

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN COUNTRIES OF THE EAST

Report of a conference held in the History and Philosophy Department of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., at the Institute of Oriental Studies, on the nature and peculiarities of people's democracy in the countries of the East. (Izvestia of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. History and Philosophy Series, Jan-Feb., 1952, Vol. IX, No. 1).

THE conference (held between November 12 and 23, 1951) was opened by corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., E. M. Zhukov, who gave a report on the subject 'The peculiarities of people's democracy in the East'. He declared that the path to socialism through people's democracy has been shown to be equally suitable for developed capitalist countries and for backward colonial and dependent countries. The four people's-democratic states created by Eastern peoples—the Chinese People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam—in spite of the different conditions in which they arose, the different development of the people's democratic regimes in each of these countries, and the great differences in their economic and cultural levels, can all be counted as belonging to a common group of Eastern countries of people's democracy.

The fundamental difference between the Eastern countries of people's democracy and the Western countries of people's democracy consists in the fact that, at the present stage, people's democracy in the Eastern group of countries is carrying out the national-liberationist and anti-feudal tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the task of building socialism does not present itself as something for the near future, and consequently, people's democracy is not fulfilling the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The main cause of this state of affairs is the colonial oppression to which these countries were subject until recently; this retarded the economic development of the Eastern countries and hindered the liquidation of barbarous survivals of the Middle Ages which were particularly burdensome to the peasantry, who form the overwhelming majority of the people of Asia. The overcoming of the general economic and cultural backwardness which is the inevitable result of the past colonial oppression requires a long time and does not permit a forcing of the solution of the tasks of the bourgeois-

democratic revolution into a brief space of time, as was possible in the European countries of people's democracy. Although the latter were also oppressed by imperialism in the past, they did not know prolonged colonial enslavement.

The need to overcome the consequences of imperialist bondage which has lasted for centuries, and which was always closely linked with feudal oppression, sets its mark on the whole character of people's democratic power in the Eastern countries. People's democracy in the East bears a clearly-expressed anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and is based on a broad coalition of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces which includes not only the workers, the peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie but also the national bourgeoisie (medium and small manufacturers and merchants). The foundation of people's democratic power is the alliance of the workers and the peasants under the leadership of the working class. People's democracy in the countries of the East is a special form of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, carrying out an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal policy in close collaboration with the national bourgeoisie and with all those social groups capable of taking up a position in defence of national independence against the encroachment of the imperialists and in support of the anti-feudal struggle of the peasantry.

While speaking of the Eastern countries of people's democracy as a single entity, E. M. Zhukov said that one must not forget the great differences between one people's democratic country and another. In analysing the questions of the peculiarities and nature of people's democracy in the East, it was necessary to recall the three important tactical principles of Leninism which J. V. Stalin formulated in 1927 in his work 'Notes on topics of the day'.* The rapporteur spent some time in characterising the existing states of People's Democracy—the Mongolian People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Chinese People's Republic, emphasising the need to study the special features of each country and the inadvisability of any 'stereotyping' in connection with this problem. He paid special attention to the situation in the Chinese People's Republic, particularly to the successes achieved in creating a single people's democratic front, in agrarian reform and in the agrarian policy of the Communist Party.

* Collected Works, Vol. IX, p. 331.

The experience of the Chinese Revolution is enormously important. The results of its fruitful influence can easily be perceived in the documents of the Communist Party of India and of the Vietnam Party of Labour. But, remembering the first tactical principle of Leninism, the principle of the necessity of taking into account the national peculiarities and specific national features of each separate country, it would be rash to see the Chinese Revolution as any sort of 'standard' for the people's democratic revolution in the other countries of Asia. In particular, one can hardly suppose that the other countries of Asia, travelling along the path of people's democracy, can necessarily reckon on obtaining the most important advantage of the Chinese Revolution—a revolutionary army. This does not mean, however, that there are not thousands of problems the solution of which by the advanced people of India, Indonesia or any other country of the East will not require study of the actual experience of the Chinese Revolution or that of the October Revolution in Russia.

