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Where Is the Soviet Union Going ?

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U.S. Imperialism Is Encircling the USSR

(6 April 1946)

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In order to survive in a world which remains capitalist, the Soviet Union is forced to maneuver between the great powers, to engage in "diplomacy." This was already true in the days of Lenin and Trotsky, and remains fundamentally true for the Stalin period.

But during the first years after the October Revolution, Soviet "diplomacy" introduced new concepts into international politics. It began by publishing all the secret treaties. It voluntarily abandoned all the economic and territorial "concessions" extorted by Czarist Russia from backward countries like Persia and China. It based its diplomatic plans not on a system of alliances, but on the estimate of the revolutionary possibilities in different countries.

While exploiting to the utmost the imperialist contradictions, the USSR relied, in the first place, on the WORLD PROLETARIAT AND THE COLONIAL PEOPLES AS ITS PRINCIPAL ALLIES.

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Bankrupt Policy of "Equilibrium"

With the victory of the bureaucracy, reaction made itself equally felt in the domain of foreign politics. Having, at first, lost confidence in the revolutionary possibilities of the working classes of other countries, then having understood that revolutionary victories abroad would constitute a mortal blow AGAINST the domination of the bureaucracy. Stalin replaced the foreign policy, as it was practiced in the days of Lenin and Trotsky, by a new policy based EXCLUSIVELY on the exploitation of imperialist contradictions.

Allying himself now with one power, now with another, first with Germany, then France, then Germany again, and then England, Stalin hoped each time to "neutralize" the main enemy, and above all, prevent the consolidation of an anti-Soviet alliance of all the imperialist powers.

During the war, it may have seemed for a while that the Stalinist policy had succeeded. In truth. Hitler had failed to gather about him all the imperialist powers for the purpose of launching a final assault against the USSR. But an analysis of the PRESENT situation demonstrates the complete bankruptcy of the Stalinist policy. The German-Soviet war, and the Hitler-Stalin Pact, which preceded it, are now disclosed as successive stages through which the ELIMINATION of different potential "allies" of the USSR was effected ; the elimination of all those powers which by creating a balance, lessened the threat of complete encirclement of the USSR by any one imperialism.

The result of the Second World War has been that the entire capitalist world finds itself now dominated by a single imperialist power, the United States, while a second. Great Britain, desperately attempts to defend its remnants of independence. Before the war, the USSR was ringed by the armed forces of a half-dozen nations, which clashed violently among themselves in all domains.

Now, whichever way the USSR turns it finds itself confronted by the same army, the Anglo-American army !

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The Encirclement Is Being Completed

The different "crises" which we have witnessed since the end of the war were each time the climax of an imperialist attempt to close the chain surrounding the USSR by adding a new link.

American imperialism has secured for itself the control of Japan, South Korea, North China. Now it also wants, at all costs, to secure for itself, Manchuria, in order to close the chain of encirclement from the northeast.

The Middle-Eastern crisis, Iran, and of the whole Arab world is only one aspect of British imperialism's attempt to keep intact the cordon of encirclement to the south of the USSR. Turkey is the key position to the southwest.

Finally, the problem of Greece, the question of Trieste, the question of "regime" in the countries occupied by the USSR in Central Europe (for example : the question of the forced merger of the Socialist and Communist Parties in the Soviet Zone in Germany) are manifestations of this same desire to complete the encirclement to the west.

And if we follow the events closely, we cannot fail to conclude that despite the loud cries of the venal press about Soviet "imperialism," Anglo-American imperialism (which is real) is quietly going about, almost imperceptibly, completing this encirclement, so much coveted by world imperialism for 28 years but never, in the past, realized.

Thus, we can understand how erroneous and superficial is the judgment of those who claim that Stalin has "preferred" to serve Russia rather than the world revolution. By demoralizing the international proletariat, by shackling the revolutionary movements with the help of his Stalinist agents, by smashing the movement even by violence and betrayal where it has broken out, Stalin has prevented the breaking of the imperialist iron ring surrounding the USSR at the only place it could be broken, namely, in the very interior of the capitalist world. It is Stalin who bears the whole responsibility for the imperialist encirclement of the USSR, which is now being completed.

