THE TRUTH ABOUT SOVIET RUSSIA

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THE TRUTH ABOUT SOVIET RUSSIA

By GIL GREEN

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WHAT is the truth about Soviet Russia? What happened in the recent elections? Why the purge and trials? What is the truth about spying activities? Was socialism betrayed? These are the questions being asked by numerous individuals bewildered by the maze of contradictory stories in circulation regarding the Soviet Union. Interested in the truth, the American people also have a vital concern in knowing the truth.

The economic machine of capitalism has once again broken down. Hard times are here. Every workingman's home is haunted by the specter of unemployment and insecurity. Storm clouds of fascism and war hover on the horizon, approaching ever closer to American soil. Wars of fascist aggression rage in Spain and China. The democratic liberties of peoples, the independence of nations, fought and won by the blood and sacrifice of countless generations,

face the danger of complete destruction. War and fascism threaten all humanity.

It is in this situation that the people are searching for a path to a more abundant life, a lasting peace, a greater liberty and security. They know that for the past twenty years a new type of government and social system have evolved on one-sixth the surface of the earth—commonly referred to as the "Russian experiment." Much has been written about this "experiment." Some are highly laudatory, others highly critical and derogatory. Instinctively the working people see in the Soviet Union their friend and ally: the only land without millionaires, without economic royalists. But nevertheless they are confused by the contradictory stories that appear, by the charges and counter-charges made.

Of course, this is not the first time that Soviet rule has been subjected to criticism and attack. From its very inception it has had to weather storm after storm of opposition. Much of the old criticism has been proven by later events to be nothing more than malicious slander. For example, few if any would dare resurrect today the old hair-raising charges that the Communists were "destroying the home," were "nationalizing women." One hears less and less the old charge that socialism as an economic system is impracticable, that it destroys individual incentive and initiative, that it means lower instead of higher productive levels. The successful Five-Year Plans have buried this accusation forever.

Most of the old charges have "gone with the wind," but new ones have taken their place. Today the most frequent

charge hurled against the Soviet Union is that it has destroyed the democratic liberties of its people and instituted despotic terrorist rule. Most intelligent people believe that this charge is false, but they often find it difficult to answer specific accusations pertaining to the Soviet Constitution the recent elections and, what the press harps on no end and loves to refer to as the "Soviet purge."

Whatever confusion exists among the American people on these questions is largely due to one reason: they do not know *all* the real facts. If these were known the atmosphere would clear at once. They are not known because the press from which most people gather their information consciously keeps these facts from them.

As a means of lending plausibility to its tales, the capitalist-controlled press has concocted the following rather simple recipe: Where possible, ignore facts completely; where impossible, take certain incidental facts, remove from their original setting, magnify out of all proportions, mix until successfully distorted and serve up as "conclusive proof" of whatever you're out to prove in the first place. This formula is guaranteed to produce only news "fit to print."

It will be my attempt to unscramble this unsavory omelet —to bring together the most important facts and place them in their proper historical setting. Only in this manner can the truth become evident to even the most casual observer.

I. Soviet Democracy at Work

FREE SPEECH?

DURING a recent visit to the Soviet Union, I had occasion to address a group of American students touring that country. One of their first questions was: "Is there real freedom of speech in Russia?" I referred these students to article after article in the daily press which showed how the workers and peasants were criticizing shortcomings on the part of the government and its departments, were accusing various officials of bureaucracy, etc. But this answer did not satisfy at least one of the group. He wanted a direct answer to the following specific question: Could he if he so desired stand up in Red Square and denounce socialism and defend capitalism or even fascism? After all, he reasoned, were not Communists permitted to speak against capitalism in Union Square, New York?

This question, posed quite frequently in the same direct form, is not uncommon. And when the answer is given in the negative as it invariably must be, it is taken as evidence of the fact that free speech really does not exist in the Soviet Union. My contention is that this conclusion can only be drawn by people who have not given the entire matter sufficient thought.

At the start I wish to reject the inference that freedom of speech in the United States has *equal* application to

all. A worker in New York City may have the temporary right to speak against capitalism on a street corner or in Union Square. While he is given the means by which to speak to a handful, the capitalist class *alone* controls the means by which to speak to the millions: the radio, the newspapers, etc. In many parts of the United States, as in the South, even the limited rights of free speech do not exist. In the Soviet Union these most important mediums of free speech are in the hands of the people.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that individual freedom is not and never has been an unlimited freedom. Someone once expressed the thought that individual right ends where the right of society begins. This is a profound truth. Individual freedom may be interpreted by some people as the right to rob or to murder. Society, however, recognizes no such rights because they violate the interests of society—they are anti-social.

Mankind has gone through a number of stages of social development. In each one of these the concept of freedom was different. At one stage of human existence men practised what is known as cannibalism, *i.e.*, man ate man. Could anyone advocate cannibalism today? And if there were such a person, what would happen to him? At first he'd be laughed down as crazy and then he'd be locked up in a nut-house. In other words, what was right once is entirely wrong now.

Let us take another example to make the point we're driving at clearer. Suppose a Ku-Kluxer came to New York City and decided to deliver a message to the people of Harlem from a soap-box on 135th Street and Lenox Avenue.

Suppose this Southern white gentleman chose as his theme the Negro question. Suppose he got up and told the Negro people that they were an inferior lot, that they deserved discrimination, that they would be much better off as slaves and that lynching was just and proper. What do you think would happen to this Southern gentleman? And would anyone accuse the Negro people of Harlem, who know what Southern white rule means, who know what lynching and exploitation mean, of being "undemocratic" if they refused to listen to this individual and in double-quick time ran him out of Harlem? On the contrary, American democracy would be so much superior if we had stronger laws which prohibited individuals from preaching or practising race hatred and discrimination!

These examples all hold for the Soviet Union as well. To advocate a system based on the exploitation of man by man is to advocate another form of robbery, a more subtle form of cannibalism. It violates the very moral concept of socialist society. Is it therefore surprising that the Soviet masses will not permit anyone in their midst to get up and say: "You workers should not have power. This should belong to a class of parasites. You do not want production for use, you want economic crisis, unemployment and insecurity. What you need is capitalism, with its rich and poor, with its fabulous fortunes and hungry bread-lines." Nor can they listen to such things and disregard them as silly. The Soviet masses know that their country is surrounded by a hostile capitalist world. They know their enemies endeavor to destroy the victories of socialism. They also remember what capitalism meant to them, and they bear on their

own bodies the marks of previous capitalist exploitation.

