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TWOPENCE

Leon Trotsky THE SOVIET REGIME AGAIN, YET AGAIN, ON THE NATURE OF THE U.S.S.R

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND MARXISM

Certain comrades, or former comrades, such as Bruno R., having forgotten the past discussions and decisions of the Fourth International, attempt to explain my personal estimate of the Soviet State psychoanalytically. "Since he participated in the Russian revolution it is difficult for him to lay aside the idea of the workers' state inasmuch as he would have to renounce his whole life's cause," etc. I think that the old Freud, who was very perspicacious, would have cuffed the ears of psychoanalysts of this ilk a little. Naturally I would never risk taking such action myself. Nevertheless I dare assure my critics that subjectivity and sentimentality are not on my side but on theirs.

Moscow's conduct which has passed all bounds of abjectness and cynicism, calls forth an easy revolt within every proletarian revolutionary. Revolt engenders need for rejection. When the forces for immediate action are absent, impatient revolutionaries are inclined to resort to artificial methods. Thus arises, for example, the tactic of individual terror. More frequently resort is taken to strong expressions, to insults, and to imprecation. In the case which concerns us certain comrades are manifestly inclined to seek compensation through "terminological" terror. However, even from this point of view the mere fact of qualifying the bureaucracy as a class is worthless. If the Bonapartist riffraff is a class this means that it is not an abortion but a

viable child of history. If its marauding parasitism is "exploitation" in the scientific sense of the term, this means that the bureaucracy possesses a historical future as the ruling class indispensable to the given system of economy. Here we have the end to which impatient revolt leads when it cuts itself loose from Marxist discipline!

When an emotional mechanic considers an automobile in which, let us say, gangsters have escaped from police pursuit over a bad road and finds the frame bent, the wheels out of line, and the motor partially damaged, he might quite justifiably say: "It is not an automobile - devil knows what it is!" Such an estimate would lack any technical and scientific value, but it would express the legitimate reaction of the mechanic at the work of the gangsters. Let us suppose, however, that this same mechanic must recondition the object which he named "devil-knows-what-it-is." In this case he will start with the recognition that it is a damaged automobile before him. He will determine what parts are still good and what are beyond repair in order to decide how to begin work. The class conscious worker will have a similar attitude toward the U.S.S.R. He has full right to say that the gangsters of the bureaucracy have transformed the workers' state into "devil-knows-what-it-is." But when he passes from this explosive reaction to the solution of the political problem, he is forced to recognise that it is a damaged workers' state before him, in which the motor of economy is damaged, but which still continues to run and which can be completely reconditioned with the replacement of some parts. Of course this is only an analogy. Nevertheless it is worth reflecting over.

"A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS STATE"

Some voices cry out: "If we continue

to recognise the U.S.S.R. as a workers state, we will have to establish a new category: the counter-revolutionary workers' state." This argument attempts to shock our imagination by opposing a good programmatic norm to a miserable, mean, even repugnant reality. But haven't we observed from day to day since 1923 how the Soviet State has played a more and more counter-revolutionary role on the international arena? Have we forgotten the experience of the Chinese revolution, of the 1926 general strike in England, and finally the very fresh experience of the Spanish revolution? There are two completely counter-revolutionary workers Internationals. These critics have apparently forgotten this "category." The trade unions of France, Great Britain, the United States, and other countries support completely the counter-revolutionary politics of their bourgeoisie. This does not prevent us from labeling them trade unions, from supporting their progressive steps, and from defending them against the bourgeoisie. Why is it impossible to employ the same method with the counter-revolutionary workers' state? In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade union which has conquered power. The difference in attitude in these two cases is explainable by the simple fact that the trade unions have a long history and we have become accustomed to consider them as realities and not simply as "categories" in our programme. But, as regards the workers' state there is being evinced an inability to learn to approach it as a real historical fact which has not subordinated itself to our programme.

"IMPERIALISM?"

Can the present expansion of the Kremlin be termed imperialism? First of all we must establish what social content is included in this term. History has known the "imperialism" of the Roman state based on slave labour,

the imperialism of feudal land-ownership, the imperialism of commercial and industrial capital, the imperialism of the Czarist monarchy, etc. The driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of "imperialism" in the widest sense of the word which was a property in the past of all monarchies, oligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes. However, in contemporary literature, at least Marxist literature, imperialism is understood to mean the expansionist policy of finance capital which has a very sharply defined economic content. To employ the term "imperialism" for the foreign policy of the Kremlin - without elucidating exactly what this signifies, means simply to identify the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy with the policy of monopolistic capitalism on the basis that both one and the other utilise military force for expansion. Such an identification, capable of sowing only confusion, is much more proper to petty-bourgeois democrats than to Marxists.

CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY OF CZARIST IMPERIALISM

The Kremlin participates in a new division of Poland, the Kremlin lays hands upon the Baltic states, the Kremlin orients towards the Balkans, Persia, and Afghanistan; in other words, the Kremlin continues the policy of Czarist imperialism. Do we not have the right in this case to label the policy of the Kremlin itself imperialist? This historical-geographical argument is no more convincing than any of the others. The proletarian revolution, which occurred on the territory of the Czarist empire, attempted from the very beginning to conquer and for a time conquered the Baltic countries;

attempted to penetrate Rumania and Persia and at one time led its armies up to Warsaw (1920). The lines of revolutionary expansion were the same as those of Czarism, since revolution does not change geographical conditions. That is precisely why the Mensheviks at that time already spoke of Bolshevik imperialism as borrowed from the traditions of Czarist diplomacy. The petty-bourgeois democracy willingly resorts to this argument even now. We have no reason, I repeat, for imitating them in this.

AGENCY OF IMPERIALISM?

However, aside from the manner in which to appraise the expansionist policy of the U.S.S.R. itself, there remains the question of the help which Moscow provides the imperialist policy of Berlin. Here first of all, it is necessary to establish that under certain conditions - up to a certain degree - the support of this or that imperialism would be inevitable even for a completely healthy workers' state - in virtue of the impossibility of breaking away from the chains of world imperialist relations. The Brest-Litovsk peace without the least doubt temporarily reinforced German imperialism against France and England. An isolated workers' state cannot fail to manoeuvre between the hostile imperialist camps. Manoeuvring means temporarily supporting one of them against the other. To know exactly which one of the two camps is more advantageous or less dangerous to support at a certain moment is not a question of principle but of practical calculation and foresight. The inevitable disadvantage which is engendered as a consequence of this constrained support for one bourgeois state against another is more than covered by the fact that the isolated workers' state is thus given the possibility of

continuing its existence.

But there is manoeuvring and manoeuvring. At Brest-Litovsk the Soviet Government sacrificed the national independence of the Ukraine in order to salvage the workers' state. Nobody could speak of treason towards the Ukraine, since all the class-conscious workers understood the forced character of this sacrifice. It is completely different with Poland. The Kremlin has never and at no place represented the question as if it had been constrained to sacrifice Poland. On the contrary, it boasts cynically of its combination, which affronts, rightfully, the most elementary democratic feelings of the oppressed classes and peoples throughout the world and thus weakens extremely the international situation of the Soviet Union. The economic transformations in the occupied provinces do not compensate for this by even a tenth part!

The entire foreign policy of the Kremlin in general is based upon a scoundrelly embellishment of the "friendly" imperialism and thus leads to the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the world workers' movement for secondary and unstable advantages. After five years of duping the workers with slogans for the "defence of the democracies" Moscow is now occupied with covering up Hitler's policy of pillage. This in itself still does not change the U.S.S.R into an imperialist state. But Stalin and his Comintern are now indubitably the most valuable agency of imperialism.

If we want to define the foreign policy of the Kremlin exactly, we must say that it is the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of a degenerated workers' state in imperialist encirclement. This definition is not as short or as sonorous as "imperialist

policy", but in return it is more precise.

"THE LESSER EVIL"

The occupation of Eastern Poland by the Red Army is to be sure a "lesser evil" in comparison to the occupation of the same territory by Nazi troops. But this lesser evil was obtained because Hitler was assured of achieving a greater evil. If somebody sets, or helps to set a house on fire and afterwards saves five out of ten of the occupants of the house in order to convert them into his own semi-slaves, that is to be sure a lesser evil than to have burned the entire ten. But it is dubious that this firebug merits a medal for the rescue. If nevertheless a medal were given to him he should be shot immediately after as in the case of the hero in one of Victor Hugo's novels.

"ARMED MISSIONARIES"

Robespierre once said that people do not like missionaries with bayonets. By this he wished to say that it is impossible to impose revolutionary ideas and institutions on other people through military violence. This correct thought does not signify of course the inadmissibility of military intervention in other countries in order to cooperate in a revolution. But such an intervention, as part of a revolutionary international policy, must be understood by the international proletariat, must correspond to the desires of the toiling masses of the country whose territory the revolutionary troops enter. The theory of socialism in one country is not capable, naturally, of creating this active international solidarity which alone can prepare and justify armed intervention. The Kremlin poses and resolves the questions of military in-

tervention, like all other questions of its policy, absolutely independently of the ideas and feelings of the international working class. Because of this the latest diplomatic "successes" of the Kremlin monstrously compromise the U.S.S.R. and introduce extreme confusion into the ranks of the world proletariat.

INSURRECTION ON TWO FRONTS

But if the question thus shapes itself - some comrades say - is it proper to speak of the defence of the U.S.S.R. and the occupied provinces? Is it not more correct to call upon the workers and peasants in both parts of former Poland to arise against Hitler as well as against Stalin? Naturally, this is very attractive. If revolution surges up simultaneously in Germany and in the U.S.S.R., including the newly occupied provinces, this would resolve many questions at one blow. But our policy cannot be based upon only the most favourable, the most happy combination of circumstances. The question is posed thus: What to do if Hitler, before he is crushed by revolution, attacks the Ukraine before revolution has smashed Stalin? Will the partisans of the Fourth International in this case fight against the troops of Hitler as they fought in Spain in the ranks of the Republican troops against Franco? We are completely and whole-heartedly for an independent (of Hitler as well as of Stalin) Soviet Ukraine. But what to do if, before having obtained this independence, Hitler attempts to seize the Ukraine which is under the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy? The Fourth International answers: Against Hitler we will defend this Ukraine enslaved by Stalin.

