

LENINISM AND SOME PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD

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As THE WORLD goes into the postwar period, it is confronted with the most complicated and difficult problems in all its history. These are national and international in scope, and are economic, political, and social in character. The only way these problems can be understood and the road found to their solution is on the basis of Leninism, which is the Marxism of the epoch of monopoly capitalism. There are those who consider Leninism as solely applicable to immediate revolutionary situations. But this is a gross error. Leninism comprehends all the problems of this whole epoch of monopoly capitalism, including those in periods of slow revolutionary development, as well as those in periods of stormy, revolutionary advance. There are others who try to limit the application of Leninism to the Soviet scene, but this, too, is a crude misconception. Leninism is worldwide in its application. It is the key to an understand-

ing of all countries, in every stage of economic and political development.

In view of the tremendous role now being played by the United States in the world, it is especially important that Americans, particularly the workers, should secure a solid grasp of the scientific principles of Leninism. For only in this way can they truly understand the complex problems increasingly facing them and know what to do about them.

THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

One of the major necessities of the American labor movement now is to understand that the United States, with its present economic and political set-up, is an imperialist country. It has need to master the great lessons of Lenin in regard to this matter. As it is, however, in labor and liberal ranks the opinion is generally held that the United States is not imperialist. Great Britain, France, Holland—these are admittedly imperialist countries, but not the United States. This erroneous distinction is made on the false grounds that Great Britain, France, and Holland, having colonies, are therefore imperialist in character, whereas the United States, with no extensive colonial system, is consequently not an imperialist power.

On the basis of this incorrect estimate, the United States is pictured as a sort of Sir Galahad among the

nations; as a country which has no ulterior designs upon other peoples, and which follows a foreign policy dictated by high principles of altruism. President Truman, in his Navy Day speech, expressed this idea graphically in his demand that the world should recognize the United States as the sole trustee for the atom bomb secret. Such absurd conceptions of the supposedly unselfish international role of capitalist United States are, of course, highly advantageous to the American imperialists, serving most conveniently as a smokescreen to cover up their reactionary maneuverings. How deeply ingrained this notion of the unselfishness of American motives in foreign affairs has become is well illustrated by the fact that with the United States now definitely making a bid for world imperialist hegemony there are hardly any voices outside of the ranks of the Communist Party that signalize this gross manifestation of imperialism for what it is.

Lenin, in his book *Imperialism*, proved that the United States is an imperialist country. The consolidation of gigantic monopolies, the growth of great banks, the merging of banking and industrial capital under the hegemony of finance capital, the export of capital to other lands, the allocation of the world market through cartels and similar devices, and the territorial division of the world among the great powers — which Lenin analyzed as the basic

features of "Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism,"—are all fully characteristic of the United States.

Regarding the last point in this analysis, the territorial division of the world, the United States is of course not a colonial power to the same extent as Great Britain and France are. But this does not signify that it is not an imperialist country. It has its own methods of dominating and exploiting other peoples, without actively occupying their territories. It secures such imperialist domination quite effectively by its tremendous economic power, by the weight of its great military force, by its occupation of key bases all over the world, by the aggressiveness of its foreign policies. All of Lenin's principles of imperialism are valid with regard to the United States.

During the war years the most basic elements underlying imperialism, the great industrial and financial monopolies, were enormously strengthened in the United States. Hence, once the war had ended and the fascist Axis had collapsed under the blows of the United Nations coalition, it was only to be expected that the United States would attempt to strengthen its international position at the expense of the other peoples of the world. This it is now doing vigorously. American imperialism, with so much of the world lying in ruins, has set for itself the objective of international domination.

American labor must understand

this question of imperialism. It must free itself from capitalist-propagated illusions. It must learn that the United States is not only an imperialist country, but the most powerful imperialist country in the world, and that its foreign policy of American expansion is full of danger to world peace, freedom, and prosperity. Labor must also learn that American imperialism, which proceeded even under the checks of the liberal Roosevelt regime, is more militant and dangerous under Truman, and that under a regime dominated by Hoover, Vandenberg, Dewey, etc., it would quickly create a fascist war threat throughout the world. It is impossible for the labor movement of this country to combat successfully the reactionary foreign and domestic policies of American monopoly capital unless it understands the principles underlying imperialism. For such an understanding a knowledge of the writings of Lenin is indispensable. Lenin's great book, *Imperialism*, has a most vital lesson for American workers here and now, and it should be read by every man or woman who presumes to advise the workers and to tell the American people what course they should follow in these stormy days.