No sir, they will tolerate such people no more than the Negro masses of Harlem would tolerate a Ku Kluxer if they had the means by which to kick him out—and the Soviet masses have the means.

This charge against the Soviet Union is therefore not an accusation but a tribute. Instead of proving that there is no freedom of speech it proves that socialist society is so superior to capitalism that its masses have much higher standards of freedom and ethics than are possible under any system of class oppression.

WHY ONLY ONE PARTY?

When the new Soviet Constitution was adopted the American press went out of its way to ridicule the claim that this document was the most democratic in history. This was done by harping on one fact: that the constitution made no provisions for more than one political party. "What kind of free elections can you have," the press said. "when the people are given the choice of only one party?"

To an average American this sounds like a telling point. He immediately imagines himself in an election booth on voting day being handed a ballot with only one party column and only one list of candidates, and thinks: "What kind of democracy is that?" From this point of view he's absolutely correct, because he's thinking solely of the American election system.

But the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is not an election party. On Soviet election ballots no party designa-

tions or columns appear whatsoever. Candidates run as *individuals* on the basis of their merits. Government officials are chosen not because of party membership but because of *personal* qualification.

Does this sound queer? Well, let's go back a bit in American history to the early days of our own Constitution. The American Constitution also made no provision for parties; candidates were to be elected as individuals on the basis of their merits. That was how the Founding Fathers wanted the President and Vice-President to be elected. Instead of direct voting under party designations for President and Vice-President, as at present, the Constitution provided for an entirely different system. It specified for the election in each state of a designated number of Electors to an Electoral College. Each Elector cast two votes for his first two preferences. The candidate receiving the highest vote became President. The candidate receiving the second highest vote became Vice-President. This was the system in use for seventeen years, until 1804.

Why did the Founding Fathers propose this scheme, and why was the Constitution later amended to change it? The framers of the Constitution recognized the existence of class divisions but did not visualize these as sharpening to such a degree that separate political parties, representative of these separate class interests, would become a permanent feature of American life. They hoped that elections could be based on the selection of the best man for the given job. In a few years, however, the struggle between the democratic camp of Jefferson and the autocratic camp of Hamilton had become so sharp that two contending

parties came into being—the Federalist and the Republican* Parties. A change in the provisions of the Constitution therefore became necessary.

In the Soviet Union the economic basis for classes has disappeared. Ownership of all the means of production and exchange are in the hands of the people. Private property is strictly limited to objects of personal use and can no longer become the means of exploiting other people. Hence, there is no economic foundation for a multiplicity of parties. Only one party exists, representing the interests of all the toilers, made up of the most conscious and devoted individuals, dedicated to the promotion of the welfare of the people and pledged to the achievement of the complete transition to a classless communist society.

Elections in the Soviet Union consist in the selection of those *individuals,* regardless of whether they be members of the Party or not, who can best represent and defend the interests of the Soviet people as a whole.

UNANIMITY

Many people were also puzzled because there were so few contending candidates in the final elections for the Supreme Council (Congress) of the Soviets. The capitalist press has made much of this fact. Once again on its part, it has presented a half-truth in order to put across a whole lie. It purposely failed to tell the American people how the Soviet elections were prepared and conducted. Once

* Not to be confused with the Republican Party of today, which was formed in 1854.

this is known all becomes clear. Having been in the Soviet Union for approximately three months prior to the recent elections I feel partly qualified to speak on this subject.

To start with it must be remembered that while the final elections took place on only one day, December 12, the election campaign, as such, occupied two to three months of intense discussion and activity. Why was this necessary if most of the candidates were unopposed? Because the very process of selection of the candidates was a most important aspect of the election.

In the United States candidates are proposed by political parties. The average citizen has darn little to say about who these candidates shall be. This is all left to the ward heelers and the city, state and national bosses of the major political parties.

Not so in the Soviet Union. According to the Soviet Constitution the right to nominate candidates resides in every public organization, in every society of toilers. Trade unions, cooperatives, youth organizations, cultural and sport clubs and all other organizations of the people not only have the right but actually did nominate their candidates for the Supreme Council.

Let us see how this worked in practice. In one election district a number of local organizations of that type nominated their own candidates. This took place many weeks before the final elections. Hence, as a result of such nominations by a number of organizations in this district, a handful of candidates were left in the running. Immediately a widespread discussion developed around these proposed

individuals. One organization would send spokesmen to others to convince them to support their nominee. As the whole discussion was based on finding the person best suited for the post, some candidates were withdrawn, others declined, until finally, just before election, one candidate was left in the field, the unanimous choice of all the organizations of the people in that election district.

Thus, if only one candidate was on the final ballot in this election district it was not because no others were nominated and discussed, but because prior to election day it had already become clear that this one person was the logical candidate and would emerge the victor.

In the United States it often becomes clear long before election day which candidate will win. This, however, does not deter the others. They keep their names on the ballot anyway. Why? Because even if defeated they wish to register their vote in order to show the strength of their political party and platform, in order to show their *opposition* to the other parties.

Such things are unnecessary in the Soviet Union. The contending candidates are not political opponents. They represent no separate classes, but one united people.

"How is such unanimity possible," ask some people, "when we know there are enemies within the borders of the Soviet Union?" Yes, there are enemies and disgruntled individuals within the Soviet Union, but these are so insignificant in number and influence that they feel it a hopeless task to oppose the overwhelming majority in an election. Even if certain of them did propose opposing candidates these were undoubtedly rejected by the various

local organizations and thus could not get on the ballot except by a write-in campaign.

On this question as well, let us go back to American history. Those who are so surprised about "unanimity" should remember that Washington was twice elected to the office of President unanimously. And yet, we know not all favored him, we know there were Tories who hated Washington. But these were so hopeless a minority that they did not even oppose his election.

A FALSE COMPARISON

But why is it so difficult for some people to understand these relatively simple questions? Because they have been affected by the shallow and superficial "similarities" drawn by the capitalist press between the Soviet Union and the states of fascist rule. The press says: In Russia there is only one party, in Germany there is only one party; in Russia the government claims the support of the overwhelming majority of the population, in Germany and Italy likewise; hence, fascism and communism are the same (!).

