

AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

Left British Social Democrats as Defenders of Imperialism.

By M. N. Roy (Moscow).

In the December 30 issue, of "The New Leader" Mr. Brailsford makes a review of the past "Year of Perils and Escapes". Of course he could not do it without touching the Chinese question. After a very cursory and remarkably detached review of last year's events in China he gets terrified by "an Asiatic problem and a continental struggle against imperialism which may involve India". The "escape" from this "peril" he finds in "a rare degree of liberal foresight"! So, out of the capitalist ruins and danger of imperialist war the world can only be saved not by Socialism, but by liberalism. This is the remedy prescribed by the "left wing" of the political Labour movement.

How does Mr. Brailsford, who calls himself a Socialist and passes as a "left winger", arrive at such a flagrantly unsocialist, nay anti-socialist, conclusion? He is driven to this conclusion by the fear of Socialism: by the fear that the oppressed peoples of the East will be completely convinced that their only friend is the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Mr. Brailsford invokes, with evident pessimism, a liberal policy "in China and in India alike which will assure their awakening masses that there is hope for them in quarters other than Russia, and in measures less violent than revolutionary".

The world is unavoidably heading towards Socialism and the road leads through revolution. This is the consequence of capitalism. But the "socialist" Brailsford refuses to see the inexorable logic of events and becomes a wise counsellor of imperialism in distress. The world is in revolt against capitalism. The Russian Revolution as well as the anti-imperialist movement in the colonies are the expressions of this revolt. The place where the revolt has been successful naturally becomes the standard to which the eyes of all rebels turn. Mr. Brailsford advises the imperialist rulers to adopt a liberal policy in order to break this revolutionary unity brought about by community of interests.

"The hope of the awakening masses" of India and China, indeed of all the subject countries is to be free from imperialist domination as a step towards the liberation from capitalist exploitation. Does Mr. Brailsford maintain that this hope can be realised without breaking the bonds of imperialism? Does he maintain that even the elementary conditions for the realisation of this hope can be created under the benign protection of imperialism? No policy of imperialism, however liberalised, can allow the realisation of this hope. Imperialism and the aspirations of the peoples it oppresses are irreconcilably antagonistic. Obviously Mr. Brailsford has a different notion as regards what he calls the hope of the colonial oppressed masses. He did not say what it is. But judging from the trend of his arguments one could gather that in his opinion the hope of the colonial peoples is not, rather should not, be national and social freedom. In that case they could secure the patronage of the liberal apologists of imperialism. But even this is not possible, as has been proved by the recent refusal of the British labour leaders to support even the very modest hope of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie. This Mr. Brailsford himself admits when he deplores that: "the decision over the Indian Commission does not encourage optimism". So it has become clear that no other policy than that of revolutionary Socialism can help the oppressed peoples realise their hope. Nevertheless, Mr. Brailsford's faith in liberalism is pathetically incorrigible. If it were only Mr. Brailsford's inability to grasp the situation, he could be left alone in his faith in liberalism and pacifism. But the case, is more serious. He is worried about the perilous position of imperialism and is anxious to show it a way out. The "escape" he suggests is futile. He is himself conscious of it. Nevertheless, it is significant that he is so concerned about the future of imperialism. Imperialism would not accept the advice of its Social Democratic apologists. It refuses to follow any other policy in the colonies than that of the iron hand. In this situation Social Democratic Liberalism stands completely exposed in its native character: it supports unconditionally imperialist absolutism in the colonies, Mr. Brailsford's party has

done it shamelessly in connection with the Indian Commission; and Mr. Brailsford, together with the other "left wingers" of his brand, are no better than MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Co. The theory he makes in the article under review deprives him of any distinction from those who have frankly abandoned Socialism and have openly united with imperialism against the oppressed peoples.

The theory he makes is that a "muddled" policy has driven the peoples of the East, particularly of India and China, to look towards the U. S. S. R. as their only friend and to the conclusion that the way to freedom lies through revolution. The deduction from this is that an alliance of the oppressed peoples of the East with the U. S. S. R. is dangerous and that a revolution in the colonies should be prevented by all means. This is exactly what imperialism also desires. As a result of prolonged and devious intrigues imperialism has succeeded in having the nationalist bourgeoisie of China violently betray their alliance with the U. S. S. R. But they betrayed their alliance with the U. S. S. R. after they had betrayed the national revolution. The masses of China, who in the teeth of bloodiest terror, are heroically defending the revolution, remain convinced that the U. S. S. R. is their only friend in the bitter struggle against imperialism and native reaction. The remarkable failure of the Social Democrats to move a finger against the terror confirms them in this conviction. In spite of everything, for imperialism, China is a lost cause. Mr. Brailsford admits it lamentably, and he warns that India will go the same way, unless imperialism changes its "muddled" policy for a sane policy of liberalism. But it is too late. The disease is too serious to be cured by Mr. Brailsford's remedy. The future of imperialism depends upon the bloody suppression of the colonial revolt. The "muddled" policy is the result of the inner contradictions of imperialism. In the fierce clash of world conflicts Social Democratic liberalism has gone totally bankrupt. On every acute question the thin veil of radicalism drops from the face of the "left wing", exposing its true complexion.