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Information Conference of the Comintern.

Held on April 6th, 1925.

In connection with the Enlarged Executive of the Comintern a conference of the Information Department took place in Moscow on April 6th, 1925.

Comrade Pepper, the chief of the Information Department of the ECCI, opened the session and proposed to the conference that Comrade Sauvage (France) be elected chairman and Comrade Sillen (Sweden) secretary.

The chairman announced that 25 representatives of 17 countries were present. The following countries had sent their delegates to the Information Conference:

Argentina
Austria
Czechoslovakia
Denmark
France

Germany
Great Britain
Holland
India
Ireland

Italy
Java
Norway
Poland

Sweden
United States of America
Yugoslavia.

The Conference agreed to deal with the following questions:

1. Report on the aims and activity of the Information Department of the ECCI.
2. Reports from the various Sections of the CI. to the ECCI.
3. The establishment of Information Departments in the various Sections.
4. Appointment of informative reporters by the CCs. of the various Parties.
5. The establishment of a centre for the struggle against Social Democracy.

Report on the Activity of the Information Department of the ECCI.

Comrade John Pepper:

The Information Department of the ECCI had already been in existence some time but in an embryonic state. Only a few months ago this department has been transformed into a political instrument of the Executive.

The requirements of the political work of the ECCI, and its organs have shown more and more that, without carefully following the life of the Parties and without systematically collecting and elaborating the concrete subject matter, a thorough preparation of the political and organisational decisions of the CI. is impossible. On the strength of this the session of the Presidium of December 3, 1924, decided that "the Information Department should be reorganised in a way to enable it to do justice to the tasks required of it".

The directions for the reorganisation of the Information Department were elaborated in the sessions of December 1 and 8 of the Org Bureau of the ECCI. According to these directions the Information Department is to serve the following purposes:

1. To keep the Executive and its organs informed about the political life and activity of the Communist Parties.

2. To keep the various sections of the CI. informed about the activity of the Executive and the other Sections.

3. To draw the attention of the Executive and its organs to any new political and Party problems, and if possible to prepare the political and organisational decisions of the Executive and its organs by suitable proposals.

When carrying out these directions the Information Department should use the following methods:

1. The Information Department should make the life and the problems of the Communist Parties the main feature of its Work, and should only collect and elaborate economic and political material in so far as it is required by the Parties.

2. One of the tasks of the Information Department is to draw up a clear review of world political events, in so far as is required for the Work of the Executive.

3. The Information Department is not only to collect and elaborate the material concerning the campaigns of the various sections but also the material concerning the international campaigns of the CI.

4. The Information Department is to compile accurate and thorough statistics on the structure of the Parties.

In order to do justice to the above-mentioned tasks, special attention had to be paid in connection with the reorganisation of the Information Department to renewing and supplementing the reporters' panel. The work of the department is built up on the collaboration between the reporters of the various groups of countries. The Information Department should have reporters for the following groups of countries:

1. Germany (Austria, Holland); 2. France (Belgium, Switzerland); 3. Italy; 4. The British Empire; 5. United States of America (Canada); 6. Scandinavia; 7. The Balkan Countries; 8. The Spanish countries; 9. Czechoslovakia. The Information Department has no reporters for the countries of the Far and Near East, as this group of countries has a special department, the Eastern Department of the E. C. C. I.

The Information Department has not yet been able to provide all the groups of countries with reporters, as some Parties could not place at the disposal of the Information Department the comrades who should fill these posts.

The main sources for the information material of the Department are as follows:

1. The minutes and reports of the various Parties and representatives of the E. C. C. I.

2. Sessions of the Presidium, the Org Bureau and the Secretariat; also sessions of the various Commissions of the E. C. C. I.

3. The Party press, Party literature, as well as the opposition press and the political-economic literature of the various countries.

The reporters of the Information Department group the material not only according to countries, but also according to problems. The following plan is adopted: The material collected by the various reporters concerning the different problems, as for instance Agitprop work, Organisational work, International campaigns, world political events is summarised internationally. The Information Department has carried out its political reporting in the following manner:

1. The Department drew up a short daily report under the heading "Facts". "Facts" give in a very abbreviated form the most important political events of the day, and the most important news on the life and actions of the Communist Parties, as they come in.

Up to March 1st, the Information Department published forty six numbers of "Facts".

2. The Information Department elaborated reports on the movement of the various countries and on special problems.

One hundred and sixty one reports were drawn up during the report period.

3. For the purpose of keeping the various sections of the C. I. informed on the work of the Executive and on the problems and activity of the brother sections, the Information Department introduced "Letters of information from the secretariat of the E. C. C. I."

The first of these letters is dated September 18, 1924. Since then, and up to the Enlarged Executive 9 letters of information were sent to the Parties.

These letters of information dealt with the following subjects:

1. a) The Swedish Party crisis; b) the position in the Italian C. P.; c) the crisis in the C. P. of Czechoslovakia.

2. a) The International situation and the question of trade union unity; b) the situation in Great Britain; c) the Executive on the situation in Italy, and the tasks of the Italian C. P.

3. The Executive of the C. I. and the C. P. of Czechoslovakia.

4. The C. P. G. and the Reichstag election.

5. The reactionary offensive against the C. P. F. and the struggle of the Party against right digressions.

6. Tactics and successes of the C. P. I.

7. The new offensive of the Polish bourgeoisie against the C. P. P.

8. Report on the crisis of the C. P. of Spain.

9. Work of the C. P. G.

Apart from "Facts", the regular reports and the letters of information, the Information Department has carried out the

following more important and special work during the report period:

1. A comprehensive questionnaire to all Parties on the structure and statistics of the Communist Party and the labour movement.

