

Russia and the League

It is altogether proper and necessary that the Soviet Union should utilize every difference between the imperialist powers to prolong peace. The leaders of Soviet foreign policy have been ever on the alert to detect every difference, however small, to drive an entering wedge into even the slightest fissure in the anti-soviet front; and in the process Soviet diplomacy has scored notable victories and prolonged beyond its own hopes and dreams the period of unstable equilibrium, of armed peace, the "breathing spell" for defensive preparation, socialist construction, and the maturing of revolutionary forces in the non-capitalist world.

Is League Entrance a Desertion Of Communism?

It is now becoming apparent that in the pursuance of the above policy the Soviet government is preparing to cooperate more closely with, perhaps even to enter the League of Nations. Does this involve anything new in principle? Does it, as the Trotskyites are intimating, imply any abandonment of the principles of Communism?

In our judgment it does not. The same motives which have led the Soviet Union to enter into diplomatic relations and non-aggression pacts with government after government, justify its entering into pacts with several governments at once (regional pacts), or with all the governments of the world together (Kellogg Pact). Has not the Soviet government repeatedly

by BERTRAM D. WOLFE

participated in, nay forced its way into, conferences called by the League, e.g. the disarmament conferences, the economic conferences? Beginning with the first delegation sent in Lenin's time to a conference in Geneva, and continuing until the latest diplomatic victories of Litvinov, the Soviet government has pursued this policy with notable success in the prolonging of peace, the exposure of diplomatic comedies and plots, the utilization of these world platforms to speak to the masses of all lands and present the Soviet position, the fomentation or utilization of differences inside the ranks of the imperialist powers.

Who Uses Whom?

Naturally, all such activities involve certain dangers. In all diplomatic relationships there is always a hidden question: **Who uses whom?** The bourgeois statesmen entering into negotiations with the Soviet Union pursue their own bourgeois aims. Within certain limits, e.g. the mutual advantages of certain forms of trade, these aims may even not be in direct contradiction with each other. But these limits are extremely narrow and unstable. Fundamental for the wide range and the long run is an irreconcilable antagonism of interests, maneuvering and temporizing in what must be, in the end, a life and death struggle between two classes and two social orders.

Soviets Must Guard Against Sowing Illusions

For these reasons, the Soviet government must be ever on the alert, lest its activities, its participation in conferences and treaties, be used to sow illusions in the mind of the masses as to the nature of such conferences, treaties, institutions and governments. Diplomacy may postpone wars, but it is the masses who suffer in and fight wars, and who turn imperialist wars into civil wars. Soviet diplomacy has the double task, not an easy one, on the one hand, of postponing war and defending the Socialist Republic by diplomatic means, and on the other of preparing the mind of the masses, and most certainly of preventing the sowing of illusions among the masses, to the true nature of each of these diplomatic-political events.

It is this second requirement, avoiding the sowing of illusions in the mind of the masses, that has been neglected in slovenly and shameful fashion in some of the statements recently issued by Soviet and above all by Communist International leaders, on the question of Soviet entrance into the League of Nations.

Stalin On The League of Nations

Thus we can quite agree with Stalin when he says with due caution:

"If the League is only the tiniest humn. somewhat to slow down the drive toward war and

(Continued on Page 5)

Soviet Russia and the League of Nations

(Continued from Page 1)

help peace, then we are not against the League. In that event I would not say we would support the League. I would say that if historical events were such that the League became a brake upon or an obstacle to war, it is not excluded that we should support the League despite its colossal deficiencies." (From his interview on the League of Nations, published in the New York Times, December 28, 1933.)

This statement should have been followed up by a declaration by the Communist International emphasizing the "colossal deficiencies," as Stalin puts it, of the League. This declaration should have warned the masses that the League is a maneuvering ground of capitalist diplomacy, a stage on which clashing imperialist policies find as yet peaceful expression, an instrument, at times actual, and at all times potential, for anti-Soviet and anti-colonial policies, and a puppet show for the mystification of the masses.

But the Communist International did not follow up with such a declaration. On the contrary, the International is today in so unhealthy a state that when Stalin sneezes, the next day the International publishes a blue print of it magnified a thousand diameters. If Stalin's statement had a few crudities of expression, the follow-up "explanations" of Radek for the benefit of the Communist press of the world, magnified the slight crudities into a monstrous distortion that has nothing in common with Marx'sm except the abuse of Marxian terminology.

Radek's Dialectics

Radek's article, entitled "Dialectics, History and the League of Nations" was cabled to all party papers throughout the world. It is thus not the formal statement of the Soviet government entering in-

to diplomatic relations and requiring in externals a certain adherence to diplomatic usages and forms. No, it is the "explanation" by the Communist parties to the toiling masses of all lands. It purports to enlighten the masses as to the League of Nations and to fortify them against illusions and deception.

