

MAR 20 '44 B

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bulletin of the Provisional International Contact Commission

Volume 6 No. 3

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BUILDING A RED ARMY

NEW BETRAYALS OF STALINISM

Issued by the Revolutionary Workers League for the International
Contact Commission.

Affiliates

Central Committee of the Red Front of Greater Germany

Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

Leninist League of Great Britain

Mail address of publishers

DEMOS PRESS

708 N. CLARK STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Label Donated

BUILDING A WORKERS ARMY

"The Red Army - A Study of the Growth of Soviet Imperialism," is by Erich Wollenberg, former member of the editorial staff of the German C.P. paper "Rote Fahne" (Red Flag) and former member of the Soviet Red Army.

The title illustrates the quality of the book. On the one hand it gives a sound factual analysis of the birth and growth of the Red Army. On the other hand it expatiates at considerable length (and unsuccessfully) on what the author considers to be imperialism. At times he even calls the Soviet Union fascist.

For purposes of positive analysis so necessary to aid in educating workers in military matters the section on the Red Army is worthy of considerable attention, both theoretically (in order to comprehend the class dynamics of degeneration of the bourgeois army and growth of the revolutionary army) and practically (in order to accelerate the decay of the one and the birth of the other).

This is particularly true today, in the era of wars and revolutions when "History causes the military problem to become the essence of the political problem." (Lenin). The class war is approaching its summation of combat by class force. In the modern world of imperialism, class force is concentrated in the military apparatus at the base of the state. As Wollenberg says "every bourgeois Army is the instrument of bourgeois dictatorship." more, it is, "The most ossified instrument for the maintenance of the old order of things, the strongest safeguard of bourgeois discipline, the prop of the rule of capitalism and the means of creating and inculcating a slavish obedience and keeping the masses of workers under the sway of capitalism." (Lenin).

MILITARY ARM OF DICTATORSHIP

The army is the base of the state. It would be a serious error to imagine that Lenin meant the army was an "Ossified instrument" in the sense that it is weak and old style. For in the next few words he makes clear that as ossified as it is yet it is the "strongest safeguard of bourgeois discipline."

Its chief function is to make war on the workers at home, terrorize them into submission, then strike out abroad to spread the rule of imperialism over the planet.

So important is the army, the concentrated class force of the bourgeoisie, that Marx, Engels, and Lenin agree ("Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky") that "The first commandment

for those who would carry out a successful revolution is to bring about the destruction and disintegration of the old army and its replacement by a new one...the defense force of the new class."

The essential preliminary condition for successful revolution is destruction of the bourgeois army. Any other viewpoint is adventurist and doomed to defeat. The causes of army decay stem principally from the economic breakdown of capitalism and the consequent political incapacity to any longer rule the masses except by naked force. This economic and political disintegration usually reaches a very advanced stage before it reflects itself in the army in the form of bad food, stoppage of pay, increased brutality. This is so because as the base of state power the army is essentially a bureaucracy, and like all bureaucracies is separated from the mass of the population by a higher standard of living and a rigid control of body and mind by imperialism. Even in the U.S. with the most vaunted standard of living in the world, in order to raise the army above the suffering mass of the population the government was forced to raise soldier's pay, provide partially for dependents, and improve the food. This has been obtained as a result of the crucial military and political necessity to make men into soldiers by giving them something to fight for, to separate them from their worker brothers ideologically, geographically and economically. The highest expression of this separation which is the essence of bureaucracy is the German army, in which soldiering is a "distinguished" profession, pay and food is far superior than among civilians. The opposite of this is the Red Army which despite Stalinism is closely tied to the soil and factories.

It should be noted parenthetically that the more industrialized a country the more will its Red Army be tied to the workers in factory, mine and mill, through workers militia based on these industrial units. The Red Army, like the workers council, attempts to group people on a class basis, rather than a geographic territorial basis, which disperses corking class unity.

CZARIST ARMY

The principal phenomenon showing decay of the old Czarist army was the enormous number of deserters - 2,000,000! Other figures are: 1,800,000 killed, 2,000,000 prisoners, 5,000,000 wounded. This is a total of almost 11,000,000 removed from active participation in the war. In the Czarist army the decay was further intensified by the fear of peasant soldiers of being "overlooked in the distribution of land." And the industrial worker soldiers returned to the cities to take over the factories and help build up their class organization.

