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The Russian Question (18th R.W.L. PLENUM REPORT)

Anglo-American Perspective

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REPORT ON RUSSIAN QUESTION

The present report is divided into a number of parts: a few general remarks on the importance of the so-called Russian question, a re-statement of the salient points of our position, an analysis of the political role of the Red Army and our strategy relative to it, war and post-war economics of the Soviet Union, and the relationship of the Russian question to revisionism.

I

GENERAL REMARKS

Too many people are still saying, "Why worry about the Russian question? We are AMERICAN revolutionists." But the "Russian" question is not a problem just for the Russian proletariat; nor is it just a European problem. The Soviet Union is the living embodiment (despite its warpings by Stalinism) of Marxian theory. It is no accident that the capitalist propagandists constantly point to the Soviet Union and say, "see, that is Communism. Do you want that?" If the capitalists are correct, if the Soviet Union is the complete, utterly black picture that they paint, then all Marxian theory is wrong, the whole fight for Proletarian Revolution is a mistake.

Just consider the fundamental theoretical problems posed by the "Russian" question:

1 - Is it possible for a state of society to exist BETWEEN capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat? Schachtman, for instance, says it is.

2 - Are there two or three decisive independent forces in Society? Is Stalinism a new phenomenon, a new class? Was Marx wrong in his Communist Manifesto, when he claimed there were only two decisive classes in society, or was there something of major importance that he did not understand or visualize?

3 - Can there be a PROGRESSIVE economic order, one operated on the basis of planned plenty and growth, rather than organized planned scarcity and retirement of the means of production - can there be such an order that is NOT a Socialist order? If so, then Nomad and the technocrats and Burnham are correct and Marxism is all wrong.

4 - Are there two types of socialism, democratic and totalitarian? And if so, is totalitarian socialism a kin of fascism, equally vile and venomous?

5 - Can power be achieved by the proletariat peacefully? Does violence always lead to Stalinism? Is "Leninism" a blood relation of Stalinism? Can a counter-revolution be achieved peacefully, with

mere police measures?

6 - Is the state really an instrument of the ruling class, as Lenin pointed out, or can there be states which serve all classes or states which serve no classes, except the bureaucratic state machines?

There are other such questions. But obviously the way you answer each of these questions has a far-reaching importance even for such "American" questions as the trade union question. For instance, if the Soviet Union "proves" that a state can exist which favors no class, then we can conclude with Roosevelt, Wallace and Company that the War Labor Board is an impartial body, that the state will bring the working class justice without recourse to strikes and violence. If there can be an economic order BETWEEN capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which advances the productive machine, then we as revolutionists are bound to support it. Furthermore, we are forced to conclude that other classes beside the proletariat can be and in fact are progressive - whether they be the "managerial class", the "technocrat class", etc. Our concentration on organization of the proletariat, here in the U. S., as well as elsewhere, would thus be an outmoded or false strategy.

And besides these theoretical problems the "Russian question" poses a number of major strategical problems, that affect us decisively here in the U. S. For instance, if - as we Marxists state - the social order in Russia and the capitalist order are fundamentally antagonistic and must inevitably (unless checked by revolution elsewhere or counter-revolution inside Russia) lead to military conflict, then our whole life in the U. S. is vitally affected.

The "Russian question" is the most difficult social problem ever posed, precisely because of the arrested proletarian revolution, moving backward and dominated by a reactionary clique. Too many people make rash, quick and "new" discoveries about the Soviet Union everyday. If you check any of these "theories" you will find that few, if any of them, deal scientifically with Soviet economics.

Let us start with a glance at Russian economy and particularly the outlook for the "post-war" period.

I I

It has become fashionable in some circles to say that the differences between Soviet economy and that of the capitalist world are purely academic. What difference does it make - so runs the argument - whether the private capitalist appropriates the profit of industry individually or whether the state appropriates it collectively for the interests of the Stalinist clique?

The question is posed completely wrong, but the Soviet war against Germany has proven beyond any peradventure of doubt the stupendous

superiority of the Soviet transition economy to the economy of the capitalist world. Let anyone put holes in this economic argument. Soviet economy - SHORN OF MORE THAN 1/3 ITS PRODUCTIVE AREA DURING THE WAR - has SINGLEHANDEDLY defeated the total productive machine of Germany, whose economic machine at the outset of war was the most powerful in Europe, greater than that of the Soviet Union and second only to American production;

The economic might of Italy and France - two of the six major imperialist powers, plus the economies of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and a dozen satellite countries.

The Soviet Union defeated this economic bloc virtually unaided. The aid given by the U. S. in the form of lend-lease was important but no-where near decisive. The fight on the eastern front was a contest between two forms of economy - the capitalist economy of Fascist Germany and the transition economy of the Soviet Union. It was a clear-cut definitive struggle, since both powers were involved only on this one major front. And the Soviet economy proved itself vastly superior. It reorganized for an offensive despite the loss of hundreds of thousands of square miles of the most fertile agricultural and industrial areas.

Is that just an "academic" difference? No, you can say what you will about the Stalinist political machine and even about the Stalinist perversions of some phases of Soviet economy, but the NEW MODE OF PRODUCTION in the Soviet Union is qualitatively different from any that has ever existed - and vastly superior, too. Soviet economy does not differ just in details or academically. It has an opposite momentum, an opposite direction, an absolutely different driving force from that of capitalism.

