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**A
Congress
Socialist
Looks at
World-Politics**

By S. S. BATLIWALA

Ans. 4.

A CONGRESS SOCIALIST
LOOKS AT
WORLD POLITICS

BY S. S. BATLIWALA



A COMMUNIST SOCIALIST

BOOKS

WORLD POLITICS

BY S. BATHWALA

To
The much-maligned anti-Imperialist fighters
in our own country,
—the Communists.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION

WHEN Comrade M. R. Masani printed and put into circulation his little booklet styled "A FOREIGN POLICY FOR INDIA," towards the end of last year, I did not believe it needed a reply. Quite a lot of anti-Soviet books are available on the market, and I thought, at the most it would add one more to them. Even though Comrade Masani is an important member of the Congress Socialist Party (the party to which I too have the honour to belong), I believed that ignoring it was the best way to kill it. I had also fondly hoped that the advent of Congress Ministries would, in course of time, lift the ban on progressive literature, and then it would be easy for the public to get at the originals, and find out for themselves the deviations of Comrade Masani. But the hope has by now dwindled into a dying ember covered over with a thick layer of ashes. And in the meanwhile the little booklet of Comrade Masani has continued to do damage.

In spite of all this, I would have resisted being drawn into writing this reply, had it not been for the consistent attempts which Comrade Masani and men sharing his views have been making to bring the extension of their perverted angle of vision to bear on the all important question of left unity in our country. Their blind hatred of Soviet Russia and the Communist International have made them shut their eyes to several glaring facts of world and Indian politics.

to-day. Their analysis is undoubtedly un-Marxian, and is merely an echo of the foul tactics adopted by some of the I. L. Pers in England for the disruption of left unity. I have adopted Comrade Masani's booklet as a basis for criticism because he has reproduced most of the arguments used by this set of critics.

Needless to say, the booklet of Comrade Masani offers no solution worth the name for the difficult problem of chalking out a foreign policy for India. The reader will vainly search it for an exposition of the fundamentals that must guide us in our relations with Afghanistan or Persia or China or the various dominions and crown colonies of the Br. Empire,—or the major states of Japan and U.S.A. or any other country with which this policy would have relation. All he has attempted is a discussion of the European problem from a very interested angle, abused everything he suspects has emanated from the Soviet Union, and then in his conclusions made very inadequate and mechanical suggestions. This booklet is undoubtedly unworthy of any genuine socialist or even a democrat, with a sense of justice and fair play.

I have thought it necessary to attach two appendices to this brochure. One is an article by Mr. A. Kellermann on the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union; the second is the full text of the interview given by Comrade Stalin to Mr. Roy-Howard. All are authentic documents and have appeared in the press before. They have been added here in the hope that they will materially help the reader in the understanding of the various issues, and serve as ready-reference.

14, Club Road,
Bombay, 1-3-'38

S. S. Battivala,

“WAR IS INEVITABLE”—A WRONG SLOGAN

THE inevitability of another world war forms the starting point of Comrade Masani's thesis. He declares: “Another world war is inevitable. The only questions still open are when it will come, where it will break out and who will be the contestants.”—(page 5). The fight for peace is, according to him, useless, or rather, worse than useless, as it creates illusions. It is obvious that he fails to understand the real meaning of the Marxist-Leninist teaching that the capitalist system is indissolubly linked with war, that capitalism cannot develop without enveloping the peoples in the horrors of war. He interprets it in a mechanical, fatalistic way. And fatalism is by no means Marxism.

The correct position to take in this matter is well illustrated in the Resolution on the report of M. Ercoli in the 7th Congress of the C. I.:

“...While fighting against the illusion that war can be eliminated while the capitalist system still exists, we exert and will exert, every effort to prevent war. Should a new imperialist world war break out, despite all efforts of the working class to prevent it, we will strive to lead the opponents of war, organised in the struggle for peace, to the struggle for the trans-

formation of the imperialist wars into a civil war against the fascist instigators of war, against the bourgeoisie for the overthrow of capitalism."

The mechanical point of view necessarily leads you to the position that as long as the capitalist regime lasts, the fight for peace is a hopeless fight, and should not be fought.

Even in times of pending crisis, the struggle for peace is not useless. Every week, every month, that war is postponed, humanity is saved untold misery and slaughter, as also time is gained for closing up our ranks, making preparations for the victory of revolution. So it is not merely a humanitarian argument that moves us.

Let us remember the words of Lenin: "It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united. It is in our interest to do all that is possible to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment the revolutionary ranks of the single, great, international army has been United" (Lenin—Selected Works Vol. VII—"Left Wing Childishness and Petty Bourgeois mentality.").

Again, war is not the only time when a favourable situation for fight for the revolution, for the conquest of power, arises. Also if we have not harnessed the masses in the time of peace, created confidence in them, taught them to organise, war will catch us unprepared. The slogan that "War is inevitable" will demoralise the masses. The slogan that "fight for peace can and must be waged" will unite them in a

common bond, and prepare the path for the final success.

And to-day there are reasons why we can confidently assert that the fight for peace is a real fight. The existence of the Soviet Union a bulwark for the preservation of peace, is not an insignificant fact as Comrade Masani makes out. The triumphant Working Class of the Soviet Union has gone from strength to strength, not only building up a powerful state able to withstand the worst attack, but through the success of its economic programme, has created confidence in the working class of the world and given them a concrete object from which to draw inspiration.

The Communist International has to-day determined militant affiliated parties operating in 65 countries of the World, all solidly pledged to the fight for peace. In an ever widening front the working classes of the different capitalist states are harnessing their resources to the same end. Huge strike struggles are training them for revolutionary utilisation of war crisis. To dismiss all this by a phrase: "Collapse of organised opposition on the part of the international labour movement" is, to say the least, a positive misreading of the actual position.

Comrade Masani completely ignores another argument. He does not realise that the hatred of imperialist war has grown to great proportions. What was witnessed in Spain, where the forward section of the intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements from all over Europe thronged inside the International Brigade, is reminiscent of the days of the Crusades. To-day, over and above the Working Class, a huge mass of

the petty-bourgeoisie is ready to be drawn in the Crusade against Fascism, the disruptor of peace and democracy.

There is yet another argument as to why the struggle against war is a reality. At the present time the imperialists themselves do not possess a united front. Side by side with the war-mongers exist bourgeois states who fear war and desire peace. If the conflagration is once lighted, they argue, who can predict what will happen to our frontiers, our independence, our freedom. This is especially true of the smaller states.

The great contribution made by the Soviet Union towards the cause of peace appears to Comrade Masani to be actuated by narrow "diplomatic consideration." The great fight that communists all over the world are waging to rally broad masses against war-instigators appears to him to be based on an opportunist differentiation "between Fascism and bourgeois democracy" and therefore, anti-Leninist.

"1914 AGAIN"—A FALSE ANALOGY

THE next point which Com. Masani makes is his analysis of the present conditions. He states: "I am quite aware there are some differences in the situation as it exists, and that which existed on the eve of the last Great War.... But these differences pale into insignificance when put in juxtaposition to the essential resemblances." (page 5.)

...."If war breaks out in near future, we must realise that the unfortunate history of 1914 is likely to be repeated" (page 16.)

It is incorrect and absurd to say that the situation that faced the World in 1914 is the same as that of today. The whole balance of forces has altered. Profound changes have taken place in the two decades. The analogy is not only wrong but harmful. Let us compare

1. Imperialism or monopoly capitalism has developed its contradictions much further than in 1914. The possibilities of expansion are still less today. The capitalist world has been certainly narrowed by 1/6 of the area available by the appearance of the U.S.S.R.

2. In 1914 the world was not divided between the world of capitalism and the world of socialism. The Bolshevik Party, a small group operating in Russia without any base worth the name in other countries, was the sole party of socialism. Today Soviet Russia stands out as a huge pillar of Socialism, supported by the organised Working Class in most of the capitalist countries. Imperialist offensive has got a target which it did not possess before. The Working Class of the World has a citadel of which it could not dream before.