(Translated from the Belgian Trotskyist paper, La Lutte Ouvrière, April 6, 1946. Next week's Militant will feature [another article](#) on this question.)

The Policy of the "Strategic Bulwark"

(20 April 1946)

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On the morrow of the second world war, the dominant fact concerning the Soviet Union's situation is the imperialist encirclement that is being completed. The bureaucracy is incapable of counteracting this encirclement by its old policy of balancing itself between the powers.

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It sees itself forced to elaborate a new system of defense, based neither on revolutionary politics of the proletariat (1917–1924), nor on alliances with certain capitalist countries (1924–1944), but on the progressive conquest of a "strategic bulwark," separating the Soviet frontiers on all sides from the imperialist bases of operation.

The creation of the "strategic bulwark" appeared as the immediate aim of Stalin's foreign policy at the time of the Teheran Conference, that is to say, at a time when Hitler's defeat seemed certain and when the conquerors were discussing division of the spoils. In the beginning Stalin attempted to create this bulwark in a "peaceful" way, that is to say, with the consent of his imperialist "allies."

Knowing that the Red Army was bearing the main brunt of the German armies and conscious of the progressive enfeeblement of the USSR in the course of the prolonged warfare, the English and American imperialists postponed their settling of accounts with the bureaucracy until after the war with Germany and Japan. They accorded Stalin, as "spheres of influence" large parts of Europe and Asia : Poland, East Germany, all the Danubian and Balkan countries except Greece, Manchuria and North China.

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Under Pressure

But Stalin knew very well that this occupation would be only temporary. At the "Peace Conference" when American imperialism would be forced to redraw the map of the world according to its plans of world domination, the question of evacuation of all these countries would be posed. But the "strategic bulwark" threatens to crumble even before that as a result of the constant pressure of English and American imperialism.

Already this pressure succeeded. a year ago in the introduction into all the governments of those countries occupied by the USSR of representatives of the "native" capitalist class, direct agents of imperialism : Mikolajczyk in Poland, Tartarescu in Rumania, Geol in Yugoslavia and others. Also the bureaucracy entered upon a series of maneuvers aiming at the more or less temporary "stabilization" of its influence in these countries by establishing obedient governments.

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Reactionary Methods

At the moment when the Red Army entered these countries, broad revolutionary movements appeared. The workers seized the factories and established a network of all-powerful factory committees. The peasants seized the long-coveted land.

But the Soviet bureaucracy which fears the revolution as much as do the world capitalists, far from supporting or consolidating these workers' actions, helped the "native" capitalists all it could to restore law and order ; either by force (Poland) or by a series of deceitful maneuvers (Czechoslovakia). Moreover, by ruthlessly pillaging these countries already impoverished by the war, by introducing a hateful police regime, the Soviet bureaucracy soon alienated the sympathies of large sections of the working masses who had at first welcomed it as a liberator.

Later, when it was a question for Stalin of establishing a more strict control over the countries in the "strategic bulwark" he no longer received the workers' support in dealing mortal blows to the capitalists of these countries. He was forced to arrive at his goal by vile bargains, by military "coups," by the odious blackmail of hunger, or quite simply by brutal police intervention.

Having abandoned the revolutionary methods of defense of the USSR, Stalin is forced to borrow his entire policy from the infernal arsenal of imperialism. Instead of creating on the periphery of the Soviet Union sister soviet republics supported by the enthusiasm and devotion of the toiling masses, Stalin surrounds it with a group of police buffer states where large layers of the population, starving and desperate, are turning again to imperialism.