Let us deal with just a few of these "small academic" differences:

1 - There can be and has been NO CRISIS OF OVERPRODUCTION in the Soviet Union. There has been no large freezing of capital in the banks. The whole impulse of Soviet economy is in the opposite direction. Under capitalism, except in periods of war preparation (negative production) there is a steady stream of overproduction of both goods and capital. The push for profits, for PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL APPROPRIATION, the commodity form of production and the consequent constant rationalization of industry to meet ever greater spheres of competition - all this makes for a retirement of capital (freezing), a retirement of means of production (idle factories), and an overproduced economy (filled warehouses with no markets for their produce). But in the Soviet Union there is NO important private appropriation. The PRINCIPLE behind production is something entirely different from the profit motive. All surpluses are not stored in banks or warehouses but actually re-invested in the productive process or used to better the standard of living. (This latter of course, under Stalinism, is done with the usual bureaucratic touch - with the bureaucrats getting the gravy and the rest getting the left-overs). Consequently the rate of increased production of the Soviet

Union from year to year has frequently been five or six times as great as the most favorable growth in any capitalist nation in its best periods. While American, German and other banks were overloaded with capital, and while thousands of factories were being shut down, (in the depression of the thirties) the Soviet Union was re-investing dozens of billions of rubles in the productive process, and quadrupling its production.

2 - The world market is not decisive as far as the Soviet Union is concerned. Production in Russia in 1940 was a dozen times greater than in 1913, but exports and imports were only one-third of 1913. Since the economy does not have within it the basic evil of over-production, it depends on world markets only for those items that are still uneconomic to produce, or for such raw materials, etc., as are not found within the Soviet Union; and it exports only enough to get the necessary credits to buy such items. In the capitalist world, on the other hand, world markets are the *sine-qua-non* of the capitalist economies. The markets MUST be constantly expanded to meet the increasing productive potential of the capitalist world. "More markets" is the flaming watchword emblazoned on the capitalist flag - not "more production"; but, more markets. The consequences are well known: economic war between the powers, followed by political and diplomatic wars, and then finished off by the present military carnage. The two major powers of this war - Germany on the one side and the U. S. on the other - must either dominate the whole world market for goods and spheres of investment or be destroyed. America organizes her dominance in the form of Latin American "good neighbor" blocs, in the form of "trusteeships", in the form of military occupation and in the form of economic control. German imperialism used similar methods. But even the world policy of the major powers is one based on ORGANIZED SCARCITY. Wherever the Americans or Germans conquer they completely alter the economy; they attempt to reduce industrial countries to agricultural ones; they attempt to lower the productive levels and the standards of living.

Not more, but less production is their guiding creed.

The Transition Economy of Soviet Russia (despite Stalinism) is something entirely different. And the war brings that out in sharpest relief. Take a few examples.

In America and Britain there has been a considerable food shortage. For ten years there has been a constant planned reduction of acreage in the U. S. and the effects of it are now noticeable. Soviet agriculture, however, sowed five million acres more in 1942 than in 1941, despite the tremendous loss of territory, particularly in the rich Ukraine. Furthermore, Soviet agriculture was able to introduce radical and long term innovations which assure enormously increased production. A system of planting grain according to the way the sun's rays fall yields (according to one Stalinist writer) five times as much grain per acre as former methods. In addition to

that, the increased yield makes it economical to fertilize grain-fields and thus both increase production and preserve the land. A method of treating seeds makes possible planting of crops like cotton much farther north than previously, etc.

Are such things unknown in the U. S. No, obviously not. But can the American (or German or British or any capitalist) government encourage such methods when the whole direction of government policy is to reduce acreage, TO CUT DOWN PRODUCTION? There are no MARKETS for increased American production. Consequently,...A.A.A. Increased production under capitalism means lower prices, lower profits. Thus.....production must be decreased. But Soviet economy has an entirely different motif. Increased production causes no panic on any local grain exchanges. Lack of world markets causes no reduction in acreage.

Take another example. In 1938 the Soviet Union started underground gasification of coal. Coal mines are set on fire, turning the mine into a gas works with gigantic output. Not a single miner is needed. The coal does not have to be dug, cleaned, crushed, weighed, nor does it have to be loaded, shipped by railroad, unloaded and then placed in stockpiles for future use. The gas is either coupled to electric generators directly (reducing the cost of electricity), or burned in regular industrial furnaces, or as vast automatic chemical factories. Of course much coal still has to be mined for metallurgical coke production.

Could such inventions - KNOWN TO THE CAPITALIST WORLD - be put into effect by the imperialist powers? Can anyone imagine the railroad trust agreeing to such things, or can anyone imagine the chemical trust uniting with the coal, railroad and electric trusts for this scientific utilization of a coal mine? Thousands of inventions are bought up each year by the capitalists for the purpose of preventing increased production. What would happen to an individual under capitalism who discovered a method of using water instead of gasoline for an automobile? How many millions of dollars would Standard Oil spend to drive such a man and his invention from society?

The familiar argument that capitalism has discovered many beneficial inventions is undoubtedly correct. But capitalism utilizes only an infinitesimal amount of such inventions, because to use them all would interfere with profits no end. Only under a working class economy can the full advantages of research be gained. And the Soviet Union today is proving that.

Now, what are the portents of this phenomenon for the next period? The answer is so simple it hardly needs elaboration. During this war there has been an enormous acceleration of productivity all over the world. In the U. S., for instance, the nation is producing commodities to the value of 185 billions per year, where previously it produced 70 or 80 billions in its best years. Unquestionably the increase of national productivity in the Soviet Union

must be considerably more sensational. Otherwise how could they defeat Germany, after losing so much territory?