The Russian revolution went through its whole process of birth without an army of real military strength. It was forced to sign the treaty of Brest-Litovsk early in 1918 veritably at the point of the German gun. The masses were armed with what arms were available. But Brest-Litovsk proved as pointed out by Marx, that "the revolution will have to fight modern instruments and arts of war with modern instruments and arts of war." This is made simpler because the bourgeoisie trains its own gravediggers, "the bourgeoisie teaches the proletariat how to use its arms." That is the central contradiction of capitalist militarism: it must arm the workers to fight its wars, and it must train the workers in the use of arms.

We can now approach the problem of destroying the old army and creating the new. These are directly opposite processes. The proletariat functions in a directly opposite way in developing from the one to the other.

The basic instrument for disorganizing an army is an organization which sets itself that task. An army can be destroyed as such by military defeat. But disorganization (and consequent destruction) by a class conscious organization is something else again. The French army of 1940 was destroyed by overwhelming military force, as well as by the class hostility and defeatism of the worker-soldier. The Czarist army was destroyed by a combination of military force and the social force of mass discontent and hatred of the war led by the party of Lenin. In the France of 1940 the strength of the opposing German army was so great that the masses were unable to take advantage of the military defeat of the French armed forces and overthrow the government. It has been established as an historical fact that the reason the French bourgeois surrendered so quickly to the Germans is their fear that proletarian revolution would break out in the rear. This revolution would be more of a menace to the profits of imperialism than subservience to the Germans who would allow the defeated French bourgeoisie a percentage of their profits, however small, whereas the revolution would have wiped out all profit.

REVOLUTIONARY CELLS

The chief function of the Bolsheviks in the Czarist army was to create revolutionary cells, spread revolutionary propaganda among troops, training themselves in military science, and connecting the struggle of the soldier with the broader struggle of the oppressed masses.

But with the fall of Czarism the disorganizers of the old army had to become the organizers of the new army, two dialectically contradictory processes. From a negative approach to the army they had to develop a positive approach. The first steps in this general direction were the formation of Red Guards before

October, the training of military cadres. Within the not yet dead Czarist army the Bolshevik military organization attempted for a time to no longer undermine the remains of the army but to control the officers and thus prevent the creation within the old army of military formations which might war against the revolution. The Bolsheviks created revolutionary cells in and out of the army, trained military agitators and organizers during the revolution.

The Bolshevik military organization in the army played a key role in the armed insurrection of October 1917. "After the victories of October 1917 the military cells tried to arrest the disintegration of the old army and build up formations of the new army within the shell of its predecessor. But it soon became manifest that the Russian workers serving in the old Army were 'incapable of taking it over and making use of it for their own purposes.' The old Tsarist army ... simply could not be evolved into a class army of the proletariat."

The dictatorial capitalist army could not be democratized. The workers could not turn it to their own use. They had first to destroy it completely. Then they built a new army which was democratic at its foundation. This is an extension of the Marxian theory of the necessity of shattering the state power into the realm of the army, the base of the state. No army based on capitalism is democratic. This is the social reason why all capitalist armies are essentially identical. The German army and the American army have no important structural differences. Any attempt to take over either army on a capitalist basis is impossible of success. The lesson of the Russian Revolution is that the entire state apparatus must be irretrievably shattered, including the armed forces.

STATE POWER AND THE ARMY

"The system of electing officers did nothing to stop the disintegration." This illustrates the important fact that though revolutionary propaganda calls for democratizing the army by introducing election of officers and obtaining other workers' rights, yet this is of propaganda value only, and can be gained only as byproducts of the struggle to shatter the army control over the soldier and the state control over the worker. These democratic reforms can never be fully achieved in the capitalist army. It is a structural and social impossibility. As the boss can not relinquish control of production without loss of his entire business, so the national boss class cannot give up control of the army without losing state power.

"As Trotsky remarked, it had to be first reduced to atoms and dissolved into its components." The entire base of the state had to be smashed. The grinding process of disintegration had to

continue inexorably to the end of the old army. "Every soldier, workman and peasant had first to return to the place of his civilian occupation and re-enter his old workers' cell in order to emerge new-born to join a new army." Soldiers had to get the physical union with the toiling masses again and then be prepared to turn their efforts to construction of the new army. The Soviet Government demobilized the entire old army. Only in a few isolated regiments did Bolshevik military organization succeed in transforming units of the old army into an efficient part of the revolutionary army.

