

MANUAL FOR POLITICS TODAY

WILLIAM GALLACHER

BACK before the First World War a lad named Norman Angell wrote a book entitled *The Great Illusion*. The great illusion being the idea that any nation could benefit from a European War. But this 'great illusion' was a moderate affair compared to the illusion on which the policy of the Labour Party was built by its petty-bourgeois leaders. Away with Marx and the class war, they cried. Such a teacher and such teaching may be good enough for 'foreigners', but there is no place for them in England. Here we do things differently. Here we can, by a continuous process of social reforms change capitalist society into socialist society, without the slightest disturbance of the social fabric. And just recently the secretary of the Labour Party informed the world at large that labour policy was based, not on Marxism but on Methodism. At the recent Labour Party conference his pal Deakin, far from preaching Methodism, was threatening murderism—murder of the Labour Party.

The great illusion of reforming capitalism out of existence arose when British imperialism was ruthlessly exploiting millions of oppressed colonial slaves. From the loot thereby obtained the bourgeoisie could afford to make certain concessions to the working class in the shape of social reforms. But now British capitalism and British imperialism are in deep and insoluble crisis. No more 'easy' reforms. On the contrary, the watchword of the Labour leaders is harder work and sacrifice. Now it has become obvious that if the workers want anything they've got to fight for it. But the present leadership is quite unfitted to lead a fight against capitalism. They have become a bulwark for capitalism against the advance of the

working class. The 'great illusion' has been blown away sky high by the revolt of the colonial peoples and the general crisis of capitalism. The Labour leaders can no longer offer a policy and programme suited to the needs of the working class. 'Challenge to Britain' is an exposure of their political bankruptcy. Their wretched performance at the Margate conference was further proof of this.

Now the delegates and the members as a whole, if they wish to save the movement from the decay and death prepared for it by its petty-bourgeois leaders, must turn to a study of Marxism and master the method of conducting the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. And how better could they start than by a study of Stalin's *Collected Works*.* What a valuable mine of Marxism is here for the British workers. I wish I could see every rank and file delegate who attended Margate with a copy of the third volume. As I read, I marvelled. Where is there anything in literature like this—so clear, so simple, so deep and so profound. Never an obscure sentence or an obscure thought. Here is a comrade who knew how to present an issue in its simplest form and how to provide the answer so that any interested worker could read and understand. This volume deals with the period from March 1917 (shortly before Lenin's return to Russia) till the eve of the Great October Revolution, a difficult, complicated and extremely dangerous period during which so many alleged socialists went completely astray. But through it all, calm and steady, there is the wise guiding hand of this great disciple of the mighty Lenin.

Read it, my young comrades of the Labour movement; please read it and see the lessons there for the situation that now confronts the workers of this country. On page 12, we get the all-important question presented: 'How can the incipient counter-revolution be curbed? What conditions are necessary for the victory of the Russian revolution?' In every page of the book in one form or another the answer is hammered home. Power in the hands of the workers and poor peasants; in the factories; on the land; in the army. The workers and poor peasants. Never any doubt, never any ambiguity. There lies the victory for the revolution. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (the Attlees, Deakins and Morrisons) were horrified at this and the advice the Bolsheviks were giving to the workers in the factories and to the poor peasants regarding seizure of the land. In the article 'The Land to the Peasants' we read (p. 37):

*J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (452 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 5s.)

We are told that immediate seizure of the landed estates would disrupt the 'unity' of the revolution by splitting off the 'progressive strata' of society from it. But it would be naive to think that it is possible to advance the revolution without quarrelling with the manufacturers and landlords. . . . People who want to influence the course of the revolution must realise once and for all: (1) that the main forces of the revolution are workers and poor peasants who, owing to the war, are now wearing soldiers' uniform: (2) that as the revolution grows deeper and wider the so-called 'progressive elements' who are progressive in word but reactionary in deed, will 'split off' from it inevitably.

Surely that is particularly applicable to what is going on in Britain. The right-wing leaders (typical Mensheviks) put a programme to save capitalism. The rank and file want to fight for the overthrow of capitalism—for socialism. 'You'll split the movement' they're told. Isn't it significant that it is always the right-wing leaders who raise this bogey? What do they mean? They mean that if the movement adopts a policy of fighting capitalism, they will refuse to put it into operation, and if such a policy is pushed too far, they will get out. Get out and good riddance, the membership should say and get ahead with the great task that lies before them—the task of transforming society. For God's sake, what loss would they be? People who put this point of view are not helping the movement forward, they're holding it back. Deakin made a threat of taking his union out of the Labour Party if the rank and file didn't accept the backward lead. But he couldn't do it if he tried. His co-delegates in all probability advised that he had made a bad blunder by his threat, hence his later fit of indignation in the course of which he made a complete retraction of his own threat and knocked hell out of the absent O'Brien.