If "peace" should descend on this world, what would happen? Everytime there is such a "danger", the American stock market goes tumbling, doesn't it? When hostilities cease - if only temporarily - billions of dollars of war plants will be retired. The national productivity will be cut considerably, probably in half. Whenever there are no profits forthcoming, the imperialists make their industrial machine idle.

But the Soviet economic machine operates on different principles. The Russian increase in productive capacity is a PERMANENT increase. What happens, then? A United States, which goes into the war with an 80 billion production, let's it rise to 185 billion, then GOES BACK TO ORGANIZED SCARCITY of an 80 billion or 100 billion production. But the Soviet Union, which starts with a much lower capacity, doubles or triples or quadruples (figures are not available) its national production during the war and WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ADVANCE ITS PRODUCTION LEVEL EVEN HIGHER AFTER THE WAR when the needs of military struggle do not drain the bulk of the economy.

Can American Imperialism permit such a thing? Can it permit another nation to exist anywhere on earth which has an equal WAR PRODUCTION CAPACITY to that of its own? How can Uncle Sam hope to dominate the earth when another power can place a military machine into the field at any time equal to that of its own? And furthermore, the RATE of acceleration of productivity in the Soviet Union - because of its superior mode of production - is greater than that of the U. S. That makes the odds against Wall Street even greater.

American Imperialism simply can NOT permit any such thing, if it wants to pursue its policy of world domination, if, in fact, it wants to continue to exist. An attack against the Soviet Union is inevitable and foregone. Capitalism has no other recourse - not only because of the political necessity of defeating the Social Revolution in Europe - but also because of this economic factor.

WITHOUT THE DEFEAT OF THE SOVIET UNION, EITHER BY A MILITARY ASSAULT OR BY A COUNTER-REVOLUTION, THE IMPERIALISTS HAVE LOST THIS WAR. That is economic cold-turkey. Moreover, the basic antagonism between America and British imperialism over control of the world markets complicates the task of American capital, as American capitalist productive capacity is organized only for the task of wresting control from its rival, British capital.

But a military victory over Germany and Japan and an economic victory over England are absolutely meaningless, if in the meantime another power comes up with as great a war-producing potential as America - and particularly if the other power threatens to far outstrip the U. S. after another decade or so. For twenty years we Marxists have pointed out that the Stalinist theory of "socialism

in one country" is unfeasible precisely because the imperialists can not permit and will not permit the Soviet Union to develop its economy unhindered. Stalinism denied such an assertion. But the war is proof that we were correct. The Allies - unfortunately for themselves - relied on a much greater reduction of Soviet productive power by Germany. They were wrong: the transition economy of the Soviet Union showed its superiority. The Allies now have no other alternative: either smash the Soviet Union or be smashed yourself.

If she can keep Proletarian Revolution down, America will yet lead a crusade of all capitalist nations against the Soviet Union.

I I I

"RED IMPERIALISM"

Another very fashionable view in the present period is that the Soviet Union is pursuing a "Red Imperialist" policy. Again, our good liberals and ultra-lefts veer sharply away from economics. What is imperialism? It is the last stage of capitalism, a stage of monopolies and cartels, a stage when finance capital has become dominant over the export of goods, and when capitalist contradictions are so acute they can be ameliorated only by war. Imperialism does NOT mean the mere conquest of territory - although the conquest of territory is PART of imperialism. France conquered considerable territory in the 1790's and early 1800's. Far from being a reactionary conquest the movement was progressive - even under a tyrant like Napoleon Bonaparte - because it attempted to spread capitalism to the rest of Europe, at a time when Europe was predominantly feudal.

At the outset of this war the Revolutionary Workers League stated that wherever the Red Army went there would be a change in the property relationships - despite Stalinism. This statement was probably put a little mechanically, but its essence is undoubtedly correct: the pressure of Soviet property relationships can be and is being felt wherever the Red Army goes, even in those spots where it upholds the capitalist order. Furthermore, the last word has not yet been written nor has the last act taken place. An army does not function in a vacuum; it is tied to its economic roots by a thousand cords. Soviet economy exerts its pressure on the Red Army too. Temporarily, as a concession to Allied imperialism - an in another vain attempt to stave off intervention - the Red Army is upholding (with considerable modification) capitalist property relations in conquered Rumania and elsewhere. But sooner or later the contradiction between such actions and the economic roots of the Soviet Union must be resolved one way or another. Rumania, Western Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, etc., must either be brought into the sphere of transition economy, or they will be the major base for the beginning of the counter-revolution to destroy transition economy WITHIN the Soviet Union.

As soon as the pressure of the Allies on Stalin becomes too great, and war appears immediately inevitable, there is little doubt that Stalin will attempt immediately to expropriate the capitalists in these areas and establish transition economy. Whether he succeeds or not, whether he will confront a bloody civil war or not, remains to be seen. But that he will try is a foregone conclusion. The whole property set-up in the Balkans today is very temporary.