"UNCONDITIONAL DEFENCE OF THE U.S.S.R."

What does "unconditional" defence of the U.S.S.R. mean? It means that we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy. It means that independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the U.S.S.R., if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism.

Some comrades say: "And if the Red Army tomorrow invades India and begins to put down a revolutionary movement there shall we in this case support it?" Such a way of posing a question is not at all consistent. It is not clear above all why India is implicated. Is it not simpler to ask: If the Red Army menaces workers' strikes or peasant protests against the bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R., shall we support it or not? Foreign policy is the continuation of the internal. We have never promised to support all the actions of the Red Army which is an instrument in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy. We have promised to defend only the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state and solely those things within it which belong to a workers' state.

An adroit casuist can say: If the Red Army independently of the character of the "work" fulfilled by it, is beaten by the insurgent masses in India, this will weaken the U.S.S.R. To this we will answer: the crushing of a revolutionary movement in India, with the cooperation of the Red Army, would signify an incomparably greater danger to the social basis of the U.S.S.R. than an episodic defeat of counter-revolutionary detachments of the Red Army in India. In every case the Fourth International will know how to distinguish where and when the Red Army is acting solely as an instrument

of the Bonapartist reaction and where it defends the social basis of the U.S.S.R.

A trade union led by reactionary fak-ers organises a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilising the given strike make an attempt to crush the trade union and to make impossible in general the organised self-defence of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership. Why is not this same policy applicable to the U.S.S.R.?

THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE

The Fourth International has established firmly that in all imperialist countries, independent of the fact as to whether they are in alliance with the U.S.S.R. or in a camp hostile to it, the proletarian parties during the war must develop the class struggle with the purpose of seizing power. At the same time the proletariat of the imperialist countries must not lose sight of the interests of the U.S.S.Rs defence (or of that of colonial revolutions) and in case of real necessity must report to the most decisive action, for instance, strikes, acts of sabotage, etc. The groupings of the powers since the time the Fourth International formulated this rule have changed radically. But the rule itself retains all its validity. If England and France tomorrow menace Leningrad or Moscow, the British and French workers should take the most decisive measures in order to hinder the sending of soldiers and military supplies. If Hitler finds himself constrained by the logic of the situation to send Stalin military sup-

plies, the German workers, on the contrary, would have no reason for resorting in this concrete case to strikes or sabotage. Nobody, I hope, will propose any other solution.

"REVISION OF MARXISM"?

Some comrades evidently were surprised that I spoke in my article ("The U.S.S.R. in the War") of the system of "bureaucratic collectivism" as a theoretical possibility. They discovered in this even a complete revision of Marxism. This is an apparent misunderstanding. A Marxist comprehension of historical necessity has nothing in common with fatalism. Socialism is not realisable "by itself", but as a result of the struggle of living forces, classes and their parties. The proletariat's decisive advantage in this struggle resides in the fact that it represents historical progress, while the bourgeoisie incarnates reaction and decline. Precisely in this is the source of our conviction in victory. But we have full right to ask ourselves: What character will society take if the forces of reaction conquer?

Marxists have formulated an incalculable number of times the alternative: Either socialism or return to barbarism. After the Italian "experience" we repeated thousands of times: either communism or fascism. The real passage to socialism cannot fail to appear incomparably more complicated, more heterogeneous, more contradictory than was foreseen in the general historical scheme. Marx spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat and its future withering away but said nothing about bureaucratic degeneration of the dictatorship. We have observed and analysed for the first time in experience such a degeneration. Is this revision of Marxism?

The march of events has succeeded in demonstrating that the delay of the socialist revolution engenders the indubitable phenomena of barbarism - chronic unemployment, pauperisation of the petty bourgeoisie, fascism, finally wars of extermination which do not open up any new road. What social and political forms can the new "barbarism" take, if we admit theoretically that mankind should not be able to elevate itself to socialism? We have the possibility of expressing ourselves on this subject more concretely than Marx. Fascism on one hand, degeneration of the Soviet State on the other outline the social and political forms of a neo-barbarism. An alternative of this kind - socialism or totalitarian servitude - has not only theoretical interest, but also enormous importance in agitation, because in its light the necessity of socialist revolution appears most graphically.

If we are to speak of a revision of Marx, it is in reality the revision of those comrades who project a new type of state, "non-bourgeois" and "non-worker." Because the alternative developed by me leads them to draw their own thoughts up to their logical conclusion, some of these critics, frightened by the conclusions of their own theory, accuse me... of revising Marxism. I prefer to think that it is simply a friendly jest.

THE RIGHT OF REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMISM

I endeavoured to demonstrate in my article "The U.S.S.R. in the War" that the perspective of a non-worker and non-bourgeois society of exploitation or "bureaucratic collectivism," is the perspective of complete defeat and decline of the international proletariat, the perspective of the most profound historical pessimism. Are there

any genuine reasons for such a perspective? Is it not superfluous to inquire about this among our class enemies?