Last summer Upton Sinclair wrote an effective reply to the gentlemen who confuse the issue in this fashion. He did so by making a comparison of his own. He wrote:

> "I know two men, one named John and the other Tom, and they both use dynamite. John uses the dynamite to blow rocks to pieces in order to build roads, dams, and irrigation works. Tom uses dynamite to blow up school houses and libraries, and to make bombs which he drops on the heads of women and children. Both John and Tom use dynamite; and therefore John and Tom are the same sort of persons.
>
> "What do you think of my logical powers?"

In fascist countries the one-party system is used to destroy the democratic liberties of the people, to crush the resistance of the toiling masses—the majority of the population. Under fascism class divisions are not abolished, they are intensified—the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. The one-party system is therefore imposed upon society not because class divisions and class struggles have disappeared, but for the very opposite reason—they have become so sharp that the ruling class does not dare permit their open and legal expression.

In the Soviet Union, as we have already seen, the economic foundation for classes has already been removed, the people are building a classless society. That is why they can have greater political unity than any other people in the world.

The recent Soviet elections have for the first time in history made it possible for more than ninety million citizens to cast their vote for candidates of their own choosing. For the first time a people's parliament was elected, composed of 463 industrial workers, 330 peasants, 325 clerical workers and intellectuals—out of which total 187 were women. This is truly a government *"of, by and for the people."*

THE WHY AND WHEREFORE OF THIS ATTACK

What then remains of the attempts to discredit the Soviet Constitution and the recent parliamentary elections? When all the facts are given due consideration we can see that the Soviet Union represents a *higher* stage of democracy,

a further extension and development of what are *limited* rights under capitalist democracy. But we have consciously refrained from treating the *most* important aspects of this democracy precisely because we wished to limit ourselves solely to the issues of distortion or misconception.

Let us take the right to work. A worker in the United States has that formal right, but what does it mean practically? Will it get him a job if he can't find one himself? Of course not! In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the right to work is *guaranteed* by the government. This is likewise true of the right to leisure, the right to education and many other rights. What under capitalism are at best merely *formal* rights have become *real* rights under socialism.

Why then have the opponents of the Soviet Union concentrated their efforts on trying to prove what they cannot prove? Because the major issue in the world today is that of democracy versus fascism. The peoples downtrodden and oppressed under the yoke of fascist rule are struggling for democratic liberties. In the democratic countries the peoples are striving to preserve and extend their present limited rights. The smaller nations such as Czechoslovakia are fighting to maintain their independence threatened by fascism. In all countries millions of people realize that if a new world war is to be averted the democratic peoples and nations must unite against fascist aggression.

The Soviet Union is the most powerful anti-fascist force in the world. It is the firmest and most consistent fighter for peace and the most determined worker for world unity against the aggressor nations.

Is it not logical, therefore, that the plutocrats of power and wealth—the reactionaries—who fear this growing world unity more than the devil itself aim at delivering a body blow against the most important proponent of such unity—the Soviet Union? "How wonderful it would be," think they, "if we could only succeed in smearing the Soviet Union with the hated brush of fascism, if we could only get large numbers of people to believe that fascism and communism are brothers under the skin, are twin evils." Achieving this, they would sow confusion and chaos in the ranks of the democratic masses and make impossible the unity necessary to defeat fascism.

Furthermore, this new campaign aims to creat a paralyzing doubt in the hearts and minds of many of those who believe in socialism and wish to work for a socialist society. The reactionaries understand full well that millions of toilers look more and more towards the Soviet Union for their inspiration and guidance. If they can get such people to believe that socialism has proven to be a failure in the only land of working class rule, or if they can make sections of them believe that the revolution has been betrayed, they think they can discredit the whole struggle for socialism and discourage the masses from participating in that struggle.

But that is not all. Fascism is out to bag even larger game. It wants to destroy the Soviet Union itself. That is why it hopes to break the close ties that exist between the toiling millions of the Soviet Union and those of the world. By creating confusion and doubt among the people of the world it expects to prepare the way for the armed invasion of Soviet territories.

Stalin in his recent letter warned world fascism that it could not break the ever closer ties that bind the working people of the world with those of the Soviet Union. He also warned the people of the world against the "tricks" of the fascist war-makers and declared that the land of socialism was prepared to defend itself if attacked.

That this warning was certainly timely is proven by the latest events in Austria, and by Hitler's new threats against Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The people of the world must be prepared to meet and defeat every "trick" of world fascism.

AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE AND THE CHARGE OF BETRAYAL

Of course the fascists understand that if they are to achieve their objectives they need some outside assistance. After all, who will believe what they say about socialism and the Soviet Union? And so a united front is formed between two sets of scoundrels—the reactionaries as represented by Hearst and the renegades as represented by Trotsky. This business merger has its own division of labor. Mr. Hearst and his cohorts supply the money and the press. Mr. Trotsky supplies the weapons, ideological and organizational, with his gang of operatives thrown in to boot.

And so one witnesses a sight to make a horse laugh: none other than Willie Hearst sadly lamenting over the duplicity of human nature and "Stalin's betrayal of the revolution," but consoled by one fact at least, that his bosom pal Leon has remained true to his ideals (!)—yes, let us add, to their common "ideals."

Was there ever perpetrated a farce more ludicrous than this?

But most brazen of all is their unmitigated nerve in using the name of Lenin against his Party, his teachings, his class and his socialist fatherland. Imagine!—the Hearst press printing articles and interviews with Trotsky to "prove" that Stalin, the great continuer of Lenin's work, has betrayed Leninism! Years ago Lenin pointed out that great revolutionists when living are ridiculed and abused by the class enemy, but when dead are transformed by these same foes into harmless saints. This was true of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. This was true of Marx. It is likewise true of Lenin.

The charge of betrayal is, of course, nothing new. It is as old as the Soviet Union itself.

When Lenin in 1918 insisted, as against Trotsky, Buhkarin and others, that the Soviet government sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty he was accused of betraying the revolution.

A few years later when the Bolsheviks inaugurated what was known as the New Economic Policy and granted certain concessions to foreign enterprises they were again accused of betraying the revolution.