THE DEMOCRATIC COALITION

Another basic phase of Leninism that is of profound significance in the present situation, both on a national and international scale, is the

building of a system of alliances between labor and its natural allies. Lenin was the great theorizer and organizer of such alliances. To develop these alliances in national and international democratic coalitions is a fundamental condition for defeating the forces of reaction and for winning the peace in the fullest sense of the word.

The key achievement in Lenin's revolutionary strategy in old Russia and later in the U.S.S.R. was the establishment of a working alliance between the proletariat and the poor and middle masses of the peasantry. Rejecting, on the one hand, the Social-Democratic and Trotskyite contentions that the peasants as a mass were reactionary, and repudiating, on the other hand, the Populist argument that the peasants alone were revolutionary, Lenin found the way to link workers and peasants together under the leadership of the proletariat. This great combination of toilers in the factories and on the land, which has been further developed with consummate skill by Stalin, not only assured the overthrow of the Czarist-capitalist system, but was also the basis for the building of Socialism and the carrying through to victory of the recent war. To maintain this worker-peasant alliance, which carried in its train all other constructive social forces, required masterly political ability. At every stage the success of the Russian revolution depended upon it.

In this same category is the close working together of the different peoples who make up the Soviet nations, in the development of which Stalin played the decisive role. On the international scale Lenin also applied his strategy of class and national alliances, with his grand conception of the world proletariat, the Socialist sector of the world, and the colonial peoples working jointly for the accomplishment of their constructive goals.

Lenin's general conception of working class alliances with other progressive forces in society has complete validity today in the United States, even though, of course, such a labor-democratic coalition in this country at this time does not have the revolutionary objectives of Lenin's great worker-peasant combination in the U.S.S.R. For, as stated before, Lenin's class strategy applies, not only to revolutionary crises, but to this whole epoch of monopoly capitalism and in all countries.

The situation in the United States sharply demands the application of this general Leninist strategy of class alliances. We had the elements of such a labor-democratic coalition under Roosevelt, although Truman, with his turn to the right, is tending to break up the coalition. In building the labor-democratic coalition, which must be carried beyond anything known in Roosevelt's time, two things are imperative: first, the workers should enter into organized coop-

eration with the poorer farmers, with the Negro people, with the progressive professionals and middle classes, with the bulk of the veterans, for joint political action against their common enemy, monopoly capital, and in such forms as to culminate eventually in a broad third party movement. Secondly, this great political combination must be led by the workers, by the trade unions.

The fate of our country, economically and politically, depends upon the building of this national coalition of the democratic elements of our people, which comprises the great majority of the nation and speaks in the interests of the whole people. The more familiar the workers are with the basic principles laid down by Lenin for such class alliances, the more effective they will be in building the national labor-democratic coalition.

Lenin's class strategy is, of course, fundamentally different from the traditional class collaboration of the Social-Democrats. The essence of Social-Democratic class collaboration is a subordination of the proletariat to the big bourgeoisie, with a consequent sacrifice of the workers' interests. The Leninist system of class alliances, on the contrary, organizes the workers and all other exploited and oppressed classes into a single front against the monopolist enemies of the people.

