

What Happened to the World Since 1917

By ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

ONLY FORTY YEARS have passed since the great October Socialist Revolution. In man's long history this is no more than a brief account. Yet in this short span of time a socialist world system has come into being, seeking to coexist and compete peacefully with the capitalist world system.

This historical social transformation contains bright promise for the material and spiritual advance of mankind.

Since Nov. 7, 1917 we have been living in the epoch of social and national liberation. In one country after another, now embracing one-third of mankind, socialism has supplanted capitalism. In one nation after another, in Asia and Africa, in the Far East and Middle East, the peoples are throwing off the yoke of colonial oppression and are proudly advancing toward free and independent nationhood. And in the lands of capitalism, still including large parts of the world, the working class and the labor movement have grown in strength and influence. They are becoming leading factors in the life and progress of their nations.

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THE NATURE of the present epoch is such that the forces of peace, socialism, labor, democracy and national independence are bound to grow while the forces of monopoly capital, aggression, imperialism and reaction are bound to decline. It is historically inevitable for the capitalist world system to contract and for the socialist world system to expand.

It is on the basis of these historic processes that American labor and its allies have been able to come to their present strength and growing influence in the affairs of the nation. American trade unionists and their allies among the Negro people, the farmers and middle classes will do well to ponder the truth that the growth and expansion of their own influence in the social and political life of the United States have been inseparable from the growth and expansion of the socialist world system and of the national liberation movements.

The gratitude of mankind and eternal glory for opening up the present epoch belongs to the working class and peoples of old Russia, now the Soviet Union. Led by the great Communist Party, founded and built by Lenin and

his disciples, they have carried through successfully the first socialist revolution in history, completed the building of the first socialist system, created the first socialist nation.

Joined in later years by the People's Republic of China and by many countries in eastern and central Europe, the Soviet Union has emerged as the leading socialist nation in a world system of socialism. A new period in the history of the world is now being born. It is the period of peaceful coexistence and competition in which unprecedented opportunities will arise for all peoples to live peacefully and to advance rapidly on the road of social progress, in their own way and by their own free determination.

For the American people these opportunities are even brighter than for any other in the capitalist world. What is needed is for labor and its allies to steer a consistent course of struggle for peace, for peoples' welfare and anti-monopoly positions at home and non-imperialism and non-aggression abroad.

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THE SOVIET UNION has demonstrated in practice what was proven in theory by Marx and Lenin—that peoples and nations can get along very well without capitalist monopolies and capitalism. It has demonstrated that peoples can advance their material and cultural progress much faster under socialism than under capitalism.

No wonder the new nations and industrially underdeveloped countries are studying so intently the experiences of the socialist countries. No wonder many of these nations are seeking roads of industrialization which will enable them to bypass the capitalist stage of development.

The heritage left by the capitalist system in Russia was a country of relative industrial backwardness, widespread poverty, periodic famines, mass illiteracy and disease.

Now, only forty years later, the socialist Soviet Union occupies the position of the first industrial power in Europe and second in the world. The people are literate. Education is growing by leaps and bounds on all levels. Science and technology have reached unheard of heights. Sputnik in the skies dramatizes all these historic attainments of socialism as nothing else could. Standards of living

are steadily rising, materially and culturally.

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THE SOVIET UNION has undertaken to catch up with and then surpass the United States in per capita production of agricultural and industrial commodities. Judging by its past accomplishments the Soviet Union is well on its way to attaining this objective too.

In the quarter of a century from 1930 to 1956 the volume of industrial output in the Soviet Union increased twenty times. In the United States it has only slightly doubled.

The Soviet economy suffered incalculable damage in World War II while the economy of the United States was able to develop peacefully and better than normally.

Soon after the end of the war, the Soviet Union was producing 23,000,000 metric tons of steel to 76,000,000 in the United States. In 1956, Soviet production was 48,000,000, an increase of more

than 100 percent while American production was 101,000,000, an increase of 33 percent.

In 1948 Soviet coal production was a third of this country's. In 1956 it was 60 percent of American production.

The rate of growth of the Soviet economy since 1945 has been about 10 percent per year while that of the United States has been about 4 percent.

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ENEMIES of socialism like to speak of the price paid by the Soviet people for these achievements in the economy. But what about the price paid by the world's peoples for capitalism—from its birth, in the course of its rise and decline, in the process of its disappearance as a world system? Compared with the suffering imposed upon the peoples by capitalism, the price of building socialism would appear small indeed.