3. Again, Fascism, has reared its head and has put a new construction on the alignment of forces. In 1914, the power of the bourgeoisie could afford to rule everywhere with parliamentary democracy. Today it is not so. Repeated crisis has shaken confidence. Many major capitalist States have adopted forms of disclosed or open Fascist dictatorship. Each one of the fascist dictatorships holds down the masses by brutal terror and carries beneath it a dynamite which may burst forth any

time especially during a war. Already from every country we are receiving news of determined opposition slowly but steadily raising its head against ruthless exploitation. Mussolini is indulging in frantic heroics in order to avoid economic collapse; Hitler is always running up against broadcasts which are anathema to him; the Japanese war-lords find their soldiers lying dead on the battlefields of China decked with anti-war placards and letters.

4. Apart from this, today the colonial peoples are rising in revolt, declaring unequivocally their determination to shake off the imperialist yoke by taking advantage of a war crisis. The anti-imperialist consciousness, organisation and general fighting strength of the peoples is far greater.

5. "The idea of storming capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses" everywhere, and everywhere solid disciplined parties, understanding the basis of imperialism, conversant with its theory and tactic, ready with their own plan of action have been growing. In Spain and China mighty mass resistances are being staged successfully against predatory imperialism and are leading mass movements against war. The world today has learnt its lesson from these mass resistances, has learnt to recognise its enemy and the best method of fighting it.

6. Today the whole approach has to be different. In 1914 the issues were not so clarified. Today the Berlin Axis, the tie that binds Germany, Italy and Japan, is the source from which danger arises. In 1914, the "principal culprit" propaganda was used for hiding the aggressive aims of the imperialists. Impe-

rialism cannot hope to fool anybody with the same jargon again. The fascist war-mongers have been completely exposed.

7. In 1914 the genuine fighters for socialism could only work for the defeat of their own imperialist government; today the Workers' State Soviet Russia, affords them a concrete object for which to struggle.

8. The collapse of Social-Democracy on August 4, was but a natural corollary to the reformism and centrism that were dominant in the pre-war Second International. Today the international labour movement cannot be said to be in the same weak condition. The communists are not a negligible force, and their tactic of United Front is bringing them tremendous support. The international labour movement, while it was not able to prevent the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and Austria, did successfully prevent it in France, in Czechoslovakia and in Spain. In U.S.A., the labour movement is stronger than ever before. In Britain, the democratic masses stand for peace, for sanctions against aggressive imperialisms. Brighter prospects for one consolidated International, true to its line, were never better.

9. Apart from this, the conscience of the world has awakened to the enormity of danger involved in a modern war. Soldiers and scientists, have opened our eyes to the fact that a mechanised war with aeroplanes and gas bombs and bacterial infections holds out horrors which will wipe out our civilisation. The Spanish, Abyssinian and Chinese cataclysms are proofs of this. War today is bound to bring in its wake revolt of the whole population because of the whole-

sale disruption it will involve. In 1914 science had not taken the leaps which it has in the post-1914 era, and certainly had not placed in the hands of the imperialist robbers the instruments of barbarity and ruthless destruction that it has today.

To sum up—the tremendous growth of anti-War sentiments among the broad masses of people, the gathering strength of national movements in colonies, the leftward swing and growing consciousness and unity in working class ranks, the existence of a number of capitalist States that for the moment are opposed to war, and above all, the growth of the Soviet Union as a World Power, which nevertheless is a consistent fighter for Peace, opens up today the perspective of uniting all democratic and peace-loving forces against the war instigators—the Fascists. This is a very different picture to 1914.

We agree with Com. Ercoli when he says in his "Fight for Peace" "the most objective examination of the international situation and the mass movement, and of their perspectives, inevitably brings us to the conclusion that for all capitalist countries the beginning of war will denote the onset of a revolutionary crisis. . . .".

"HUNGRY" AND "SATIATED" POWERS— A FASCIST OUTLOOK

THE next assumption which Comrade Masani makes is a division of imperialist powers into "hungry" and "satiated" powers. He writes:

"It is true that Germany, Italy and Japan are what may be called "hungry" powers, who are depriv-

ed or kept out by the Treaty of Versailles of colonial possessions, and now demand a "place in the sun." On the other hand there are France and Britain who did well out of the Treaty of Versailles, and who are therefore "satiated" powers, whose main concern is to defend their ill-gotten gains. In the past few years, the Soviet Union, which had hitherto denounced the League of Nations as a gang of Imperialist robbers, has joined that organisation and has been making consistent attempts to weld these Powers who desire the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* into a **bloc** based on the maintenance of Peace and Democracy." (Page 6).

The division of the modern world into "hungry" and "satiated" powers is not a new division for a student of political science. Hitler and Mussolini as well as the Japanese, made out their case for "expansion" on this ground. They have maintained that the lack of mineral resources, an expanding population, cornering of colonies by the "Haves," the essential "unequal distribution of wealth by the Treaty of Versailles," are driving them to attack and forcibly take possession of "backward" Abyssinia or China. They have declared that if "peace" must be ensured, it can only be by a "revision" of the Treaty, or a "re-distribution of colonies." This is the fashionable theory sought to be popularised among the masses by the fascists, so that the real nature of imperialist aggression may be kept hidden from the general view,—all under the cloak of "necessity," coupled with "injustice" perpetuated by the unfortunate Treaty of Versailles!

The division of the world into the "satiated" and "unsatiated" Powers was made by Bismark, the astute diplomat, as far back as the nineteenth century. The fascists today are merely borrowing his phraseology to conceal their desire for imperialist expansion.

But Marxists cannot fall a prey to this clever subterfuge. They know that the "hungry" are the proletariat, the poor exploited workers of the world, and the "satiated" are the bourgeoisie, the rich exploiters of the world. Germany, Italy and Japan possess in themselves those who are denied "a place in the sun," as also those "whose main concern is to defend their ill-gotten gains." They know that this clever theory has the germ of a poisonous half-truth, that it seeks to explain away with a plausible phrase the basic brutality of imperialism whose main concern is to devour lands and minerals of other peoples, and prosper on the fat of the colonials.

The division of the imperialist powers into peace-loving "haves" and war-mongering "have-nots" is disastrous for several reasons. Not only does it serve as cloak for fascist aggression, fooling the masses into the belief that what is wrong with the world is the present arbitrary distribution of colonies to be set right by another arbitrary distribution more favourable to the fascist powers, but it definitely diverts attention from class-exploitation which is the root cause of the misery of the world in general, and of the misery of the fascist states in particular. Not only does it foster an illusion that Imperialist rivalries can be liquidated and the millennium achieved within the framework of capitalism by resorting to a system of international free trade or free access to raw materials,

glorifying French and British predatory Imperialisms as forces interested in the *status quo*, no more desiring expansion, but it presupposes the necessity of the colonial system as a *sine qua non*, for peace. This dangerous theory is based on the presupposition that the colonial peoples must continue for all time in subjection and allow themselves to be exploited by the "hungry" powers instead of the "satiated" powers so that the causes of world conflict may be removed!

Even at its face value, the theory is absurd. Who, but an ignoramus, would characterise Britain as a "satiated" power? After the conquest of Sudan in 1898 and of the Boer Republics in 1902 it was said that Britain was "satiated," in the sense that it had everything it wanted in the world. In 1918, after the Treaty of Versailles, this was still more so. And yet, can we forget the recent attempt by Britain to partition Palestine and take off a huge slice of Arabia under its dominance? No imperialism can ever be "satiated" the desire for expansion is ever growing, and with the first opportunity it manifests itself. Again, Italy has annexed Abyssinia and thereby won her coveted "place in the sun". Has that made her a "satiated" power, a peace-loving supporter of the *status quo*? Far from it, today there are whole divisions of the Italian army in Spain.

Since 1931, Japan has conquered Manchuria, Jehol and Chahar. This immense territory, rich in mineral resources and fertile soil, has not appeased the "hunger" of the Japanese fascists. On the contrary Japan is once again invading China and this time for a much bigger bait.

Sir Thomas Holland, in his well-known analysis of the distribution of 25 indispensable primary commodities, declared that the British Empire ("satiated") had no supplies of only five, France ("satiated") of nineteen, Japan ("hungry") of seventeen, Germany ("hungry") of nineteen, Italy ("hungry") of twenty-one. If lack of these commodities was the criterion, then France must be termed "hungry" and the smaller states of Europe should be in the forefront of warmongers instead of being the pillars of collective security.