RED GUARDS

The Red Guards, one of the chief early efforts of workers to create their own armed forces, first began in the revolution of 1905, when the workers "formed their own fighting units in the factories." The Red Guards were based on the productive unit and defended the workers' conquests. "The victorious counter-revolution discovered that one of its chief tasks would have to be the disarmament of these units." The workers had to be disarmed before the counter-revolution could succeed. This armed threat to the capitalist state power had to be obliterated, as, contrari-wise the workers would have to smash the capitalist armed force to win the revolution. In 1917 these defense forces or Red Guards again sprang into existence. They were a further extension in a revolutionary situation of workers armed bands which spring up in major class conflicts. The Red Guards grew steadily, operating as factory militia. The Kerensky government attempted to no avail to disarm the Red Guards. When the Kornilov revolt broke out at the end of August 1917 the Red Guards emerged from semi-legality and led in the defense of Petrograd. After this victory the Petrograd Soviet established the Red Guards as an official workers militia on a comprehensive military basis.

In the preparation for the insurrection the Red Guards played a decisive role, arming the workers, training them, extending the military network, agitating ceaselessly. Officers were elected from the ranks, mostly for their political views. Up to the time the counter-revolution sent regular troops against them, the Red Guards were equal to the task of defending the revolution. To meet regular troops a regular proletarian army was necessary. This came later. This accords closely with the ideas of General George Washington who in the first American Revolution asserted that the militia was capable of defense but that for offensive action against regular troops a more cohesive and better trained force was necessary. This is also the opinion of the military strategist Homer Lea.

GUERRILLA BANDS

As the Red Guards grew in the cities, so the guerrilla bands arose in the country. Guerrilla bands established themselves over whole provinces. There were two main types of guerrilla bands: Siberian peasants who were in close contact with the workers, and Ukrainian peasant bands many of whom were under the influence of wealthy peasants. On their own terrain guerrilla bands were hard to beat. In unaccustomed country against regular troops they had considerable difficulty, illustrating the important military fact that as incipient forces of the revolution they are of considerable use, but that in the further defense of the revolution against regular armed intervention, they can be of auxiliary use only. Many guerrilla bands vacillated, now supporting the Reds, now the Whites, in the bitter Civil War of 1918-20. The individual bands were in some cases a source of serious danger to the revolution. Grigoriev and Makhno, almost legendary warriors, were the chief representatives of these vacillating bands. These two leaders represented the hatred of the Ukrainian peasant for the Great Russians who had previously oppressed them. They also resented the requisitioning of grain by the Red Army. "Successful guerrilla warfare came to an end when the Civil War exchanged small operations for large ones on entrenched fronts." It was even necessary to crush many guerrilla bands which refused to conform to centralized Soviet authority. From a necessary weapon in the opening stage of the revolution they became, as long as they remained independent, an obstacle to the orderly development and consolidation of the centralized state apparatus. The individualistic guerrilla bands had to give way to the centralized Red Army if the revolution was to hold its ground and move forward against its enemies.

CENTRALIZED RED ARMY

This does not preclude the use of workers' militias in the cities and of guerrilla bands (partisans) in the country in Russia today or in other countries tomorrow. But where a centralized regular proletarian force exists as in Russia today, the decentralized bands are of necessity an auxiliary to the regular armed force of the proletariat. In the war against Germany today the guerrilla bands operating in German-controlled territory are armed by the Red Army, and where possible ammunition, food, and other materials are dropped to the guerrillas by parachute and other means. Without this close cooperation, operations in German-controlled territory would be very limited. In China where the guerrilla bands also operate extensively they have been able to do so without such assistance mainly because of the hitherto weak character of Japanese forces outside the big cities.

It can generally be stated that the value of guerrillas will be directly in proportion to the political popularity of the ruling

regime, on the one hand, and the cohesion between regular army forces and guerrillas, on the other. The successes of the Red Guerrillas in this war would undoubtedly have been many times as much if true workers democracy had continued to exist in Russia.

From the Red Guards in the cities and the guerrilla bands in the country a new army, centralized and organized under the central proletarian state power, was established. This was based on "the principle of election of officers and mutual comradely discipline and respect." The revolution was finding that the cohesive cement which holds an army together thus distinguishing it from an unorganized crowd is discipline. No the guardhouse discipline of old based on terrorism and officer domination (in the bourgeois army even punishment), but the new revolutionary discipline of election of officers by the rank and file, thus involving the entire rank and file in the conduct of the war, and on comradely respect and revolutionary responsibility. This responsibility was to the working class, and is the class-conscious responsibility of every revolutionary worker who maintains solidarity with his class. The conception of the military writer De Picq that "In the private soldier sense of duty may spring from blind obedience; in the noncommissioned officer from devotion to his trade; in the commanding officer from supreme responsibility" is highly significant for revolutionary military theory and revolutionary discipline. In a class-conscious revolutionary army what is needed is supreme responsibility to the class, based on revolutionary power, revolutionary cooperation and comradship, and revolutionary organization - the solidarity of the armed working class.