Since many of our readers may not remember these periods of Soviet existence, let us quote a few interesting comments that typify the observations of the world press of the period 1922-23.

On April 22, 1922, the *Leipziger-Volkzeitung*, one of the most popular Socialist papers in Europe, carried a leading article under the head: "Lenin—the Anti-Bolshevik." This

article, speaking of the New Economic Policy, said:

> ". . . any person with even an elementary knowledge of the laws of economic and social evolution knew from the outset that the Bolsheviki . . . were foredoomed to failure (sic!) . . . above all in a country where the peasants form more than 90 per cent of the population."

And then came the following "prophetic" conclusion:

> "Precisely in the measure that capitalism is restored will the declamatory Bolsheviki vanish from the political stage; or else they will become converted, as is very probable, into enthusiastic eulogists of the capitalist system."

But not only to these Social-Democrats did the New Economic Policy appear as a betrayal of communism and a return to capitalism. A year later an editorial, appearing in *Current Opinion,* a popular American magazine of that day, stated:

> "They [the Bolsheviks—G.G.] had to choose between communism and their jobs, and they clung to their jobs and *chucked communism out the window.*" (My emphasis—G.G.)

Those were the days in which Herbert Hoover, the "great engineer," said: "Soviet Russia is an economic vacuum," and in January, 1923, the bourgeois historian Hendrick Van Loon declared, "Bolshevism is completely dead."

Where are all these "prophecies" today? Despite these Jeremiahs of despair the Soviet Union has marched consistently forward towards a classless society, towards communism. Since the days of the New Economic Policy, the Soviet Union has increased its national income by more than 300 per cent; established the seven-hour day for its

workers and year by year improved the material and cultural standards of its people. From the most backward country it has transformed itself into the first industrial power on that continent and the second industrial nation in the world. Its industrial production is approximately ten times that of 1913 and in five years hence will equal that of the United States. The socialist system of planned economy has abolished economic crises and recessions and with them unemployment and insecurity. Health facilities have been increased by 5,000 per cent. In twenty years of Soviet power more schools were built than in two hundred years of tsarist rule. Students have increased by 370 per cent; illiteracy has been done away with and universal compulsory education established. National and racial inequality is no more and fifty nations of peoples live and work harmoniously together. Today there are one hundred and eighty million people within the borders of the U.S.S.R. but *not one* capitalist, *not one* landlord.

This is how the Bolsheviks "chucked communism out of the window," this is how the Bolsheviks "were foredoomed to failure," this is how "Bolshevism is completely dead!"

Yes, poor Hearst is right, all of his hopes pertaining to the Soviet Union have been completely shattered. This is what happens to all men who indulge in wishful thinking.

Of course, the great world-shaking achievements of the first land of socialism are not to the liking of Mr. Hearst and the other gentlemen of the "free press." But they are to the liking of the one hundred and eighty million people who inhabit the territories of the Soviet Union. But after

all, of what importance to these gentlemen are the lives of a mere one hundred and eighty million *common* people as compared to those of a few hundred grafters, wreckers, traitors and spies, who have received their just deserts? How can the U.S.S.R. be of any good when grafters and thieves are thrown in jail? How terrible it would be for Mr. Hearst if such "undemocratic" procedure were adopted here.

II. The Soviet Purge and Its Lessons

ENEMY FIGHTS TO BITTER END

SOME people who consider themselves friends of the Soviet Union have been somewhat disturbed by the stories that have appeared in the capitalist press on the recent purge of spies, wreckers and traitors. They are disturbed by what they consider to be the large number of people involved and by the fact that some of these were in responsible posts.

What these people fail to see is, first, the tremendous problems and difficulties connected with the task of building socialism in *one* country surrounded by a hostile capitalist world; and, second, the significance of the rise of fascism as a world force and the resulting explosive state of the world today.

It would indeed be fine if no one opposed the struggle for socialism, or if the bourgeoisie obliged us and admitted defeat as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, or if it at least agreed to live up to certain rules and promised not to hit below the belt.

But the ruling classes no matter how old and decrepit never abdicate willingly. They struggle to their last gasp of breath. The more hopeless their cause the more vicious

their methods. Rules never were lived up to in any war, least of all in this, the war against those who are struggling to end exploitation and exploiting classes forever. Those who fail to understand this simple truth live in a world of fantasy and not in this world of reality.

The fight for socialism is a bitter, hard struggle conducted over a long period of time and fought under diverse forms in accordance with changing conditions and circumstances. Lenin constantly emphasized that "the socialist revolution is not one single act, not one single battle on a single front, but a whole epoch of intensified class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts."

Our study of history in general and of previous revolutions in particular bear this out. The French bourgeois revolution was fought over a number of decades. The American bourgeois revolution was fought against the British Tories in 1776. Britain did not, however, give up its hope of American domination until she was defeated thirty-six years later, in the war of 1812. The second phase of the American revolution was fought against the slave-holders eighty-five years after the battle of Bunker Hill in the form of the American Civil War.

Twenty years ago the working people of the Soviet Union took power. They succeeded in driving the last of the foreign imperialist armies from their country in 1920-21, but since then the struggle has continued under new conditions and through new forms and will not completely abate until socialism is victorious throughout the world.

Let us take the question of wrecking and spying activities. Any worker who has been employed in industry for any

length of time, especially basic industry, knows that company stool-pigeons are active day in and day out spying on militant workers and trying to break up union organization. The LaFollette Committee set up by the U. S. Senate last year uncovered thousands of company spies at work in the factories of the country. The large corporations spend millions of dollars every year for such underhand activities. If this is true at a time when workers are only beginning to organize, when they are only asking for higher wages and shorter hours, how much more vicious will the methods of the employing class be when faced with a class-conscious working class fighting to abolish the profit system as such?

Is it surprising therefore that the enemies of the Soviet Union finance nests of spies and wreckers within its borders? Nor are such activities a new discovery. They have existed from the very birth of the Soviet Union. The recent trials were not the first ones. In 1928 there was the Shakhty trial; in 1930 the Menshevik trial; in 1933 the Metro-Vickers trial. These were also trials of wreckers and spies.

THE ENEMY AT HOME

From what social classes and groups were spies and wreckers recruited and how was it possible for them to carry on their nefarious activities?

