

# SPEECH BY COMRADE ERCOLI

**W**E have reached the end of the work of the plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

For three weeks we, who represent the Communist Parties of the whole world, the representatives of the vanguard of the world proletariat, have thoroughly examined the situation which is before us to-day. We have gathered in order to examine the present objective situation of the capitalist world, to examine the position of the workers' and peasants' revolutionary movement and the tasks which we have before us.

From the very first day, our discussions have been full of the consciousness of the gravity of the situation and the importance of the tasks before us.

The resolutions are full of the same consciousness that the situation before us is not a period of development of Pacifism, but of big struggles, wars and revolutions.

We started our work by the statement that the relative stabilisation of capitalism was at an end. We have analysed the significance of this definition and its results, which we have tried to set out in our resolutions in the simplest and most popular way.

But, before we break up, it is perhaps necessary for us to make an effort in order to get a clear idea of what this end of relative capitalist stabilisation, which we have discussed at length, actually is. May be this effort will enable us to acquire a concrete, life-like and precise notion of our fundamental task, and its importance, a precise notion of the responsibility which rests on us, of the spirit which we must put into the fulfilment of our tasks and into our whole future work.

The end of relative capitalist stabilisation means that the whole capitalist world is suffering from a new and profound upheaval. The crisis is deepening. The bourgeoisie is desperately seeking for a way out by means of violence and war.

The contradictions between the imperialists are becoming graver and graver while Socialist con-

struction in the U.S.S.R. is making progress. The capitalist and proletarian worlds are opposed to each other in the most irreconcilable fashion.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means that, in order to face the situation, the bourgeoisie is mobilising its forces for a war directed against the Soviet Union, for its offensive against the working class, for new reductions in wages, for reductions in the living standard of the working class, for depriving new scores of millions of workers of bread, for still more increasing the millions strong army of hungry unemployed in the world.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means that our class enemy, rent by ever graver contradictions, is gathering his forces, it means the growth of Fascism, the persecution of Communists in all countries, accelerated preparations for imperialist war, it means, at the same time, the continuation of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, new hundreds of millions of workers, peasants, unemployed, oppressed and colonial peoples, joining the struggle to defend their bread, their life.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means the victory of the red army in revolutionary China.

We have the strike movement, the revolutionary peasants' movement in Spain. We have the strike of economic and political strikes in Poland, accompanied by peasants' revolts.

We have the wave of strikes in Czecho-Slovakia, the impetuous gathering of millions of workers in Germany, in the course of the class struggle of our Party.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in the strike of 100,000 Belgian miners who have revolted against their bosses, against their reformist leaders.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in the mass movement which is arising more slowly but surely and certainly in countries of Fascist dictatorships.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in those great mass movements, those deep streams of millions and millions of human beings,

workers, peasants, colonial toilers who are awaking to the daily struggle against the employers, against capitalist war, against imperialism, in the deep stream of these millions who are gathering together, who are on the march, who are marching along the path of revolution.

Comrades, in the midst of these millions of people, where do we stand? Where are the Communists? Where is the revolutionary vanguard? Is it at its battle post?

That is the problem which stands before us to-day.

In the course of the work of our Plenum, we have carefully examined the situation of our movement. We have examined the achievements and weaknesses of our Parties, we have marked a whole series of successes: the increase in the number of our members, the development of our influence among the working masses of China and the successes of the red army, the progress achieved by the Chinese Soviet power. In Poland, the fact that our Party has not only doubled its forces in the struggle, but has placed itself, to a greater extent, at the head of the strike movement and the peasants' movements. In Germany, the fact that our Communist Party, the largest Party of the International, that Party which is an example to all parties of the International in capitalist countries, is making a rapid advance in the conquest of the majority of the working class and is already succeeding in breaking through the walls of the Social-Democratic organisations and in detaching groups of Social-Democrat workers who have come under the influence of our ideology while members of Social-Democratic organisations.

We have all heard to what experience of mass work has led in Czecho-Slovakia, work for the defence of the direct interests of the workers, what experiences the comrades have communicated to us.

This shows that the Communist vanguard is already on the way to take up its proper place.

But we recognised at this Plenum and we must frankly repeat, for it has been stated in the resolutions, that those successes are not sufficient, they show some advance but the greatest part of the way still remains to be covered and we must make it under new conditions. In the light of the tasks which are before us, we are stating the end of capitalist stabilisation and the transference of the capitalist world to a new period of wars and revolutions and in the light of those tasks we are stating the backwardness of our movement in all capitalist countries. The question as to where we stand in the large plants, where the decisive masses of the industrial proletariat are assembled, is a most acute one. Where are we in the big plants in Germany,

France, England? Have we succeeded in transforming the factories, in accordance with the instructions of Lenin, into strongholds of Communism? What is the state of our work among the unemployed?

These, comrades, are the three items to which we have given special care in all the discussions of the Plenum and on which our Party must dwell at the present moment and in the future. There is a big upsurge of the masses, symptoms of the end of the capitalist system, are coming from the factories, from the mass of employed workers, from the mass of unemployed and therefore from a mass which is still under the influence of reformist ideology and still tied to the reformist organisations.