If excess of population in the sense of density, over-crowding and consequent low standard of living was the cause of making a country "hungry" for expansion, then China would eclipse all other countries in a policy of aggression and expansion. But this is not so.

How is it that Tsarist Russia was always a 'hungry' Power in search of expansion, and Soviet Russia today, in spite of its smaller geographical area and a bigger population is a "satiated" and peace-loving Power?

The answer is simple. This theory of "hungry" and "satiated" powers does not and cannot explain the world conflict at the present time. Imperialist powers, in their role as imperialist powers, are rushing into conflict, and it suits them to adopt this convenient theory to justify their nefarious deeds, to hoodwink the masses and get their support.

Having accepted as correct this mischievous fascist theory of the "haves" and "have-nots," Com.

Masani proceeds to attribute to the Soviet policy for peace and the same basis, and then predicts that it is doomed to failure!

WHAT DETERMINES FOREIGN POLICY?

THE next confusion is on page 6, where he says:

"The foreign policy of a state is governed not so much by whether its administration is a parliamentary democracy or a dictatorship as by the class composition of its government on the one hand and its own imperialist interests on the other."

According to Com. Masani the character of a government, its class composition and its imperialistic interests are all mutually unrelated factors. What he fails to grasp is that the class composition of a government is itself determined by the **relation of class forces** in the country. This also determines the character of the Government, whether it is a workers', bourgeois-democratic, Peoples' Front or a fascist government. The relation of class forces in any given country at any given time is certainly not the only, but the **decisive**, factor in determining the foreign policy of the government concerned. This is an elementary principle of Marxism.

Comrade Masani seems to think that the fact that Germany, Italy and Japan have been following the most aggressive chauvinistic policy and waging war against the Abyssinians, Spanish and Chinese people has nothing to do with the other fact that in these countries working class, liberal and pacifist, and even oppositionist bourgeois organisations have been banned, all democratic rights destroyed, and bru-

tal terroristic dictatorship established. For him, the explanation of Hitler and Mussolini that they represent "have not" powers, and so are compelled to follow an aggressive policy is correct. For him, the necessity to point out that the people of Germany and Italy are really not behind Hitler and Mussolini and that these fascist tyrants are merely the henchmen of the capitalistic class does not arise.

The **decisive** factor in determining the foreign policy of a country **today** is **not** its possession or non-possession of colonies,—though that too is one of the factors,—but the **relation of class forces** within the country on the one hand and the relation of the world of capitalism with the world of socialism on the other. This realisation must constitute the starting point of every estimation and analysis of the international situation. This point will be dealt with later.

"BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IS SITTING ON THE FENCE"—AN INCORRECT ESTIMATION

COMRADE Masani once again errs when he classifies British foreign policy today as undecided. He states: "In the vital clash between Germany and France on the one hand, and between Germany and Russia on the other, Britain is obviously sitting on the fence." (pages 7-8).

There can be no doubt whatsoever as to the policy adopted by Britain in her foreign affairs. It is a policy which is neither hesitant nor wavering. It is a policy which is cold-blooded and consistent, though attempts have been made systematically to cloak it in mystery.

In order to ensure the support of British public opinion, considerable pains have been taken by the British cabinet to make it appear that it is the upholder of peace, the enemy of War and war-mongers, the supporter of justice and equity, and the bitter foe of fascist aggression. But its deeds tell another story. If we go back to the Versailles Treaty, it was the "perfidious Albion" that stood in the way of Clemenceau making ruthless safeguards against a possible re-arming of Germany. The work of re-building Germany was undertaken as soon as the fear of the success of the working-class revolution had definitely been laid low. It was Britain that made the scheme of the Protocol impossible, and in 1925 got Locarno, or the scheme of the Western European Pact, adopted. This policy of the Western European Pact lies at the bottom of all manoeuvres made by Britain. It is a policy definitely aimed at Soviet Russia. It also strives for the formation of a bloc against the United States, the biggest rival and competitor of the British Empire.

Till 1927 Britain was too involved in the general strike at home to be able to follow up the Locarno plans. By the time the Arcos Raid took place, the Baldwin Government was ready for action. Relations with Soviet Russia were broken off; raids on Soviet consular offices in Canton and Shanghai had been brought off; Warsaw witnessed the provocation of the murder of the Soviet Ambassador; Birkenhead made concrete proposals to Berlin and Paris for a British-German and French coalition to smash Soviet Government and support a bourgeois-democratic Government in Russia, instead. But fortunately France chose to sign the non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia just

at this time, and Stresemann also declared his helplessness in face of the German working class and democratic opposition. The World Economic crisis made Britain desperate and determined. It was necessary to smash completely the German Working-Class, and Hitler became the pet of British finance-capital. Hitler was not only helped to attain power, but was definitely helped to rearm Germany. The city of London assured credit, the British armament firms poured out guns, the British Foreign Office took up the position of active connivance—all with the specific desire to see a "strong" Germany emerge, a Germany which would back up British schemes against Soviet Russia.

Then Britain joined hands with Mussolini in the Four Power Pact of 1933. Geneva witnessed the scandal of Britain openly advocating the acknowledgement of German re-armament. Once again it was Britain that exerted its pressure on France at this time, and successfully prevented the coalition of France, Czechoslovakia and Poland for nipping Hitler in the bud. In 1934, Britain facilitated the German-Polish Treaty. In 1935, Britain signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement which dealt a mortal blow to the Versailles Treaty regarding the naval disarmament clauses. In 1936, Britain stood by and watched the armed occupation of the Rhineland by Hitler, and put sufficient pressure once again on France to let Hitler have his own way. Then comes the scandal of the "Non-Intervention Committee," when Britain once again adopted its policy of apparent vacillations—"sitting on the fence"—in order to really facilitate German-Italian aggression in Spain. Needless to say

it was Britain that sabotaged the "sanctions" against Italy over the Abyssinian disgrace.

But let us turn to more recent history. The British National Government goes in for a huge re-armament programme. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, glorifies in his "love-letters" to Mussolini. Lord Halifax takes precedence over Eden in visiting Hitler in Berlin. Eden gives up the ghost, resigns Foreign Secretaryship, as he is unable to go the full length of being bullied by the fascist dictators. A first class cabinet crisis ensues. But Chamberlain is quite obdurate. "On with the policy,—not a hair's breadth wavering!" As in 1925, and again in 1933, the appeal is to the spirit of "realism," the concession is to fascist domination in Europe,—with the Western European Pact as a basis. France is to be broken off from the Franco-Soviet Pact. In France, the working class and the democratic opposition are too much alive, their back yet remains to be broken. Britain must concentrate on creating crisis for the Peoples' Front in France. France is to be bullied into submission. The smaller states must be made to see "reason." And for all this a powerful Germany and Italy will prove formidable arguments.

The National Government does not accept Hitler or Mussolini as its main *betes-noires*. It considers socialism, which today is inseparable from democracy and peace, typified by the Soviet Union a much greater danger. If the Empire is threatened seriously it is by this scourge of socialism. Italy, or even Italy and Germany combined can never hurt it, disrupt it, to the same extent.

And Britain calculates on the possibility of a deal with the three fascist dictatorships. Britain believes that it can appease Germany by facilitating German hegemony over Central and Southern Europe; Italy by concessions in the Mediterranean zone, Abyssinia and Spain, Japan by a free hand in the Pacific and China. This would keep the Empire intact, and yet preserve fascism as an active aggressive force to combat socialism and the danger that comes from democracy.

In the meanwhile, fascism takes up its victims one by one. "Localised Wars" go on, with Britain "keeping the ring clear" for fascism to win. And fascism ostensibly "marches from strength to strength," whilst in reality suffers more and more from economic exhaustion. Britain doles out its surplus capital by way of loans to the fascist powers and thus exerts a very conclusive pressure on them. Britain is utilising the period for conserving its resources and making further preparations. Britain is arming at a tremendous rate for the war that must come in the near future because of the contradictions of imperialism. This policy necessitates clever phrase-mongering, use of "liberal" jargon, a cloak of mystery to enshroud the real aims, and "convincing arguments" about "realism," "justice" etc. Bluff is its code-word. Comrade Masani has failed to grasp the essentials of British foreign policy when he maintains: "Undoubtedly...the British cabinet is divided between a pro-German and a pro-Franco-Russian Policy," and so, "today England is sitting pretty."