In the *first* place, it must be remembered that the Russian working class established its government in a country in which the landlord and capitalist classes had jointly held power for generations. It took power in a country twice the size of the United States and forty times the size of Ger-

many. It took power in a peasant country of widespread superstition and illiteracy, of economic and cultural backwardness; a country whose whole economic life was in a state of paralysis as a result of three years of imperialist war followed by three more years of civil war.

Faced with this reality the Bolsheviks realized that they could only build the new order by utilizing certain elements of the old. If industry were to get back on its feet, if it were to be reconstructed on a socialist basis, engineers and technicians were needed. In their majority these were hostile or unfriendly to the new government. If the country were to defend itself against the foreign armies invading its soil, men with a knowledge of military science were also necessary. Many of these likewise had no love or sympathy for socialism. But Lenin and the Party knew that large numbers of these would have to be used if the country were to be reconstructed, if the conditions of the people were to be improved, if the enemy were to be defeated.

It was this realistic appraisal of the situation which gave birth to what seemed like a peculiar form of organization. This was best expressed in the army set-up. Besides military commanders the government established a new category: political commanders. Many of the military commanders came from the old army and were non-Communists. *All* of the political commanders were Communists. A military commander could issue no orders without having them countersigned by his political commander. In this fashion the government guaranteed that the army would remain true to its working class principles and at the same time utilize people with a greater knowledge of military strategy

and tactics. A similar form of leadership developed in industry as well.

Of course, many of these individuals of the old regime were in time won heart and soul for the cause of socialism. Others, however, while professing loyalty in words, tried to use their posts of responsibility to hinder and obstruct the will of the people. The government tried to combat these activities but had no alternative other than to use even unreliable and untrustworthy people.

Today this is no longer necessary. A generation of engineers and technicians trained in modern technical science and imbued with socialist teachings has grown up. The Soviet Union is strong enough to weed out all wreckers and saboteurs.

FOREIGN AGENTS

The *second* factor to be considered is the intense activity of foreign espionage services, penetrating the Soviet Union with their spies and agents. It is estimated that during the last war 40,000 foreign agents were active in espionage and sabotage. Nevertheless, even people who know this express surprise when told that large numbers of foreign spies are at work within the Soviet Union. These people do not give sufficient thought to the present state of the world. They especially fail to understand the significance of the alliance of the fascist powers under the leadership of Hitler Germany. If Hitler is preparing for world war, if he wants to conquer the rich Ukraine, the bread-basket of the Soviet Union, if he openly proclaims that his task is to save Europe

from Bolshevism, will he not do all in his power to penetrate the U.S.S.R. in order to weaken it from within? If the German Kaiser sent thousands of spies into France and Great Britain before the last war, is Hitler not doing the same thing on an even larger scale in connection with the Soviet Union? If the Nazis organized the assassination of Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, will they hesitate to organize attempts to assassinate Stalin and other Soviet leaders? To think otherwise is grossly to misunderstand the character and role of fascism today and its hatred towards the land of socialism.

While the fascist powers have organized their espionage on a scale unheard of before, *all* capitalist nations conduct espionage to one degree or another. They spy upon one another and of course upon the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union the agents of the fascist powers not only try to discover military secrets, the location of important plants and railroads, new technical inventions, etc., but try to make contact with the remnants of the old ruling classes, try to turn weak elements into their tools and try to organize terrorist and wrecking activities.

FASCIST SPIES IN THE U.S.A.

Let no one think that these fascist spying and wrecking activities are not also going on in the United States and other democratic countries. As this pamphlet is being written the papers are filled with sensational stories of a German spy ring operating in the United States. These spies were working to obtain military secrets as well as false passports

to be used to send German spies into Russia posing as American citizens. A few weeks ago the French police uncovered a fascist terrorist organization called the "Cagoulards" or "Hooded Men." This organization had nests of arms hidden all over France, received from Germany and Italy.

Why are the fascists at work in the democratic countries? Because they realize that their plans for increased aggression and world domination cannot succeed unless the democratic powers are kept in a state of impotence. Once the democratic powers unite and call the bluff of fascism its doom is sealed. That is why the Nazis at their Nuremberg Congress declared that all Germans in foreign lands were to be considered as "German cultural representatives" and were responsible only to Hitler for their actions. They even went so far as to ask that the spokesmen for these "cultural representatives" should be given a special diplomatic status in each country. This means that the German foreign office is attempting to regiment the millions of German immigrants in this and other countries into their special espionage service. The bloc of aggression which goes under the name of the "Anti-Comintern Bloc" is not directed solely against the Soviet Union. This bloc is directed against all democratic countries and functions as the clearing house for international fascist espionage.

It goes without saying that these fascist spies are trying to worm their way into all progressive organizations, especially those of the working class. A few months ago we saw an example of how they are trying to spy on the Communist Party. The brother of Victor McLaglen, the movie star, was

arrested in Hollywood on a charge of extortion. When questioned in jail as to his income and employment he admitted that he was receiving money from both the German and British Consulates in order to spy on the Communist Party. Nor will these spies in the United States hesitate to organize terrorist acts when they feel such are necessary to break up the growing democratic movement, unless weeded out before then.

MEANS OF PENETRATION

The fascist powers have used numerous means by which to penetrate the Soviet Union. During the period of the First and Second Five-Year Plans, they utilized the circumstance that the Soviet Union was dependent upon the capitalist world for technical assistance. Thousands of German, British, American and other engineers were hired by the Soviet Union to aid it in building a modern industry. Not only engineers, but thousands upon thousands of skilled workers during the last economic crisis migrated to the Soviet Union from dozens of foreign countries. The Soviet masses had not yet mastered technique. They needed outside assistance. The enemies of the Soviet Union did not hesitate to use this opportunity in order to send spies and wreckers.

Large numbers of spies also sneaked across the borders into the U.S.S.R., borders, which are immense, and large sections of which are uninhabited. The total length of Soviet borders equals 40,300 miles. This is more than forty times the distance between New York City and Chicago

and more than thirteen times the distance between New York City and San Francisco!