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Our Condemnation

While we condemn the bureaucratic expansionism as a reactionary policy, we do not grant to the imperialists the right to shed crocodile tears over the fate of the "poor little oppressed peoples." We have seen these "humanitarian democrats" at work when they atomized Nagasaki, burned Bekasi and other Indonesian villages, organized the white terror in Greece and starved India. But it is precisely on the basis of the defense of its own interests that the world proletariat must recognize how futile and criminal the Stalinist policy is,

Futile because in the age of the atomic bomb, an additional few hundred kilometers do not in any way constitute a sufficient defensive base. To fight against the atomic bomb by means of strategic bases, is like fighting against artillery with spears. Criminal because it brings discredit upon the USSR in the eyes of the world proletariat and the colonial peoples, because the similarity of political methods leads the masses to identify the Soviet Union with an imperialist country.

To the extent that it widens the gulf between the policy of the bureaucracy and the interests of the proletariat, to the extent that it enables imperialism to array the English and American masses not only against Stalin but against the USSR as such – to that extent Stalin's policy favors the imperialist war preparations and increases the threat to the USSR.

At Brest-Litovsk, Lenin "sacrificed space to gain time." Stalin is in the act of sacrificing time to gain space which will protect him neither against his internal difficulties, nor against the atom bomb.

(Translated from the Belgian Trotskyist paper, La Lutte Ouvrière, April 20, 1946. Next week's Militant will feature [another article](#) on this question.)

The War Strengthened Pro-Capitalist Forces

(April 1946)

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Superficial observers frequently insist that the USSR has emerged from the second world war "strengthened." Like authors of kindergarten primers, they measure "victory" or "defeat" by the number of "cities taken" and "battles won." We have tried to apply more serious criteria.

Thus, we have shown that the international situation of the Soviet Union was more precarious at the conclusion of the

second world war than at its beginning, in view of the fact that a single imperialist power has now completed its encirclement of Russia. We will try to show that even inside Russia the war has considerably strengthened elements hostile to the economic base inherited from the October revolution. In this sense, the internal situation as well reveals itself to be much more precarious in 1945 than in 1940.

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Rich Farmers

The pro-capitalist tendencies became accentuated during the war, above all, in the domain of agriculture. The disappearance of the tractors as a result of Hitler's conquests ; the psychological consequences of the partition of the land by German imperialism ; the extreme scarcity of the most elementary tools and the general disorganization of the economy acted to destroy the material and subjective basis for collectivization in Western Russia. Individual exploitation remained, for all practical purposes, quite prevalent even after the liberation of the territories.

Even in the Soviet press, voices were raised demanding an implacable struggle against the pro-capitalist elements in the countryside. In the other Russian territories, the scarcity of prime necessities, the spread of the black market, the intensification of speculation, created conditions favorable for the crystallization of a new exploiting stratum within the collective farms (kolkhozes).

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"Independent" Spirit

Many peasants succeeded in accumulating hundreds of thousands if not millions of roubles. That was shown clearly at the time of the individual purchase, more or less compulsory of State loans which frequently amounted to the above mentioned sums. As their riches increased, the spirit of independence of the well-to-do farmer elements (kulaks) in the countryside likewise increased. Numerous complaints appeared in the Soviet press about this or that kolkhoz which not only did not take into consideration the plan quota for the bread grain crop assigned to it, but even refused to make its grain deliveries to the state – that is to say, which began living independently of the Soviet economy.

Finally in March 1945, a decree effected changes in the law of inheritance so as to eliminate for all practical purposes any limits to the number of legal heirs. Now any Soviet citizen can draw up a will and make any other citizen his legal heir. To the extent that this permits pro-capitalist elements to transform numerous poor peasants into convenient figureheads who can be used to get around the limitations on the amounts of money or goods one can inherit, this decree constitutes an important concession to the kulaks and an accelerating element to primitive accumulation in the countryside.

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Conditions in Industry

During the whole war period, industry worked without a general pre-established plan. In heavy industry this resulted in an increasing independence of different state trusts, which more and more tended to make agreements between themselves without consulting any intermediate central bodies. In light industry it led principally to an increasing decentralization, with the local authorities occupying themselves more and more with the production of very limited articles of consumption, often on a handicraft basis. Even in 1945, the local and regional authorities were told "Get along by yourself" in providing for the construction of new lodgings for the millions of homeless.