In the weekly of the well-known newspaper Paris-Soir of August 31, 1939, an extremely instructive conversation is reported between the French Ambassador Coulondre and Hitler on August 25, at the time of their last interview. (The source of the information is undoubtedly Coulondre himself.) Hitler sputters, boasts of the pact which he concluded with Stalin ("a realistic pact") and "regrets" that German and French blood will be spilled.

"But," Coulondre objects, "Stalin displayed great double-dealing. The real victor (in the case of war) will be Trotsky. Have you thought this over?"

"I know," - Der Fuehrer responds, "but why did France and Britain give Poland complete freedom of action?" etc.

These gentlemen like to give a personal name to the spectre of revolution. But this of course is not the essence of this dramatic conversation at the very moment when diplomatic relations were ruptured. "War will inevitably provoke revolution" the representative of imperialist democracy, himself chilled to the marrow, frightens his adversary.

"I know," Hitler responds, as if it were a question decided long ago, "I know." Astonishing dialogue!

Both of them, Coulondre and Hitler, represent the barbarism which advances over Europe. At the same time neither of them doubt that their barbarism will be conquered by socialist revolution. Such is now the awareness of the ruling classes of all the capital-

ist countries of the world. Their complete demoralisation is one of the most important elements in the relation of class forces. The proletariat has a young and still weak revolutionary leadership. But the leadership of the bourgeoisie rots on its feet. At

the very outset of the war which they could not avert, these gentlemen are convinced in advance of the collapse of their regime. This fact alone must be for us the source of invincible revolutionary optimism!

October 18, 1939.

New Fronts

The dramatic series of events that heralded the commencement of a new phase in the war - the swift dynamic seizure of Denmark and of key points in Norway - has been accompanied by the usual crop of wild rumours out of which the truth will only slowly emerge. The character of Allied counter-measures suggest that the northern thrust is taken to be largely a feint, designed to create a diversion in preparation for another blow, the main blow, aimed in another quarter. Whether German imperialism seeks to convert the North Sea into a testing ground for theories of air-power versus sea-power, or whether the move is a mere part of a larger strategic plan, it carries the stamp of desperation. The Russo-Finnish peace and the new series of economic blows dealt by the Allies provide the background for this new chapter in the war.

In the flood of oratory that has accompanied the termination of hostilities in Finland, congratulating and condoling with the "heroic Finnish nation" and hinting at a future reckoning, there have escaped certain hints that give a clue to the curiously indecisive and temporising attitude of the Allies towards the invasion of Finland and to their future plans.

Stalin has achieved a costly triumph. It cannot be denied that the immediate object of the war, the securing of

strategic advantages in the defence of Soviet territory, has been attained and from the military point of view the Leningrad region has been rendered less vulnerable to attacks from the capitalist powers. Since in spite of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Germany is potentially the most dangerous foe, the victory was gained as much at Germany's expense as at Finland's.

But the costs of this victory have yet to be computed. If, as the Finnish government claims, 200,000 Soviet soldiers have been slaughtered, the expense sheet makes tragic enough reading, but to this must be added the even more important losses, the shattering blows that have been dealt at the sympathy held by the toiling masses of the world for the Soviet Union. It is only because these sympathies have been trampled upon by Stalinism that it has been possible for the world bourgeoisie to profit by the universal working class revulsion towards the Kremlin by initiating campaigns ostensibly aimed against the "Communists," in reality aimed against the workers. In France the death penalty has been imposed for "subversive propaganda," in Belgium, arrests have been made and new legislation initiated, in the United States new drives are being planned by the reactionaries, all in the name of the struggle against Stalin's agents.

In the House of Commons on March 19, Mr. Chamberlain revealed the extent to which the British Government was preparing to exploit the situation in a similar manner. Apart from armaments sent, an expeditionary force of 100,000 men "heavily armed and equipped" was to have been dispatched and would no doubt have been sent if the Scandinavian countries had consented to the plan, which involved the certainty of German intervention. Mr. Hore Belisha made it clear that the Russian onslaught could have been broken solely by attack from the air. "Never have there been such targets."

But obviously the Government was interested, not in breaking the Russian onslaught, but in opening up a new front in Scandinavian territory. The terrified neutrals clung like drowning men to the last remaining straws of neutrality, refused their consent, refused voluntarily to transform their territory into the battlefield of the giants. And so Stalinism was permitted to get away with it, in spite of the outcry of that section of the British bourgeoisie for whom Mr. Hore Belishawas the mouthpiece.