The prospect before us is that the rising mass movement will break the cadres of the reformist organisations. The prospect before us is a crisis of Social-Democracy, but this crisis will not achieve the result to which it must come without action on our part. Our action must start in the factories and develop itself in the widest manner in the reformist trade union organisations. That action will only succeed in destroying the basis of the influence of Social-Democratic ideology over the working masses, in breaking through struggle the cadres of the Social-Democracy, and breaking, in the struggle, the main enemy in the ranks of the working class, in accomplishing our basic revolutionary task, if we work in the reformist trade unions, reinforce the revolutionary trade union opposition and red trade unions, if we work in the factories.

We must work among the unemployed, show the mass of workers, by our daily work, that we are the best fighters in the defence of the most elementary claims of the working class, in defence of its wages and for their increase, in defence of the life of the working class.

Have we done everything in this respect since the last meeting of the Plenum, have we made any decisive progress? We have not made any as yet, and, even at this moment, which is an important one, our work lags behind our resolutions. That deficiency must be eliminated.

That is the main task before us. That is the basic condition for making a decisive advance in the conquest of the majority of the working class, for making the mass movement take a step forward, so that we may place ourselves at the head of the economic movement, the strike movement and political movement, prepare the masses for the development of economic and political movements into decisive struggles for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Comrades! the definition of the differing character of the general objectives, which we have given, implies a differentiation in the devel-

opment of the capitalist crisis in various countries.

In Germany, we have a situation where reactionary and revolutionary forces are gathering and opposing each other in an extremely rapid manner.

Our task is to raise the ideological capacity of our Party, so as to be able to analyse with continuous attention and exactly understand, at every moment, the nature of the situation which we have before us and adapt our political line, our tactics to this situation. Now, more than at any other time, our ideological capacity must be allied with the capacity to do practical work, with the spirit of struggle, with the greatest development of the initiative of each Party and each Party organisation.

We speak of war, of revolutionary upsurge, of revolution. We do not know what the situation will be when the next session of the Communist International assembles. We do not know, in case of war, what connections we shall be able to maintain between the Parties of the Communist International and the centre of the Communist International. We do not know, during the development of the revolutionary struggle in each country, where strikes are going to develop and assume the character of mass political strikes; we do not know what connections we shall be able to have between the centre of our Party and the basic organisations.

In these circumstances we cannot advance unless we succeed in developing, to the widest extent, the initiative of our Party and of all the organisations of our Party, from the highest leading organisations down to the factory cell.

We see a movement of the masses in our direction, coming partly from the unorganised masses, partly from the workers organised in the reformist trade unions. That mass is seeking for a revolutionary direction, part of that mass wishes to join our ranks. Our task consists in succeeding in directing it and, in order to achieve this task, it is absolutely necessary for all Social-Democratic traditions to be overcome in our ranks. It is absolutely necessary, in order to achieve this task, for each Party to work with the greatest ideological and political steadiness.

We are advancing towards a period of great struggles. What will be the reaction in our ranks, in the ranks of the various parties in capitalist countries with regard to these struggles? Will there be elements which will weaken just when it is necessary, on the contrary, to show the greatest amount of strength? Can we put aside such a prospect? No! We must have that prospect here before us and we must learn

to understand the importance for all the Parties of the Communist International, under the present conditions of struggle, of a Leninist ideology of revolutionary Marxism, against right opportunism, which is the main danger, and against deviations of the left wing.

All our Parties have not yet become real Bolshevik Parties. They will become Bolshevik Parties in the course of struggle, but, beside the great ideological and political confusion of the Parties of the Second International, we are an International unified on the basis of a programme which is a banner to the workers, to the oppressed peoples of the whole world.

We are a world Party which draws its strength from an ideology and tactics which we have been taught by our great leaders, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, which has been taught us by the experience of three revolutions. All our Parties are not yet Bolshevik Parties, they will become so in the course of the struggle, but we have at our head, at the head of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., Lenin's Party, the Party directed by Comrade Stalin, the leader of the world proletariat, which shows the whole International an example of ideological steadfastness, of irreconcilable struggle against opportunism, against Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois opportunist deviations to the right and to the left, the way of close alliance with the masses, obtained by daily work in contact with the masses.

The victories of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the victories of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union are a guarantee of victory for the whole world proletariat, for the whole Communist International.

Strengthened by the experience of the Bolshevik Party, let us go back to our work, let us try to bring into our work the same spirit of struggle, the same practical spirit which we have tried to put in our resolutions. No mere words. Work! Let us try to overcome the gap which exists between our decisions and our resolutions. Let us take root in the factories, let us work thoroughly in the reformist trade unions, let us work among the mass of unemployed, let us penetrate into Fascist trade union organisations, into the army, into the navy. Let us practice revolutionary class struggle throughout the world, the struggle for bread, for the workers' freedom, against war, against the régime of capitalist exploitation, for the dictatorship of the proletariat!

Long live the Communist International!

Long live the Bolshevik Party and its leader—Stalin!

Long live the world revolution!

(Thunderous applause).