Finally, the "policy of forced savings" which was followed to prevent a runaway inflation during the war resulted in the

accentuation of the tendencies toward independence in the domain of the banks. The banks have tended to follow their "own policy," that is to say, to fix an interest rate determined by their own balance sheet, and no longer a general one for all of Russia. This inevitably causes a differential in investment policy and is also a serious step toward the dissolution of the Soviet economy as such.

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Concessions to Reaction

We know that the caste of ranking officers received important concessions from Stalin at the beginning of the war : the reestablishment of indivisible command, abolition of political commissars, the reestablishment of the use of orderlies, the extension of officers' rights (among others, the right to shoot deserters on the spot !). Later the inequalities in the army became even more accentuated. The officers and enlisted men were lodged separately, messed separately and the relative differences in pay became very much greater than those in capitalist countries.

Meanwhile the vilest chauvinism triumphed in the field of propaganda. The Greek Orthodox Church under the patronage of the government accumulated immense riches. It even succeeded in bringing about an official reconciliation between Stalin and the White Guard Russians in Paris and Shanghai. That is how Soviet society emerged from the Second World War, menaced internally and externally.

(The above is the third in a series of articles on the Soviet Union, translated from La Lutte Ouvrière, Belgian Trotskyist paper. Future issues of The Militant will print [additional articles](#) in this series.)

The 5-Year Plan and the New "Left Turn"

(29 June 1946)

From The Militant, [Vol. X No. 28](#), 13 July 1946, p. 7.

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As a consequence of the war and the weakening of the USSR in relation to imperialism, as a consequence of the reactionary policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy which, from fear of the proletariat and its revolutionary traditions, appealed during the war to the most reactionary instincts of the most backward layers of the population ; as a consequence of all these factors, the elements of a new exploiting capitalist class became considerably strengthened during the war.

In the year that followed termination of the war, a series of internal struggles within the bureaucracy led to a new consolidation of the Bonapartist party apparatus around Stalin. This consolidation expressed itself in a new and pronounced "left turn," that is to say, in a resumption of the struggle against capitalist elements in industry and agriculture as well as in a further tightening of the party's grip on the state apparatus and the official ideology.

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Aim of Plan

In the field of industry, the looseness of planning in heavy industry and its virtual disappearance in light industry,

which took place throughout the war, were successfully overcome and replaced by the first applications of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. This plan sets a very definite goal ; the reconstruction of the devastated regions of Russia, an increase of steel production, and in general the attaining of higher levels of production than on the eve of the war.

Thanks to the abundant contributions from the newly industrialized regions of East Russia and Siberia ; and thanks above all to the ruthless pillage of occupied countries, this reconstruction is well on its way. The total of Russian industrial production already surpasses the 1940 level. The industrial production of the Ukraine, notably the Donetz Basin, has already reached 60 per cent of the prewar level. It should be noted, however, that the Fourth Five-Year Plan once again sacrifices the sphere of consumers' goods to means of production, that is to say, ignores the most pressing ; needs of the masses, and thus becomes the source of grave social disturbances.

Agricultural Crisis

At the same time the Soviet press has engaged in a violent campaign against the new exploiting elements in the countryside. Hitherto it had ecstatically reiterated that "classes have completely disappeared." Now, recognizing for the first time in ten years the existence of these elements, the Stalinist journalists have launched harsh attacks against "peasants who monopolize the land of the collectives for their personal profit." They denounce the "persistence of the capitalist spirit in the countryside," and instruct the local party bodies to implacably eliminate all abuses.

As a matter of fact, the government has taken Draconian measures to force the collective farmers to comply with the plan. A rigid control of planting has been introduced, and a discriminatory policy in granting credits, material aid, seed, tractors, etc., is pursued in the devastated regions in order to favor the "loyal" agricultural enterprises which fulfill the plan.