The purpose of the Red Army was "to serve as a bulwark for the Soviet regime at the present time, a groundwork for the replacement in the near future of the standing army by the armed force of the people, and a basis for the Socialist revolution in Europe." (Council of People's Commissars Decree of Jan. 12, 1918) The Red Army from its birth was internationalist. Trotsky became War Commissar. The "universal military training" was begun in the factories and other productive units. Volunteers had to serve six months. From 1918 to 1920 the Red Army grew from 600,000 to 5,498,000.

The Red Army was forced to live off the country, one of the basic reasons for the guerrilla and peasant vacillations (the other class reason was the control by the rich peasants and foreign imperialists of some of the guerrilla bands). Two-thirds of the Red Army was raised by the fighting front command, and not in the rear, at the factory gate. The Red Army arose from local formations of diverse descriptions, to become a highly centralized army. Centralization was necessarily weak at first, until the revolutionary power became more firmly established.

RED ARMY AND REVOLUTION

Without a Red Army there could have been no successful revolution. "Every great revolution has been forced, in the course of a civil war and a national war of independence, to create a new revolutionary army, as it were, out of the ground and on the debris of the old army - the army of the rulers and oppressors. If the revolutionary class or party failed in this military task, if it could not gain the breathing space it needed in order to hold on, thru the army-less period of transition, it had failed in the problem set it by history and was doomed to sink back for a long period of further development (or, perhaps, forever) into the void where history has nothing to record," writes Wollenberg.

This was the cause of the defeat of the German Peasants' War of 1525. The English bourgeois revolution was supported by the armed might of Cromwell. The French revolution succeeded in creating an armed force which defended the revolution. In the Paris Commune of 1871 the proletariat failed to create an army which could defend the revolution. It had no breathing space, no developed industrial base. The result was disaster. Wollenberg claims the military debacle of the Paris Commune led Karl Kautsky to state "warfare is not the proletariat's strong point." Kautsky was wrong. Workers compose the mass of the world's armies. And the Red Army even under Stalin has shown it is a remarkably powerful fighting machine. When it makes full use of its social weapons, not merely its military might, it is unbeatable, as the comments of General Hoffman, German representative at Brest-Litovsk, establish, when he said the German armies on the Eastern front were devoured not by military defeat but by the virus of Bolshevism. The call to class solidarity - fraternization - was far stronger than the entire Prussian disciplinary structure founded on fear. The revolution of 1905 did not have the requisite breathing space to construct a potent armed force, though Red Guards and peasant guerrilla bands were created. This matter of breathing space is of primary importance. Time is of the essence. Breathing space is the reason Lenin favored signing the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It is a necessary component of defensive class war strategy in such straitened circumstances where the enemy has the upper hand, and the revolution lies prostrate without arms.

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

The proletariat learned much of war since 1871. The bourgeoisie did too. A principal problem of the new Red Army was obtaining leaders - officers. Without officers no army could be formed. In March 1919 Lenin wrote "the former teachers of socialism who foresaw and prophesied so many events of the social revolution never discussed the question of utilizing the reserves of bourgeois knowledge and technique accumulated by the worst forms of militarism."

Bourgeois militarism had its useful side. Lenin himself had carefully studied military history, particularly as it related to the armed insurrection. Engels who first clearly developed the three main points of the Marxian theory of insurrection, took these from the general experiences of military history. It is to be noted that Engels was the military expert of the movement for the long period of its youth. Clausewitz' "On War," was Lenin's chief source of military knowledge. It is acknowledged by military historians of all classes as the most profound work on war ever written. In his works Lenin writes of how he carefully studied barricade tactics and movement of armed masses, utilizing the experiences of the Paris Commune (General Cluseret's writings were his chief source book), and he wrote many articles against Plekhanov (who said the proletariat "should not have taken up arms" in 1905) and against Kautsky who took a pacifist stand. It is an illuminating commentary on the state of the world proletarian movement that insufficient attention has been devoted to continuing the study and practice of war from the point of view of the proletariat.

OFFICERS AND THE RED ARMY

Before the Red Army no revolutionary writers had written on the necessity for using bourgeois military specialists to raise and lead the army of the revolution. First the small force of Bolshevik military cadres and ex-noncommissioned officers formed the officer cadre. In the spring of 1918 military schools were created to train officers, but these early schools could not turn out commanders in the short time allotted the revolution for training its defenders. Officers of the old army had to be utilized.