The Daily Worker for June 1, 1934 publishes the Radek story as cabled from Moscow without comment of its own. It is headed: "Radek writes on history of League Nations; shows how sharpening capitalist conflicts changes outlook; fascism drops out and takes leading role in war preparations."

League No Longer Menaces U.S.S.R.—Radek

According to Radek:

1. The League of Nations, thanks to the withdrawal of Germany and Japan has proved "incapable of becoming the political expression of the 'organized' capitalist world to adjust its interests and direct its expansion against the U.S.S.R."

A strange sort of "dialectics" that does not take into account the extremely unstable and fluid nature of imperialist alliances and antagonisms. Divided today, they may be united tomorrow against the Soviet Union. Against this danger it is the chief duty of a Communist analysis to warn.

"Imperialist Expansionists Gone"

2. "What does the League represent now?" asks Radek, and answers: "Two powers have withdrawn, powers which were the chief tendencies of imperialist expansion in the present historical stage . . . Firstly, the small powers remained in the League. They are aware that in the case of a

by BERTRAM D. WOLFE

fresh imperialist war they fall its first victim." (This "discovery" of Radek's will inevitably sow illusions in the minds of the masses or these "small" nations, and conceals the fact that under imperialism the governments of "small" nations are in general but the puppets of the imperialist policies of the larger ones.—B.D.W.)

The French "Peace" Policy

"France remained in the League," continues Radek, "and the countries allied with her, against which are directed the aggressive policy of fascist Germany and countries siding with the latter. France naturally defends the interests of French capitalism . . . But defense of these positions demands defense of peace, because France can hardly hope that in case of war all powers that helped her defend her positions during the World War would be on her side." (Could illusions of a bourgeois liberal journalist based upon the extremely unstable relation of forces at the moment go any further? The superficial and temporary must of course be taken into account, but not so as to obscure for a moment the basic and long-run tendency.—B.D.W.)

Great Britain And Italy Bide Their Time

"Finally," continues Radek, "Great Britain and Italy remained in the League. These countries are preparing to participate in the fight for the re-division of the world, believe that the time is not yet ripe to come over to the side of the powers preparing a fresh

world slaughter . . .

"The danger of the organization of war against the U.S.S.R. emanates now not from the League of Nations, but from its opponents and the British die-hards." (Of course, there are no "die-hards" in France, no party in favor of switching into an alliance with fascist Germany against the Soviet Union, on the basis of giving Germany the Polish corridor and Poland a slice of the Ukraine!)

The League "An Instrument For Peace"

But the culminating piece of vulgarity and non-Marxist thought and language is Radek's conclusion:

"Those powers remained in the League, who are interested in the maintenance of peace." What a sentence to appear in every official Communist paper in the world! What a conclusion to give to the French, British and American workers! Here the temporary and superficial has triumphed completely over the basic and fundamental and leaves the Communist press as a shameful sower of bourgeois pacifist illusions as to the League of Nations and as to all its component parts, as to all armed-to-the-teeth capitalist lands except only Germany and Japan. It needs only the finishing touch of the Daily Workers headline writer who declares:

"Fascism drops out and takes the leading role in war preparations." Apparently, Italy is no longer a fascist land!

Party Members Must Demand Correction!

It is high time that the Party membership demand that the Daily

Worker correct this drive, that Radek be repudiated, and that the Communist International speak clearly and openly on the perfectly valid reasons for the Soviet Union's rapprochement to the League of Nations, on the temporary nature and extreme instability of those reasons, and the fundamental dangers inherent in the League of Nations and the imperialist policies that are pursued by its remaining members. Stalin's remark on the "tiniest bump" was valid. But Radek has elevated the bump into a veritable Himalaya of peace. It is far more serious than Browder's error on Japan a few years ago, which the International corrected under our pressure. It is more dangerous, for Radek is not Browder, and this time it is the entire International that is in danger of sliding down the path of pacifist illusion and unconscious apology for the imperialist designs of certain great powers.

New Literature On Hand

The Literature Department of the CPO has been very busy of late. During the last month 3 new publications have appeared. "What Next For American Labor," a 5c pamphlet by Jay Lovestone. "The Road To Communism," the quarterly theoretical organ of the International Communist Opposition. Price 35c. "Where We Stand," Vol. 1, including the platform and other programmatic material of the I. C. O. This sells for 25c.

In addition the following publications are under preparation: "The Roosevelt Program" by Jay Lovestone; "The Revolt in Austria" by Will Herberg; "Where We Stand" Vol. 2 in 2 parts. There is now on the press a CPO edition of "Left Communism" by Lenin.

Socialist Red Baiting