The conquest of territory by the Soviet Union has an entirely different motif from the conquest by the imperialist powers. American, British, German, or Japanese imperialism sends armies into Europe and Asia for the purpose of extracting loot, gaining markets for goods and capital, and eliminating competitor nations. As they move in they fight bitterly against reform, they attempt to pauperize the industry of the nations they conquer, they attempt to impose military dictatorships to carry out a program of reduction of the standards of living. Note: Greece, Italy, France, the French colonies in Africa, Belgium, Holland, conquered sections of Germany. Without exception Allied occupation has meant a standard of living lower than that of the pre-war period and in most cases a lower standard of living than what prevailed even under German imperialism (which already had lowered the previous standards). Reforms and concessions are fought viciously, because what the imperialists need is **MARKETS**. What they are fighting for is...**MARKETS, PROFITS, SPHERES OF INFLUENCE!**

The Soviet Union does not need markets in the same way the imperialists do. It would not, and does not, go to war to gain markets. Regardless of who fired the first shot, regardless of who is at the head of the Soviet Union, Russia is today at war for purely **DEFENSIVE** reasons - to protect her economy and the territory containing that economy. It would be childish to insist that in such a defense the Soviet Union should confine itself to merely regaining its lost territories. It is dangerous to hold that the mere military conquest of contiguous countries, disregarding the economy permitted to remain in such countries, (establishment of buffer states), is a defense of the Soviet Union. Defensive measures against the future and inevitable capitalist intervention are more necessary today than in 1940-41 against the then impending Nazi attack. It is the nature of these defensive measures which must come under careful consideration in this period.

Conquered and subdued buffer states are not enough - more than that they are dangerous. If capitalist economy **IN ANY FORM** (Peoples' Frontism, etc.,) is permitted in such states, then the class enemy, with the decisive factor - the economy - in his hands, is waiting and biding his time and **PREPARING** to join with the forces of capitalist intervention whenever they arrive. Truly the only defense of the **SOVIET UNION** today, as yesterday and tomorrow, is the **EXTENSION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION** which, in this case, means the establishment of **SOCIALIST PROPERTY RELATIONSHIPS** in the so-called buffer states, the transference of power into the hands of the pro-

letariat and the LIQUIDATION of the capitalist elements who are the internal potential aids for the coming capitalist assault on the Soviet Union.

The Red Army does not have an imperialist goal or aim; it can not, for the simple reason that it does not rest on imperialist property relations and on imperialist CONTRADICTIONS. The contradictions of the imperialist world are economic, between socialized production and private appropriation. The contradictions of the Soviet Union are political, between two types of social order (and, indidentally, as a reflection of that, the antagonism between the working class state, on the one hand, and Stalinism, on the other.)

The different economics behind the different armies make themselves felt - even though the Red Army still upholds capitalism in many spots. In the wake of the Red Armies many strange things happen. Anna Louise Strong, Stalinist writer who is 100% opposed to Proletarian Revolution, nevertheless gives a fairly clear picture of what happened in Western Poland as the Red Armies approached (although she naturally completely distorts the meaning of these events).

"Under the chaotic conditions of German retreat," she says, "the industrial workers were usually the first to organize. Factory committees often preceded city governments, and indeed even helped set up city and provincial governments."

The workers were the driving force for change. They set up factory committees and elected delegates to a central body. What is this if not a Soviet, a Workers Council? Strong, naturally, slips over this significant fact: that the workers set up Soviets in the wake of the Red Army! All she can see is that "these factory committees were not yet trade unions". Precisely, they were much further advanced.

Furthermore, the Workers Councils actually took power. "The first municipal authority in liberated Lublin was thus set up by factory workers from their meetings and elections." These events show clearly that the masses in these "liberated" countries are ready and willing to establish the conditions prerequisite to the ONLY POSSIBLE DEFENSE of the Soviet Union.

When the Red Army and military intelligence, however, finally gets around to these places it warps the whole process. "However," says Anna Louise Strong, "they (the Soviets) had no intention to hog the government. The City Council kept adding members chosen by various political parties and cultural organizations, pending final freeing of all Poland. Of these present fifty councilmen, fourteen are directly chosen by the Lublin city trade unions." In other words, Stalinism has by insidious moves, both political and military, altered the whole set-up in favor of a "good" People's Front bourgeois regime.

But despite that, the extent of reform under pressure is infinitely greater than where the imperialist armies dominate. Land reform and distribution for instance is widespread. Naturally this is just a sop to keep the masses quiet. But it is a sop which the imperialist armies do not grant - since adherence to private property and ruthless exploitation of conquered areas, is their basic philosophy. Although there is a complete blackout of news in the Balkans and Poland, it is definitely known that there has been considerable division of the land and considerable expropriation of large land-owners.

The R. W. L., of course, does not approve of the Stalinist actions. We do not approve of the mild reforms instead of revolutionary social change, the warping of the Soviets and their destruction, the maintenance of capitalism. The only point being made, however, is that the Red Army operates on an entirely different premise from that of the imperialist armies - even though it is warped and degenerated like all other aspects of Soviet life, away from Socialism and approaching capitalist norms and forms.

No, the mere conquest of territory is not imperialism. Lenin and Trotsky attempted to conquer Poland in 1920, in order to make contact with the German Revolution; and to push through Rumania in 1919, in order to make contact with the Hungarian Revolution. No one could possibly condemn such conquests had they been successful. Stalinist conquests are not based on internationalism, on spreading the revolution. But, on the other hand, they are not based on imperialist greed, either.

Like everything else relative to the Soviet Union, the Russian military moves are a warped form of defense of the Soviet Union, AN ATTEMPT TO DEFEND THE DEGENERATED WORKERS STATE BY PURELY MILITARY (GEOGRAPHICAL) AND DIPLOMATIC MEASURES. Such a defense is not only doomed to failure, but it further warps Soviet economy itself (as for instance the inclusion of capitalist sectors in the Russian orbit). The results of such a policy, although not too apparent to the average layman today, will be considerably more manifest in the future stages of this war, when the Allies intervene against the Soviet Union. In this coming counter-revolutionary attack all historical and political questions relative to the Soviet Union will be posed in their naked form.