"The problem of the employment of military specialists in an army raised by the dictatorship of the proletariat is an old one. It is part of the problem arising from the relations of the revolutionary party to the middle classes in general and to bourgeois experts and scientists in particular," writes Wollenberg.

In Russian history the officer caste illustrates how specialists of the old ruling class contributed their services to the cause of the lower masses. The officer class was never homogeneous. Powerful revolutionary tendencies existed in it alongside the backward tendencies. Officers had gone over to the side of the masses in 1905 as thousands did in 1917. Almost a 100 years before in 1827 the Decembrist revolt was led by officers. Officers participated in the serf uprisings of 1861.

"Patriotic feelings were the main motives which induced a number of officers of the old army to offer their services in good faith to the Soviet Government to which they had been originally hostile. They came to realize that Russia's national freedom was

indissolubly linked with the Soviet Power, and saw that all 'patriotic associations' were forced to become the agents of imperialist powers striving to lay hands on the cornfields and oil and mineral deposits in 'Russian soil.'" These are some of the motivations driving officers to support the revolution which had destroyed their previous social base. At first many officers considered the Bolsheviks to be agents of Germany. They soon learned that the Bolsheviks were the deadly enemies of all imperialism. True, in many cases, relatives would be held as hostages in case of any treachery. This was the price the ex-servant of the bourgeoisie had to pay to the revolution which he had kept down and was now forced by the development of events to serve. Holding of hostages is not an invention of the revolutionists nor of the Bolshevik party. It is an old military device or tactic utilized from the dawn of warfare. For those faint-hearted gentry who imagine fondly that the earlier groups in the movement never used this particular tactic, attention is invited to the experience of the Paris Commune where the Communards not only took prisoners, but were roundly scolded by Marx himself for not dealing more harshly with them.

Many officers deserted and betrayed. This was an evil no one could abolish.

POLITICAL COMMISSARS

A second basic principle of Red Army organization later abolished by Stalin only to be reestablished during the Nazi-Soviet war which began in June 1941, was the "political commissar." "First and foremost they endeavored to dissipate the natural distrust felt by Red soldiers towards the employment of military specialists by enacting that every Tsarist officer should be accompanied by a commissar, who had to countersign every order given by the commanding officer before it became effective."

The political commissar was the direct representative of the government to the Red Army. Commissars were attached to every echelon of the army, even down to the lowest units. "The command of fronts and armies was entrusted to 'Revolutionary Councils of War', consisting of one commanding officer and one or two commissars." The function of these Councils and of the commissars were the same, "Though within different frameworks." The commissars were prohibited from interfering with the "work of leadership or with tactical measures." They had to countersign even orders they disapproved, thus possessing the right of protest to higher authority. The commissars were useful as controls on the Tsarist officers. According to Wollenberg, "The office of commissar was conceived as a temporary measure which the creation of a reliable corps of Soviet officers would gradually render unnecessary."

THE CIVIL WAR

One of the main reasons the revolution could not convert the old army to its own ends and had to demolish it was that the old Tsarist officers had to be completely subordinated to the revolution before they could be used in the army of the workers. The revolution had to reach a stage in the development of its positive force, as contrasted to its previous destructive power, where it was strong enough to surround the old imperialist officer caste with the new social force of revolution.

The Red Army showed its purpose and value in the Civil War of 1918-20. So it is in class war. "History shows no instance of a revolution which may be considered as an accomplished fact when it has proved successful, or which will allow the rebels to rest on their laurels when it is over," said Lenin. This expresses a fundamental law of the permanent revolution, i.e., that the revolution continues even after seizure of power by the proletariat. The class war continues, as the bourgeoisie does not surrender its control of society without a bloody struggle. Only in this phase of the struggle, is the proletariat on the top. The proletariat is the ruling class. This phenomenon leads to the creation and rapid extension of the principal contribution of the proletariat to the present Nazi-Soviet war: the new social form of organization, so immeasurably superior to capitalism that it was able even with lesser mechanical might to stave off the German armies. The bourgeoisie calls this "spirit", elan, or morale, or super-patriotism, but to every serious worker, this is only a manifestation of the superior social form of organization possessed by the working masses.

In the closing stages of the Civil War the country was so impoverished that the population was bled white to support the revolution. That was the price the revolution had to pay in a backward country, after a destructive four years or imperialist war, and three years of civil war. The finale was the Kronstadt revolt, which was crushed in blood.