In choosing agents who could camouflage themselves as Soviet citizens the enemy also had little difficulty. One must remember that tens of thousands of Russian aristocrats, capitalists and landlords fled from the country after the victory of the revolution. In 1921 Lenin had the following to say about these emigres:

> "There is not a country in Europe now in which there are no White Guard elements. It is calculated that there are about 700,000 Russian emigres abroad. These are fugitive capitalists and the mass of officials and office workers who could not adapt themselves to Soviet rule. We do not see this third force. It emigrated abroad. But it lives and operates in alliance with the capitalists of the whole world, who are assisting it. . . . We must know our enemy. He is not so conspicuous now that he has emigrated. But, see, he has not moved very far away, only a few thousand versts at most; having moved that distance, he went into concealment. He is intact, he is alive, he is waiting. That is why we must watch him closely, the more so that we are dealing not only with refugees. No, *we are dealing with the direct coadjutors of world capital, maintained by it and operating in conjunction with it.*" * (My emphasis—G.G.)

Numbers of these White Guards have been used as agents of foreign powers against their own country!

For those who may be skeptical as to whether spies can get into a country illegally let them remember that the United States, which is separated from the most populated regions of the earth by two oceans, has tens of thousands of immigrants who came into the country illegally since the war.

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* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. IX, p. 143.

The right of political asylum granted by the Soviet Union to the victims of class oppression in the capitalist world was another medium utilized by the fascist powers in order to penetrate the Soviet Union. Thousands of victims of fascist, capitalist and colonial terror have found refuge in the land of the Soviets. But among these honest class fighters there were also some who had been planted by the enemy for the specific purpose of getting them into the Soviet Union.

Let me cite an example with which I am personally familiar. Some years ago a "revolutionist" escaped from a Polish jail and was given asylum in the Soviet Union. Here he was treated as a class hero, was given schooling, training and responsibility. Later it was discovered that this individual was a Polish spy. The Polish police had assigned him to enter the working class movement of Poland; had organized his arrest and conviction and had prepared his "escape," all with the original objective of planting him as their agent. In this manner hundreds of enemies came into the U.S.S.R. masked as "friends."

Such are the dastardly methods used by world fascism.

FAIR WEATHER FRIENDS

But some may say, "All that you say is very true, but it still doesn't explain how people who were active members of the Communist Party could be involved in such anti-Soviet activities." This is precisely the point we wish to cover next.

When the locomotive of history makes a sharp and dan-

gerous curve those aboard who are unprepared get jostled from their seats while others who become panic-stricken jump. The history of the Soviet Union provides plentiful examples of people who were jostled and people who jumped.

Thomas Paine during the American Revolution used all of his literary power to castigate those whom he aptly termed "fair weather friends and summer patriots." Every revolution has its fair weather friends who become its bad weather foes. The same holds true for the Russian Revolution.

Speaking of this in his book *The October Revolution*, Stalin said:

> "In general I must state that during a victorious uprising, when the enemy is isolated and the rebellion is spreading it is not difficult to fight well. In such moments even backward people become heroes. However, the struggle of the proletariat is not a solid advance, a solid series of successes. The struggle of the proletariat has also its trials, its reverses. Not he who displays courage in the period of a victorious uprising is a genuine revolutionary, but he who, while being able to fight well during the victorious advance of the revolution, is also able to display courage during the period when the revolution is in retreat, when the proletariat is defeated; who does not lose his head and flinch when the revolution meets setbacks, when the enemy gains successes; who does not become panic-stricken and seized with despair during the period when the revolution is in retreat."

The Soviet Union has faced a number of critical periods in which people were badly jostled and in which some jumped. Let me discuss two of these periods.

The first I wish to discuss is that of 1923-27. This was the period in which the New Economic Policy was in full

swing, the period in which industry and agriculture were slowly getting back on their feet. It was also the period in which the capitalist sector of the national economy was growing at a far more rapid rate than the socialist sector. Merchants and businessmen were conducting a flourishing business; certain enterprises had been leased out to foreign companies; the rich peasants (kulaks) were getting richer.

In the rest of the world the revolutionary upheavals that followed upon the wake of the war had subsided. The working class movements in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Finland, etc., were definitely, even though temporarily, defeated in their struggle for governmental power. World capitalism was once again establishing a certain stability even though of a weak and transitory character.

It was in this situation that a group of people became panic-stricken. Underestimating the strength and unity of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, they saw only the defeat of the working class movements of Western Europe, the power of world capitalism and the increasing strength of the capitalist and kulak elements within the Soviet Union. As far as they were concerned there was no hope for the only land of working class rule. This was most clearly expressed by Judas Trotsky, when he wrote:

> "Without direct state support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain power and transform their temporary rule into a long enduring socialist dictatorship. *One cannot doubt this for a moment.*" (My emphasis —G.G.)

But the lion-hearted Bolshevik Party led by Stalin did doubt this and for more than a moment. Knowing that

working class victories in Western Europe could not be manufactured artificially; that for the time being, at least, they could not expect the "state support" of the European proletariat, they knew that the salvation of the Soviet Union rested primarily on their ability to build socialism in this one country, to transform this most backward country into a land of modern industry.

At the time this seemed like a wild dream. But the Party had faith in the power of the working people. It knew that before long the capitalist world would once again try to destroy it through armed intervention. Every day, every month, every year counted. If it could build a powerful modern industry, it could equip its army with the necessary means of defense; it could improve the material and cultural standards of the masses; it could provide the tractors and machinery necessary for large-scale farming based on collective labor; it could, in short, draw all the workers and peasants into the work of socialist construction and bring about the gradual liquidation of classes. It could do all these in one country because this particular country covered one-sixth the surface of the globe, had adequate natural resources and had the good will and support of the working people of the whole world.

After a few years the country embarked on its first Five-Year Plan and the period of the New Economic Policy came to a close. It became clear that the policy of the Bolshevik Party had proven correct. Socialism was marching on.

A second period in which panic developed was that of 1931-33. What was the situation then? In the Far East, Japan had already taken Manchuria and was organizing

provocation after provocation on the Soviet border. In the Soviet Union itself the struggle for collectivization had not yet been won. This struggle was raging from one end of the country to the other. The kulaks were resisting to the bitter end, they were destroying crops, murdering government officials and collective farm heads, slaughtering cattle and in every other respect trying to bring the government to its knees. In the Ukraine the harvest was a failure and grain had to be imported from other regions. At the same time, in January, 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany. These three combined factors created vacillations and doubts once more. Once again a number of people lost confidence and faith.

