



effect on international working class consciousness). But what have Lenin and Trotsky got to do with the present Moscow regime, with its character, selection, education, motivation, lifestyle, relationship to the Russian and other USSR peoples, relationship to the workers in the USSR or outside it. The answer, for Ted Grant, seems to be that they carry on the same business in a 'distorted' way. The train of thought runs on tracks laid down by Isaac Deutscher — Stalinism is the continuation of Bolshevism, or at least the custodian of its social-economic achievements and the transplanter of them to other countries, carrying them on the point of bayonets to people who are crushed by tanks if they resist.

This is very strange stuff. But it is of interest as illustrating the confused thought processes of the main political leader of one of the biggest groups in Britain calling itself Trotskyist (a group which also has some supporters outside Britain). He is confused to the point of seemingly not knowing who he is supposed to be, who and what the Stalinist rulers of the USSR are, and what their relationship is to the working class. He is seemingly confused about what time of the political clock it is. Like the legendary professor of history who asked a colleague, "what century is this?". Ted Grant must have occasion to ask his associates, "What decade is this?". (But they won't be able to tell him!)

Having explained at great length the different techniques of the bureaucracy and of Marxist working-class revolutionaries, Grant then comes close to the truth that it is a matter of different people, of a different social formation, and of different aims. He puts his own gloss on this. The policies of the proletarian bonapartist regime in the USSR are determined by the "income, power, prestige and privilege" of the bureaucracy. But

they support revolutions in backward countries "when it takes place in the distorted form of proletarian bonapartism". That's only for backward countries with 'distorted revolutions'; "they are opposed to a socialist revolution in advanced countries [because]... the establishment of a democratic socialist regime in any country in the world would immediately threaten the foundations of the bureaucratic misrule in Russia, China, and the other Stalinist states". This seems to mean that despite what they are, and in the course of serving their own interests, the Russian bureaucracy can nevertheless do good work in backward countries. But Grant manages simultaneously to conflate and link as parallel phenomena the workers' revolution and the mutations: the idea is clearly one of distinct stages reflecting levels of development. At the same time Grant's scheme of workers' socialist revolution for advanced countries, 'distorted (Stalinist) revolution' for backward countries, ignores the fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy has made its own 'revolution' in advanced countries too — in Czechoslovakia*, in East Germany (a backward part of Germany, but that is relative), on condition of having military-bureaucratic rule over them.

Now Grant gets to the crux. The ending of feudalism and capitalism in Afghanistan opens the way to bring that country into the 20th century. "If we just considered the Russian intervention in isolation, we should have to give this move critical support".

"But because of the reactionary effect it has on the consciousness of the working class... Marxists must oppose the Russ-

* He has a selective memory. He forgets the Czechoslovak Stalinist coup of 1948, and he forgets that his own organisation (the RCP) was then alone among Trotskyist organisations in supporting the coup.

ian intervention".

"The Russian intervention in Afghanistan must be condemned despite its progressive aspects, because it is spitting at the opinions of the world working class".

It is clear from the article that when he talks about the bad effects on working class consciousness of the invasion, he has something specific in mind. "The overriding danger under contemporary conditions is the alienation of the workers of Japan, Western Europe, the USA and other advanced countries from the idea of socialism and socialist revolution [i.e. Russia?!]. This is shown by the attitudes taken by the Tribunites. Like the CP, they unfortunately base themselves, not on the real movement of the class struggle and on the actual relations between the great powers [sic!] but, on the contrary, rely on abstract moral condemnations... But [world antagonisms] are a reflection of the dialectical contradictions between the capitalist states, and, above all, of the major contradiction of our time, that between the Stalinist states, on the one hand, and the countries of capitalism on the other".

It is clear that Grant is being tossed between the implications and necessary conclusions from his theory, and the pressure of the Tribunites. It may, 'in isolation', be progressive in Afghanistan, but it makes life difficult in the Labour Party! The complete prostration into bloc politics, and the consequent abandonment of independent working class politics, should be noted.

But Grant deplors the invasion. Should the Russians then withdraw? Grant seems to think so, though it is not quite clear. His way of expressing it is to dismiss "the demand by the imperialist powers supported by the CP and the Tribune group" as "utopian". (Why? Grant adds immediately after this: "Russia, of course, has vetoed this de-