In the realization that without the technical base of mechanization, the collective farm system must necessarily fall apart, a number of prewar machine and tractor stations have been rapidly restored in western Russia. But a large number of these stations are "ghost stations," lacking equipment. It will take many years of the Fourth Five-Year Plan before the situation in Soviet agriculture is restored.

Bureaucratic Rift

In the political field the latent tension between the new military caste and the party, which appeared to have lost supremacy in the course of war, has been resolved in favor of the latter. The new Soviet government does not include a single member of this new military caste. On the contrary, the only two military men who are included, Voroshilov and Budenny, are the two sole survivors of the Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky. It is noteworthy that the majority of the marshals, the "war heroes," had been shifted toward the end of hostilities and were finally relegated to the distant and most remote provinces, where they are incapable of consistently influencing Russian political life.

In the ideological field, this political weakening of the military caste has expressed itself in an abrupt halt of the ultrachauvinist propaganda. Soviet periodicals have even been suppressed for having too strongly insisted on glorifying Russia's past and Czarist heroes. A special resolution of the Central Committee of the "Bolshevik Party" has "condemned this deviation" – although it had been officially propagated for several war years ! – and insists on the revival of the "propagation of Marxism-Leninism."

Need for Terror

Some foreign observers have found it possible to discover the appearance of a "third apparatus," injecting itself between the party apparatus and the military apparatus, that is, an independent apparatus of the state which serves as a buffer between the rival factions of the bureaucracy. In our opinion, involved here is a case of optical illusion.

In reality, as with Stalin's "left turn" in 1927, the present "left turn" is accompanied by an important strengthening of the state and of the repressive apparatus. This is reflected precisely in the limited and contradictory character of this "left turn," executed by a rapacious bureaucracy quaking before the people.

Hence the astonishing declaration of Pravda to the effect that : "The essential contribution of Stalin to Marxist Leninist Doctrine is his theory of the strengthening of the state during the transition from the socialist society to the communist society."

From the Marxist point of view this declaration is gross nonsense. The state must disappear and not become stronger with the disappearance of the classes. But this "theory" does admirably reflect the desperate position of the bureaucracy which, in face of the capitalist menace and the pressure of the masses, finds its only salvation in the resurgence of police terror.

(The above is the fourth in a series of articles, translated from the Belgian Trotskyist paper, La Lutte Ouvrière, June 29. Next week's Militant will print the [fifth](#) in the series.)

Role of the Masses Since End of War

(July 1946)

From The Militant, [Vol. X No. 29](#), 20 July 1946, p. 3.

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The old generation of the Russian proletariat lost its revolutionary potential during the years of revolution and civil war ; the next generation which grew up after the civil war was decapitated by the Thermidorian terror ; it was affected by all the terrible defeats of the world proletariat, and could be considered therefore as incapable of a serious movement of revolt against the bureaucratic dictatorship.

Competent observers expected a reawakening of the Russian proletariat by 1940–1945. By then, according to them, the improvement of living conditions in Russia, the appearance of a new fighting generation, and the change of the relationship of social forces on the world arena would give hope of a renewal of activity on the part of the proletariat.

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Independent Activity

But in 1941 the possibility of such an evolution was abruptly – and not accidentally – removed by the outbreak of the Soviet-German war. During the first months the attitude of the proletariat was hesitant and somewhat passive. When it realized the real nature of the Hitler war – a war of pillage, of destruction of everything progressive that the October

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Revolution had brought about, of a return to capitalist exploitation – it threw itself into the struggle with all the ferocious energy of which it was capable.

There is considerable evidence of the independent activity of the masses during the war. During the defense of Odessa and Leningrad, workers' militias made their reappearance. This was especially 'illustrated by the spectacular reconquest of Rostov in 1941, ending the 1941 campaign. The manual of the French Military Academy, edited by Vichy in 1943, flatly declared that it was "the intervention of the civilians in Rostov which changed the course of the war."

Is it necessary to insist on the bitterness and implacability of the partisans' struggles whose formations often bore names more than indicative of the moods which animated them, such names, for example, as "For the Power of the Soviets" ?