MILITARY INTERVENTION

One of the chief experiences of the Red Army was the campaign in Poland in 1920, based on the "fundamental idea of revolutionary fraternization with the Polish workers and the excitation of revolutionary conflicts in Germany." This was called the theory of "revolution from without." It failed, as the rev. situation in Poland and Germany was not ripe. As Trotsky put it "military intervention may hasten the denouement and make the victory easier, but only when both the political consciousness and the social conditions are ripe for revolution. Military intervention has the same effect as a doctor's forceps; if used at the right moment, it can shorten the pangs of birth, but if employed prematurely, it will merely cause an abortion." ("On Military Doctrine")

This does not preclude the possibility of accelerating revolution in another country when both the class consciousness and social conditions are ripe for revolutionary intervention. When the larger industrial countries go over to the revolution, it is entirely feasible that they will assist their smaller brethren by armed intervention, if that is necessary. Trotsky's suggestion in 1933 when Hitler seized power that the Red Army be sent in to crush German Fascism and cooperate with the still rising tide of working class pressure was never followed. Had it been followed the resurgence of German militarism might have been prevented; the proletarian revolution might have been accelerated. Stalinism chose to allow Hitler to come into power without a struggle. "Revolution from without" is a tragic farce. Revolution from within and from without will be an important weapon of the proletariat in the imminent struggle for power which the war will produce.

The later history of the Red Army is the story of Stalinist control of the armed power of the Soviet government. The essential feature of the Red Army - the arming of the entire people - was gradually altered under Stalinism, until the masses were disarmed, and has now been dealt a death-blow by the total war begun in 1941 on the steppes of Russia. As Wollenberg says "The device of arming the entire people which a 'total war' involves cannot be employed by the new ruling class in Russia without risking its very existence." Leaving aside the misconception of "new ruling class," it yet remains a historical fact of decisive revolutionary significance that total war necessitates arming of the population. **THE ARMED MASS IS EVER CLOSE TO REVOLUTION.** A spark can make it shift its guns in a political revolution against the Stalinists. In the imperialist countries the time is drawing near when the millions of workers armed by imperialism for its ends will learn the class significance of the fighting cry of the ancient revolutionist Spartacus:

"IF WE MUST FIGHT, LET US FIGHT FOR OURSELVES."

This statement is the practical essence of the summarized experience of workers' struggles against modern capitalism - the theory of revolutionary defeatism.

WAR AND CIVIL WAR

For the American workers "The Red Army" is a small part of their necessary training in revolutionary strategy and tactics. The experience of the Russian workers is a tremendously rich source of material for the American revolution. We can and must learn from the experiences of the Russian workers.

In the leadership of these efforts history requires a vanguard steeped in political, economic, and thereby **MILITARY** knowledge of the machine age. Such a party will have its ramifications

throughout the entire armed forces of imperialism digging away at the armed base of imperialism, and throughout all the structure of bourgeois society.

Such an organization will of necessity arise in the class conflicts under imperialism, and lead the struggle to destroy imperialism.

The time is now close when revolutionary writers and thinkers can seriously begin the application of revolutionary theory to American conditions. In regard to the army this theoretical summarization will not merely be based on the experience of workers abroad but on the actual class war experiences of the American proletariat. The problem of seizing the principal industrial centers and maintaining control over them is a problem of class-military power. The problem of winning the American farmer to the revolution by arming him and cooperating with him in the struggle to smash the landlord, is a problem of class force. The problem of the revolutionary international fraternization of the workers of all lands is a problem of class force. To wield this momentous class force the revolutionist first of all must understand it, create the organization to spread and organize this class consciousness. Then, since we must fight, we will be fighting for ourselves with all the weapons of modern machinery at the disposal of the revolutionary workers. **CLASS WAR AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR**

IF YOU WANT TO
CONTINUE WITH
MARXISM
RENEW YOUR SUB
TO THE
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The "New" Stalinist Program

The gyrations of the Communist International ever since Stalinism attained complete mastery over its apparatus in 1928 have been nothing short of phenomenal. In its day, the Second International also had many ups and downs and ended up, after a protracted political illness, in the camp of social patriotism. Bad as it was, however, the Second International parties during the last war never took the position of openly advocating the continuance of capitalism.