The policy of creating buffers between the Soviet Union and capitalism would have been a correct policy ONLY IF IT HAD BEEN AUXILIARY TO THE MAIN LINE OF FIGHTING THE IMPERIALIST WAR AND EXTENDING THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND THE WORLD. By making this the SOLE AND PRIMARY defense, Stalinism has immeasurably hurt the Defense of the Soviet Union.

But to call the Stalinist policy of creating buffer states "Red Imperialism" is to play directly into the hands of Wall Street. In fact such views are encouraged by many American capitalists who

understand full well that it is necessary now to build up distrust of and hostility toward the Soviet Union, preparatory to the coming intervention. To peddle such propaganda means in effect to agree with the imperialists that ECONOMICS is not the DECISIVE cause for this war, that in effect this is a People's War, a political war against Hitlerism. To peddle such propaganda - "Red Imperialism" - means to justify the Imperialist War now and the coming Counter-Revolutionary intervention against the Soviet Union and the Proletarian Revolution in Europe.

I V

RESTATEMENT OF OUR POSITION

The present report, is of course in addition to previous reports at the last plenum and at the last convention. It is merely supplementary to our views, already elaborated in the course of the years of our existence. However, in order not to be open to misinterpretation we repeat here some of the basic tenets of our position.

The Soviet Union is a warped workers state. A Proletarian Revolution occurred in 1917 in backward Russia, and the working class seized state power and established transition economy. The defeats of the proletarian revolution in Western Europe and the long Civil War in Russia, led to growth of and final victory of a petty bourgeois Stalinist clique within the Soviet Union. This victory was facilitated considerably by many organizational and secondary political errors of the Marxian Left Opposition led by Trotsky, although it based itself essentially on a correct political program (permanent revolution, Lessons of October, China, Anglo-Russian committee, analysis of the Draft program, etc.) Failure to correct these errors led eventually to the acceptance by Trotskyism almost a decade later of a general centrist line of compromise with and capitulation to bourgeois democracy.

Stalinism which had its material roots in the defeat of the proletariat on a world scale, and the backwardness of Russia, finally in 1924 crystallized its political betrayals and bureaucratic acts into a general line of Revisionism, the theory of Socialism in one Country, and had it approved by a World Congress of the Communist International in 1928. On the basis of this nationalist policy Stalinism has led the working class inside and outside the Soviet Union to one defeat after another - Germany 1923, China 1925-27, The British General Strike 1926, Germany 1930-32, Spain 1936-39, etc. Inside the Soviet Union the nationalist policy has led to an over-concentration on heavy industry at the expense of consumers' goods industry and the consequent strain on living standards, plus a stratification of the masses in order to maintain a semblance of popular support. Stalinism had dealt brutal blows at the peasantry; it has re-introduced many features of capitalism. Despite the stupendous growth in economy it has been a zig-zag proposition and was accompanied not by a smooth integration of the masses into the economic

control but by bureaucratic decree. On a world scale Stalinism has operated on a policy of maintaining the world status-quo, maintaining a "left" capitalism, a Popular Front capitalism where possible; and of dividing the imperialists or utilizing the friction in their ranks to stave off a concentrated attack against the Soviet Union. This policy led to the Franco-Soviet pact, then to the Hitler-Stalin pact, now to the Anglo-American-Soviet agreements. Stalinism has become the most powerful agency of capitalism in the ranks of the working class, and it has aided and will continue to aid the bourgeoisie by either undermining the Proletarian Revolution (through reformist demagoguery and acts) or by playing an open counter-revolutionary role in certain other places and at other times. Stalinism is a social reformist force that is reactionary at all times, although its tactics and strategy vary considerably. It plays a contradictory role in that it is an objective agency of world capitalism within a working class society.

Faced with the degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Stalinist control of its machine, the Revolutionary Marxists pursue a complicated strategy. We are for the Defense of the Soviet Union against world capitalism from without and against the Stalinist and other agents of capitalism from within. That means we are for a military victory of the Soviet forces against ANY imperialist power. Marxists are not "neutral" in any struggle between two different modes of production. Marx himself supported the capitalist North (despite its bureaucracy and profiteering) against the slave-owning South in the American Civil War. We support the Soviet Union (despite the Stalinist bureaucracy) against the imperialist world.

But defense of the Soviet Union does not mean defense of Stalinism. We reject the Trotskyist concept of giving material aid to the Stalinists and confining ourselves to purely political criticism of Stalin during the war. Such a policy will lead to defeat of the Soviet Union. Only a determined struggle against Stalinism, aimed at a political Revolution (with its consequent re-introduction of proletarian democracy) DURING THE WAR, can lead to a successful Defense of the Soviet Union and aid to the world revolution. The impetus for such a political revolution will most likely come from abroad, from the Social Revolutions now developing in Europe and Asia.

The only other major strategical question is, what happens when the Soviet Union (degenerated Workers State) comes into conflict with a healthy Soviet order someplace else in the world, or with dual power. There it is no longer a choice between an imperialist power, on the one hand, and a new progressive social order on the other. There it is a choice between two forms of the SAME social order. In such a case we tell the workers in the healthy Soviet state, or in dual power, to resist the attempts by the Red Army under Stalinism to smash it, to use force against the Stalinist moves - at the same time, of course, that it continues its struggles against its own capitalists and against world imperialist intervention.