On the international field also a application of the fundamental Len

minist strategy of alliances and cooperation between the world working class and its various natural allies is now of the utmost importance. The great danger that the world faces comes from the reactionary maneuverings of the imperialists in the big capitalist countries, especially those in the United States. Unless checked and eventually defeated by democratic mass pressure, these imperialist forces would soon lead the world into a new bloodbath of fascism and war. If international peace and progress are to be maintained, therefore, it will be basically through the strength of the great democratic forces of the world—the U.S.S.R., the organized working class in the capitalist countries, the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the new democratic governments in various parts of the world. The heart of such a world collaboration must be a close working together between the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Already, although the war has been over but a few months, we have had a most instructive lesson in this general respect. Hardly had the firing ceased on the battlefields, than the United States embarked upon a bold and ruthless campaign to make imperialist influence predominant throughout the world. Phases of this American imperialist drive were the hazy attempt to frighten the world with the atomic bomb, armed intervention in China, one-power control

over Japan, reactionary interference with the new democracies in the Balkans, proposals for a gigantic military establishment in the United States, etc. But this drive of militant American imperialism suffered a serious check at the hands of the democratic forces of the world. Some manifestations of this opposition were the popular discontent in the United States, including the broad strike movement, widespread protest demonstrations by soldiers, etc., the spread of civil war in China, strong resistance in Europe against arbitrary American interference, a growth of anti-Yankee sentiment in Latin America, a sharpening of Anglo-American antagonisms, a refusal of the U.S.S.R. to be intimidated by the reactionaries' "get tough" policy, etc., etc. The general result of this world-wide resistance was that the Truman Administration definitely had to moderate, even if only temporarily, the speed and ruthlessness of its reckless imperialist policies.

This whole experience should teach the democratic forces everywhere that the future of the United Nations, and with it the peace of the world, will depend directly upon the initiative, cooperation, and foresight displayed by the world progressive forces against those powerful imperialist elements who would grab world domination for themselves and thereby again plunge the world into bloodshed and ruin. Especially is this Leninist lesson necessary in view

of prevalent illusions in our country to the effect that so-called progressive capitalists in the United States may be relied upon to lead the world to democratic objectives.

FOR A MASS SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally the bulk of the American workers have never looked beyond the framework of the capitalist system for the solution of their economic and political problems. But the time is now at hand when the toiling masses will have to begin to develop a Socialist outlook. Such a perspective is made necessary by the developing general breakdown of the world capitalist system, which has been greatly speeded up by World War II. This means that another fundamental of Marxism-Leninism, a mass perspective of Socialism, has now become a practical necessity for the American working class.

For the past 30 years the capitalist system in the United States, for all its seeming strength, has been exhibiting signs of the decay which, as Lenin pointed out, is the common characteristic of world capitalism in this, its final, imperialist stage. American capitalism is subject to the general laws of world capitalism, and it is obvious that the world system is now in grave difficulties. The inherent weakness of American capitalism, as part of the sick world capitalist system, is dramatized by the fact that during the whole past generation the

great industries of this country have largely depended upon artificial stimulation in order to keep going at anywhere near full strength. This stimulation has been in the shape of war orders, repairing war damages, and government subsidies of various kinds.

Thus, from 1914 to 1919, American industrial activity and development rested upon the production of war munitions for World War I. Then, in the period from 1920 to 1922, there was a sharp depression. This industrial breakdown was followed, in the years 1922 to 1929, by the great post-war "boom," a "boom" which was largely directed toward repairing the property damages and commodity shortages created by World War I. In October, 1929, however, when this great impetus had played out, American industry showed its inherent weakness by plunging into a tailspin such as the world had never before known. In the ensuing period, until early in 1934, unemployment in the United States reached the unheard-of figure of 17,000,000. From 1934 until 1939 industry absorbed some 30 billion dollars of government make-work subsidies; but even this big artificial stimulus could not revive it, and it lingered along in a chronic depression, about 10,000,000 workers being without jobs in this whole period. World War II, however, beginning late in 1939, gave industry another shot in the arm, and for the next six years, until the autumn of

1945, gigantic war orders kept the factory wheels turning and laid the basis for a mushroom growth of industry in this country. Now the war is finished and industry is counting upon continuing in operation, with a "boom" lasting for a period variously estimated at from three to five years, based upon the repairing of war damages and the overcoming of the commodity shortages caused by the war, after which, unless drastic measures are adopted, we can look for an economic smashup that will far exceed the holocaust of 1929-1934. This is the dubious record of American industry for the past generation.

