

THE WORLD PROCESS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE TASKS IN BRITAIN.

J. POSADAS

05.04.78

Extracts

Note to the reader:

In April 1978, Callaghan had been Prime Minister since 1976. He was going to be removed by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher at the next elections in 1979.

The Soviet Union had supported Vietnam until the latter's victory (30 April 1975), and now it was supporting Nationalist Revolutionary Liberation movements in Africa, as in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. The Soviets' policy of complete coexistence with world capitalism had ended. This marked the time of what J Posadas characterised in other texts as 'The Partial Regeneration' in the Soviet Union.

Encouraged, the followers of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Movement (then fighting from Mozambique) were preparing the conditions for the victory of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe in 1979, one year after this text was elaborated.

In 1976, the "Sahrawi Republic" had been declared by the Polisario Liberation Front in Western Sahara; and in 1977-78, that Front, in full growth, was supported by Algeria and Libya.

In Portugal, the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA) that had taken power in Portugal (1974) supported by a Movement of Civil Resistance, facilitated the independence of the Portuguese colonies in Africa and East Timor.

In South Africa, the masses were centralising their revolutionary will around the ANC to win the end of Apartheid (which happened in 1994).

Each of these anti-imperialist advances – at a tremendous human

cost to the most exploited populations - was an encouragement for the left currents in the capitalist countries, as in the Labour Party in Britain, against their imperialist ruling class.

Editorial, Sept 2016.

THE WORLD PROCESS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE TASKS IN BRITAIN

J Posadas

5.4.1978, Extracts

Dear comrades: The world process today forms a unity where imperialism seeks to hold back or divert the revolutionary process. Imperialism cannot stand the Soviet Union and the Communist parties. Its paramount concern is to stop them intervening. This is essentially what is happening in this stage.

World imperialism has difficulties containing the Soviet leaders nowadays. To make up for this, it meddles in the affairs of every European country to stop the Communists reaching governments. To reassure imperialism, various Communist parties have come up with the talk of 'euro-communism', but imperialism is not about to be reassured. It knows that if a Communist Party is elected, it will come under the pressure of the working class.

The process in Britain is determined by the class struggle:

The crisis of capitalism deepens and sharpens, and so does the class struggle. Imperialism knows that Communist governments will be forced to push capitalism aside, down or out. It vows to itself: 'Let's stop them before they find some Soviet road'.

The intervention of the USSR in Africa tilts the world balance of forces strongly to one side. What we call 'the world balance of

forces' as expressed in Africa, for instance, is not just determined by Ethiopia, the Polisario Front, or Portugal. It is a world process. A world process finding form within a system-against-system confrontation. This is why you find imperialism implicated in every part of the world.

There is a strong quest for change in Britain, but the forces that decide in the world are not in Britain; those forces are not with the British parliament or with its MPs looking at the clock for tea-time. The forces that decide in the world are those that drive the class struggle. The middle ground between the classes narrows. Individuals feel the need to side with the class struggle or stay with capitalism. Those who stay with capitalism lose the respect of the masses. This is the historic stage we are in.

The capitalist leaders have no concern for the human being:

In North America, Britain, Germany and beyond, capitalism is engaged in a world campaign against the Workers States¹. Although this campaign has failed. Few are those who support the Workers States' "dissidents"². Absolutely no movement, big or small, has appeared anywhere to condemn Cuba's intervention in Angola. There is not a single capitalist country where the masses have demonstrated against Soviet support for Ethiopia, Angola or the Polisario Front. It is true that capitalism and Social Democracy have retained their power, but their political authority keeps dwindling and deteriorating.

Britain was once a world leader in science, literature, theatre and culture. It had a Lawrence Olivier³ for instance, but this is finished. A cultural void has taken hold instead, and a

¹ An enormous media campaign tried to anger the world masses against the Soviet and Cuban interventions in Africa, where the latter sent troops and support to fight Apartheid. Editorial.

² Intellectuals in East Germany and the USSR, mostly. Critics of, or dissenters from Communism. Supported politically by the capitalist West. Solzhenitsyn is an example.

³ Laurence Keer Olivier, 1907-1989; very famous English actor on stage, in films and on TV.

decomposition. The production of science and culture for their own sake has stopped in Britain, and the standards of life for the population in Britain degenerates.

Germany, North America and Britain have stopped producing outstanding works of literature or art. In the scientific field, North America and Britain concentrate almost entirely on atomic research for the sake of weapons and engines of war. Their focus on atomic science is essentially driven by their war preparations, with a few productivity improvements thrown in, as by-products.