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Discontent Breaks Out

But if the Soviet masses were willing to bear the worst privations in the struggle against Hitler, they observed with resentment which became more and more marked that speculation, good food, the most shameless privileges were flaunted openly behind the front, while millions of workers were killed together with their wives and children. Once the country was free, this discontent found numerous ways of expressing itself. The number of deserters-marauders increased rapidly. In a sensational speech Kalinin admitted that working class wives asked, "Why do you wear boots when we haven't any ?"

Contact with the higher standard of living in central and western Europe, completed the awakening of the Soviet worker. And since the end of 1945 there is only one cry heard from the proletariat : "More bread ! More clothes ! More consumers' goods !"

These cries penetrate into the Soviet press very clearly ; the whole "electoral campaign" was centered about them. The rapid demobilization measures, the abolition of rationing, as well as the "left turn" on the industrial plane which characterizes the beginning of 1946, were certainly imposed in a large measure by the pressure of the masses.

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Perspectives of Mass Struggle

The third generation of Soviet workers was certainly struck hard blows by the war. But these blows are not defeats. Quite the contrary. There are many indications that the Russian masses are showing a. renewal of confidence, assurance and faith in their own powers, after victory against Hitler.

In the present circumstances, so long as the police terror keeps weighing on them more heavily than ever and so long as they are still unable to find open forms of struggle, an inspiring example of a striking victory of the workers abroad remains without doubt the necessary condition for stimulating and coordinating mass movements.

But Stalin's very fear of the proletarian revolution is the best guarantee that the role of the Russian proletariat is still far from finished. Stalin hastily withdrew his troops from Czechoslovakia where the working class almost raised itself to an understanding of its historic role. All over Germany GPU troops are replacing the regular army. These are eloquent signs that permit us to look to the future with hope.

Since 1937 Trotsky considered that the role of the bureaucracy, which historically consisted of introducing the advanced technology of the capitalist countries into the backward workers' state, had reached its end ; the tempo of industrial development became slower and slower. The war interrupted this process and made the bureaucracy appear as the "agency empowered to conduct the defense of the land of socialism against Hitler."

At present they draw upon a new prestige from the undeniable successes of reconstruction. But this role is approaching its end. To the extent that the reconstruction is achieved, the bureaucratic management will come more and more into contradiction with the further growth of the productive forces. Violent social crises will result from this by the time when the class struggle will attain its peak in Asia, in Europe and undoubtedly also in America.

The Russian proletariat will see itself no longer isolated. There is reason to believe that it will attempt its first decisive showdown with the bureaucracy even before imperialism launches an open attack against Stalin.

(The [sixth and final article](#) in this series by Ernest Germain will be printed in next week's Militant.)

Why Workers Should Defend the USSR

(July 1946)

From The Militant, [Vol. X No. 30](#), 27 July 1946, p. 3.

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The brutality with which Stalin operates in the Soviet buffer zone in Eastern Europe provides countless imperialist agents with a convenient pretext to unleash their anti-Soviet agitation, the moral preparation for the third world war. The sole aim of all these gentlemen is to reintroduce capitalism in Russia ; their hypocritical lamentations about the "freedom of the peoples," about "democracy," against "pillaging," are only despicable formulas veiling the real demand, the colonization of Russia by Wall Street.

If these gentlemen were really concerned about "freedom of the peoples," they would strive for the immediate independence of India, for the withdrawal of imperialist troops from Indo-China, Indonesia, Germany and Italy. As touches their horror of applying terror against "innocent people," they clearly and noisily showed their real attitude by their frantic applause when the atomic bomb blasted Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the map of the world.

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"Imperialism" ?

Even in the ranks of the revolutionary movement, the barbaric methods with which Stalin treats the occupied countries have been advanced as sufficient ground for changing our attitude toward the USSR. We are forced to conclude that comrades holding such views have hitherto nursed illusions about the nature of the bureaucracy.