This is exactly what the pro-fascist National Government of Britain would like the democratic masses

to believe, raising as it does a lurking hope that Britain will play correct in the final crisis. This is just the dope Chamberlain wished to be doled out to the "opposition," to the democratic masses. The National Government would be exposed if it showed itself in its true colours. The masquerade of "impartiality" and "justice to Germany," and again "non-intervention" in Spain, are all well-calculated plans.

SLANDERS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION

AFTER having taken a fascist stand with regard to world imperialist contradictions, Com. Masani turns to the Soviet Union and the Communist International. Naturally, his source of inspiration and knowledge on these latter subjects is Trotsky. Tearing out a bit from the recorded talks between Stalin and Roy-Howard he tries to prove that the Communist International has thrown World Revolution overboard and has become nationalistic, that defence of the Soviet Union and not world revolution is the keynote of Stalin's policy.

If we examine a little closely the way in which Comrade Masani has quoted this interview, we are bound to come to the conclusion that a deliberate attempt has been made to suppress significant and very relevant sentences.

His "quotation" runs thus:

Howard: "Is war inevitable?"

Stalin: "I think that the position of the friends of peace is growing stronger; the friends of peace can work openly, they rely upon the strength of public

opinion, they have at their disposal such instruments, for instance, as the League of Nations."

The original, runs thus:

Howard: "Seemingly the entire world is today predicting another great war. **If war proves inevitable, when do you think it will come?**"

Stalin: "This is impossible to predict. War may break out unexpectedly. Nowadays wars are not declared. They simply start. But on the other hand I believe that the position of the friends of peace is growing stronger. The friends of peace are able to work in the open, basing themselves upon the force of public opinion. They have at their disposal such instruments as, for instance, the League of Nations. This is an advantage for the friends of peace. **Their strength lies in the fact that their activities against war are based on the wide masses of the people. There is no people in the world desiring war. As regards the enemies of peace they are forced to work secretly. This is a disadvantage to the enemies of peace. However there remains the possibility that on account of this very fact they may embark upon a military adventure as an act of desperation. One of the newest successes of the friends of peace is the ratification of the France-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance by the French Chamber. This pact represents a certain obstacle to the enemies of peace.**"

Mr Masani goes on to quote:

Howard: "What are your plans and intentions as to the world revolution?"

Stalin: "We never had any such plans or intentions. This is the result of misunderstanding."

Howard: "A tragic misunderstanding?"

Stalin: "No comic, or if you please tragi comic."

But the original reads:

Howard: "May there not be an element of danger in the genuine fear, existing in what you term the capitalist countries, of an intention on the part of the Soviet Union to force its political theories on other nations?"

Stalin: "There is no justification for such fears. If you think that the people of the Soviet Union have any desire themselves, and moreover, by force, to alter the face of the surrounding states then you are badly mistaken. The people of the Soviet Union naturally desire that the face of the surrounding states should change, but this is the business of the surrounding states themselves. I fail to see what dangers the surrounding states can see in the ideas of the Soviet people, if these states are really firmly seated in their saddles."

Howard: "Does this statement of yours mean that the Soviet Union has to any degree abandoned its plans and intentions to bring about a world revolution?"

Stalin: "We never had any such plans or intentions."

Howard: "You appreciate no doubt, Mr. Stalin, that much of the world has for long entertained a different impressions?"

Stalin: "This is the product of misunderstanding."

Howard: "A tragic misunderstanding?"

Stalin: "No comic. Or perhaps tragi-comic. You see we Marxists believe that revolution will occur in other countries as well. But it will come at a time when it will be considered possible or necessary by the revolutionists in those countries. Export of revolution is nonsense. Each country if it so desires, will make its own revolution, and if no such desire exists, no revolution will occur. For instance our country wanted to effect a revolution and did effect it, and now we are building a new classless society. But to assert that we desire to bring about revolution in other countries by interfering with their way of life means to speak of something that does not exist, and which we have never preached."

The method and manner of quoting Stalin is certainly objectionable. Com. Masani lays himself open to the grave charge of twisting the whole meaning of Stalin, especially so in the second and subsequent questions and answers. He cuts off the quotation at a very significant point, allowing the reader to come to the conclusion that even Stalin himself acknowledges the fact that "World Revolution" has been abandoned by Soviet Russia. Comrade Masani goes further and himself declares, in the heading to this chapter: "World Revolution Overboard!"

This is just what Trotsky would applaud.

When we read the replies of Stalin in full, we are forced to the conclusion that Comrade Masani has consciously suppressed the real gist of the answer, in

his anxiety to get Soviet Russia condemned. This is going a bit too far even for an anti-Soviet enthusiast. Com. Masani could have given the devil his due, and openly dissociated himself from the theory and practice of Socialism in Soviet Russia. But that would have classed him with the fascists. What Com. Masani wants to do is to give the impression that he is a real Communist, a true follower of Marx and Lenin, whilst the Communist International, the U.S.S.R., along with all the Communist Parties of 65 countries of the world, are all flirting with Imperialist countries and have abandoned Socialism. So, he clips quotations, twists phrases and whole sentences, searches the files of the "New Leader" for anti-Soviet lies.

He wants us to believe that defence of the Soviet Union and "world revolution" are two **contradictory** and **antagonistic** aims. The defence of the Soviet Union itself is one of the tasks, a major task for achieving world revolution. This, with all his pompous phrase-mongering about internationalism, he does not understand.

He attempts to teach the lesson that "the real method of defending the Soviet Union is to weaken the position of imperialism and strengthen those of the proletariat and the colonial peoples." (page 11).

It is impossible to understand what he wishes to imply. If he means that the Communist International is not striving day and night "to weaken the position of imperialism and strengthen those of the proletariat and the colonial peoples," then obviously he is wrong. For this, we need not study the thesis and resolutions of the International. The history of the last two years

is enough. In every struggle against imperialism and capitalism, in every country of the world, the Communist Parties have been in the forefront. Spain, France, Germany, Brazil, China—everywhere, Communists lead the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist movements. Even the worst critic of the Communists cannot conceal this glaring fact.

If Comrade Masani means however that it is “anti-Leninist” for the Workers’ State to form military alliances with imperialist powers, or that it is “opportunist” to utilise inter-Imperialist rivalries, then again he is wrong.

When in May 1918 a proposal for military alliance was made to the Soviet Republic by the Anglo-French Allies, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia rejected the proposal not on grounds of principle, but of simple political expediency. Lest Comrade Masani should consider the statement heretical let us quote what Lenin wrote on the occasion.

“Without renouncing in general military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other, in cases where such an agreement without violating the basis of Soviet Power could reinforce the position of the latter, and paralyse the attack of any imperialist power against it, we cannot at the present moment accept a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition.”

If Com. Masani took an honest Marxian stand, and attempted to understand Leninism, he would not have classed the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance as a criminal act. The Franco-Soviet Pact is not

an exclusive pact. Any power is free to join it on the same terms. Soviet foreign policy is not based, as Comrade Masani seems to think on the principle of uniting ‘Satiated’ imperialist powers against ‘Hungry’ ones. It is based on Peace. The proof of this lies in the repeated declarations of the Soviet leaders that the Soviet Union is ready to enter into a non-aggression pact with any country. The proof of this lies in the repeated refusal of the war-mongering powers and their ally, Britain, to accept the Soviet proposal.

Comrade Masani, because of his blind hatred of the Soviet Union and the Communist International does not even bother to keep himself correctly informed. He goes on describing the disastrous consequence of the Franco-Soviet Pact thus:

“In France the first result of the Franco-Soviet Pact was the abandonment of opposition to French militarism on the part of the Communist Party of France. When in May ’35 Stalin openly declares that “he understands and fully approves the measures of national defence taken by France to raise its armaments to the level of security” with what face can the communist party of France vote against military credits in the French Parliament?”

What he deliberately conceals is the fact that the C.P. of France **did** vote against the military budget, **even after** the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact, **even after** Stalin’s declaration.