Beyond the drive to improve atomic use, there is a paralysis of intellect throughout the capitalist world. The large capitalist countries, Japan included, no longer contribute to human progress. In none of these countries do you see any concern for the human being. Their essential concern is narrowly focused on the survival of the capitalist regime - and this, by atomic means.

Socially transformed Angola is superior to Britain:

Britain had a high level of culture at one time, and we are told that Angola never had such a thing. The fact remains that Angola today is more cultured than Britain. It is more cultured because it is socially transformed. The basis for social change is cultural, and Angola today owns that cultural base. The British masses are not allowed to speak this truth, but they observe it, and they feel it. They see that the standard of human life is rising in Angola and that it degenerates in Britain. The British masses are not allowed to speak in terms of social transformation, but they know that Angola's success comes from its social transformation⁴.

In 1945, the world situation was revolutionary and its influence transformed Britain. The British Communist Party (CPGB) did not

⁴ Angola has accomplished the following transformation: Expulsion of imperialism, nationalisations and economic planning, as well as great strides against obscene inequality. Editorial.

advance, but the Labour Party did. Labour took a giant leap of programme and policies. It is remarkable that the Labour Party transformed Britain radically in 1948 with a left-wing extremely imperfect, doubtful, vacillating and insecure. Clearly, that particular radical change did not come from the Labour left. Then, where did it come from? It came from the world situation! Here you have a clear illustration of the power of persuasion of the world revolution, and a clear illustration of the power of the British masses to be persuaded by the world revolution.

In 1948, the British Labour Party went a long way to the left. It could have gone farther still, had it not been for the world Communist parties opting, erroneously, for a policy of alliance with capitalism. Communist leaders like Thorez and Togliatti⁵ embarked upon a policy of peaceful coexistence with capitalism. The effect was to strengthen the right wing in all other workers' parties. In the British Labour Party, for instance, it became normal to think that capitalism is compatible with human progress. The fact that the Communist parties never corrected themselves shows in all their talk of 'euro-communism' and 'pluralism'⁶.

Bring the world revolutionary experience into Britain:

The way history developed allowed capitalism to dominate the workers' centres, the workers' political organisations and the main Trade Union Centres. In Britain, Germany and the United States, the workers' organisations are run by strong apparatuses

⁵ Maurice Thorez, French Communist leader, 1900-1964. French Communist Party Sec: 1930-1964.

Palmiro Togliatti, Italian politician, 1893-1964. Italian Communist Party Sec: 1927-1964.

⁶ "The economy does not advance through a mixture of Workers State and capitalism. The concepts of '**euro-communism**' and '**pluralism**' have no place in history. These notions are no use to human progress or growth. They are still-born. No Party can hope to endorse them and survive. There is a revolt about this against Santiago Carrillo (leader of the Spanish Communist Party). The same goes with the Communist leaders of Italy and France. In France, the Communist workers' base criticised and indicted its leadership in the recent electoral campaign". J Posadas, in an unpublished Addendum to this text, same date.

dedicated to containing the influence and experience of the world masses.

The aim of those apparatuses is to rebuff the intelligence and knowledge of the world masses. This was never entirely successful in the past, and now it cannot continue. Left-wing leaders keep appearing in the capitalist countries, with the wish to understand the world. In the left in Britain, but also in Germany and the United States, there is a growing comprehension of the world process. The transformative power of this comprehension grows, and can only keep growing.

The analyses we make have yet to reach the Labour Party; but they will. British capitalism no longer impresses the world with its 'mighty economy'. This has ended. It is the Soviet Union now that is mighty. Here, we say 'Soviet Union' and not 'Soviet bureaucracy' because the Soviet Union is admired all over the world. It is admired for its strong economy and strong relation with the world masses. These attributes will eventually destroy the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, in the Soviet Trade Unions, and beyond.

The craving of Angola for liberation is not a passing phase driven by a few leaders. Because there are Workers States, the world relation of forces is for liberation. The determination of the people of Angola is completely and irreversibly in tune with the world relations of forces. This is why the USSR sends support and weapons there. In the Sahara, the Polisario Front⁷ have no shoes, but they have Soviet-supplied modern weapons. They learn to read and write in the very process of imposing their rights.

⁷ Polisario: Popular Front of Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro, territory claimed by Morocco. The area is populated by indigenous people living in the desert. These declared "The Saharan Arab Democratic Republic" in 1976. It is now recognised by several governments in the world, and it is a member of the African Union. Editorial note, July 2017, based on BBC News 4.4.2017.