The conclusion of peace between Russia and Finland clinched two important questions. In the first place the acquisition of key strategic points in the northern defences of the Soviet Union places such formidable barriers in the path of any attack by Germany that the possibility of diverting German expansionism towards the Soviet Union is decisively ruled out, and with it the last chance of any peace by compromise at the expense of Russia. The war in the west becomes a death struggle which aims at the total defeat and the hacking to pieces of the territory of the foe. In the second place, the deadly fear of the Kremlin for its partner in the Hitler-Stalin pact has been somewhat allayed

so that the Stalin bureaucracy can now with more confidence drop back into comparative isolation again. With Russia neutralised and with Nazidom committed to a war of annihilation, the British bourgeoisie has now chosen to settle down to a war which is in the military sense defensive but in the field of economy, fiercely offensive.

Thus it is left to the "initiative" of Germany to invade and overrun neutrals for what is gained by such initiative by the element of surprise is a thousand times compensated for in the moral losses sustained in the field of propaganda. The task of organising United States intervention in the war on the side of the Allies after the presidential elections is thereby rendered somewhat easier. The initiative in beginning the bombing of the great cities from the air is similarly left to Germany, and for similar reasons.

But in the arena of world trade, these conditions are reversed. It was the sharply dwindling volume of world trade that brought the imperialists to grips. This is strikingly revealed in the report of the Chamber of Shipping for 1939, published last month, which showed that as a result of the restriction of world trade, the average tramp freight rates for the first eight months of 1939 was 91.3 as against 131.5 in 1937. This glimpse alone at the world slump is sufficient to show the driving force behind both the dynamic moves of German imperialism and the resistance of its rivals. The outbreak of war brought into operation more far-reaching and more destructive measures of competition for world trade. The invasion of neutrals by means of capital, the conclusion of trade deals dictated with the help of artillery, in these fields the Allied gangsters have the whip hand over the German gangsters, so that in spite of

the internal instability of France, the initiative is entirely in their hands.

A series of trade agreements were successfully negotiated by Britain with Norway, Holland, Spain, Greece, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Turkey and the remaining links of the iron chain round Germany are being forged in the impending agreements with Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Rumania and the Soviet. The entire exportable surplus of Norway's current catch of whale oil has been, according to Chamberlain, purchased by the Allies, who have also made purchases of minerals in South Eastern Europe "on a large scale."

These moves have posed squarely before German imperialism the necessity for action. In order to make room for increased trade with Denmark, preparations were made in Britain to end rationing of those products which Denmark is able to supply. The dynamic move by German imperialism in occupying Denmark and carrying the war far into the North was the military reaction against the tightening economic Aocse. The answer to the economic pressure applied in the Balkans has yet to be given, but ripples of apprehension are passing through south-eastern Europe, reflected in accelerated military preparations, while Italian interests, deeply involved in the Balkan situation, have compelled Italy and with her, Hungary, to take measures to face up to a possible extension of the war to this area.

As new fronts are opened, swift and spectacular military moves take place, but they culminate very soon in the mutual digging in of the contending armies, the prolonged deadlock of trench warfare, costly in lives taken by gunshot and disease, but inconclus-

ive. And the slow economic strangulation goes on, reducing whole continents to famine and disintegrating the technical organisation of modern civilisation.

As the field of military operations expands in Europe, a new focus of tension is developing in the Far East, following the abrogation of the United States-Japanese Trade Treaty. The cutting off of German trade from South America and the preoccupation of Britain and France with their economic drive in Europe has opened the door, not only for the United States but for Japan as well. The trade treaty concluded between Argentina and Japan was a direct blow at the United States which is outbidden in a field marked off as America's empire. Now that British preoccupation has directed an attitude of conciliation towards Japanese encroachment in China, Japan grows correspondingly bolder. In this situation are the beginnings of imperialist war in the Pacific.

The peace in Finland terminated the first phase of the war of deadlock. New offensives open and more nations are sucked into the whirlpool of war. But the dead-lock re-establishes itself on the higher level and the process goes on until all humanity is deluged with blood. The ruling capitalists have no way out; they are committed, now more than ever, to the total war of mutual extermination.

Confronted with the necessity of paying this price in blood and suffering for the privilege of permitting imperialism to sit at the driving wheel, the toiling masses will be compelled, in sheer self preservation, to intervene, to take over the wheel, to turn society away from the capitalist path to annihilation and on to the road of socialism.

I.L.P. Easter Parade

The I.L.P. held its 48th Annual Conference in Nottingham during the Easter week-end. The yearly stocktaking of organisational achievements and theoretical potentialities revealed, as usual, only deficiencies. This year the militant wing went down, not with a bang, (as was the case last year) but hardly even with a whimper. The capitulation to reformist-pacifism was complete.

By its substitution of these petty-bourgeois doctrines for the programme of class struggle, the 48th Conference of the founders of British Social Democracy, only further exemplified Lenin's characterisation - the Independent Labour Party is independent only of Socialism.

If attempted subtle concealment can be regarded as an improvement on frank revelation of political bankruptcy, then in all fairness we must grant that the resolutions submitted by the National Administrative Council constitute an improvement on those of recent years. Confusion and self-deception characterised the deliberations and conclusions of the Conference. The Chairman of the Party, Dr. C.A. Smith, in his opening speech stated: "The I.L.P.'s peace campaign will be directed not to the Government but to the people. We are not asking Mr. Chamberlain to make peace, but urging the workers to strike the war weapon from his hands...."