Common to all the people's democracies, both those of the West and those of the East, is the awakening of the widest masses of the people, their active struggle under the leadership of the working class, under the banner of Leninism, for democracy, peace and socialism. The bandit aggression of American imperialism against Korea and the provocative colonial policy of the British imperialists in the Near East have stimulated to fresh vigour the anti-imperialist feelings of hundreds of millions of people in Asia. This creates conditions for the formation of an extremely broad anti-imperialist front, embracing, as the programme of the Communist Party of India puts it, 'millions of toilers, the working class, the peasantry, the working intelligentsia, the middle classes, and equally also the national bourgeoisie which is interested in the freedom of the country and the building of a prosperous life'. The experience of the national liberation movement shows that the creation of a united anti-imperialist front is of first-rate importance for a successful struggle for independence in colonial countries. This front is the stronger the more decisively the peasantry, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population in colonial countries, is drawn into the anti-imperialist struggle. The policy of the agrarian question, the struggle against feudalism and feudal survivals, these form the most important content of the national-liberation movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries. Quoting a number of V. I. Lenin's statements

on the tasks of the revolutionary movement in backward countries, E. M. Zhukov declared that the struggle against mediæval survivals was and continues to be the chief task of the proletariat and the Communist Parties in countries subject to imperialism.

Dealing with the question of the possibility of a bloc and even an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in colonial and dependent countries, the rapporteur carefully examined the concept of the national bourgeoisie, excluding from it the compradore bourgeoisie as being closely linked with imperialism, and dividing the national bourgeoisie into the big and the middle bourgeoisie. The former are closely linked with the landlords, are disposed to come to terms with the imperialists and are only temporary and unreliable participants in the united front.

The unprecedented broadening of the anti-imperialist front in the countries of Asia gives particular weight to the question of enhancing the leading role of the working class (the vanguard of the national-colonial revolution), the strengthening of its alliance with the peasantry. The alliance of the working class with the peasantry is the basis of the anti-imperialist front in the countries of the East. The progress of the people's democratic countries of Asia, the general upsurge of the national-liberation movement in the East, testifies to the strengthening of the role of the proletariat in a number of countries of the non-Soviet East. Communist and Workers' parties (or parties of Labour) are already the acknowledged leaders of millions of toilers. But the demands placed upon the proletarian leadership ceaselessly increase both in the countries of people's democracy and in the colonies and semi-colonies of the East.

The broadest masses of the peoples of the non-Soviet East, whose feet are already on the path of People's Democracy and who are carrying forward the struggle for People's Democracy, for national liberation and for peace cherish feelings of the greatest trust and love for the Soviet Union and Comrade Stalin.

In the debate on E. M. Zhukov's report sixteen persons took part: corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik S.S.R., I. S. Braginsky, Doctor of Sciences A. M. Dyakov and G. N. Voitinsky, candidates of sciences I. Ya. Zlatkin, V. N. Nikiforov, A. N. Vzyanov, A. I. Stadnichenko, P. P. Staritsina, L. A. Sikiryanskaya, G. B. Ehrenburg, V. V. Balabushevich, G. V. Astafyev, A. N. Heifetz, Colonel A. A. Martynov, aspirant of the Academy of Social Sciences under the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. (B) Yu. P. Nasenko and scientific worker in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. G. I. Levinson.

Those who spoke took up a number of problems which related not only to the definition of the character and peculiarities of People's Democracy in the East but also to the history of its origin and development and to the prospect of the growing-over of the people's democratic revolution into the socialist revolution.

The chief problems which were examined were: —

- (i) The common features of the regime of People's Democracy in the West and in the East and its special features in the countries of the East;
- (ii) The special features of the regime of People's Democracy in those countries where there is not (or was not at the time of the establishment of the people's government) any proletariat;
- (iii) The period in which people's democratic forms of government arise;
- (iv) The significance of the experience of the Chinese Revolution and the ways of applying it in the revolutionary movement of the other countries of the East;
- (v) The question of the non-capitalist path of development in its application to China and to India;
- (vi) The question of the growing-over of the people's democratic revolution into the socialist revolution.