But along with such tactics, however, the 'healthy' Soviet must attempt to win over the members of the Red Army to a policy of CONTINUING THE FRONT AGAINST WORLD IMPERIALISM AND EXTENDING THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION. The struggle against Stalinism can be advanced either by a policy of frontal attack against its forces or by a policy of "march separately and strike together", whichever is feasible depending on the given circumstances - the strength of the imperialist attack, the state of the Stalinist forces, our own strength, etc. The policy of "march separately and strike together", if it is not to end in capitulation to capitalism or to Stalinism must be executed with utmost care so that independent working class action of the class and of its vanguard, the Revolutionary Marxian Party, is never given up.

A Marxian Party is a prime prerequisite of the masses in the Soviet Union today. Defense of the Soviet Union, without it, is impossible.

Such, briefly, is a bare outline of our strategical line relative to the Soviet Union. It has been filled in with hundreds of details in dozens of articles written by the League in recent years. More, much more, can undoubtedly be said on the subject. But the fundamentals of the program of the R. W. L. are clear.

V

THE QUESTION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND REVISIONISM

As we stated at the beginning, the question of the Soviet Union can not be by-passed. That will be increasingly more true as time goes on. If there should be a "peace lull" between the present phase of the war and the attack against the Soviet Union, the contrast between Soviet and capitalist economy will be most pronounced. Up till now, it must be remembered, while Soviet economy made enormous progress it never equalled the rate of production in either Germany or the U. W. Following the war - which is something hypothetical and in reality impossible since the imperialists can not permit a long lull - following the war, Russian production, will be able to compare far more favorably with American production; and in the course of a short period it may even outstrip U. S. production.

Those who claim Russia is no longer a Workers State will then have to answer a number of embarrassing questions:

1 - If a NEW type of social order is possible between capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, then new classes are also in existence. Is this new ruling class. (Stalinism) progressive or reactionary?

2 - How can you call a ruling CLASS (remember, class, not caste or clique) - how can you call a ruling class reactionary if it is able by a new mode of production to give such enormous impetus to the productive process?

Essentially all the attacks against Marxism in the present period

revolve around the question of whether there are two decisive classes in society or whether there are more. Marx pointed out, as far back as the Communist Manifesto, that there are only two classes of an independent character - the working class and the capitalist class. This assertion of Marx is denied by such people as Nomad, Burnham, and others. These gentry find THIRD classes in society, a managerial class or technicians' class. To these people the working class is not the only driving force for fundamental change. There is another class driving for change. In fact for Nomad, the working class is incapable of making any real change.

In the ranks of the so-called "Marxists", there is likewise confusion on this point. On the basis of the position of Schachtman or Marlen or Ruth Fisher, Stalinism is a new phenomenon, an independent force that must be reckoned with separately from the working class or the capitalist class. It is NOT, according to them, an agency of capitalism WITHIN the ranks of labor; it is something apart from the ranks of both capital and labor. Some of these revisionists even consider Stalinism as more dangerous than the capitalists.

But what is the logic of such views? A reactionary class (Stalinism), we would be led to believe, has been capable of such phenomenal economic advances! Obviously this is a contradiction. If there can be a "third" decisive class in society, there can be a third social order, other than capitalism and socialism. If we accept this premise we must conclude that there is a society other than the dictatorship of the proletariat possible AFTER capitalism; (regardless of whether Marlen or Fisher or Schachtman say so or not) and that since such a society is capable of liberating the forces of production from the capitalist strait-jacket, it is obviously progressive. The wheel turns around and we are led back to.... support of Stalinism, since it heads a progressive social order. Schachtman or Marlen or Fisher may not accept such views, but their fantastic anti-Stalinism leads in only that direction. To justify their position they must turn all sorts of contortions. Essentially however this position is the same as that of Nomad and Burnham - only these latter gentlemen, who denounce Marxism, are at least consistent.

The position of the R. W. L. on the Russian question today is not a very popular position. In this pragmatic-thinking world it is hard for most people to understand a progressive social order with a reactionary leadership; it is hard for people to understand a progressive economy moving back toward capitalist restoration. To most people questions are settled on an either...or, black...or white basis. That is why the masses - imbued with this pragmatism - can be misled into believing this is a "people's war". They do not understand THINGS IN MOTION; they do not understand that bourgeois "democracy" LEADS TO fascism. They look at only surface phenomena. And they look mostly at POLITICAL SURFACE FACTS, rather than UNDERLYING ECONOMIC ROOTS.

It has become very popular to deal with the Soviet Union in the same way. Momentarily the pragmatists are having a field day. They can point to Stalinism's brutality, tyranny, conquest, maintenance of capitalism in Rumania, Bulgaria, etc. Each group of pragmatists adds this up to a totally different set of answers. Some advocate a "revolution" by the technicians, managers; others see a new type of society, bureaucratic collectivism; others claim it is still a workers state but are opposed to its military defense since the main enemy is Stalinism; still others draw the conclusion that there are two types of socialism; some cynics even conclude that the "Soviet experiment" has proven that capitalism is the only worthwhile social order.

Yes, the pragmatists are having their field day ideologically. But our position is based on science, dialectical materialism. Our position was very unpopular when "poor little Finland" was attacked. Our position was unpopular because almost no one could foresee that Germany would attack the Soviet Union. Our position is unpopular today because few people can foresee that the Allies will attack the Soviet Union. But we would be traitors to science and in the end, to our class, if we renounced this correct position simply because it is unpopular.

A correct analysis of class forces in the Soviet Union and a correct position of Defense of the Soviet Union thus becomes a major pillar in the struggle of the American proletariat to overthrow American capitalism.