In Britain, the left must feel joy on seeing how the leaders of the Polisario Front fight for their liberation. It must be a source of joy to them to observe the Polisario women and children intervening as leaders in their struggle. Things of that sort are not much talked about in Britain, but they will. Materially speaking, the Polisario have strictly nothing at all. The measures which they take, however, are the bricks that build Workers States. It is the world relation of forces that permits this, and Britain is part of that world.

The role, and the weakening of Social Democracy:

It is not true that Portugal progresses under 'Socialist' Prime Minister Mario Soares⁸. With him, 'progress' is for a handful of capitalists. Social Democrats like Jim Callaghan⁹ in Britain and Mario Soares in Portugal believe that capitalism will eventually restore the economy to health. This is why Soares returns the nationalised enterprises to the private sector. It is not that the people have wanted this, or called for it. It is only happening because the Communists and others - whose task it is to oppose Mario Soares - are failing to do so.

Although in a subtler form, the same goes for Britain. In Britain, capitalism has the Labour Party's apparatus to rely upon against social change. The Labour apparatus is capitalist. We insist in saying that it is a capitalist apparatus. It plays the conscious role of defending the capitalist system, and so does the Callaghan leadership. The Callaghan leadership is not mistaken: it is a capitalist leadership - whose role is to maintain the masses in the illusion of the possibility of improvements later, later - always later... This does not allow for the development of a cultural and political life in the Labour Party. The only element

⁸ Mario Soares, Portuguese politician, 1924-2017. Head of the Portuguese Socialist Party, Prime Minister or President of Portugal between 1976 and 1996.

⁹ James Callaghan, British Labour politician, 1912-2005. British Prime Minister 1976-79. Labour Party leader: 1976-1980.

of political life that Labour cannot entirely stifle is the limited one that comes up from the Trade Unions. Overall, this leaves the country with no scientific culture deserving of the name.

The influence of the world generally reaches Britain second hand, but the British people are moved when they see human progress happening in another country. The British masses, and not just the British workers, admire the social transformations that Ethiopia, Angola and Vietnam have made. If this were not so, Callaghan would just push the British workers back. Because the population supports the workers, Callaghan pretends to be on the side of social progress for workers. This is a fraud of course, because there is no social progress being made in Britain.

The forces for social transformation are already in place:

The British masses are constantly demonstrating or on strike. About this, capitalism has no remedy apart from contention and economic regression¹⁰. The undulation of Callaghan's policies suggests that he fears a too direct clash with the masses politically. In the United States, a similar process forces Carter¹¹ to give to his administration a democratic facade. It is the advance of the struggle of the world masses that imposes this sort of thing on capitalism.

The British workers do not wait for their MPs to return from their tea-breaks to organise anti-capitalist actions. And this is not special to Britain: what you see in Britain is the local expression of what happens in the class struggle on a world scale. In Britain, the class struggle gnaws at the authority of British capitalism. It makes capitalism think twice before attacking the working class and masses too boldly.

¹⁰ Cuts in social security, attacks on the workers' wages and conditions, the cheapening and adulteration of all products – particularly food, etc. Editorial.

¹¹ Jimmy Carter, President of the United States, 1977-1981.

Forces of social transformation are maturing in Britain. They already exist. Their political expression is not as clear as it could be, because more preliminary changes are still needed, particularly in the workers' organisations and the workers' parties. The masses cannot rise and intervene until those changes have taken place.

The British masses feel the acuteness of their situation without being able to give full expression to their understanding. When they find their voice, Britain will transform radically, and all at once. Political changes will follow each other at great speed. New leaderships will suddenly appear - and the MPs will not be there because they will be having their tea.

The centralisation of Labour:

In Britain, much of the Trade Union and working class tradition passes through the Labour Party. This fact played a crucial role in slowing down the penetration of communist ideas. This was then compounded by the lack of proletarian functioning in the Labour Party, with the result that, on the whole, the echoes of the world revolution always reached Britain at one removed.

The world revolution reaches the Workers States¹² and the Communist parties much more directly. The drawback in their cases is that they do not turn this advantage into programme. They take steps forward, but often only because the revolution leaves them no choice. The result is that they do not beam back to their masses the full force and significance of the relations in the world.

This happens because the Communist parties and the Workers States evade the programme and the policies of social transformation.

¹² There were many Workers States in the 1970's: China, USSR, Cuba, Vietnam, N. Korea, the countries of Eastern Europe, and more.

The Communist, Socialist and Trade Union leaderships do not use the recurring economic and social crises of capitalism. They do not use either its permanent crisis. This reduces enormously the possibilities that offer. It makes the working class and masses miss opportunities. It hampers their ability to concentrate their human determination and their will to struggle.