To paraphrase Stalin, 'people who want to influence the course of the working-class movement in Britain must realise once and for all: (i) that the main forces for the overthrow of capitalism are the workers and the struggling colonial peoples: (ii) in the fight for the overthrow of capitalism, the right-wing labour and trade union leaders will inevitably "split off" and go over to the side of the enemy'.

And on this question of the colonial peoples there is a really splendid statement in his 'Speech in support of Comrade Lenin's Resolution on the current situation'. Following the speech there is 'Reply to the discussion on the National Question' from which I take this:

There is movement for independence in Ireland. On whose side are we, comrades? We are either for Ireland or for British imperialism. And

I ask: Are we on the side of the peoples which are resisting oppression, or on the side of the classes which are oppressing them?

We say, that inasmuch as the Social-Democrats (Bolshevik, W.G.) are striving for a socialist revolution, they must support the revolutionary movement of the peoples, which is directed against imperialism.

The lesson there for us is clear and unavoidable. With the people 'resisting oppression' in Malaya and Kenya or with those who are oppressing them? And now with warships rushed to Guiana, *whose side are we on?*

We are told in the Daily Press that the Queen signed the Order in Council revoking the Constitution 'on her return from church on Sunday morning'. They're in a hurry to get the guns going off in another part of the world. Why the rush? The people there voted the 'wrong' way. They voted for the Progressive Party and now there is talk of nationalising the sugar industry where the fearfully exploited workers are on strike against their British overlords. The miners here fought their mine-owner overlords for generations before they succeeded in getting nationalisation of the mines. Their conditions in the years gone by were bad, but nothing to those of the sugar workers in Guiana. Are they for the people resisting oppression or for the gun-boats and marines? Those who desire to advance towards socialism can have only one answer to such a question.

In an article on the municipal election campaign, Stalin makes a deadly exposure of the Mensheviks and their two-faced policy of saying one thing and doing its opposite. He goes on: 'The more adroitly they mask themselves with talk of "freedom" and "revolution" the more determinedly and ruthlessly must they be fought'. Here we are getting a surfeit of talk on 'freedom' from Labour leaders and their Tory associates. The 'free' nations. The latest addition to this sorry conglomeration is 'Franco' Spain. A resolution was passed on this at Margate but will the Labour leaders put up a fight? Not they. They are for the 'free' nations, and the common feature of all of these, with Franco Spain, as with the others, is freedom for the capitalists to rob the workers. Yes, the more they talk of 'freedom' and 'socialism' as a mask to cover their subservience to capitalist exploitation at home and imperialist oppression abroad, the more ruthlessly must we expose them.

In the July days the workers were defeated and the counter-revolution was victorious. The articles on these events should be earnestly studied. I will only point one lesson. Maybe Bevan and

his associates will take note of it. Maybe! Writing of the 'victory of the Cadets' he says:

For the question at issue was: Either the war goes on—in which case complete dependence on the British and American money market, the rule of the cadets, and the revolution curbed . . . or, transfer of the power to the revolutionary class. There was no third way, and the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries who sought for a third way were bound to go down.

Do you hear that, Mr. Bevan? Are you still looking for a third way between the workers and the capitalist class? You'll never find it. You're 'bound to go down'. Don't worry about your own personal advance—it's the advance of the working class that matters!

And now a special word to two of Bevan's lieutenants, Foot and Crossman. I can still see them standing there in the House of Commons talking about 'our social revolution', while at the same time supporting every American demand for increased armaments. What has happened to 'our social revolution'? It has vanished like the mirage it really was. Gone, never to return. The real thing will come only when the workers take over power for themselves.

But here is Stalin making a 'Report on the Political Situation' at the Sixth Congress of the Party. And here I may say that these reports and answers to questions must also get special attention. But then I'd have to say the same for every part of the book. I must repeat there's never been anything like it in the realm of literature. In one passage he refers to those who want:

A little revolution for the sake of a big war. The workers and peasants on the other hand, were out for a thorough break-up of the old order . . . a great revolution and peace.