3-25-45

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ANGLO-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

Now that the military phase of the imperialist war is drawing to a close in Europe it is advisable to recheck our general perspective and to see what is ahead. Most people agree that the defeat of Germany does not mean the end of the war. Japan must be defeated and what effect the over-running of Germany by the Allies will have on this is a subject of debate. But one thing is sure. The military defeat of German imperialism does not equal the defeat of Fascism. Although these are inter-related problems they are not one and the same. For the common, for the workers and peasants of the world, the defeat of Fascism is the key question. For the Marxist, who understands that the growth and maintenance of Fascism is but one of the forms of the capitalist profit system, the key question is the overthrowing of the profit system no matter what its form: and the establishing of a system of production for use under a Workers Council Government.

KIND OF WAR?

If this were a "People's War" as some are misled to believe, the war against Fascism would be a step ahead, but unfortunately, since the Anglo-American imperialism, and not Stalinism, still sets the pace, the imperialist interests, due to their combined strength, still dominate. To the degree that the Soviet Union is involved in the war and to the degree that the social revolution marches forward in industrial and colonial areas, to that degree the element of the "People's War" is making inroads on the imperialist war. To that degree the basis for the turning of the imperialist war into a civil war is being laid. Just because the people are involved in this war in greater numbers than in the previous wars; just because the whole nation is involved, just because the people DESIRE a people's war instead of an imperialist war; just because Stalinism and Henry Wallace call it a people's war, does not make it a people's war.

A people's war is the first stage of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. It is the period when the masses, with gun in hand, begin to take things into their own hands, to determine the conditions of the nation for themselves instead of leaving it to the "higher-ups!"

When the French workers took up arms and drove out the Fascists and began to establish their own government; when the Italian, Belgian and Yugoslavian workers did the same thing; when the Greek workers fought to keep their weapons and to elect their own democratic state institutions....those were the elements of the People's War.

YALTA AND THE PEOPLE'S WAR

Great Britain did not wait for agreements with the United States

and the Soviet Union. The British proceeded, as good Tories should, to smash the rising head of the people's war that was the beginning of the turning of the imperialist war into civil war. Roosevelt and Stalin did nothing to stop this - except save their own faces-- if they could. Yalta and the Big Three did nothing to change the character of the war. On the contrary, everyone of the agreements made are part and parcel of an imperialist war, cloaked in high sounding phrases to cover up the real deal of power politics. Truly Stalin got some concessions. Why shouldn't he? Is it not a fact that the main blows against German Imperialism have come from the blood of the Russian workers, even though this blood had the backing of American material?

ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTAGONISMS

Yalta again proves that the Anglo-American antagonisms have not been eliminated. The imperialist war against Italy, Germany and Japan has only changed the form, postponed the day of reckoning.

After the 1914 imperialist conflict the United States and England emerged as victors but with increasing antagonisms. During the whole period from 1917 up to the present declaration of war in 1939, these antagonisms have increased. The war has not lessened them. On the contrary, they confront new and greater problems in the very near future.

At first it was the fear of the Russian Revolution that prevented more open expression of the Anglo-American antagonism. Then it was fear of the Hungarian Revolution, the German Revolution, in fact revolutions in many countries, including the revolution in China. With the beating back of these many revolutions the "have" powers felt more at ease; and with this relief from the "nightmare" of communism came sharper economic fights between the imperialist powers, especially the United States and Great Britain.

By this time German Fascism had gone beyond Italian Fascism and was making giant strides in the imperialist spheres. This was a new menace to Anglo-American rivalry. They tried to divert it against the Soviet Union but Germany would not risk such a war until - until it had European instead of mere German economy organized for Germany's imperialist needs.

It was not understanding, or steps toward agreement that held in check the Anglo-American conflict from opening into military clashes --it was fear of communism, fear of the Axis powers, that held them in check. The economic might of the United States and Great Britain enabled them to use the lesser "have not" imperialist powers, such as Germany, Italy and Japan, to do their dirty work.

Yalta is not a product of agreement. The Yalta conference is an agreement of conflicting interests against fear, fear of German imperialism and the fear of the Axis. Russia felt the full impact of

German imperialism and fascism, and Anglo-American imperialism saw what was almost the fulfillment of German imperialist dreams - - land unity with Japanese imperialism - - the European and Asiatic continents under the control of the Fascist powers. This fear, not agreement, drove Anglo-American interests and Stalinism into their "patched up" unity.

THE DEFEAT OF GERMAN IMPERIALISM

But with the defeat of German imperialism this fear that made for temporary unity will be almost gone, with the exception of Japan. All three great powers face the same fear, but on a lesser scale, that Germany made possible. But even before the final defeat of Japanese imperialism these powers are drawing up plans for solving their own antagonisms.

First the Allies agreed to defeat Italian imperialism as the weakest of the three enemies and the one most easily reached. Their time-table then proceeded to defeat Germany as the second one, not because it was easier to defeat, but because its economic base in the whole of Europe was more menacing to Anglo-American world interests and Soviet interests than Japanese. Highly developed industrial Europe in the hands of Hitler was a greater immediate menace than scarcely developed Asia and the Pacific in the hands of Japan.

Fear again drove these powers together. That was the basis of their "unity". Not a unity of purpose because they were seeing alike - not that capitalism and "communism" were uniting.

Japan is third on the list for the Allies - and the Soviet Union will be drawn into this orbit as we predicted when the United States first entered the war.

DO CHURCHILL AND ROOSEVELT WANT DEMOCRACY?