From the beginning of the present epoch the capitalist world sys-

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tem gave rise to the mass misery and suffering of 1921 and 1924, the catastrophic economic crisis of 1929 and the deep depression of 1937. In addition the capitalist monopolies gave birth to fascism, Hitlerism and to World War II, for which mankind paid with tens of millions of lives and indescribable tortures.

Since the end of World War II even the economy of the United States has been affected by serious crisis elements, undergoing serious recessions in 1948-49 and 1953-54.

What price capitalism? What price monopoly?

THE REAPPRAISAL of Stalin's role, initiated by the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was a significant part of a historic turn, the birth of a new stage in the development of the Soviet Union. In this new stage, the socialist potentialities and capacities of the Soviet Union will be widely unfolded and come to full fruition. The material and cultural standards of the people will rise with increasing tempo. The repressive activities of the organs of government will decrease while the role of organizing and managing the socialist economy will expand. The great qualities of socialist democracy will then find full expression in all spheres of Soviet life.

No judgment of ours of Stalin's role can be complete or definitive at this time. Neither the greatness of his leadership nor its detestable inhuman aspects can be fully assessed now. Only history will be able to do that.

But this much is certain. The abuse of personal power associ-

ated with the Stalin cult of the individual was a crime not alone against socialist legality and democracy. It was a revolting crime against socialist morality, against the humane and humanitarian concepts and feelings of socialist ethics.

The historic turn in the development of socialism signaled by the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Union constitutes also a recognition of the fact that socialist morality is an organic part of Communist political judgment. No policy or method of leadership can be right or scientifically correct from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism if it violates the humane precepts and feelings of socialist morality.

On this the 40th anniversary of the great October Socialist revolution the scientific truth and humane morality of Marxism-Leninism stand out in all their beauty and greatness. The teachings of Marx and Lenin have won the minds and hearts of hundreds of millions throughout the world. In the hands of a vanguard Party of the working class, a party that had the capacity to develop these teachings on the basis of the national peculiarities, traditions and needs of its own country, Marxism-Leninism has proven invincible. This is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

ON THE EVE of the Great October Socialist Revolution Lenin wrote:

"All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but not all will do so in exactly the same way. Each will contribute something of its own in one or another form of democracy, one or another

variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, one or another rate at which socialist transformations will be effected in the various aspects of social life."

The 16th Convention of the Communist Party of the United States has given recognition to the idea that the American people are in a position to realize a new form of democracy—an anti-monopoly democracy—popularly known as the Welfare State. This could represent a historic stage of social progress to be followed by the next and higher stage of social progress—the peaceful and constitutional transition to Socialism.

The road to socialism in the United States will be longer than elsewhere, passing through one or more historic stages. But the process of socialist transformation itself is bound to be brief and relatively easy when the American people, headed by the working class and led by a party inspired by the teachings of Marx and Lenin, will decide to take that road.

In the United States, socialism will be able to unfold almost from the very beginning all its limitless capacities for the material and spiritual advancement of the people as a whole and of every individual. Democracy—socialist democracy—will prevail in all spheres of life. And in the rapid advance from socialism to communism the American people will display marvels of creative ability and ingenuity.

American Communists and all socialist-minded workers, have a great part to play in accelerating these historic processes.

Greetings and congratulations

seriously the advantages of neutrality.

The truth of the matter is that the Soviet Union does not have a weapons diplomacy, although it has the weapons; and it does not have a "positions of strength" foreign policy, although its positions of strength are becoming stronger, precisely because they do not depend upon arms and military bases to make political friends. The Soviet Union has Sputnik, but it does not threaten to build space platforms for military intelligence and push-button bombing, as some of our "experts" threaten to do should they reach outer space.

It certainly has not escaped the attention of the world that the Soviet first in outer space is betokened by a scientific instrument, while our first in atomic energy was announced to a shocked world by dropping A-bombs over defenseless cities when, as many pointed out, this was not essential for the final defeat of Japan.

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IN HIS interview with James Reston of the Times, Khrushchev did not boast of Soviet superiority in missiles or other weapons. Instead, he took the much more sensible view that in these days of universal science two powerful countries like the United States and the Soviet Union hold positions, more or less, of parity in science and its military applications. What the Soviet Union has one day in weapons the United States will attain the next, and visa versa. "But we do not want such competition," he added, "we want peaceful relations, not the stockpiling of means of destruction."

This reflects the mentality of

to the Soviet peoples and their Leninist Communist Party on the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.