If the American Communist Party (and, of course, the step will be followed by all other Stalinist organizations) now brazenly comes forth with the position calling for "a capitalism with a rising standard of life," and pledging support to bourgeois democracy after the war--if it does that, it should not be attributed to the depravity of its individual leaders. The zigzags of the "communist" International along the road to social-patriotism have been sharper than the zigzags of the Second International before it. But they have been sharper because the class relations since 1917 have been infinitely more tense than the class relations from 1890 to 1914. The Third International like the Second is now proving that one must either support the class struggle and proletarian revolution, or support capitalism and reaction. There are no other alternatives in the present period! As we pointed out so many years ago the theory of "socialism in one country" inevitably ends up in the theory of socialism in no country; the theory of defending the Soviet Union purely by bourgeois manouvers ends up in the defense of the bourgeois itself.

BROWDER'S STATEMENT

To the average Marxist, the theories of Stalinism are puerile--from the point of view of Marxist science. Nevertheless since the Stalinists influence so large a section--relatively--of the working class, and of the so-called liberal world, it is necessary to take up their arguments one by one.

The statement issued by the National Committee of the Communist Party and published in the Daily Worker, January 10, states "The Moscow, Teheran and Cairo agreements give a program to banish the spectre of civil wars and the war between nations for several generations. Not only a prolonged world peace without precedent in history but also a flourishing of economic relationships of cooperation and of economic well-being and social reforms, is the prospect for the world."

This is truly an amazing statement. If three conferences without making a single change in class relationships on a world scale can so alter the social scene that civil war and imperialist war are both eliminated, then we are forced to revise the whole Marxian concept that wars and civil wars are the result of economic contradictions.

This is what Lenin had to say on war. "Wars between capitalist states are, as a rule, a result of their competition on the world market, because every state strives not only to safeguard its world markets, but to win new markets, and in this connection the subjugation of foreign nations and countries plays a principal part...Wars are rooted in the very nature of capitalism; they will cease only when the capitalist system is abolished."

If war is now the result of things other than capitalist rivalry, then the Stalinists should have the decency to inform us what. The truth of the matter, of course, is that their present program has no relationship whatsoever to the fundamental theories of Marxism.

The Teheran conference was a secret conference precisely because it proposed no basic change in class relations and capitalist economics, but, on the contrary, evolved plans for safeguarding capitalist oppression BY FORCE!

The conclusion, from this C.P. statement, that the various conferences have practically eliminated the evils of capitalism, is simple: (1) The working class must now support the system of capitalism for a long period to come. (2) The working class must support the two-party (Democrats and Republicans) fraud. (3) There must be no thought of a class struggle after the war but only the continued "collaboration" with--in other words, capitulation--of the working class to the capitalists.

"It is beyond question," says the statement, "that the post-war reconstruction, like production for the war at present, will be carried OUT UNDER THE SYSTEM OF FREE ENTERPRISE....It is clearly evident that political issues at this time will be decided within the frame of a two-party system tradition of our country. In this framework can be fought out and won the necessary struggle of the American people to safeguard our country's victory and preservation of its institutions...." The "Communist" Party and its fraudulent leader Earl Browder undoubtedly understand these statements are treacherous from beginning to end; untrue and untenable. If the two-party system could work now, why couldn't it work before? Why the 16 million unemployed, the imperialist war, the growth of Fascist elements, the reaction in the South, the poll tax, the thousand and one undemocratic, anti-democratic and the openly dictatorial policies of bourgeois democracy?

Even Mr. Browder recognizes this fact in a few remarks in the January 23 issue of the same paper. Browder is interviewed by an Australian journalist and to one of his questions he relates how in the New York state elections, despite the fact that the Stalinists had "complied with all the provisions four-fold, 400%,..." the bourgeois authorities had refused to permit them to be on the ballot. He relates that 10 million people in the South are disfranchised. If he wanted to emphasize the point he could tell how it is absolutely impossible for a working class party (in fact, even a third bourgeois party) to get on the ballot in 23 of the 48 states. He would have to expose the whole fraud of bourgeois democracy and the two-party system which is merely a cloak for the dictatorship of Morgan, Rockefeller, Du Pont, et. al. Yet he defends this system!

In this interview, Mr. Browder is exceptionally frank. The correspondent asked whether "in the post-war period you will not raise the question of socialism." And he answers, "Not in any way to disturb national unity... We have definitely taken a position that it is not on the order of the day for the post-war period for us to try to secure the establishment of socialism in the United States; that is that the post-war readjustment shall, so far as the United States is concerned, certainly take place on a capitalist basis.... We interpret the meaning of the Teheran agreement as opening up the prospects for world reconstruction after the war which will make possible the strengthening of democracy and the full employment of American economy, which means the large expansion of the domestic market, which means a rising standard of living in the United States and a much greater foreign market than has ever been conceived before. That is the only way in which American economy can be kept operating. It is our understanding of the Teheran conference that there the basis was laid for such a period, which makes it possible to avoid a great crisis in the United States."