There is no 'British Road' to Socialism:

Britain is no longer 'the island' which it thought itself to be in the past. Today's global events exert a much more direct influence in Britain than they used to do. However, there is still the screen and obstacle of the British working-class apparatus in the way. This apparatus is not just in the Labour Party, but in the Trade Unions too, and in the Communist Party¹³.

The British Communists do not discuss on the basis of the dialectical method. In not posing the end of the monarchy, they bend the knee to the structure and apparatus of British imperialism. Their *British Road to Socialism* assumes that Britain is special and unlike anywhere else; but Britain is not special or unlike anywhere else. As Lenin explained to H E Wells¹⁴ when the latter paid Lenin a visit.

With the *British Road*, the British Communists live outside the reality of life. They cling to the defunct tranquillity and all-powerfulness of British capitalism. As it unfolds, the historic process demonstrates that Britain is not special, and that there is no British Road to Socialism. The process runs counter to this concept. It runs counter to the leaders who hold on to it. It runs counter to their view of the world.

No more tranquillity to be had for the Labour apparatus:

¹³ This refers to the **CPB**, that was the CPGB until 1977, one year before this text.

¹⁴ Author of the book "*Russia in the Shadows*", published 1921. Visited Gorky and Lenin in the USSR.

The constant unrest in the British working class shows that the world process of the class struggle does find its way to the Labour Party and Trade Unions. Our comrades need to elevate their capacity and preoccupation to understand how this is happening. They need to discuss it, to guide the changes happening in the Labour Party, and to encourage the formation of left Labour currents.

The Labour bureaucracy moves with great arrogance, but its apparatus makes it incapable of scientific reasoning. We have made it our task to develop the method of analysis based on scientific reasoning. This makes us capable of formulating the ideas that those on the Labour left require. It enables us to name the policies that correspond better to their progressive aims.

Along with Germany and the United States, Britain is one of the places with the least knowledge about dialectical analysis. In those countries, Marxism has been carefully pushed aside, discarded or ignored; the remarkable thing however is that there are no systematic movements against Marxism in the intellectual circles of those countries.

It is the third time now that the SDP Youth¹⁵ takes a stand to the Left of the SDP¹⁶. Some SDP MPs recently voted against their Party about a repressive law. The SDP in government never faced this kind of rebellion before. The disagreement must have gone deeper than pretended because those MPs were expelled. They were expelled to stop others in the Party being influenced.

What stimulates the left in the SDP is the advance of the world revolution and its impact on Germany. When the world finds its way in an apparatus as thick as the German SDP, it is because

¹⁵ Young Socialists in the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Also called 'the Jusos',

¹⁶ **German Social Democratic Party**, still member of the Second International today, like the British Labour Party.

the capitalist system has lost the strength to cut Germany off from the world. The standard of living declines in Germany, unemployment grows and there is deterioration in every way.

German capitalism is still strong, but it was recently defeated in the two major strikes of the Printers and the Engineers. The workers could have gone further, had the Union leaderships been prepared. Strikes and popular committees hampered capitalism a good deal. The Police Union reaffirmed its affiliation to the German Workers Centre;¹⁷ all in all, the Trade Unions put up a fair fight.

In these events in Germany, you see signs of what is coming to Britain. In Britain, the conditions will be different of course, but the bureaucratic leaderships of the Trade Unions and of the Labour Party will have to give ground. The bourgeois apparatus of Social Democracy can no longer impede, oppose, repress or ignore the workers' in the way of the past. The general direction of the process demands change, change and more change.

The Labour-Trade Union apparatus is in trouble:

Generally speaking, there is little political life in Britain and Germany. There are few assemblies, mass meetings or political events. The bureaucratic apparatus of the working class leaves no room for any anti-capitalist suggestion, proposal, petition or initiative. It thwarts the workers' struggles before they can start. It wants to hear nothing of progressive ideas or programmes; but it is this apparatus, and the leaderships behind it, that are in trouble now.

We are reaching the point where nothing more can be gained from capitalism without the involvement of the masses. Nothing can be defended now without the Trade Unions having to fight

¹⁷ The German TUC is called the DGB. Formed in 1949. Had 6 million workers in 2011.

for it. This applies as much to Germany as to Britain. Although the workers' struggles are still too dependent on the Trade Union bureaucracy, the British Unions already play an important political role.

In Britain, the function of the Trade Union bureaucracy is to keep Trade Union action limited to what the bourgeois apparatus of the Labour Party is ready to accept; but this cannot last for ever. The world relation of forces runs counter to this.

