the factory workers and, above all, among the workers of his own department (workshop); (2) whenever conflicts are brewing in the factory (or department), and also when questions arise which might drive workers to demonstrate *en masse*, every nucleus member must immediately let the nucleus bureau know of this; (3) the bureau, on its part, must be active, drawing as many non-Party workers as possible into the discussion of the question and into practical work, and placing before all the workers of the factory (at general and delegate meetings, with the help of proclamations, factory newspapers, etc.) questions connected with the organisation of the struggle, formation of committees of action, elaboration of demands to the employer and all other steps likely to ensure the success of the mass sections of the proletariat; (4) as soon as the question is decided (and on receipt of instructions from the Party committee) all nucleus members must be united before the non-Party masses; (5) under present conditions of semi-legal or completely illegal work, every factory nucleus is in duty bound to publish a factory newspaper.

The conferences must discuss very carefully the state of affairs in a number of countries where Party members employed in the factory do not want to work in the factory nucleus. Efforts should be made to find out if there are not among them people who are Party members only in

name, or members so addicted to social-democratic methods of work that very soon they will not be able to help the Party to strengthen its position in enterprises. Parties should turn their attention as soon as possible to such members, helping them to understand the new line and to adapt themselves to it. Those who oppose work in factories, should be got rid of by the Parties as unnecessary ballast.

On the other hand, all Parties must consider carefully and in a businesslike manner the difficulties pointed out by Party members employed in factories in regard to participation in the work of the factory nuclei, difficulties arising out of long distances between their places of employment and their residential districts, etc. When solving these questions, our attitude to them should be as follows: if in order to do justice to the duties of a factory nucleus member, Party members have to endure various inconveniences (for instance, getting home very late and travelling by an inconvenient train, etc.), they must not allow this to interfere with their efforts to transfer the centre of gravity of their work to the enterprise. But of course, Communist Parties must be mindful of a correct distribution of Party duties between individual working-class Party members, taking care that they should not be engaged in Party work every evening of the week. In all the Parties the situation now is such that while a small circle is overburdened with dozens of duties, the main body of the membership does hardly any regular Party work. One should put an end as soon as possible to this abnormal state of affairs.

IV. The work of factory nuclei cannot be satisfactory unless there be correct systematic leadership of this work on the part of Party committees, especially the basic committees which are directly responsible for the work of factory nuclei (district, urban, local, etc.). To ensure a decisive change in the attitude of Party committees to factory nuclei and work in factories in general, the conferences will have to discuss the following concrete measures:

1. To establish, as a firm and obligatory rule, that in the preparation of political campaigns, maximum attention is to be paid to measures which guarantee the participation of factory nuclei in these campaigns as their chief driving force.

2. The Party committee must establish permanent connection (making also provision for extraordinary cases) with factory nuclei. Factory nuclei must keep the Party committee systematically informed about everything going on in the factory. The Party committee, on its part, must lead and instruct factory nuclei systematically. Of special importance are provisions for firm and fully responsible leadership at the outbreak of conflicts in enterprises.

3. The present methods of leading and instructing by means of circulars must undergo a radical change. As few circulars as possible, as much personal leadership as possible on the part of Party committees and instructors. As far as police conditions permit, conferences of secretaries and nucleus representatives should be called regularly, to sum up past work and discuss the plan of immediate tasks. It is very important to call together nucleus representatives in the form of instruction - conferences before the organisation of political campaigns. Finally, the C.C. must take measures for the establishment of an institute of permanent instructors.

4. To bear in mind the peculiarities of work among women workers and among the working youth in discussing and deciding on questions of consolidation of the activities of the factory nuclei and the local Party committees.

5. To revise existing street and temporary concentration groups, and to reorganise with as little delay as possible those which are still wrongly organised on the residential basis. All Party members employed in enterprises must be removed from these nuclei and sent into suitable factory nuclei.

6. One should persevere in the efforts to make all factory nuclei publish factory newspapers.

7. The question of cadres should also be discussed at the conferences. The Organisation Department of the E.C.C.I. proposes to discuss the following questions and to make concrete decisions:—(1) registration of leading cadres (precautions being taken to prevent documents getting into the hands of our class enemies); (2) promotion of new Party workers from the ranks of working-class members who have distinguished themselves during the recent mass

actions of the proletariat; (3) taking note of experience with promotees, side by side with taking note of renovation of leading cadres by removal of opportunist, passive, etc., elements shown their incapacity of leading Party work who have under present conditions.

In regard to the technique of registration of leading cadres, the Department makes the following suggestions: (1) no complicated system with cards, files, etc. The registers should be small books and the writing should be done in cipher and code, the books should be kept as the most secret documents and in such places where they could be easily and with certainty destroyed; maximum care in keeping the registers, particularly in illegal Parties; (2) registration should be limited to as narrow a circle as possible (secretaries of Party committees and factory nuclei and their deputies, leaders of trade union fractions, bureau members of regional committees). It is essential for Party committees to discuss systematically the state of affairs in the leading cadres and the results achieved with new promotees, to sum up past work, its positive and negative sides, and to decide on the next tasks. The Organisation Department of the E.C.C.I. lays stress on the enormous importance of this work, because without boldly promoting new workers, without boldly replacing by these new workers those who have proved themselves opportunist and passive leaders of Party organisations, the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the C.I. and of the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. concerning the new line, will not be carried out.

VI. Finally, our experience of August 1st has shown that verification of the execution of the instructions of the Party leadership, and also of the instructions of the C.I. is very inadequate indeed in all Parties. Party committees and the suggested Organisational conferences must pay serious attention to this question and must elaborate business-like concrete proposals in regard to putting an end to this state of affairs. In this connection, we must firmly establish personal responsibility of leaders of Party organisations for the execution of instructions of the higher Party organ and of the Communist International.