

method of disarming the victims of the Axis used against China, Abyssinia and Spain, under the pretence of "treating both sides equally" (pp. 170, 268, 282).

Taken together, the two books present a devastating reply to those who pretend that the present world conflict is not an imperialist war.

## II. How to Fight for Peace

The four speeches of Molotov, delivered at the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. between August, 1939, and August, 1940, and now published with a foreword by D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P., reveal a totally new kind of diplomacy.\* As Pritt remarks, it has been "clear and consistent to a quite unusual degree," in which, contrary to the practice of Austen Chamberlain and Samuel Hoare, Lord Halifax and Anthony Eden, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs "says what he means and means what he says."

The first speech, made on August 31, 1939, after the signature of the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression, gives a trenchant summary of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations of that year. Here is such a crushing exposure of British imperialist democracy that—most significant—even at the height of the anti-Soviet campaign during the Finnish war, when the British Government stuck at nothing, it did not dare to attempt an answer.

What are the facts recalled by Molotov's speech? First, that throughout the negotiations the British and French Governments displayed an unbelievable frivolousness and dilatoriness—dragging out the political negotiations from April until August, after the U.S.S.R. had made a clear offer, based on reciprocity and equality of obligations. Second, that the military missions which they sent to Moscow in August were a farce, alike in their composition, their lack of powers and their refusal to talk about Soviet military help for Poland. Third, that all this time the Germans and Italians were winning success after success in Europe, and consequently the Anglo-French tactics were obviously calculated to encourage Hitler: while their attitude over Poland infallibly meant that he could go on against Poland,

too, if he liked—and against the Soviet Union.

From these facts the Soviet Government could and did draw one conclusion. "It is our duty to think of the interests of the Soviet people, the interests of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — all the more because we are firmly convinced that the interests of the U.S.S.R. coincide with the fundamental interests of the peoples of other countries." The task was lightened because the German Government itself decided to change its policy towards the U.S.S.R. The result was the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939—"On the strength of which the U.S.S.R. is not obliged to involve itself in war either on the side of Great Britain against Germany or on the side of Germany against Great Britain." Molotov deals sharply with the arguments used by those who thought otherwise.

The second speech was delivered on October 31, after two months of war. Molotov gave a striking and still unanswered analysis of the causes and nature of the new imperialist struggle, and—months before Churchill—declared: "This war promises nothing to the working class but bloody sacrifice and hardship." By contrast, he recapitulated the principles constituting the new basis of Soviet-German relations.

But Molotov had other great events to report in the sphere of Soviet foreign policy. First was the reoccupation of Ukrainian and Byelorussian territory seized by the Polish imperialist landlords in 1919-20, and the consequent liberation of 13 million people (whose conditions of barbarous oppression had been eloquently described, more than once, by British journalists before the war). Next came the Pacts of Mutual Assistance concluded with the (then capitalist) republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—pacts which kept the Baltic

\* "Soviet Peace Policy": Four Speeches by V. Molotov. Lawrence & Wishart, 1941. 101 pp. 3s. 6d.

States out of the war, while ensuring respect for their internal affairs, so long as their governments loyally fulfilled the Pacts.

Then there were negotiations which had failed. One was with Finland, for territorial adjustments which would have greatly added to Finnish territory while reinforcing Soviet security. One of the most unmistakable signs of the anti-Soviet campaign which was worked up by the British Press in the early winter of 1939 was the fact that not a single capitalist newspaper dared to publish this section of Molotov's speech in full. Lastly there were the abortive negotiations with Turkey, which failed because the Turkish Government had tied up its destinies with Britain and France. "Whether Turkey will not come to regret it we shall not try to guess," was Molotov's dry comment.

The whole of this speech is packed with forgotten facts of international history and valuable material for understanding Soviet foreign policy. The same applies to Molotov's comments on the Anglo-French campaign against Soviet neutrality, made in his third speech (March 29, 1940). At a time when there is once again glib talk of the Soviet Union's "rejecting British overtures" and "living up with Germany," it is appropriate to recall Molotov's catalogue of hostile Anglo-French acts against the U.S.S.R. in the winter of 1939-40, and his caustic remark that "the plans of the British and French ruling circles to utilise our country in the war against Germany have been frustrated, and as a result they are pursuing a policy of revenge towards the Soviet Union." That

policy of revenge, it may be remarked, has been pursued ever since, notwithstanding every Soviet effort to improve relations with this country.

The height of that policy, of course, was reached in the Finnish War, to which Molotov devotes the bulk of his speech. "What was going on in Finland was not merely our collision with Finnish troops. It was a collision with the combined forces of a number of imperialist States, most hostile towards the Soviet Union." And there are still politicians and journalists aplenty who ask, with innocent surprise, "Why doesn't the Soviet Government trust us?" Here, too, there are many notable facts of which Molotov's speech reminds us.

The fourth speech, made on August 1, 1940, contains further examples of such facts—the attempts of the British Press to intimidate the U.S.S.R. by the prospect of the growth of Germany's strength, the appearance of mysterious foreign aeroplanes, coming from Turkey and Iran, over Batum and Baku (in March and April), the British embargo on the Baltic gold (July). At the same time, it gives a mass of further evidence of the Soviet fight for peace.

Throughout these speeches runs the connecting thread of Molotov's insistence that *the Soviet Union never has been and never will be the tool of the policy of others, that the U.S.S.R. has always pursued its own policy and always will pursue it, irrespective of whether these gentry in other countries like it or not.* Those who rack their brains over the "riddle of the Kremlin" would do well to remember it.

E. M. WINTERTON.

## A Classic of LENIN

*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, by V. I. Lenin. Lawrence & Wishart, 6s.

At the outbreak of the war there existed a certain amount of confusion in the ranks of a number of the Communist Parties as to the character of imperialist policy and the methods of struggle against it. But the mistakes committed were speedily rectified and the meaning of the big changes in the entire international situation were quickly grasped. In all countries the Communist Parties have carried out a correct policy expressive of the interests of the working class. This is

one of the fundamental differences between 1914 and 1939. To-day there exist tried revolutionary parties. Far from having collapsed as in 1914, the international movement is fulfilling its historic tasks, and the rise of the mass movement against the imperialist war has already begun.

The significance of these facts, even the facts themselves, have been obscured by the everlasting propaganda of the bourgeois Press and its hangers-on about "orders from Moscow" and "political somersaults." Actually, the British Communist Party reached