It is the translation of the programme into practice, however, which shows the worth of a party and its policy, and not the meaningless vapourings of leaders in internal discussions. Among the most important resolutions on the agenda was the party's attitude towards war. This evasion of reality

headed "The Struggle for a Socialist Peace" is a piece of chicanery worthy of the pen of Palme Dutt.

Expressing a hope that the latest dishonest acrobatic posture of the corrupt agency of Stalin - the so-called Communist Party - will be maintained, it proceeds to welcome "the opposition to the war which has been shown among the sections of the public unassociated with the working-class movement..." but "recognising, however, that the ending of the war by a peace concluded by capitalist governments would only be a truce so long as the capitalist imperialist system continues, the I.L.P. supplements its agitation for stopping the war by action to secure a Socialist Peace." With the remnants of socialist verbiage torn from it, the I.L.P. "revolutionary" opposition to war stands nakedly revealed as pacifism.

Mr. Maxton has attempted to implement the resolution by an appeal to the finer feelings of President Roosevelt's envoy, Mr. Sumner Welles. No doubt he asked him to support the "Socialist Peace" terms laid down by the I.L.P. John Mc. Govern is busy participating in a "stop the war" campaign with the Marquess of Tavistock who declares: "NOW is the time to negotiate." and puts forward terms for another "Munich" which he declares "on the basis of information received," would be acceptable to the German Government. In "welcoming (and embracing) the opposition to war among sections of the public unassociated with the working class movement," the I.L.P. gives a free hand to its Mc. Govern to play the role of Hitler agents by peddling his "peace" terms in the ranks of the British workers. It is

by these actions, and not by the holiday speeches of the Chairman, that the oppressed masses will appraise the role of the I.L.P.

In condemning the leaderships of the Second and Third Internationals, the I.L.P. recognises (on paper) the bankruptcy of these organisations as instruments of class struggle, but in characteristic centrist fashion refuses to draw the conclusion that the time is more than ripe for the building of the revolutionary Fourth International. Declaring that "all possible steps (to secure a socialist peace) should be taken to develop a similar agitation in other countries," the resolution advocates that collection of heterogeneous political splinters the "International Workers Front Against War" as the medium for this purpose. Included in its ranks are the parties of the French Freemason, Pivert, the glorified Zionists, Orenstein and Abramovitch together with that of the American, Jay Lovestone, which so recently called upon the Finnish workers to take up arms against the Red Army. Even this futile and fore-doomed movement away from national sterility, however, was too much for the Luton delegate who attacked this section of the resolution on the grounds that it contained the "germ of a new international." Although they were defeated on this issue, the Luton comrades can rest contented, the "germ" is not fertile.

On the second important issue, the U.S.S.R. and the war, the I.L.P. arrived at the correct conclusions, i.e. despite the degeneration of the workers' state under the monstrous Stalin oligarchy, its defence is still the duty of the international proletariat. Just how this squares with organisational association with the party of Jay Lovestone, was not explained. Presumably no delegate was sufficiently concerned to enquire.

How this conclusion was reached, we are unable to say, for utter and complete confusion on the fundamental principles concerning the Soviet Union and the role and actions of the Stalin bureaucracy was all that was revealed by discussion.

The Political Secretary, Fenner Brockway linked Stalin's actions "in international affairs to imperialist power politics." Lenin's definition of Imperialism as "the highest form of Capitalism," which is generally accepted by Marxists, has no meaning for the I.L.P. leaders. In defending Brockway's false characterisation, C.A. Smith rejected Marxism for etymology. "Imperialism" he declared, "is a word derived from imperia which means domination."

Unfortunately this verbal manoeuvre was not the only occasion on which the Conference had occasion to denounce Marxism. Far from it. On the agenda was a resolution from the Lancashire Divisional Council which called for: re(!)affirmation of "belief in the basic principles of Marxism in their revolutionary significance for the world today." This was a direct challenge to the Conference, and Conference responded to the challenge by dismissing the resolution contemptuously by a majority vote in favour of the motion "previous question." In formal procedure, "previous question" means, as its nomenclature implies, to go back as you were before, ignoring any discussion on the question in point, (in this case the basic principles of Marxism) and proceed to the following item.

Rejecting the scientific method of approach to the fundamental social problems facing mankind, the theories formulated by Marx and Engels and elaborated and operated by Lenin and Trotsky, the I.L.P. prefers to continue its efforts to face in two direc-

tions at the same time. Verbally recognising the strength and capabilities of the proletariat, it is to the bourgeoisie that they always turn in times of stress. The Abyssinian and Munich debacles, the Summer Welles and Lord Tavistock episodes, leave no room for doubt on this issue. We cannot but share Lenin's view that the I.L.P. is "independent" only of socialism.

The wheels of history will continue, however, to revolve and ultimately

prove too strong for the brake being at present applied by the Reformist, Stalinist and Centrist leaderships of the proletariat. The despairing efforts of these people to frustrate the laws of historical progress will only serve to demonstrate to the masses all the more clearly that the crisis in the culture of mankind will only be finally resolved by the actions of the oppressed themselves at whose head will stand the parties of the Fourth International.

