

# World Socialism

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## Franco-Soviet Alliance And International Labor

A great deal of uneasiness was manifested among the thinking sections of the revolutionary movement when the news of the Franco-Soviet military alliance first became known. It was feared that the foreign diplomacy of the Soviet Union, which has hitherto been characterized by its difference from that of the imperialist countries, would now become indistinguishable from theirs.

Revolutionists had always opposed military alliances as a preparation for war. This opposition would now be robbed of a good deal of its effectiveness by the fact that the country of the workers, which stands for peace, also participates in military alliances.

In spite of these doubts, however, there was great reluctance on the part of the real friends of the Soviet Union to engage in any public criticism. It was generally granted that the Soviet Union as a country had to do things which revolutionary parties or individuals could not do. The Soviet Union had to take advantage of the disagreements among the imperialists to promote its own interests. It was questionable whether more would be gained than lost by this form of diplomatic activity.

### STALIN LANDS WITH BOTH FEET

If there was uneasiness at the signing of the military alliance, there is outright indignation at what has followed. For in justifying this pact, Stalin, Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Pravda, official organ of the Party, have made statements which not merely depart from the beliefs of all true revolutionists, but which are completely contradictory to the lifelong teachings of Lenin, of the Bolsheviks and of the Communist International.

The joint statement issued by the French and Russian representatives contains the following sentences:

"In this regard M. Stalin understands and approves the national defense policy of France in keeping her armed forces at a level required for security."

The capitalist press interpreted this as an instruction to the French Communists, and justly so.

There could be no other reason for such a statement. This means that so long as there is this alliance between France and the US SR, the French Communists must vote for the military budget, for conscription, for armaments, must urge "loyalty to the country" and discourage anti-military activities.

### 'ONE MUST BE STRONG TO DEFEND PEACE'

Pravda tries to justify this attitude by the threat of Nazism. It declares:

"One must be strong to defend peace. The weak will not be able to defend their borders. Military weakness would only be an additional reason for the National Socialists to hasten aggression."

Nothing could be more false or deceiving from a revolutionary point of view. This is nothing but a vulgar concession to national chauvinism. This is the argument which was heard in 1914. Then it was "protection" against the Kaiser, or against the Czar, or a "war for democracy."

Only a few months ago there was a popular referendum in Switzerland to increase the military establishment as a defense against Nazism. The Communist and Socialists both voted against the proposal. The Pravda argument was made by the militarists and reactionaries, "One must be strong to defend peace."

The theory preached by Stalin and the Pravda is the much-

despised "lesser of two evils," against which the Communists have spilt so much ink, but this is in an even worse form.

### WORKERS WILL FIGHT FASCISM

It is an illusion to believe that a bourgeois anti-Nazi government can be a real bulwark against Fascism or a real friend of the Soviet Union.

Today in France there is a "democratic" government. But the transition to Fascism may be very easy, as the Stavisky events showed. A Fascist France may hate Nazi Germany just as much as democratic France, or even more. Would that be justification for an alliance with it?

The Soviet Union must depend for real assistance only upon the international labor movement, not upon bourgeois governments. Consequently its present policies are dangerous because they tend to give the reactionaries arguments against the labor movement and weapons against the revolutionists.

In 1923, when France invaded the Ruhr, some Communists wished to defend Germany as a "colony." The Communist International refused to adopt such a policy. "This is the continuation of the imperialist war," it said.

Can not this be said with equal justification of the present struggle between France and Germany? Only the roles have changed. In 1923 France was the aggressor. Today Germany. In 1923 France was pushing the anti-Soviet campaign. Today it is Hitler.

It is true that as a result of the ruinous and splitting policies which the official Communist movement has carried out in the last half dozen years, the Soviet Union has become isolated from the international labor movement. But is that a reason for seeking friends among the imperialists?

On the contrary. What the Soviet Union needs is to move closer to the international labor movement. Its leaders must stop considering all critics as enemies, and stop trying to dictate the tactics and strategy for the entire world.

Above all, they must give up the childish belief that only the members and sympathizers of the Communist parties are friends of the Soviet Union or can be relied upon for assistance.

### 'DEFEND THE USSR' VS. 'ARM THE IMPERIALISTS!'

The revolutionary workers in all countries have on many occasions shown their willingness to "defend the Soviet Union."

The British workers prevented war against the Soviet Union in 1921. The French and Belgian Socialists duplicated this action. But "Defend the Soviet Union" never meant "Arm the imperialists." If the two are made synonymous, there will be mighty few defenders of the Soviet Union in the capitalistic countries.

"The enemy is at home." This must remain the slogan of all true revolutionists. We must continue to oppose all chauvinism, all militarism, all military alliances as preparations for wars of imperialist aggrandizement, in which the workers are the main sufferers.

Only when we have established a workers' government will we be justified in taking measures to strengthen it and defend it against foreign attacks. And only such a government can become a real ally of the Soviet Union.