The tactics of the Communist Party of a country where the bourgeoisie is in power cannot be identical

with that of the Communist Party of a country where the working class rules. The Soviet Union had made a pact with France. Mere good will cannot deflect the Fascist bullets. In face of the tremendous rearmament of Germany the Franco-Soviet Pact would be worse than useless unless both countries possessed adequate armaments. It was natural for Stalin to approve the measures of defence undertaken by France from the point of view that they were meant to implement the pact. If Com. Masani had quoted a little more fully from the Pact, the idea would have been clear. The Pact runs, "They (Soviet Union and France) were completely agreed upon acknowledging—in the present state of the international situation—the obligations of states sincerely attached to the safeguarding of Peace. . . . It is particularly incumbent upon them, in the very interest of the maintenance of Peace, not to allow their means of national defence to be at all weakened. **In this respect** M. Stalin understands and fully approves the national defence policy carried out by France to maintain its armed forces at the level necessary to its security."

But could the French Communist Party also take the same stand? It could not. **It opposed the military budget**, and that too with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Explaining the policy of the C. P. of France, Com. Marty said:

"What guarantee have we that the pact will be put into effect? What guarantee have we that this army will not be thrown against the workers and peasants in battle tomorrow? What guarantee have

we that it will cease oppressing the enslaved peoples of the colonies? . . . None at all. Therefore we are voting against the monstrous credits for war at a time when poverty has never been as great in France for the last 35 years. . . . That is why our Party has set as one of its most urgent tasks the conquest of the Army for the people, both to prevent its use against it and to ensure the application of the Franco-Soviet treaty of peace" . . . Com. Cachin, another leader of the C. P. of France said, "The working class of France and its Communist Party resolutely continue their struggle against the French bourgeoisie. . . . We continue to fight against the enslavement of the people and against the return to the two-year term of military conscription." And yet, Comrade Masani says that the C. P. of France is responsible for the "liquidation of class struggle in France!"

Only the conquest of the army by the people, only the victory of the Peoples Front could supply the guarantee of which Thorez spoke.

Ever since the victorious October Revolution, the Soviet Union has been a nightmare for capitalists in all lands. France, in the years following the Great War, was the champion and leader of all anti-Soviet alliances. This war-like policy of France was due not to her being a "hungry" power, but because of the domination of French politics by extreme chauvinistic reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie—the well-known 200 families. These sections even today constitute a powerful force in French politics, and **they are against the Franco-Soviet Pact**. Their mouth-pieces, De-la-Rocque and Doriot denounce the Pact, and

favour an alliance with Hitler. Hitler himself has expressed his readiness for a Western Pact. The Franco-Soviet Pact was signed by France and has been adhered to by her till now **not with** the support of the reactionary imperialistic bourgeoisie, but because of the pressure of the proletariat and its allies, who scorned alliance with Hitler, the murderer of German workers, and the menacer of world peace. If the French imperialists had their own way, they would have joined Hitler for a 'holy war' against the Soviet Union. If their plans have not succeeded it is mainly because of the might of the united working class of France. And yet, according to the thesis of Com. Masani, the French imperialists should be enthusiasts for the maintenance of the *status quo* and should set their face against any war!

These are facts which nobody with any knowledge of contemporary France, its political parties and their class orientations would deny.

We stated before that the foreign policy of a country is determined by **the relation of class forces existing in it**. The foreign policy of France conclusively proves this thesis. The same country, which was the instigator of all anti-Soviet alliances, has been forced to enter into an alliance with the Workers' State because of the gathering strength of the workers, toilers and lovers of peace in general in its own land. If the Fascist coup of February 1934 had succeeded, that is, if the most powerful and reactionary sections of bourgeoisie had won power, France would not have suddenly become a 'Have-not' state, but it would have nevertheless joined the war-mongers Hitler and

Mussolini, and world war would have taken place long ago.

STRUGGLE FOR PEACE—THE LINE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

WHY was it that during the war the Bolsheviks did not make the slogan of Peace their central slogan of action? Why was it that Lenin fought against the Trotskyist tendency to counterpose the slogan of peace to the slogan of transforming imperialist War into civil war. Because, **during the imperialist war**, the slogan could no longer be that of struggling for peace but of utilizing the war crisis for unleashing forces of proletarian revolution, for smashing the rule of the bourgeoisie. It was the Imperialist Powers which then spoke of a "just" and "democratic" peace, in order to conceal their chauvinistic aims and deceive the masses.

Nor did the Bolsheviks in the period immediately following the war put the slogan of peace at the centre of their agitation. Peace then meant the peace of Versailles, peace imposed by the armed might of Franco-British Imperialism, peace based on spoliation and dismemberment of Germany, peace against the principle of national self-determination, peace among imperialist powers for economic blockade and armed intervention against the Soviet Union.

In order to further minimise the contradiction among the victor-powers themselves, another "peace" treaty was signed—the Washington Convention. It established the relations of forces between the big naval powers,—U.S.A., Britain and Japan. It consi-

dered the huge territory of China as an immediate field for expansion for all big imperialist powers and sought to regulate their desperate competition and struggle in connection with the spoliation of the Chinese territory.

What was the character of post-war Peace? Revolutionary working class movements were sweeping over Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy and other countries. Communist Parties were being formed everywhere. The success of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the Soviet Union was exercising a profound revolutionary influence over toilers in all lands. Colonies were seething with unrest. The Muslim countries of the Middle East were awakening to new life and consciousness. Kemal Turkey tore asunder the humiliating Lausanne Treaty. Forces of national revolution, with the purpose of ending the "spheres of influence" and "mandates" of imperialist Powers, were gathering strength in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Iraq.

It was necessary for the victor imperialist powers to arrive at agreement amongst themselves for fighting against these new enemies, and for keeping Germany in a state of perpetual inferiority.

This was the Character of Post-War Peace. The fact that Anglo-French and Anglo-American rivalries continued and sharpened, torpedoing most of the plans of united action, did not detract its basic character from Post-War Peace. This "peace" was between the most militaristic, most heavily armed and most chauvinistic imperialist powers, in order to crush the forces of national and proletarian revolutions, to destroy the Soviet Union, and to perpetuate merciless

exploitation of Germany. The Dawes and Young Plans cannot be explained in any other way.

Could the Communist International make "Peace" its central slogan in such a period? It could not. It was necessary to expose the predatory character of this sham peace. It was necessary to destroy the pacifist illusion, that with the overthrow of German militarism the world had seen its last war. The International therefore unreservedly condemned the Versailles and Washington Treaties, and exposed their iniquities. It expressed the solidarity of the world proletariat with the exploited people of Germany. At a time when Germany was considered outcaste, the Soviet Union entered into a treaty with it. In the stormy period following the war "proletarian revolution" remained the immediate central slogan.

Repeated betrayals by Social Democracy, its disruptive tactics, its support to the repressive measures of bourgeois governments against the working class, were defeating the forces of proletarian revolution. The slogan of peace and the slogan of democracy, were the slogans of Social Democracy in this period. Social Democrats counterposed the slogans of peace and democracy to the slogans of revolution and proletarian dictatorship. They preached that the Versailles system assured permanent peace, that revolution and proletarian dictatorship were not needed, and through parliamentary democracy, socialism would be achieved.

The Weimar Constitution, which was supposed to usher in socialism, led to the triumph of Hitler.

With the deepening of the world crisis, with the disillusionment of the broad masses with reformist

tactics, and their leftward swing after the fascist conquest of Germany and Austria, with the advent of fascist parties in most capitalist countries, with the new and intensified race for armaments, **a new period began.** The Versailles and Washington systems crumbled to pieces—but not under the impact of proletarian and national revolutions, but because of the re-emergence of Germany as a world military power, with the direct support of Britain the aggressive policy of Japan in the Far East, the war of colonial plunder against Abyssinia undertaken by Italy.

The post-war period was over. A new pre-war period had begun. In fascist countries the last vestiges of democracy were destroyed. Even pacifism was banned. In every country the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie, represented in fascist parties, began to preach the gospel of war, the need for establishing "totalitarian states" and destroying democratic institutions, for uniting with Hitler and attacking the Soviet Union.

Since a new period had begun, new slogans and new tactics were needed.