Hitler's rise to power had come as a tremendous shock. The German working class movement had been stronger than that of any other capitalist country. The Communist Party of Germany had a following of from five to six million. The German government had maintained friendly relations with the Soviet Union. In fact, at that time it was British and French imperialism which were leading the anti-Soviet forces of Europe. Hitler's program for expansion at the expense of the East was already known through his book *Mein Kampf* and through his many speeches. It appeared—to the Trotskyists and Bukharinists—that the victory of Hitler spelled the inevitable doom of the Soviet Union. As the defendants at the Moscow Trials testified, this was the period in which they once again undertook their anti-Party and anti-Soviet activity.

Having no program of their own which they could defend before the masses, feeling that war was only a matter

of time and the defeat of the Soviet Union inevitable, these people soon became linked with foreign agents and spies and together with them took the road of assassination and wrecking activities. Why did this become their logical program? First, because they had no other means of fighting the government and the Party which enjoyed the confidence and support of the people; and, second, because they had come to an agreement with the fascist powers to work for the military defeat of the Soviet Union.

These examples are not the first or last betrayals in history. Great social upheavals produce not only their heroes but also their cowards; not only their martyrs but also their traitors. Benedict Arnold was the outstanding traitor in American history. Aaron Burr during his term as Vice-President of the United States had connived with a foreign power to establish a separate republic in what is today the western area of the United States. Calles, the founder of the National Revolutionary Party of Mexico, is today an exile from his country, a fascist organizer of counter-revolution, despised and hated by all lovers of Mexican independence and freedom. Before the war, Mussolini was a "Socialist." Jacques Doriot, who was expelled from the Communist Party of France in 1933 as an unprincipled adventurer and who was greeted with open arms by Trotsky, is today the leader of the French fascists. Such are examples that could be multiplied endlessly.

Every great movement of history draws to itself not only millions of loyal devoted fighters, but also certain individuals who because of personal ambition or romantic or adventurist notions are attracted to it. When moments of

great stress arise, these individuals scurry away like rats from a sinking ship.

There is one thing, however, to say for the average rat. He doesn't rationalize his actions by lofty and high-sounding phrases. He doesn't try to fool himself into believing that his cowardice is really heroism. Some people are different. They can rationalize their most dastardly acts—to soothe their own conscience, to fool their more gullible followers, or to serve better the interests of their masters. Thus it is even possible that some of these Soviet traitors rationalized their agreement with the fascists as a way of saving something (for themselves!) from what they called the "terrible policy of Stalin."

But we are not concerned with the subjective mental processes of corrupt individuals and criminals against the world toilers. We are only concerned with the objective political results of their actions. The actions of these individuals can only be judged by the working class today and history tomorrow as the actions of traitors to socialism and agents of fascism.

"TOO HARSH"

Frequently people who cannot help but admit the guilt of the defendants in the Soviet trials accuse the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of being responsible in the last analysis for this guilt. They say: "The Party was too harsh with these people; it drove them to their crimes." This is the typical kind of defense put up by a criminal lawyer. He says: "Your Honor, the defendant is not respon-

sible for the crime he committed. This responsibility rests with the victim. My client wished to rob but when resisted had no other alternative than to shoot."

If there is any criticism to be made of the Party it ought to come from the other direction—it didn't apprehend the thief soon enough! Time after time these people had shown their stubborn opposition to the Party and the government. The Party had to fight them at every crucial turn of the road. And yet they were kept in responsible posts; the Party did all in its power to save them.

The main criticism to be made of the Party is the one it made of itself, namely, that many comrades had relaxed their vigilance, had forgotten the capitalist encirclement, had made the error of believing the enemy no longer dangerous.

If those who speak of "harshness" do so because they object to the decisive manner in which the Party carries out its tasks, the determination with which it struggles for each of its objectives, then we can only say that in our estimation these characteristics should not be criticized but praised and emulated. Where would the Soviet Union be today if it had not energetically and decisively taken the road to industrialization and collectivization? If any hesitation had been tolerated, if these plans had not been fulfilled, the Soviet Union would by this time be torn apart by its foes no less than is China today. And if the Soviet Union today is not only strong enough to defend itself, but also strong enough to give aid to the struggling people of Spain and China, thanks are due to the correct policy of the Communist Party and its leader, Comrade Stalin.

At this present juncture of world affairs it becomes more necessary than ever to weed out all spies, wreckers and traitors. Fascism drives ever onward towards a new world war. The time has come to clear the decks for action. By cleansing itself of these enemies the Soviet Union has delivered another important blow against the fascist war-makers. By its decisive actions the Soviet Union has once again served the interests of world peace.

SOVIET MISTAKES

Does this mean that the Soviet Union and its leadership have not made and do not make mistakes? Not at all. Our spirited defense of the Soviet Union, its policies and practices, does not imply any such opinion. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the very first to recognize its errors and mistakes. Publicly before the country and world it takes the necessary steps to correct these. But those who distort and exaggerate shortcomings, who see only mistakes, are like the old man who year after year refuses to recognize the automobile as an important modern means of conveyance superior to the horse and buggy merely because he has heard of flat tires.

Lenin, in his *Letter to the American Workers,* written on August 20, 1918, said in regards to Soviet mistakes:

> "For every hundred mistakes of ours heralded to the world by the bourgeoisie and its lackeys there are 10,000 great and heroic deeds, the greater and the more heroic for their simplicity, for their being unseen and hidden in the everyday life of an industrial quarter or provincial village, performed by men who are not used to herald their achievements to the world.

"But even if the contrary were true—although I know this supposition to be incorrect—even if there were 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions of ours, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history,* because, *for the first time* not the minority, not only the rich, not only the educated, but the real masses, the vast majority of toilers are *themselves* building a new life, are deciding *by their own experiences* the most difficult problems of socialist organization.

"Each mistake in such a work, in this most honest and sincere work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants for the reorganization of their whole life, each such mistake is worth thousands and millions of 'faultless' successes of the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the toilers. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build a new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only thus will they blaze a new trail—through thousands of obstacles—to a victorious socialism." *

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY

Those who in the name of humanitarian sentiments criticize the Soviet Union really suffer from a lack of *true* love of humanity.