1. Features in common between People's Democracy in the West and in the East and its peculiarities in the East.

The majority of those who spoke, concurring with the fundamental propositions of the report on the peculiarities of People's Democracy in the East, considered it necessary to emphasise those fundamental features which are common to all countries of People's Democracy both East and West. They pointed out that both in the West and in the East, the People's Democratic regime, (a) arose in definite historical conditions, characterised by the strengthening of the Soviet country, the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the victory of the Soviet people over fascist Germany and imperialist Japan, i.e., in circumstances of the further strengthening of the Soviet Union and weakening of the world camp of imperialism (Martynov, Heifetz, Sikiryanskaya); (b) is a transitional regime and has to undertake the task of development towards socialism (Dyakov, Nikiforov, Martynov); and (c) carries out in its first phase tasks of an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and relies upon a broad anti-imperialist and anti-feudal front (Nikiforov).

A. N. Heifetz, dealing with the fact that a People's Democratic regime can carry out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, declared that this is equally valid for the East and the West. Although in the countries of the East People's Democracy is at present carrying out the functions of the revolutionary-democratic

dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, with which it began in Europe, in the future on the basis of successes achieved, it can carry out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

L. A. Sikiryanskaya spoke on the question of the stages of development of People's Democracy, declaring that unavoidable stages in the development of all countries of People's Democracy are (1) a stage of agrarian, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution, when general-national and general-democratic tasks are disposed of, and (2) a socialist stage.

The question of the stages of development of People's Democracy was dealt with also in the contribution of A. A. Martynov, who mentioned as a peculiarity of People's Democracy in the countries of the East that, whereas the fulfilment of the tasks of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in the capitalist countries of Europe required a comparatively short period of time only, in the countries of People's Democracy in the East these tasks will require a notably longer period of time, for here the size of the tasks which have to be undertaken is notably greater.

Dealing with the peculiarities of People's Democracy in the countries of the East, the majority of speakers mentioned that these peculiarities consist in the fulfilment of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks, tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that the content of the people's democratic regime in the countries of the East is a special form of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Taking the example of China, L. A. Sikiryanskaya showed the difference between the dictatorship in the countries of the East in present-day conditions and the dictatorship which was envisaged at the time of the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07. Quoting the definition of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry given by J. V. Stalin in his article 'On the question of the workers' and peasants' government', Sikiryanskaya enumerated in detail the peculiarities of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in China, seeing them as characteristic also for other colonial and semi-colonial countries in which the people's democratic revolution will win victory. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in the East bears an anti-imperialist character; it is led by the Communist Party; its state form is People's Democracy; the proletariat shares power with the peasantry and also draws into

* Collected Works, Vol. IX, p. 186.

the government a part of the national bourgeoisie. The fact that the party of the proletariat is the leading force of people's democracy in China already creates in germ an element of the future dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., of the State leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat. And this is a very substantial peculiarity of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in China. Another peculiarity of people's democracy in China is that there are already at the present time germs of a non-capitalist, i.e., socialist development on a state-wide scale.

A. N. Heifetz also dwelt on this question, pointing out that it is necessary to observe that China has already left the system of world capitalism not only politically but also economically, and that the proletariat holds the leading position and is a predominant force in comparison with the bourgeois elements, which are weak politically and are compelled to recognise the leadership of the Communist Party, embodying the recognition in their programme (e.g., the Democratic League).

G. F. Astafyev directed his attention to the peculiarities of the bloc with the national bourgeoisie in the conditions of present-day China. He said that in present-day conditions the bloc with the national bourgeoisie in China has a number of peculiarities: (i) the subordination of the bourgeoisie to the political leadership of the proletariat and its party; (ii) the state regulation of the economic activity of the bourgeoisie in the interests of the people and the people's-democratic economy; (iii) a wide struggle by the Communist Party to liberate the masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie. These peculiarities are the special form of expression of the leading role of the working class in the united front and the transitional character of the people's-democratic regime in China.

To be continued.

Book Reviews

STUDYING MARXISM

Introduction to Marxism, by Emile Burns (64 pp. 2s. 6d.). *Readers' Guide to the Marxist Classics*, Ed. by Maurice Cornforth (116 pp. 2s. 6d.). Both Lawrence and Wishart.

EMILE BURNS' *Introduction to Marxism* is a new and revised edition of his *What is Marxism?* that went through six editions and provided the first way in to the study

of scientific socialism for very many workers. Emile Burns has the great gift of explaining political economy and philosophical theories in a way that makes them easy to grasp and which does not in any way over-emphasise and falsify them. In this short book he treats the laws of social development, capitalist society, the imperialist stage of capitalism, class struggles and the state, socialist society and the Marxist view of nature. This is the best short intro-