Democracy which had hitherto been the opiate with which to paralyse revolutionary action of the masses, and the major ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie to curb mass struggle, could today be made the rallying slogan to mobilise the masses for **action against the bourgeoisie**, and the basis for a new advance. Peace, which had been the hypocritical slogan of the imperialists in order to continue the predatory Versailles and Washington systems, to ensure undisturbed colonial exploitation, to wean the masses

away from revolution, could now become the banner under which the broadest mass mobilisation against the imperialists was possible.

The slogans of peace and democracy acquired an entirely new and revolutionary content in the altered situation. When the chauvinistic bourgeoisie found the existence of democratic institutions an obstacle in the way of their plans and began to destroy democracy, the fight for democracy became a fight against the bourgeoisie.

The capitalists today want to shift the whole burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the toilers. They want to enslave weak nations. They want to destroy the Soviet Union, whose very existence constitutes a challenge to the capitalist system. **They want to forestall world revolution by world war.**

For these reasons they need Fascism. It is not possible today to carry out the plan of destruction of the Soviet Union, of a predatory imperialist war, without destroying all working class, revolutionary and even pacifist organisations, without suppressing all but the most reactionary and chauvinistic newspapers, without shooting and imprisoning tens of thousands of communists, socialists, democrats and liberals, without smashing every vestige of democratic liberty, and without establishing terrorist dictatorship over every sphere of national life,—political, economics, education, art and even sports.

To fail to understand this close connection between fascism and war, to fail to differentiate between bourgeois democracy and fascism, to fail to realise that today the fire has to be concentrated on fascism

and its allies as the most dangerous enemies of humanity, is to fail to understand the A B C of Marxism and to play directly into the hands of fascist war-mongers.

The fight for Peace is a fight of the people against the most powerful reactionary sections of finance-capital that seek a way out of the crisis through war. Peace is not the slogan of vested interests and 'satiated' powers. Peace today is the rallying slogan of workers, peasants, intellectuals, the democratic masses, as well as all other anti-fascists. The fight for **the maintenance of peace** is not, as Comrade Masani thinks, an opportunist fight. Every day that passes, the hatred for war unites larger and larger sections of the people against the fascist and imperialist war-instigators. Even today the fight for peace is not hopeless, not devoid of prospect. 'War is inevitable' is the slogan of fatalists and supporters of fascism. It has nothing to do with Marxism. **We can forestall imperialist world war by revolutions.** Every day that war is delayed is a distinct gain—this is the line of real socialists and communists. The masses are for peace, they abhor war. By fighting for peace we unite them, and lead them step by step to the overthrow of capitalism,—the root cause of war. If however, the fascists are able to plunge the world into war even before the masses have developed sufficient strength to achieve revolution, the very unification which has been brought about on the slogan of peace, will become the basis for immediate transformation of imperialist war into civil war. It will prove to be a battering ram which will smash

the capitalist structure into bits, and lay the foundation for socialism. **This is the line of the Communist International.**

Comrade Masani states that the slogan of the transformation of imperialist war into civil war has been given up by the Communist Parties. This is far from the truth. To substantiate this Com. Masani gives an extract from a declaration by Thorez, which is another distortion. Then he proceeds to quote doubtful evidence to make us believe that the Comintern demanded of the African workers that they must become good soldiers of the French Imperialist government.

Let us recall a bit of history and examine what was Lenin's position with regard to imperialist war. In 1907, at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, a resolution was moved on the struggle against war. The resolution was passed with the following amendment proposed by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg.

"If war should nevertheless break out, it is the duty of socialist parties to bring it to an end as soon as possible and to make every effort to use the economic and political crisis created by the war to weaken the political consciousness of the masses and to hasten the downfall of capitalist domination."

Lenin never took the fatalistic position that war was inevitable. His amendment lays down the line to be followed **in case all efforts to prevent war failed!** Let us quote here once again the anti-War resolution of the 7th Congress of the Communist International:

"The communists while fighting against the illusion that war can be eliminated while the capitalist system exists, exert, and will exert, every effort to prevent war. Should a new imperialist war break out, in spite of all efforts of the working class to prevent it, the communists will strive to lead the opponents of war organised in the struggle for peace, to the struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war against the fascist instigators of war, against the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of capitalism."

"COLLECTIVE SECURITY"—A BUGBEAR

WHAT is meant by "collective security?" In essence it means that the states committed to this policy pledge themselves to combined action against a recalcitrant state which resorts to war. The line that has been offered as an alternative to it is of "Localisation of war," which accepts war as inevitable and suggests that every outbreak should be segregated or "localised." This is the fascist doctrine, and suits the fascists imperialists in their schemes of aggression.

The Soviet Union has been the strongest champion of the "collective security" line in the League of Nations.

Comrade Masani rejects "collective security" unhesitatingly. He declares: "Collective security and peace today can only mean the maintenance of the territorial and political *status quo*, including the continued subjection of India and other oppressed countries. . . . The banner of the *status quo* is not one under which the subject peoples can rise against imperialism."

Com. Masani has overlooked two facts which the Soviet Union has made plain when putting forward a plea for "collective security." The first is that the policy is advocated as a means to ward off for the time being the danger of war. Secondly, it is never put forward as a substitute for the independent struggle of the masses themselves in every country. The decisive factor in the struggle for peace, and against cataclysmic war, is certainly the pressure wielded by the masses, led by the working-class, upon the respective governments. The strength of this pressure alone will make possible the successful working of a policy of "collective security." This makes the slogan of "collective security" not an abstract one, but a concrete policy which will not only seek to prevent war, but give time and scope for the building up of united peoples' fronts everywhere, in order to make the final struggle against Imperialism a reality.

It is true that the League has within its folds imperialist robbers. It is also true that if "collective security" alone was offered as a solution of world organisation on a permanent scale, it lends itself to the charge which Comrade Masani makes, that it would mean the perpetuation of the *status quo*, the imperialist powers permanently holding on to their loot. But this is not so.

Marxism has taught us that the real solution of the world problem lies outside imperialism or capitalism, that it definitely rests on a world socialist organisation, minus colonies, minus monopolies, minus national frontiers, minus the exploiting class.

Marxism has also taught us that within the conditions of imperialism, you can struggle for preventing

war, but imperialist contradictions do make for war. The forces of expansion which are a necessary corollary of imperialism would of themselves shatter any scheme which wants to ensure the status quo on any permanent scale. And as the policy of permanent "collective security" would militate against this basic law, it is bound to be shattered.

How then does the Soviet Union sponsor "collective security?" As a measure to rebut the schemes of the fascist aggressors, as a means to secure consolidation of the ranks of fighters for peace, as a method which would delay the immediate outbreak of war. The new world order for which the Soviet Union stands becomes unceasingly a fact as mass struggle for peace gathers greater and greater momentum, freeing the colonial peoples, shattering the chains of imperialism. Even if an imperialist war comes, Com. Masani will remember that the task of the colonial peoples will be to utilise the opportunity to transform it into the war of liberation. In that event the army of the fighters for peace will be the army that will be fighting for revolution. Does not Comrade Masani want time and scope to organise the widest strata in this army?

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

"THE League has become nothing but a decaying corpse. The League is itself a sham." (page 21)

The attitude adopted by Com. Masani regarding the League is another "clever" hit at the Soviet Union. He quotes Lenin castigating the League as a "thieves' Kitchen," and ironically goes on to say. "The

League. has become a bulwark of peace fit for the workers' state to join." (page 9)

Com. Masani once again falls into the error of a mechanical approach to tactical problems. He gets hold of a catch-phrase from somewhere, and then rides it hard, irrespective of the change in circumstances. This kind of "consistency" is neither political insight nor Marxism-Leninism.

Our attitude to the League should not be dogmatic. The League has never meant the same thing all through. Changing alignment of forces, changing situations, have punched the League into different shapes. So, a "consistent" criterion cannot be employed when the League is considered as an instrument for furthering the cause of peace.

When the League was first formed after the World War of 1914-1919, it is quite easy to decipher that it was supposed to serve as a shield for the triumphant Imperialist "Great Powers" to retain in safety their ill-gotten gains. The Great War had unleashed the spirit of revolution, and the League was to be used as a safeguard against the rising of colonial peoples for freedom. The Imperialist nations were exhausted after the strenuous war, and the League was to stave off a war in the near future. The League was to keep Germany, the stormy petrel of Europe, in subjection. The League was to isolate the Soviet Union. Soviet Russia justifiably characterised such a League as "a coalition of certain states endeavouring to usurp power over other states. which really serves as a mere mask to conceal from the masses the aggressive aims of the imperialist policy of certain Great Powers or their vassals." (Soviet note of 1923).