Mind also that not every layer in the Labour Party is part of the bourgeois apparatus. To justify its existence, the Labour Party must remain distinct from the Tories. This forces it to keep links with the masses and to keep looking for support. This is why the Labour Party cannot do without some sort of Labour left. This Labour left can be very much curtailed, but it cannot be done away with; as soon as it can, the Labour Party apparatus offers it careers, posts, and titles to keep it wedded to the apparatus of imperialism¹⁸.

Countries politically backward like Germany, Britain and North America - backward in relation to the progress of history - are the result of a previous stage. What the world masses achieve in the way of liberations and revolutions runs counter to this backwardness. The world process imposes itself upon every country. Change is needed. It is pressing. The need for change is pressing against everything, everywhere.

Never think that the Labour Party apparatus is omnipotent:

Social Democratic leaders like Jim Callaghan in Britain and Mario Soares in Portugal never refer to the immense economic and social progress represented by the Soviet Workers State. They

¹⁸ On certain occasions, the Labour Party is referred to as: *Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition*. Editorial.

never mention the qualitative leap in the elevation of life which the Soviet Union has brought to ordinary humanity. They never mention that the nationalised-and-planned form of property is the source of such a progress. When they speak of the USSR, they never say that its transformation took only 20 years, and that it transformed the world into the bargain! Not a word about any of this!

Although the 'socialist' leaders of Britain and Portugal are blind to the superiority of the USSR, they never fail to detect a 'lack of liberty' in the USSR. They have a fixation on the 'Stalin' of the past, and 'the poor USSR's dissidents' of today. Mario Soares cannot admit that the deprivation observable any day in his country does not exist in the USSR: unemployment, hunger, lack of housing, lack of water, lack of transport, lack of medical attention. No mother gives birth without hospital back-up in the USSR, but Soares has only two concerns: 'USSR-oppression' and 'poor USSR's dissidents'. Soares says that he stands for 'freedom' – yes, but freedom for whom?

The masses know all this, but they cannot speak up. They cannot have a voice without organs of social power of their own. It is to stop the formation of those organs of social power that the bureaucracies in the Socialist parties, in the Labour Party and in the Trade Unions impose themselves. They impose their power to stop the formation of working class power. These apparatuses are not omnipotent however. Stalin's apparatus was stronger than them all, and he was got rid of. It is the progress of history that got rid of Stalin¹⁹.

In the last instance, the apparatus does not determine life. It is transitory. Its transitory existence can last twenty, thirty or forty

¹⁹ 'Socialism in one country' died after 1945. New Workers States and Revolutionary States became formed (some were prepared as early as 1943); and to survive as a Workers State, the USSR had to start supporting the Nationalist Revolutions of the world. Editorial.

years, like Stalin's, but nothing more. It cannot dictate to history because it does not organise the progress of history. It can stand up for a while, but the need for the economic, scientific and technical progress of society eliminates it.

Technology calls for economic planning:

Unemployment cannot be absorbed by capitalism any more. The only way capitalism can continue to do this is through war. This is why all the roads that capitalism tries to take, all its stances, movements and preparations point towards war²⁰. The capitalists themselves are aware that their system decomposes, and that war is their last hope.

Unemployment is fast becoming the biggest problem of capitalism. Unemployment brings mass mobilisations, uprisings, revolutions; and this, all the more inevitably for people knowing that Workers States can now be made, that they have no unemployment and that they are viable. Everyone in the world knows that there is no unemployment in the Workers States.

The masses of the capitalist countries support the world liberation movements; they agree that Africa, Asia and Latin America, should be free. Indeed, they wish the same for the United States and Europe! As liberation movements continue to spring up, their influence in the capitalist countries goes on growing. This process is further encouraged by Soviet support. If the USSR continues to support these movements, revolution will win in the world.

Technology is the result of science, but it contributes to science too. It improves scientific knowledge in the fields of its use and practical application. Because this uncovers new elements of knowledge, technology pushes upwards the ability to think

²⁰ Read for example: *A war has begun. Break the silence*, John Pilger, 20.3.2016

scientifically on behalf of humankind.

Although Germany, Britain and the USA are paragons of technology, they greatly hinder social progress too. Their capitalist leaders cannot have technology serving scientific thinking on behalf of humankind. This does not prevent new layers of intellectuals, scientists and academics appearing in ever larger numbers in those countries. To the extent that these specialists care for technology and its uses, their concerns come increasingly closer to those of the working class. It is not just the Trade Unions that fight for progress nowadays, but many petit bourgeois people as well.

The constantly recurring economic and social crises of the capitalist system are steadily merging into one single and continuous crisis. In spite of Hitler, Mussolini and the Second World War, the world masses never abandoned the bases of Marxist thought. Britain is not going to stay in its present state of cultural backwardness.

J. POSADAS

05.04.78

Extracts
