

(continued from previous page)

now forgotten; but in the early 'twenties Dybenko and Kollontay were the heroes of the young, starving and fighting generation in Russia.

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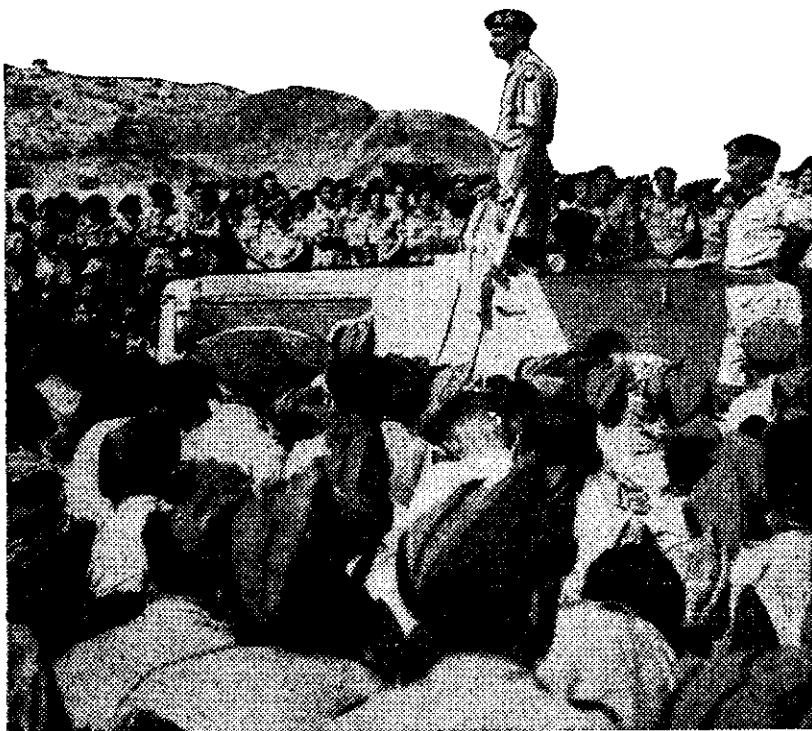
[N those years, Kollontay was "ultra-Left"—to use a favourite Russian term. She was not linked to the Party by sentiments of orthodoxy. So when the Party decided to conclude the peace of Brest-Litovsk, she bitterly fought Lenin and his followers, and condemned the peace as a "foul and treacherous compromise with German imperialism." She even left the Party, but returned to it soon afterwards. She also looked with misgivings on the emergence of a new autocratic and privileged post-revolutionary bureaucracy. As early as 1920 she headed the so-called Workers' Opposition, which called for the "syndicalisation of the State," and voiced the grievances of the rank and file against the Party hierarchy. This was the most dramatic struggle in the ranks of Bolshevism before the conflict between Stalin and Trotsky. But at that time Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin were still united in the fight against the Workers' Opposition. Kollontay was utterly defeated and discredited. She retired from the inner Party life, and decided to serve revolutionary Russia in spite of its blemishes.

In 1923, she went to Norway as Russia's diplomatic envoy, and since then, for 21 years, she has remained in diplomatic service abroad. From Norway she went to Mexico; then back to Norway. Since 1930 she has been Soviet Ambassador in Sweden. One of the last survivors of a generation of great and frustrated revolutionaries, she found her spiritual rest after the great storms of her life in the quiet, mild, and civilised atmosphere of Scandinavia. Serving faithfully her country and her Government, she now looked for those deeper pleasures of life which come from understanding of human nature and human history.

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[N the years of the war, Stockholm became the most important observation post for European diplomats; and so the old lady found herself again in the midst of the rapid stream of politics and diplomacy. In 1940 she helped to put an end to the sanguinary and embarrassing conflict between Russia and Finland. In friendly conversations with M. Paasikivi she then worked for a peace treaty which spared the Finns excessive humiliation. During the last weeks, she has been at work again, coping with the same task. When she tried to formulate the terms of armistice for defeated Finland, Alexandra Mikhailovna might have looked back to those years when Finland served as a base from which the Russian Revolution was organised. Her friendly thoughts probably go back to the days when she herself wrote her book *The Working Classes of Finland*, in which she expressed her admiration for the progressive spirit of the Finnish Labour movement. On the bookshelves she may also find the minutes of the Party conferences and of the Soviet Congresses at which the Commissar for Nationalities of that time proclaimed in ardent words Finland's right to independence. The Commissar was none other than Marshal Stalin. If historic memories can shape present policies, then the peace terms which Madame Kollontay offered to M. Paasikivi ought not to have been too harsh.

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