In course of time the contradictions of imperialism, of monopoly-capitalism, began to have fuller play. Within a period of fourteen years, the League had been deserted by several imperialist powers. Only France and Britain remained behind, along with a number of smaller states. At this stage the Soviet Union was invited to join the League. What was the peculiar situation? The United States of America had definitely cut itself off from European entanglements. Germany had been admitted and Germany had withdrawn. Japan had withdrawn. Italy remained in nominal membership, and Italy too was soon to withdraw. It was clear that the aggressive Imperialist states could not carry on their nefarious deeds with ease and comfort whilst remaining inside the League. The smaller states had become assertive and were consistently throwing in their weight in favour of peace and against war. France and Britain were the only two Great Powers left, and they were at logger-heads over most problems. And last but not the least the Soviet Union had emerged as a first-class state, with great economic, military and moral strength behind it. The German menace was threatening France as well as Central Europe. At this time, the Soviet Union accepted the invitation to join the League, and started utilising the League platform for its policy for peace. This action has not and could not make the Workers' State a pawn in the hands of Imperialists. Far from it. The unflinching stand which the Soviet Union has adopted inside the League for peace and collective security has helped the smaller states to rally round a leader of undisputed merit. It has made the utilisation of the League for the further-

ance of imperialist aims a difficult proposition. The fascist gang abhors the League, abuses the League as a thorn in its side. Over the Abyssinian question, for the first time in history, the League took even limited action against a Great Power in the shape of partial economic sanctions. It is true that Britain and France both combined to undo this. It showed that the League was not yet powerful enough to rise above the machinations of these Imperialist powers. All the same, the fight of the Soviet Union inside the League opened the eyes of the world and revealed the path for all true lovers of peace to follow.

The pro-fascist National Government of Britain could not help but note this potential danger to imperialism. Lord Lothian wrote in the Times in April 1936:

"I am reluctantly drawn to the conclusion that the only honourable and practical course for us is to give notice at once that after two years we shall no longer accept the automatic and universal obligation to go to war contained in Articles 10 and 16....."

This meant a recognition of the fact that the League was a liability to imperialism, and should be so altered as to reduce it to a mere consultative body, by removing the clauses regarding the covenant for the collective maintenance of peace. Britain has been wooing the smaller states to this end, and it would not surprise us, if ultimately Britain succeeded in turning the League into a useless body.

But as against this, the Soviet Union stands for the strengthening of the League, so that it can be

utilised further for foiling the schemes of fascism. The Soviet Union has given a definite lead as to how this strengthening is to take place. It is by a system of guarantee pacts which would provide for a collective defence of the victim of aggression by the signatory states. The Soviet Union stands for the rousing of the conscience of the democratic masses all over the world by utilising the Geneva platform.

Should the Soviet Union abandon this task, and go into isolation, because Com. Masani cannot adopt himself to the changing circumstances?

Our approach to the League is not the same as that of Imperialists or the "pacifist" experts. We do not place all our eggs in the League basket. We refuse to become the pawns of imperialism on the League chess-board. But we believe that the League will be useful today in our fight for peace, against aggressive fascism, for creating the pre-requisites for the overthrow of capitalism.

Lenin once said, "Dialectics is common-sense." But how many of us can lay claim to this "common-sense," especially if we are blinded by prejudice and opposition for the sake of opposition?

"SPAIN"—THE BATTLEGROUND OF DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM

COM. Masani has charged the Communist Party of Spain, the initiator, builder and leader of the heroic People's Front, with "undoing the gains of the workers' revolution," with "destroying the unity necessary to victory," and above all with "the suppression of a Revolutionary Socialist Party like the P.O.U.M."

It is silly to speak of "undoing" a workers' revolution, or a proletarian revolution, when no such revolution ever took place. The People's Front Government of Spain was carrying out certain **democratic measures** when the fascist launched their criminal war. The immediate task before all honest revolutionaries was **to unite all democratic forces** for maintaining national freedom, and for defeating the fascists and their foreign allies. The Communist Party of Spain, in its very first manifesto issued during the civil war, placed these tasks in the forefront. If Spain has been able to defeat till now the devilish plans of Hitler and Mussolini, it is due in great measure to the work of the C. P. of Spain.

Com. Masani finds fault with the Spanish communists for fighting against the counter-revolutionary uprising organised by the Trotskyist agents in May at Barcelona. The uprising was nothing short of a stab in the back of the People's Front Government of Spain. If it had not been nipped in the bud, it would have led to the certain conquest of Spain by the fascists. These are the facts which no one acquainted with the Spanish situation would deny. Yet the sympathies of Com. Masani do not go to the heroic defenders of the Republic who were murdered by the Trotskyists, but to the Trotskyist murderers!

A word about the "Revolutionary Socialist Party"—the P.O.U.M.,—the organiser of the counter-revolutionary Barcelona rising, will not be out of place here. For months together the Basque army, consisting almost entirely of Catholics, held up the fascist advance. It was overwhelmed in the end, but

its heroic exploits constitute one of the brightest pages in the history of the Spanish Civil War. Hundreds of intellectuals, artists, poets, and writers have fought and died in the defence of Spain. Yet the P.O.U.M. giving the demagogic slogan of a "Workers' Army." as against the slogan of a "People's Army," declared:

"We cannot tolerate the formation of an army including young liberals, petty-bourgeoisie and Catholics."

In October 1936, when the army of Franco had reached the gates of Madrid and the fate of the Spanish Republic was trembling in the balance, when all anti-fascist organisations were rushing thousands of their men to Madrid, the P.O.U.M. watched the situation unmoved. Only when its position became hopelessly compromised in the eyes of the people did it send **eighty men** to the Spanish capital **at the end of December**. That is, when the attack had been already virtually repulsed!

As against this, the International Brigade—that concrete expression of international solidarity of democratic forces—covered itself with glory in the defence of Madrid. Its heroism and devotion have become a by-word. Everybody, even the fascists themselves, agree that but for the self-sacrificing heroism of the International Brigade, Madrid would have fallen. It may come as a revelation to Com. Masani that the "Revolutionary Party," whose suppression he deplores, had the meanness to slander this noble Brigade. A statement of the P.O.U.M., worthy of Franco, is the following:

"Anarchist comrades, distrust the International Brigade. They represent the armed corps of Catalan and Spanish Communists, whose task is to make attacks on you as they did on the Anarchists in the Russian Revolution."

But the P. O. U. M. was not a "Revolutionary" Party. It represented nothing more than a gang of fascist agents, spies, provocateurs and murderers. Its suppression was a revolutionary act. No honest Marxist could support or belaud such a party.

At first sight it may seem rather strange that the same Comrade Masani who defends the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist coup at Barcelona at a period when the fate of Spanish democracy was trembling in the balance should also condemn the Indian Communists who, according to him, "are exploiting the workers by **premature mass action**." (Lecture on "Congress in Office" delivered in December 1937 at Bombay.) The inconsistency however is only apparent. He must hit at the Communists—that is his line, whether from a pseudo-left Trotskyist position or a right reactionary position. That does not worry him, so long as the attack is directed against his pet aversion,—the communists. At this rate we shall not be surprised if to-morrow he is led to denounce as "counter-revolutionary" the action of the Chinese Communists in uniting with the Kuomintang to drive the Japanese out of China, if to-morrow he publicly proclaims that the united front policy of the Indian Communists is only a camouflage, and demands that they should be purged out of the Indian National Congress!

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN CASE OF A WAR IN WHICH ENGLAND AND RUSSIA ARE ALLIES?"

A QUESTION AND AN INNUENDO

TOWARDS the end of the booklet Com. Masani conjures up the vision of an alliance between the Soviet Union and Britain and triumphantly asks us, "What would you do in case of a war in which England and Russia are allies?"