When German imperialism (not fascism) is defeated the Anglo-American imperialists will have more time to get their own house in order to carry on economic and political warfare against each other. America wants to swallow up most of the British empire, economically speaking; while the Tories' main strategy is to prevent this. In any case they can only play second fiddle, even with a so-called organic unity proposal, which will not materialize. Hypothetically speaking, if it should materialize it would be under United States domination.

Part of the pattern of Anglo-American relations and their future policy is already being unfolded before our eyes. It is for us to understand this. If the Anglo-American imperialists were against fascism primarily and German imperialism as a part of that, then their high sounding words for democracy would be put into action.

The people in the "liberated" countries, liberated from German im-

perialism, would be allowed to keep their arms, would be allowed to establish their own governments, would be allowed to kick out the kings, and the puppets of the imperialist powers.

The policy of the Anglo-American forces is to FIRST favor the right-wing, semi-fascist and monarchist elements. Then the middle; and only if the people take action to get out from under this burden are they allowed reformists like the Socialists and Stalinists, - the same brand of reformism that helped save capitalism in the last war.

Nowhere are the Anglo-Americans helping the people dispose of the fascists, e. g., Spain. The United States even fears the Spanish People's Front Government, the legal government now in exile in Latin America. The United States even prevents this legal Spanish government from holding a meeting in Mexico city.

No, Churchill and Roosevelt are not fighting for democracy. They are both fighting for their imperialists, the financial monopolists who dominate in each country. They use and help uphold fascism wherever there is danger of proletarian revolutions. They sanction, after events, democratic movements, when these upsurges are successful. They do not help establish them. They only recognize the left forces, the reformists, when they have used to the last drop every possible combination to the right of them. Italy is a good pattern to reveal the plans of American imperialism. Greece is a shining example of England and Stalinism.

The United States wants bases in Siberia near Japan and the United States wants to use the Soviet forces in Siberia to fight the powerful Asiatic Japanese armies. To win against Japan the armies of Japan in Asia must be defeated. The defeat of the Japanese navy and the invasion of Japan does not mean the defeat of Japan. For this price American imperialism is willing not only to use the Soviet forces, but to give Stalin some concessions for the Chinese Red Armies against Chiang Kai Shek and the nationalists. In the end, the United States HOPES to be able to subdue the Chinese Red Army.

Does this pattern of the Anglo-American imperialist struggle; against the people's war; against democracy in these liberated countries; sanction of "neutral" fascist powers - lead toward better relations with the Soviet Union?

No. These factors are straws in the wind which already indicate that the Anglo-American treaties with Stalinism are just so many scraps of paper, to be used today and torn up tomorrow when Germany and Japan follow Italy in defeat. The English-speaking imperialists hope to have Stalinism sewed up so completely, in helping to check the proletarian revolutions for the price of national security today, that when the right time comes they can smash what is

left of the Soviet Union - thanks to Stalinism. The United States and Great Britains combined attack against the Soviet Union is most recently evidenced by the refusal to admit the Lublin government to the San Francisco conference.

That is their plan - but it will not succeed.

Let us repeat. First, it was the defeat of Italy. Second, it is to be Germany. Third, it is to be Japan. And the time-table of Anglo-American imperialism agrees on one more step. Fourth, it is the smashing of the social revolutions in Europe and Asia to prevent them from spreading to the Americas and along with this they will attempt to defeat the proletariat, to smash the Soviet Union and take over this area as hinterlands for imperialism.

The fifth step is where these two English-speaking powers disagree. It is the Anglo-American antagonism. Who shall dominate the world? Wall Street is fighting John Bull for this position. The fight in preliminary form is already in progress.

It was expressed at the Chicago air conference. It was expressed at Dumbarton Oaks. It was expressed at every one of these conferences from Hot Springs, Va., to Yalta, and it will be expressed at San Francisco. It is expressed in Lend-Lease. It is expressed in the General Staff, both in Europe and Asia. Further evidence of the Anglo-American conflict is the current struggle over representation at the coming San Francisco conference. In order to counterbalance the six votes awarded the British dominions and colonies, the USSR is given three votes for Russia proper, White Russia and the Ukraine provided the United States also has three votes.

If the Allies are successful in defeating Germany and Japan and at the same time can hold down the social revolution to some extent, then the next big inter-imperialist antagonism (which has always existed, which will again come to the surface) will be the Anglo-American antagonism. If the social revolutions get out of control, then the fear of communism will enable the surface unity between England and the United States to continue a little longer. In this role they will try to compromise and hold Stalinism in line, with praise and small concessions, while they attempt to put out the fires of revolution.

If they are successful in putting down the people's rebellions and preventing civil war, to that extent democracy will wither away and to that extent fascism or new forms of reaction equally as abhorrent as fascism will emerge with the blessings of Anglo-American imperialism. The polarization of class relations in England and the United States will proceed with this.

If the revolutions gain, the lefts will gain in America. If American and British imperialism are successful in downing the people's

will in these liberated countries, to that degree will the rights gain over the lefts in class relations. At the same time this struggle of fascism against communism, or the common people against the interests of the victorious imperialists, will determine the relation of forces in the Soviet Union, its revival as a worker's democracy or its further disintegration under Stalinism. Stalinism rides high today with its military victories.

But once Germany and Japan are defeated a NEW world relation of forces again takes place and a NEW alignment of forces, class forces in all countries will proceed. The 1939 attack on Poland by Germany and what followed in rapid order in the next few months was a new relation of world forces. We are again reaching that decisive stage in social revolution and also in the secondary inter-imperialist war.

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