This is certainly a miracle if it can be done! What has been added to the sinking hulk of world capitalism by the Teheran conference? Is just the fact that the Soviet Union enters into a pact with the capitalist nations enough assurance that capitalism can solve its economic difficulties? Is the Soviet Union now prepared to send billions of dollars of "lend-lease" to America to take care of the millions of post-war unemployed? What of capitalist overproduction? Will Stalin now absorb the surplus goods and capital? The whole thing is patently ridiculous. The only germ of anything resembling reality in this whole quotation is the fact that the Teheran conference openly and unashamedly and with the participation of the Stalinist counter-revolutionists, planned to maintain capitalism even if it meant (as they know it will) the forceful suppression of the world proletariat.

Everything else in Browder's remarks is pure camouflage, demagoguery.

"I would say that it is true that collaboration with the Soviet Union is the absolutely necessary pre-condition for stabilizing economy in the capitalist countries" So? An alliance with the Soviet Union, is the only way that capitalism can maintain itself. Then why doesn't the Soviet Union break with the imperialists and help thereby to end capitalism? Stalinism is acting as a prop for maintaining capitalism. Unwittingly here Mr. Browder confirms what we Marxists have been maintaining for a number of years now: that Stalinism is an agent for world capitalism within the ranks of the working class and against the working class.

It is certainly incontestable that diplomatic measures in themselves can never fundamentally alter economic realities. No conferences, for instance, can make "markets expand," and the standard of living go up, employment go up, etc. For that, fundamental economic and social changes are necessary. This is what Karl Marx had to say in the Communist Manifesto about capitalism and its development as long ago as 1847: "In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation of the sway of the proletariat."

What was for Marx a simple political thesis that capitalism can lead to nothing else but civil war and revolution is now completely discarded. What was to Marx a simple scientific thesis that capitalism can only breed crises, depression, unemployment, pauperization, imperialist war and a lessening of the standard of living--this simple thesis is now denied by Stalinism. The famous statement in the Communist Manifesto that "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles," this simple statement is now explicitly denied. "Within our country the extension of the United Nations coalition into the post-war period of reconstruction provides the basis for the successful reconversion of our industrial plant, enormously expanded in war production, to normal operation--to the benefit of labor, the farmers and capitalists." Instead of class struggle we hear being taught the familiar thesis of all capitalism, both bourgeois democracy and Fascism, that all classes in society can live together harmoniously, without civil war. To such depths has Stalinism descended!

FASCISM OR COMMUNISM.

If the present "new line" of the Stalinists seems a little absurd to the average revolutionist, it is certainly not absurd

from the point of view of political logic. In 1929 and 1930, when we pointed out that the theory of socialism in one country must inevitably end in social patriotism and full support of capitalism, we were laughed at. Nevertheless, evidence has now confirmed this position. As the crises of capitalism grow sharper the revisionists are forced to put their feet most bluntly in the camp of the enemy without any hedging or camouflage. In the last World War it was still possible for German social democracy, tainted with the treachery of supporting the war, to utilize the camouflage "Long live the proletarian revolution." They appended that statement to their social patriotic document of August 4, 1914 supporting war credits.

But Stalinism and all social democracy today face a more difficult task. They must prop up a system inestimably more decadent. By that, however, they are also limiting their own usefulness to the bourgeoisie. The time will come very, very soon when splits of large proportions will develop within the ranks of the Second and Third International parties. They are rapidly causing disillusionment of the masses.

As the pressure of the disillusioned masses begins to apply itself to the lower functionaries and rank and file members of these organizations splits will become inevitable. Capitalism will then have to lean its wand on the shoulders of the various centrist forces here in the United States and elsewhere.

But we can predict with the same scientific precision that we predicted in 1928 the decline of the C.I.--we can predict today that centrism will go through in a telescoped period of months what it took Stalinism years. As the pressure of capitalism increases and its needs become more urgent this shaky world becomes more and more divided into only two camps. He who compromises with capitalism "only a little" today must in the period of stress put both feet in the camp of the enemy. There is only one dividing line in society: The two contending major classes. One must either have an unequivocal position for proletarian revolution against the imperialist war, for revolutionary defeatism, or one must support the enemy, openly and treacherously.

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