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The United States
and the
Soviet
Union



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By William Z. Foster

This pamphlet is the text of an address delivered by William Z. Foster, National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., before members of the John Reed Club of Harvard University on December 12, 1940.

"It is a different kind of freedom, a freedom we do not have, never have had and never in our most pleasant dreams expect to have. The Russians are free from all worry and fear of a helpless, dependent old age. They are free from all worry and fear of losing their jobs, crop failure, factory shut-downs, strikes, etc. They are free from all worry about doctor's bills, store bills, interest on the mortgage, or any other money matters. They are free from all worry about whether or not their children will be properly educated."—Lieutenant-Commander Charles S. Seeley, U. S. Navy, retired. (See page 8.)

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THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

TODAY our Government is virtually in alliance with Great Britain and its course is leading, step by step, toward plunging our people into the war's holocaust of destruction. We are being told that Great Britain is fighting to preserve democracy and that, therefore, we must give her all possible help. But we were also told precisely the same in 1917, and on this basis we ill-advisedly entered the World War. The Allies won that bloody slaughter, with its thirty million soldier and civilian dead and two hundred forty billions of property destruction; and for twenty years following the peace victorious England and France completely controlled Europe. With what results? Surely not a strengthening of democracy. On the contrary, under British-French domination half of Europe was driven into fascism; humanity was plagued by the greatest economic crisis in world history, and now we have a new great war to cap the climax of this ill-omened Allied rule.

As every intelligent person now realizes, the World War of 1914-18 was a cold-blooded struggle among the great imperialist capitalist powers for world rulership, and its aftermath, save for the birth of the Soviet Union, was thoroughly reactionary. The present war between Great Britain and the fascist axis powers is of the same imperialist character. Talk about Britain de-

fending democracy is only so much demagogy to fool the masses as in 1917. This is another desperate struggle between rival capitalist states for the redivision of the earth. And if the present heads of the great imperialist powers, including the United States, are allowed to write the eventual peace terms, the aftermath of this war will be even more reactionary than was that of the last war.

Unless the democratic and revolutionary peoples of the world take the situation in hand themselves by establishing Popular Front and socialist governments, we must look, after this war, regardless of which side wins, for a rapid spread of fascism, for still more devastating economic crises, and for wars more ruinous even than the present one. Nor would our country escape these disasters.

THE DECAY OF CAPITALISM

The capitalist governments cannot formulate a democratic and lasting peace. The capitalist system has exhausted its progressive historic role and is rotten at the heart. The world's increasing economic and political troubles grow inevitably out of the private ownership of the social means of production and distribution, and its accompanying exploitation of the workers and other toilers for private profit. The capitalist system has now arrived at its ultimate stage of monopoly and imperialism, and it produces inevitably ever-increasing overproduction, mass unemployment, deep industrial crises, fierce international struggles for markets and colonies, ruthless imperialist wars, and eventually socialist revolution.

Capitalism cannot cure its constantly deepening crisis, which originates in the very fiber of its profit-making economy. Even if victorious, the American and British capitalist governments could not possibly reverse the fundamental trends which have brought the hopelessly sick capitalist world system to its present debacle. And Hitler's New World Order, with its violent subjugation and deindustrialization of France, Belgium, Holland, and, expectantly, England, would, if he could carry it through, only make matters worse. World capitalism is incurably diseased and reactionary.

These are the plain facts of the basic world situation. Consequently the present course of our Government, which is to head into the imperialist war, can bring only disaster to the American people. Not peace, prosperity and democracy, but war, pauperization and fascism lie along that road. Therefore, we need imperatively a basic reorientation in American foreign policy. In order to conserve our people's welfare, we must dissolve our virtual war alliance with imperialist England, and adopt an attitude of neutrality toward the war. Then, a policy of isolationism being unthinkable, we should begin to establish friendly contacts with the genuine peace-loving and democratic forces throughout the world. Accordingly, we should give all possible aid to nationalist China and stop furnishing war materials to Japan; we should develop a truly democratic collaboration with the nations of Latin America; we should cultivate close contacts with the peoples of India and the oppressed and vanquished nations of Europe; and especially we should come to a closer and more friendly understanding with the Soviet Union. It is along such

a line, and not in war alliance with imperialist England, that the American people can help establish world peace, democracy and prosperity, and thereby protect its own liberties and well being.

FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE

I wish to elaborate upon only one phase of the above-sketches people's foreign policy, namely, that of developing friendly relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The great American and Soviet nations have no trade, territorial or other conflicts; instead they have the most basic interests in common; for only a handful of capitalists and their henchmen could gain by keeping them apart because of ideological questions. Both peoples could profit enormously from close and friendly relations.

First, let us consider the fundamental question of world peace. Aside from a small minority of imperialist warmongers, undoubtedly the vast majority of the American people ardently desire peace. Very well, then, the Soviet Union is a trustworthy defender of peace, one with which the United States can effectively collaborate. The U.S.S.R. was born out of the Russian people's struggle to end the World War, and ever since it has labored to maintain world peace. The Soviet Government repeatedly proposed to the capitalist states that all countries disarm completely; and when this was rejected, that they should at least partially disarm. It also signed a whole series of non-aggression pacts with neighboring countries.

Furthermore, in the League of Nations, the Soviet Union was the one steadfast big power champion of

collective security, and it resolutely defended the project of a broad international peace front of the democratic countries to restrain the fascist aggressors.