The question itself betrays an ignorance of international politics. British Foreign policy, as we have seen, has been consistently pro-fascist and anti-democratic. Unless the relation of class forces in Britain changes, unless the war-mongering imperialistic section of the bourgeoisie is weakened, unless a government standing for peace comes to power, Britain **would not join** the Franco-Soviet-Czechoslovakian alliance—the alliance based on peace and opposition to war. If the history of Britain during the post-war period proves anything, it proves this. And if the people of Britain gather sufficient strength to overthrow the National Government and effect an orientation of British foreign policy,—an orientation based on firm opposition to Hitler and Mussolini, and faithful adherence to the cause of peace,—**then Hitler and Mussolini would never dare follow a policy of war.** This is no mere speculation. But for the knowledge that Britain would not give France guarantee of support, Hitler would never have dared to undertake the military occupation of the Rhineland, Mussolini would never have dared to defy the League and annex Abyssinia, the criminal war of invasion of Spain would never have been undertaken.

We repeat, if the Fascist Powers know that Britain and France would stand by the Soviet Union, they would never dare attack the workers' fatherland. Com. Masani's question is absurd and meaningless. But Britain cannot, as we have said, follow a peace policy unless the forces of peace and anti-fascism triumph over the forces of war and fascism in Britain. **And a mighty people's movement alone can bring about this triumph.**

And yet for the sake of argument, what would be the position of the Communists in case such an alliance takes place when a war breaks out? The Communists are pledged "to support the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries." Imperialism is the foe of the Communists, and they have certainly not abrogated the guidance of Lenin when he said: "In all imperialist countries, the proletariat must desire the defeat of its own government." It would be their duty to utilise the crisis produced by the war to hasten the downfall of Imperialism. Com. Masani's reference to "Communist friends—more loyal than the King," has certainly no basis in fact. It is an open challenge to Com. Masani to produce a little of evidence, a single quotation from their profuse publications in support of his doubts and suspicions.

"ENGLAND'S EMBARRASSMENT OUR OPPORTUNITY."

AS regards the slogan: "England's embarrassment our opportunity," endorsed by Com. Masani, what is the correct position to adopt?

The first point that must be clarified is that no genuine anti-imperialist will question the position that if the hands of Britain get tied up elsewhere, India would not hesitate for even one second before it takes time by the forelock and makes a bid for independence.

But can it be maintained that because a war crisis would furnish us with such an opportunity, we should give support to war-mongers, that we welcome the acts of aggression by Italy and Japan, that we belaud the Berlin Axis, because all these hasten the day for imperialist war? Shall we take Hitler and Mussolini as our patron saints? Shall we glory in the building of the Singapore Base, in the war preparations made by British Imperialism in India and elsewhere? Shall we sing the hallelujahs of the War God, and make it compulsory for our schools and colleges to breed a "war" mentality? No, certainly not.

Then shall we sit quiet and wait patiently for the war to come, for the opportune moment to appear? Once again No.

Then what shall we do? We shall have actively to work for peace, and against war.

How?

By a systematic persistent campaign against war, by the organisation of anti-war bodies to fight for peace in the most varied and flexible manner. We shall have to explain to the peasants in our villages, to the sturdy youth of our land, the significance and the meaning of a modern imperialist war. We shall have to organise demonstrations and conferences where war-wrecked veterans will be present and des-

cribe their own experiences of the horrors of modern war-fare. A vigorous campaign shall have to be launched for removing from the curriculum all text books that glorify the exploits of Imperialists. A movement shall have to be set afoot in every city for the boycott of all ceremonial parades and processions of soldiers. Popular pressure shall have to be organised to prevent cinemas from screening military demonstrations, and the pomp and grandeur utilised by the predatory imperialisms to cloak their real deeds. Mere paper resolutions will not be of any use worth the name. It goes without saying that the anti-war and pro-peace movement in India must be definitely anti-Imperialist in character. The struggle to wreck the Constitution and to prevent Federation from coming into effect, the fight against the use of bombing aeroplanes on the Frontier, the attempt to make the police and the army realise that patriotism is no crime but an essential virtue, to root out fear from the masses and make them the staunchest supporters of self-determination, our struggle for freedom and Constituent Assembly—in all these the slogan of peace from predatory wars of imperialism and the slogan of independence must be skilfully woven together. By these methods, we shall be instilling in the masses a burning hatred for imperialist war, and shall successfully rally them on the anti-imperialist, anti-war platform. By achieving this here and now, we shall strike terror in the hearts of war-instigators, delay war, and unite the people for revolution. If however war does break out, our people, already filled with burning hatred for imperialist war-mongers, already united under the banner of Peace, will strike effective blows for trans-

forming the imperialist war into a war of national liberation.

Simply declaring that if war breaks out we shall use it to win our freedom, is not enough, but misleading. Those who do not actively organise against war and for peace are only indulging in "leftism," and making it an excuse for their inactivity, and excuse for not working for independence and revolution, and mobilising the widest strata of the population on this issue.

Comrade Masani has certainly got hold of a catching phrase: "England's embarrassment our opportunity"—but on second thoughts, he is bound to realise that it is not a real slogan today. The correct slogan would be "We stand for peace—Down with Imperialism."

LET US SUMMARISE

Comrade Masani is Responsible in his Booklet for the Following Theses and Slogans:

1. "WAR IS INEVITABLE."
2. THE WORLD SITUATION RESEMBLES THAT OF 1914.
3. GERMANY, ITALY AND JAPAN ARE "HUNGRY" POWERS; BRITAIN AND FRANCE ARE "SATIATED" POWERS; THAT IS WHY THE FORMER ARE FOR WAR, AND THE LATTER ARE FOR PEACE.
4. BRITAIN HAS NO DEFINITE FOREIGN POLICY.
5. THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL HAS BETRAYED "WORLD REVOLUTION;" THE SOVIET UNION HAS BECOME NATIONALISTIC; THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION ARE ABANDONING SUBJECT RACES AND MAKING COMPROMISES WITH THE IMPERIALISTS, WHICH RESULTS IN "LIQUIDATION OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE."
6. THE POLICY OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND PEACE MUST BE REJECTED.
7. DOWN WITH THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

8. THE SLOGAN FOR INDIA IS: "ENGLAND'S EMBARRASSMENT OUR OPPORTUNITY."

In fact these theses and slogans amount to:
Ideological & Moral Support to Fascism [(1), (3), (6), (7)].

Support to Trotskyist Slanders (5).

Failure to Understand the Dangerous Character of British Imperialism as an Instigator of War [(3), (4)].

Inability to make a Marxian Analysis of the Present World Situation [(1), (2), (3), (4) and (6)].

Anti-Communist Prejudice Vitiating the Outlook (5).

Fatalistic Attitude to War & a Mechanical, Opportunist Interpretation of Lenin's Slogan on War [(1), (7), (8)].

WHAT THEN WOULD BE OUR STAND IN WORLD POLITICS? WE SHOULD UNEQUIVOCALLY DECLARE,

- (1) We can have no truck with British Imperialism, or with other Imperialism;
- (2) We are in sympathy with and support all the colonial and oppressed peoples of the World in their fight for freedom;
- (3) We repudiate all secret and open treaties made by Britain in the name of the Indian people;

- (4) We promise that the policy of Free India will be of peace with its neighbours, Afghanistan, Persia, China, etc., entailing complete abrogation of the present policy of aggression of British Imperialism;
- (5) We are ready to enter into independent political alliances and formations of economic pacts, as also cultural relations with other nations, the principle of reciprocity being our guiding policy.
- (6) We support all progressive movements in the world, especially in Europe and the U.S.A., including trade-unions, socialist and communist parties; we do not approve of parties like the P.O.U.M.;
- (7) We support the Soviet Union as the hope and the dream of the oppressed toilers of the world and make plain our hostility to the maligning campaign started against it;
- (8) We are today for the League of Nations as a possible instrument for peace, but refuse to take our seat as a mere auxiliary of British Empire.
- (9) We stand today by the slogans of Peace and Collective Security as opposed to "War is inevitable" and "localised Wars;"
- (10) We have been preparing, and we shall redouble our efforts, to win complete independence for India and smash the chains of Imperialist slavery; to this end, we shall link our struggle against war, our fight for peace, our fight against Imperialism, and rally the widest masses in our army for Freedom.