The obvious fact taught by all these years of experience, of artificial "boom" and inevitable "bust" is that American industry, with all its supposed strength, cannot keep in anything approaching full operation without the stimulant of government orders, whether in the shape of direct subsidies, war munitions, or of war damage repair work. This lesson has not been lost upon the bulk of American workers. Through hard experience, they have learned the important lesson that so-called free enterprise cannot furnish them sufficient jobs, but must have the help of government intervention. This lesson actually constitutes a diminished mass faith in the capitalist system and is a political fact of major significance.

The workers have not yet, how-

ever, drawn Socialist conclusions from this loss of faith in "free enterprise." Nevertheless, they have come to understand that they must go into political action upon a mass scale if their economic interests are to be protected. They see as the central objectives of such political action: (a) the legal protection of the trade unions and collective bargaining; (b) the development of an elaborate system of social insurance against unemployment, etc., and (c) the carrying out of a government works program to furnish the jobs that they know so-called free enterprise cannot provide.

While the American labor movement has not become Socialist, it is, however, breaking with old political ideas. It has come to believe in New Dealism, which is based on the reformist principles of John Maynard Keynes, the British economist. The substance of Keynes' system of ideas is that by government make-work plans (together with social security and collective bargaining) the gap between the purchasing power and producing power of the workers can be overcome and industry kept in more or less full production. That is, by government assistance to "free enterprise," the breath of life can be breathed into the whole economic system, full employment can be achieved, economic crises overcome or minimized, and the ailing capitalist system put upon a working basis indefinitely.

President Roosevelt adopted the ideas of Keynes as the basis of his New Deal and, under his teaching and example, he induced the great mass of the trade unionists (as well as the liberals) in this country to accept the major principles of Keynes virtually as a new gospel. Henry Wallace, with his 60,000,000 job proposal, has taken up where Roosevelt left off, and President Truman also gives at least lip service to Keynes' ideas. Among those who are doing the principal theoretical work of this movement are Professor Alvin Hansen of Harvard and Stuart Chase, the popular writer on economics. Also the economic essence of Earl Browder's revisionism was that he gave up his erstwhile Marxism-Leninism, became a disciple of the bourgeois liberal reformer, Keynes, and tried even to outdo his teacher in bourgeois utopianism.

Organized labor can and should support many of the economic reforms and make-work projects of the New Dealers or Keynesians, such as Wallace's job program. Lenin long ago taught the workers to support reforms as by-products of the general class struggle. But, as Lenin also taught, the unions cannot, save at their peril, accept the general conclusions of these reformers that their proposals will put the capitalist system upon a healthy and progressive basis. Keynesian reforms, at most, can only lessen the effect of the economic evils of capitalism; they

cannot possibly arrest its fundamental degeneration. The New Deal reformers do not strike at the basic causes of the capitalist economic paralysis, and consequently, not at the wars and political reaction that flow from it. They do not challenge the right of the capitalists to own the basic industries; they do not attack the capitalist extraction of surplus value from the workers, which is the basic cause of capitalist economic collapse; they do not understand or draw the implications of the class struggle; they do not realize the necessity for the toiling masses and their allies to break the political power of the capitalists; they do not conduct an effective struggle against imperialism, the breeder of war; they have no sound economic or political perspective.

During the coming period, what with the economic ruin all over the world, the people of this country will be faced with far-reaching economic paralysis, on a national and on an international scale. The superficial reforms of the New Dealers or Keynesians cannot solve these basic problems, which grow out of the decay of the capitalist system. Only a working class imbued with the principles of Marxism-Leninism can possibly understand the complex character of the general issues presented by obsolete capitalism. Only a working class with a Socialist perspective will be able to work out the fundamental measures necessary to meet

the day-to-day economic and political problems of the people, and to give the masses a prospect of the real well-being that only Socialism can achieve.

For a long time now the question of a Socialist ideology for the American workers, particularly the trade union movement, has seemed a remote, if not an abstract matter. But now it is becoming more and more an immediate, bread-and-butter question. The capitalist system of the world is rotten at the core. That is the meaning of the two world wars, the Great Economic Crisis, and the growth of fascism with which the world has been afflicted—all in one generation. These economic and political catastrophes were the manifestations of a social system in decay. The complicated problems of this period of capitalist degeneration can be solved only by Marxist-Leninist thinkers, who understand the implications of this capitalist decay and who deal with the fundamental realities of our rapidly changing world. The Socialist education of the American labor movement, therefore, should be resumed energetically. For too many years has the ideology of the workers in our country been abandoned to the influence of the fallacies and superficialities of the reformists of various stripes.