It has invariably employed the most brutal methods to achieve its aims. The forced collectivization in Russia, for example, certainly took more victims than all the bureaucratic measures in all the occupied countries. However, in the past we were never guided in determining our attitude toward the USSR by moral or subjective factors, but solely by sociological analysis, by the class criteria. We must proceed the same way today.

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This is why we must decisively reject all attempts to identify Soviet expansionism with imperialism, the policy of expansion of finance capital. Imperialism has the following very specific features : export of capital ; superexploitation of colonial masses ; expropriation of small artisans and small farmers ; imperialist policy is a barrier to the development of the productive forces.

Soviet expansionism is characterized by absolutely different features : nationalization of heavy industries ; agrarian reform ; pillaging of a part of the industrial equipment. To the extent that this policy has durable effects, they will result in a development of the productive forces.

While imperialism in the colonies rests on the most reactionary social forces, primarily on the large landed proprietors, the bureaucracy in the occupied countries is forced to direct its blows principally against these forces, and lean, even if hesitantly, on the independent action of the masses with the aim of limiting it, holding it back and eventually crushing it.

This was clearly demonstrated not only in Poland and Czechoslovakia but also recently in Berlin when the Soviet High Command, within the framework of its policy of blackmailing imperialism, supported a large popular anti-Allied demonstration.

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Different Ends

If the policy of the bureaucracy in the occupied countries, while employing identical methods, nevertheless arrives at ends diametrically opposed to those pursued by imperialism, it is because Soviet society is a society diametrically opposed to that of decaying capitalism.

When we surveyed the internal evolution of Russia since the war, we noted that all the theories claiming that we are confronted with a new exploiting society and that the bureaucracy in Russia constitutes a new exploiting class, are unable to explain the zigzags and the many contradictory features in the internal policy of the bureaucracy, principally the recent "left turn."

We have shown that these zigzags fundamentally confirm the analysis of Trotsky, according to which the bureaucracy does not constitute a new class having well-defined interests, but a Bonapartist caste, a parasitic growth upon the proletariat. This caste – while constantly trying to play off the polar tendencies against each other, the pro-capitalist tendency against the proletarian – is forced in the end to defend the collective ownership of the means of production, the source of all its privileges. We have also shown that contrary to these theories of a new exploiting class, the danger which threatens Soviet society is really that of capitalist restoration.

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What Defense Means

For all these reasons we conclude that fundamentally Russia remains a degenerated workers' state. An attack by an imperialist power against the USSR would aim to transform Russia into an imperialist colony. The effects of such an attack, even if partially successful, would be, as the conquests of Hitler clearly demonstrated, to throw Russia back several centuries, to throw the Russian masses back to a level of exploitation surpassing anything hitherto known in the capitalist world. Against such an attack the world proletariat and the Russian proletariat are obliged to defend the USSR to the hilt in order to preserve the remaining conquests of the October Revolution.

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But this policy of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism does not at all mean the slightest apology, justification, or silence about the crimes of Stalin. We defend the Soviet Union by carrying on throughout the world the revolutionary class struggle against our own capitalists ; the Russian proletariat combines the policy of defending the USSR with the policy of waging an implacable struggle against the bureaucracy, which constitutes in Russia the most dangerous objective ally of world capitalism.

As for the occupied countries, we believe that the discredit thrown on the Soviet Union by the barbarous methods of Stalin and the demoralization of the proletariat which results from them, far outweigh the strategic "advantages" of this policy. For this reason we demand the "immediate withdrawal of the Red Army" from these territories, connecting up this slogan with our entire struggle in these territories which, proceeding from the reforms introduced since the Russian occupation, must consist of achieving the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a federation of independent Soviet Republics.

All over the world our policy of defense of the Soviet Union, far from "objectively supporting" Stalinism, delivers mortal blows to it, for this policy is identical with our general strategy, that of the world proletarian revolution.

(The above is the final in a series of six articles analyzing trends in the Soviet Union since the end of the war. This series was translated from the French by John Garrow.)

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