Otto Kuusinen

He Came, He Saw, HeWENT

So much has been written of the international aspect of the Russian-Finnish episode, that the epic drama of the heroic Finnish People's Government and its outstanding leader, Otto Kuusinen is threatened with obscurity in the history of the future. In order therefore, that posterity shall not be deprived of these details, we place them on record as reported in the DAILY WORKER.

On Friday, December 1st 1939 the Finnish people "went into action... the working people revolted and established a Provisional Peoples' Government in Terijoki." It called for "general revolt and seizure of power in Helsinki." "Established by the will of the Finnish people" it issued a proclamation the same evening: "Our Government is democratic... Our State is not a State of the Soviet type, for the Soviet regime cannot be established by a government without the will of the people."

"In tremendous developments over the week-end, the new Peoples' Government of Finland issued a vast programme of social reforms... concluded a pact of

mutual assistance and friendship with the Soviet Union."

By December 5th "At Terijoki and other places enthusiastic meetings of workers and peasants are celebrating the establishment of a new Peoples' Government.... A great meeting of people of Petsamo which enthusiastically welcomed the formation of the Peoples' Government of Finland headed by that tried and tested fighter for the happiness of the working people - Otto Kuusinen," declared themselves "profoundly convinced that the hour is not far distant when the people having risen up and become free, will, with the aid of the Red Army once and for all liberate Finland...." The "working people of the village of Rainola all as one man join with the Peoples' Government and endorse its treaty.... with the Soviet Union." In all the villages of the "liberated area" big celebration meetings were held to welcome the establishment of the Peoples' Government with Otto Kuusinen as its Premier.

Nor was the far reaching influence and support of this Government limited to the confines of the Finnish frontiers.

By December 9th it had the backing of the British Communist Party. "The uprising of the Finnish people... is sweeping forward to victory" the Secretariat declared. By January 12th 1940 "resolutions enthusiastically supporting the new Finnish People's Government under Kuusinen are being passed by Finns living in America.

From Moscow Comrade Stalin sent a message to Kuusinen personally: "I wish the Finnish people and the People's Government of Finland speedy and complete victory over the oppressors of the Finnish people, over the Mannerheim-Tanner gang." In the British House of Commons Mr. W. Gallacher, M.P. stated: "I am absolutely positive that once the People's Government is ruling in Finland, Finland will be greater, freer and happier than ever."

On December 14th we learned: "with rapidly growing support for the People's Government... the triumph of the Finnish People's Republic draws near. It will not suffer the same fate as Spain." Before Christmas work was in progress on "two short railways in Terijoki neighbourhood."

So widespread was this Government's fame and influence by January 3rd that it became necessary to inform the people in Finland itself of its existence. "All the inhabitants of the village (Harokhka) attended a general meeting where they learned of the establishment of the People's Government of Finland." And by January 20th in its smashing drive towards socialism, this government had in Karku, reduced the price of salt by $\frac{1}{2}$ mark, matches by 1 mark and coffee by 15 marks. The poor peasants, four of them, received a cow and a horse each.

In far away Silvertown, Mr. Pollitt assured the electors that: "The victory of the Finnish People's Government will mean the real liberation of

the Finnish people on the road to Socialism."

By February 27th Petsamo was in the hands of the new Government which had added 10,000 artillery shells and 5,000,000 cartridges to its socialist arsenal by the seizure of BJORKE Island.

On March 9th the DAILY WORKER produced an exclusive article by "Otto Kuusinen Premier of the People's Government" proclaiming "Mannerheim's approaching doom." But it was the funeral oration not only of Mannerheim but of the Premier himself and the People's Government, because two days later the DAILY WORKER, commenting on Mr. Kuusinen's pronouncement, made its last reference to this gentleman and his Provisional Government. The "democratic government, established by the will of the Finnish people disappeared into thin air overnight.

Undoubtedly, as an offering to the historians of the future, this "factual" record as far from complete, but it suffices as an indication of the wretchedness of the miserable, willow-spined liegemen of the Kremlin Messiah.

The very fact that the DAILY WORKER published these ludicrous reports in all seriousness goes to prove that cynical contempt for the toiling masses, and in particular those who blindly support it, is not the sole prerogative of the Stalin bureaucracy, but is reflected throughout the mercenary leadership of the entire Comintern apparatus.

A fundamental principle of Leninism is to speak the truth to the masses - no matter how bitter it may be, a principle which still finds expression in the programme and practice of Lenin's true successors - the cadres of the Fourth International.

Mounting Crisis in India

The heaviest blows of the war have fallen so far on the other side of the Suez - on India. There is a famine in India, not a natural one but an artificial one caused by a phenomenal rise in prices which has pushed even the necessities of life almost beyond the reach of the masses.