BUILDING THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The fourth major phase of Lenin-

ism that needs stressing as an immediate necessity of the American working class is the earliest possible building of the Communist Party into a mass organization.

Lenin was the great theoretician, organizer and practical leader of the Communist movement. It was he above all other Communist leaders who explained the leading role of the Party as the Party of the working class, worked out its practical structure, and taught how it must function in action as the vanguard of the working class and the leader of all the progressive forces in the nation.

Ever since its foundation in 1919 our Party has been building upon the basis of the principles worked out by the great Lenin. The Party has made much progress. We now have a substantial organization, with a large mass following. Moreover, during its 26 years of life, the Party has played an honorable and effective role in every struggle of the workers and of the people as a whole. We Communists may well be proud of our Party's record during the past three tumultuous decades of our nation's life.

But the time has now arrived when the Communist Party must be expanded on a far larger scale. The workers, and the democratic masses generally, of this country are facing a whole series of urgent problems for whose democratic solution a strong Communist Party is indis-

pensable. In the foregoing pages a few of these problems have been listed, including the development of a mass understanding of American imperialism, the building of the great national and international democratic coalition, and the unfolding of a socialist perspective by the labor movement. With these specified major problems are connected, of course, a host of individual questions, such as the protection of the workers' living standards, the development of worker-veteran cooperation, the defense of the rights of the Negro people, etc. In the vast task of winning the peace, in consolidating the people's victory in the anti-fascist war, a strong Communist Party has become a question of immediate necessity.

One of the most pronounced international features of the war and immediate postwar situation is a big growth of the Communist movement. This is manifested in many countries: France, Poland, Italy, Yugoslavia, China, Indonesia, Indo-China, Brazil, the Balkan countries. The Party is also becoming a big factor in the defeated countries, Germany and Japan. Communists have been included in the governments of liberated countries all over Europe. This great growth in strength and prestige of the Communist Parties on a world scale is taking place because the peoples everywhere have seen the clearheadedness and dauntless courage of the Communists in the war

against fascism. Moreover, they also realize the need for Communist leadership in the solution of the complicated and difficult economic and political problems that loom ahead of them in the postwar period.

The United States does not live in a vacuum. The general forces that are making for a strong growth of the Communist Parties in many countries are also not without strength in this country. Of course, our situation is very different from that in France and China, and the problem of building the Communist Party here in the greatest imperialist country presents itself under radically different aspects than it does in other lands. But when we have said this we also have to come back to the basic fact that the United States is definitely a part of the world economic and political process. It, too, faces problems of major importance and complexity and, therefore, it also stands in need of a strong Communist Party.

This signifies that we must take up in a new way the question of building and achieving full legality for the Party. We must carry on Party building as our main political task, never losing sight of it in any of our campaigns of mass struggle and mass educational work. During the revisionist period of our Party, Earl Browder challenged the whole role of our Party and undermined our organization in many directions. This requires a great deal of repair

work on our part. It seems almost incredible now to realize that, together with his other liquidatory moves, Browder actually wrote to the capitalist press offering to abolish our Party altogether if these bourgeois forces considered such a suicidal step on our part as necessary to advance national unity.

At the heart of the restored Marxist-Leninist line of the Party is a vastly intensified appreciation of its vanguard role and a strong determination to build it at all costs. Such understanding and determination, based on the urgent need of the American working class for a strong Communist Party, are all the further

strengthened because of the worldwide growth of the Communist Parties. The present year, and the whole period now facing us, must, therefore, be a period of the most active Party building in our entire history. This perspective of intense Party building will occupy our central attention at the February meeting of our National Committee. The whole body of Lenin's teachings has great validity for the American working class as it faces the complex problems of this postwar period, and a lesson of the greatest significance to be learned from these teachings is precisely to proceed to a rapid building of the Communist Party.