What do you think of it, Mr. Foot? Will you write about it in the *Sunday Pictorial*, Mr. Crossman? Are you for a 'little revolution and a big war or for a thorough break-up of the old order—and peace'? There is no third way.

Following the July days and the arrest of many Bolsheviks, with Lenin in hiding and most of the printing presses smashed, Stalin has an article on 'Two Conferences'. It is extremely interesting particularly when we read 'They say that Bolshevism is dead and buried. But our esteemed grave-diggers are showing undue haste in burying us. We are still alive and the bourgeoisie will have plenty of occasion to tremble at the sound of our voice'. And in the weeks that followed, that voice, the voice of the workers and poor peasants, grew ever stronger and louder and the bourgeoisie and their menshevik allies had every reason to tremble. July 24 'They say that

Bolshevism is dead and buried'. Then in a few short, but fateful months, October 24, this:—

The Kishin-Konovalev government must be replaced by a government of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' deputies. That which was not done in February must be done now. Thus and thus alone, can peace, bread, land and liberty be won.

Workers, soldiers, peasants, Cossacks and all working people:

Do you want the present government of landlords and capitalists to be replaced by a new government, a government of workers and peasants? . . .

If you want this, muster all your forces, rise as one man, organise meetings and elect your delegations, and through them, lay your demands before the Congress of Soviets which opens tomorrow in the Smolny. . .

The power must pass into the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' deputies.

The stage was set. The revolution was about to take an accounting of the bourgeoisie. Every Party comrade, every active member of the Labour Party, everyone who desires to influence the course of the working-class movement towards its goal of socialism, must get this volume. It is absolutely essential for an understanding of the art of transforming bourgeois class society into the classless society that a foundation of socialist economy will surely one day establish.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

- Three Months in New China, by K. Naikunthawasan. People's Press, Ceylon; Central Books, London. 148 pp. 4s. 6d.
Labor Fact Book. Labor Research Association, New York. 160 pp. \$2.50.
13 Communists Speak to the Court. New Century Publishers, New York; Collet's, London. 95 pp. 3s. 6d.
The Changing Law, by Sir Alfred Denning. Stevens. 122 pp. 10s.
Marx and Engels on Malthus. Introduction by R. L. Meek. Lawrence & Wishart. 190 pp. 15s.
Scottish Chartism, by Leslie C. Wright. Oliver & Boyd. 242 pp. 21s.
Viet-Nam Fights for Freedom, by J. Starobin. Lawrence & Wishart. 62 pp. 2s. 6d.
The Vocabulary of Politics, by T. D. Weldon. Penguin Books. 200 pp. 2s.
Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete, by Bedrich Hrozný. Orbis, Prague; Collet's, London. 260 pp. 32s.
In the Image of Mao Tse-tung, by K. A. Abbas. People's Publishing House, Bombay. 106 pp. Rs. 2/4.
J. V. Stalin: Collected Works, Vol. II. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; Lawrence & Wishart, London. 440 pp. 5s.
The Game of Death, by Albert E. Kahn. Cameron & Kahn, New York. 256 pp. \$3.00.
The Truman Era, by I. F. Stone. Turnstile Press. 226 pp. 12s. 6d.
Crown Jewel, by Ralph de Boissiere. Australasian Book Society. 432 pp. 18s. 6d.
This Monstrous War, by Wilfred G. Burchett. Joseph Waters. 338 pp. 7s. 6d.
The Cloak and Dollar War, by Gordon Stewart. Lawrence & Wishart. 72 pp. 3s. 6d.
The Water Tower, by Andre Stii. Lawrence & Wishart. 240 pp. 10s. 6d.
The Children of the World Call to Us. Secretariat of the International Conference in Defence of Children. 212 pp. 2s.

PAMPHLETS

- The Formulation of the Conception of Aggression, by Mitchell Franklin, 30 pp.; Petition of Ethel Rosenberg, 24 pp.; International Association of Democratic Lawyers.
Inside South Korea, by J. Jenkins. Union of Democratic Control. 16 pp. 1s.
Who Is Behind Them?: The Economic League. Labour Research Department. 16 pp. 4d.
The Darkening Shadow over Africa by Basil Davidson. U.D.C. 12 pp. 4d.
Advance to Peace. Ex-Service Movement for Peace. 8 pp. 3d.
In Poland Today. British T.U. Delegation. British-Polish Friendship Society. 60 pp. 9d.
Science, Humanity and Peace. Foreword by R. L. M. Syngé, F.R.S. Science for Peace. 16 pp. 6d.

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