In several instances, the poor have taken things into their own hands and forcibly seized goods from shops. The Associated Press, Reuter's Indian subsidiary, reported on January 27th, "a hundred and twenty persons were arrested here in connection with the looting of certain shops last night at Nathnager which is being guarded by the police today. Fifteen cases have been instituted against the men under arrest." A Calcutta paper reports on the same day, "a hundred and thirty seven persons have been arrested in the Central provinces and Berar on the alleged charge of looting shops at various places on December last."

Further proof is provided by the measures, futile though they are, to deal with the problem of rising prices. Remission of revenue has been granted to large sections of the peasantry, who in any case were unable to pay it. Another measure adopted is the opening of cheap grain shops under Government auspices. Five such grain shops were opened by the Government of Bombay to sell the coarsest type of wheat, rice and lentils to the city proletariat at uniform prices.

But the half-measures of the imperialist government inspire no confidence in its ability to deal with a problem which is nationwide in dimensions and

daily grows in intensity. Instinctively the masses distrust the government of imperialist finance-capital. The great strikes which are now taking place in all the industrial areas for war bonus, shows that the Indian workers know that the struggles against the sufferings and deprivations of the war does not lie in the direction of petitioning the government which carries on the war, but by mass action against the capitalists. That this struggle brings the masses immediately into conflict with the government is shown by the shootings of Jute workers on strike in Calcutta jute mills last month. Six months of war has produced a state of industrial unrest unparalleled in the history of India.

But to concentrate exclusively on the economic aspect of the struggle against the war is to lose sight of the most significant feature of the anti-imperialist movement in India today - the increasing participation of the masses in the political struggle for freedom. The most remarkable evidence of this mass awakening is provided by the fact that Independence Day on January 26th, was celebrated by the workers by a one-day general strike. In some places, as in Bombay, the workers compelled the mill-owners to declare the occasion a holiday, in other places where attempts were made to keep the factories open, the workers came out on strike. In Cawnpur, according to the Associated Press, "a serious situation arose near the J.K. Mills where about 3,000 strikers stormed the Mill Gate, threw stones and smashed window panes when their attempts to induce the workers in the Mill to come out and observe the strike failed."

"Out of the total of 42,000 mill workers about 20,000 were on strike, in answer to the call of the Mazdoor Sabha (Workers' Committee) following the refusal of the Employers Association to close the Mills in connection with Independence Day.

The general strike of the Indian proletariat on Independence Day and not the individualistic and desperate action of a confused terrorist, is the fitting reply to the reign of terror which the Chamberlain Government has let loose in India. The extent of the terror can be glimpsed from the following incident: "Mr. D.C. Hunter, District and Sessions Judge, Cawnpur, has convicted and sentenced one Jan Mohamad (55) said to be a communist, to imprisonment for life for conspiracy against the government. The accused had been charged with delivering a speech on September 3rd, ~~urging~~ the workers to prepare for armed rebellion against the government." (Bombay Chronicle, Feb. 2nd.) Thus in the eyes of the Czech and the Polish people for freedom from German domination is worthy of utmost support, but the struggle of the Indian people for the self-same object is treason to be ruthlessly suppressed. In one province alone, the Punjab, according to the statement of its reactionary Premier, 191 persons had been arrested under the Defence of India Ordinances, another 186 imprisoned for political conspiracy, since April last. The repression does not spare even children. In the Punjab, a child of 12 was recently arrested for singing patriotic songs at an anti-recruiting meeting. When our masters here try to arouse our righteous indignation against the cruelties and oppression of the Hitler gang in Poland and Czechoslovakia, we shall remember the countless arrests, savage sentences, police raids, repressive ordinances on India by the freedom-loving democrats of Threadneedle Street and Whitehall.

As the months pass by, the Indian revolution approaches closer, for, from whatever aspect the situation is viewed the crisis in India is mounting. Zetland's promise of Dominion Status at the end of the war - an offer on the same level of sincerity as Chamberlain's offer to abrogate the Trade Disputes Act when the war has been won - was repudiated by the resolution of the Indian National Congress, and its declaration for complete independence as its aim is illuminating. It proves not the determination of Gandhi and Nehru who lead the Congress to pursue the professed aim, but the rising tide of mass militancy among the workers, peasants and students who will not tolerate an open compromise with British imperialism. The Indian capitalist leaders, Gandhi-Nehru, whose main aim is to coax the struggle away from revolutionary ideas and methods and ultimately to betray it to Threadneedle Street, are beginning to realise that they must now assume a more leftist and pseudo-revolutionary mask and if necessary initiate another civil disobedience movement.

But any movement led by these agents of British imperialism is doomed to defeat and disaster. Mr. Gandhi will not countenance the class-struggle of the workers and peasants. "I must at once confess," says Mr. Gandhi, "that I have in my mind neither strike nor no-rent campaigns as part of the forthcoming struggle." (Bombay Chronicle, January 23rd.) But it is precisely because the masses signal their entry into the anti-imperialist struggle by striking at their immediate oppressors, by striking at the foundation of bourgeois leadership, that the Indian revolution can be led only to betrayal by the Gandhi-Nehru bloc. Only the proletariat leading the struggle of the oppressed masses, its spearhead the workers revolutionary party, can lead the struggle against imperialism to a victorious conclusion.