When in Spain last summer, I heard an interesting conversation between a Spanish young Socialist and a delegate from the Young Socialist International visiting that country. This delegate, surprised by the great love shown towards the Soviet Union throughout Spain, asked the Spanish comrade the following question: "How can you speak so highly of the Soviet Union when it has just executed eight generals?" The Spanish comrade answered as follows:

* V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers,* International Publishers, New York.

"Well, comrade, by this time you should know that we are having a bit of trouble with a few disloyal generals of our own. If we had acted more decisively towards these traitors in the days prior to July, 1936, it is possible that we could have saved our people from this ghastly war and thus also a few hundred thousand innocent lives."

Let those who bemoan the fate of a few scoundrels turn their thoughts to the fate of the millions.

All over the world these Trotskyite traitors have become the scavengers of the class struggle. They scour the battlefields of the class war, feeding themselves on every temporary defeat, on every setback of the working class and the progressive movement. Their hatred towards the Soviet Union, towards the Communist movement, towards the growing unity of the progressive forces knows no bounds. In Spain they are the agents of Franco. In China they are the agents of Japan. In the United States they are the enemies of the labor and progressive movement. Behind ultra-radical phrases they work to achieve the aim of the fascist powers, to keep America from becoming a force for world peace, a force against fascist aggression.

At a time when the camp of reaction is trying to destroy the great C.I.O. movement by the old Red-baiting trick, the Trotskyites (exemplified by Stolberg) once again do the bidding of their master and shout: "The C.I.O. is Communist." No wonder Tom Girdler, the man responsible for the massacre of ten striking steel workers last May 30, quotes his pal Mr. Stolberg to justify his actions against the labor movement. And likewise, it is not surprising that the leaders of the C.I.O., such as John Brophy, have cor-

rectly characterized Mr. Stolberg as "Stool-berg" and Heywood Broun has called him "parlor-fink." The leaders of the progressive labor movement of this country are beginning to realize that the fight against the Trotskyites cannot be limited to the Communist movement but is a most important task before all progressive forces.

In the United States as well as in the Soviet Union, Spain and China, one cannot fight fascism without also fighting Trotskyism. They are two sides of the same coin.

LENINISM LIVES ON

The powers that be have always expressed their fear of, and opposition to, the struggles of the toiling millions for a better life by venting their undying hatred and spleen against the accepted leaders of these oppressed classes. John L. Lewis was called a "gentleman" and "honest labor leader" until he broke from the reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. and began to lead the movement of the unorganized millions for higher wages, shorter hours and union recognition. Today Lewis is called a "dictator" and described as "an ambitious and unscrupulous man mad for power."

But John L. Lewis wants merely to improve the lot of labor within the framework of capitalist society. He does not have as his aim the replacement of the capitalist system by a socialist one. Therefore the calumny showered on his head is nothing in comparison with that heaped on the heads of the great *revolutionary* leaders of the working class. Marx, the greatest mind of his epoch, was feared,

whether it is to move forward and onward towards greater democracy—socialism—or be forced backward towards greater oppression and war as a result of fascism.

Stalin, as an individual, represents to us devotion to principle, firmness of purpose, love of the masses, ability to learn from the masses, simplicity and modesty.

There are those who object to our praise of Stalin. They are afraid that such praise signifies slavish allegiance to an individual. They are affected by the Trotskyist charge that Stalin is a "dictator." They say: "It is bad to play up individuals. We are not interested in individuals but only in movements." Of course, these people either do not know or forget that as early as 1904 Trotsky used the same slanderous charge against Lenin, saying that "Lenin is candidate for the post of dictator of the Russian working class movement." They forget that the charge of "dictator" is also leveled by the reactionaries against President Roosevelt.

Is it surprising that the masses in the Soviet Union and millions of toilers throughout the world love Stalin? These know under what difficulties the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was able to wrest victory from defeat. They know that the victories of the U.S.S.R. cannot be separated from the struggle over policies, from the decisive and firm leadership shown by Stalin as the head of the Party.

We do not agree with the "great man" theory of history as enunciated by Thomas Carlyle. But we also do not take a negative attitude towards the role of individuals in history.

We know that men have something to do with the mak-

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ing of history, that men are made by the periods in which they live, but men also influence and change these periods. As Marx said: "Man makes his own history, but not out of the whole cloth." Every period of human history is personified by those men who best represent and express the interests and struggles of that period. If you go through history you will find it impossible to speak of certain periods and struggles without also speaking of certain individuals.

Those who adopt a negative attitude towards the role of individuals only vulgarize the materialist conception of history.

To show to what extent this goes, let me give an example. When in Chicago a short while ago one person asked me the question: "Why is the new Soviet Constitution called the Stalin Constitution?" I answered by asking: "Why is the Labor Relations Act called the Wagner Act?" Why is the theory of modern scientific socialism called Marxism?" "Why is the New Deal called the Roosevelt New Deal?" Anyone who is ready to admit the role of the above individuals, for which they have since been given credit, should likewise be ready to admit the role that Stalin plays in making possible the new Soviet Constitution and the great achievements of socialist construction.

* * *

WE HAVE shown how the recent charges hurled against the Soviet Union, like those of the past, have little foundation in fact and flow from an attempt on the part of its sworn foes to hide the truth from the people of the world.

But the truth crushed to earth still remains the truth. It is rising again, more powerful than ever, to confront its assassins with their own travesties, to haunt them with the ever greater might of the first workers' republic.

The toiling millions of the world will support and defend the Soviet Union. Let the fascists and their agents beware. Let them know that nothing can separate the working people of the world from their Soviet brothers.

Thomas Paine, one of the greatest figures in the American Revolution and American history, estimating the international significance of the American struggle of 1776, spoke the following words:

> "From a small spark kindled in America, a flame has arisen not to be extinguished."

Tom Paine was correct. From that small spark a great liberating flame spread throughout the world, the flame of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Today we can paraphrase Tom Paine. We can say: "From a small spark kindled in old Russia, a flame has arisen not to be extinguished"—the flame of victorious socialism. We can say this with even more right than Tom Paine because the Russian Revolution ushered in a new day for humanity, showing the way to end class oppression and exploitation forever. The Soviet Union has been, and remains our inspiration and guide and shall continue to receive our undivided affection and love.

The Soviet Union represents the bright hope and glorious future of mankind!

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