2. A fairly detailed though not complete collection of press cuttings concerning the attitude of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic press of the most important countries towards the Trotsky Question.

3. A comprehensive presentation of the progress of the Bolshevikisation Process in the most important sections of the C. I.

4. A comprehensive presentation of the effects of the Dawes Plan on an international scale, and in connection with it a presentation of the international campaign of the C. I. against the Dawes Plan.

5. Compilation of the Report of the E. C. C. I. for the Enlarged Executive.

Nevertheless, our work is as yet far from perfect. We have not yet succeeded in establishing a systematic connection between the Parties and the Executive. The Executive is partly to blame for it; our apparatus does not yet work in a satisfactory manner. But the chief blame rests on the various sections. Comrades must realise that unless the Executive be thoroughly informed on all matters, it is unable to make correct political decisions.

The surest way out of this difficulty would be for every Party to have a permanent representative in Moscow. As matters now stand, some Parties have no representatives at all, whilst other Party representatives stay only a very short time in Moscow.

Another drawback is that the Parties do not send us any or only very meagre reports. Some Parties have left us actually six or seven months without any reports. These Parties seem to forget that they are integral parts of a world Party. And then Parties are surprised when the Executive finds fault with them.

Another drawback is that the minutes of the Sessions and conferences of our Parties are very imperfectly drawn up.

Another great shortcoming is that the Parties have generally speaking not yet taken any organisational measures to improve or to establish their connection with the Comintern.

This is one of the most important tasks of our present conference: to take measures for the establishment of a satisfactory connection between the Comintern and the Sections. With this object in view, I propose that the Parties appoint Information Reporters who should as far as possible be members of the C. C., and be responsible for supplying the Information Department of the E. C. C. I. with the necessary information. We also propose a measure which should contribute to the regularity of the reporting work: apart from minutes, the larger Parties ought to send in an economic, political and organisational report once a month, and smaller Parties once every two months.

In connection with this, I should like to say that unsatisfactory reporting is greatly due to the fact that the Parties are not well enough informed about the situation in their own countries. This is unfortunately a fact. Our Parties are now beginning to organise agitation and propaganda work. Some Parties have already Org Departments. But hardly any of the Parties have a well-organised Information Department. And yet, without such a department, a Party is unable to have a thorough knowledge either of the Party or its own country.

Comrades, the organisation of such an apparatus is not a costly affair. One well-trained comrade is in some cases all that is needed.

In this respect, America and Germany are setting an example, being an exception to the general rule. Both Parties have already taken organisational measures for the purpose of keeping their C. C.'s properly informed.

How can a political bureau work without such an apparatus? It is only natural that many of our Parties do not keep pace with events. This is entirely due to the lack of information. Without information our politics will be only dilettante politics. Collection, systematisation and elaboration of facts — such are the tasks of an information department which aims at being the basis of the political work of the Party.

Such distribution of work should be introduced into all Parties.

And now I am coming to the question of the establishment of a centre for the struggle against the Social Democrats. It should be said that the struggle against the Social Democrats is really the main problem for the Central European and for some of the West European countries. No effective struggle against the Social Democrats can be carried on without thorough knowledge.

What then will be the tasks of such a centre?

It should collect, register, elaborate and systematise facts. The fact that we have not yet been able to overcome the Social Democrats is not entirely due to political reasons. The latter play of course an important rôle, but so does also the subjective factor: the lack of knowledge, of information about Social Democrats.

We make the following proposal that a centre for struggle against the Social Democrats be established here in Moscow in connection with the Information Department. In addition, every Party should also establish such a centre. As far as I know, only the German Party has already done something in this direction.

In smaller Parties this work could be entrusted to one comrade, or the same comrade who is in charge of the general information, could also collect the material against the Social Democrats.

In the distribution of their work, Parties should certainly pay the greatest attention to the struggle against the Social Democrats.

Some Parties are sure to have material with respect to this, but Moscow has not yet any knowledge of this material, on the other hand, Moscow has some material which could be sufficiently elaborated.

Let us now see what form the work of this centre will take.

Of course, one can only give a general outline of its tasks. I should like to lay stress on the following points:

1. Systematic collection and elaboration of the copious material against the Social Democrats, for instance:

International statistics on the participation of Social Democratic Ministers in bourgeois and monarchist governments.

Statistics on the international hangmen's role of the Social Democrats with respect to revolutionary workers.

Facts on the shameful corruption and bribery in the ranks of Social Democracy.

Presentation of the ideological collapse of Social Democracy, its complete relinquishment of Marxism.

Analysis of the social composition of Social Democracy, in other words, the process of the bourgeoisieisation of the Party.

I could give many more examples, but I only wanted to give a sample off-hand.

2. The centre should induce the various Sections of the Comintern to provide in the distribution of their work for the struggle against the Social Democrats (as this is already done in Germany) and for the collection and elaboration of the necessary material which is to be sent to the E. C. C. I. for international use.

3. This centre of the E. C. C. I. should make suggestions and proposals to the organs of the Executive, and should also advise the various sections about effective means of struggle against the Social Democrats.

4. The centre should elaborate instructions for the various sections on methods by which the Social Democrats can be continuously watched and combated, and by which Communist nuclei could do effective work among Social Democrats.

5. The centre should supply material to special conferences (international trade union conferences, etc.) for the purpose of making the work of the Communist fractions more effective.

I should like the comrades to concentrate on the following points in the discussion:

1. Improvement of the connection by means of information between the sections and the Executive.

2. Appointment of information reporters for the Executive in the various Sections of the C. I.

3. Establishment of Information Departments within the Parties.

4. Establishment of a centre for the struggle against international Social Democracy, in Moscow as well as in the various sections.