It was only after the betrayal of democracy and the sell-out of Czechoslovakia at Munich by Chamberlain and Daladier that the Soviet Union gave up as hopeless the fight for the international peace front. The charge that the Soviet Union, by signing its non-aggression pact with Germany was responsible for the start of the war, is ridiculous. In reality, it was only the peace pressure of the Soviet Union that had been holding the rival capitalist powers apart, so that when the U.S.S.R., realizing after Munich that war was inevitable, stepped aside and assumed a neutral position, the mutually hostile capitalist powers flew at each other's throats like wolves. The Soviet Union's efforts to maintain world peace among the pirate capitalist powers having failed, that country is now intelligently standing apart from the war, building its industries and strengthening its defenses, while the capitalist states suicidally destroy each other's people, industries and cities. By the very structure of its socialist system the Soviet Union is an undying opponent of imperialist war, and a loyal ally of all nations desiring a just peace.

HOW TO DEFEND AND EXPAND WORLD DEMOCRACY

Second, there is the question of preserving and developing world democracy. Surely here also the American people have a most vital interest. Very well, then, we can do nothing better than to collaborate with the Soviet Union, the world's most advanced democracy.

With its industries and land collectivized and its government in the hands of the people, the Soviet Union is on a fundamentally higher level of democracy than any capitalist country is or can be.

It is a monstrous lie to lump together as one, Soviet socialism and capitalist fascism. In the U.S.S.R., it is true that many cherished bourgeois rights have been abolished, including the right of a handful of rich privately to own and exploit vital industries, to rob the workers and peasants, to abuse the Negroes and Jews as sub-human beings, to run the government as their private affair, and to wage war to increase their personal profits. Because it has abolished these anti-social rights is why the world bourgeoisie and all its agents so relentlessly hate and combat the Soviet Union. But in the U.S.S.R. the toiling masses have acquired a freedom far greater than in any other country.

In his book, *Russia and the Approach to Armageddon*, Lieutenant Commander Charles S. Seeley, United States Navy, retired, himself by no means a Communist, gives an inkling of the new Soviet freedom. He says on page 85:

“It is a different kind of freedom, a freedom we do not have, never have had and never in our most pleasant dreams expect to have. The Russians are free from all worry and fear of a helpless, dependent old age. They are free from all worry and fear of losing their jobs, crop failure, factory shut-downs, strikes, etc. They are free from all worry about doctor’s bills, store bills, interest on the mortgage, or any other money matters. They are free from all worry about whether or not their children will be properly educated. They are even

free from all worry and fear of everlasting torment in hell, because the Bolsheviks have abolished that future abode for folk that God dislikes.”

In conformity with its internal democratic regime the Soviet Union, from its inception, has followed a policy of cooperating with the world's democratic forces. It is not a member of the fascist axis, as its slanderers allege, nor will it pull Britain's chestnuts from the fire.

During the attack upon Ethiopia, the U.S.S.R. proposed that the League of Nations enforce economic sanctions against Italy. It also sent a big stream of munitions to republican Spain, at the imminent risk of war with Germany and Italy, while the United States maintained an arms embargo against that democratic country, and England and France strangled it with their outrageous so-called non-intervention policy. Moreover, during the Czech crisis the U.S.S.R., as President Benes has often admitted, offered to defend Czechoslovakia alone after England and France had sold it out.

Nationalist China has likewise received the unstinted help of the U.S.S.R., while the United States and Great Britain have been appeasing Japan by shipping it the munitions and other materials necessary for its war against China. If the Soviet Union was unable to develop a peace front with the bourgeois democracies, England and France, it is because these Tory-ridden countries did not wish it. They looked upon the U.S.S.R. as their main enemy, and their central foreign policy was directed towards encouraging Germany and Japan to attack the Soviet Union.

THE PATH TO PROSPERITY

Third, the American people, plagued by mass unemployment, industrial crises, and widespread hunger amidst potential plenty, are eager to solve these deadly problems. Therefore, all the more necessary are friendly relations with the U.S.S.R., which, with its socialist system, has found the answer to the economic and political contradictions which are destroying capitalism, harassing humanity and throwing the world into war.

Socialism in the Soviet Union has permanently solved the problem of economic crises and mass unemployment. It has opened the door to practically a limitless economic development. Today industrial production in the U.S.S.R. is ten times as great as it was in 1929 and it is rapidly increasing; whereas in the United States, the most powerful of all capitalist countries, production, in spite of New Deal economic shots in the arm and huge armament expenditures, still hovers about the 1929 level. Soviet socialism is rapidly raising the living and cultural standards of its toiling masses, whereas such standards are falling throughout the capitalist world. Socialism is rapidly expanding mass education and also giving a tremendous stimulation to the arts and sciences. It has vastly diminished crime, prostitution, and insanity; it has ended anti-Semitism and national oppression within its borders, and in its social system it bears the seeds of future world peace.

The Soviet people, frankly realizing they had much to learn from our tremendous industrial achievements, have sent over here from time to time hundreds of engineers to study our industries. We Americans have

also a vast amount to learn from the Soviet political system, which is a full stage further advanced than ours. We, too, should frankly recognize the fact and objectively study Soviet socialism in action. The main lesson we have to learn from the Soviet people is that while we may relieve our deepening economic crisis temporarily with New Deal spending makeshifts, we can make our economic and political life healthy and progressive only when we socialize the industries and the land. We will have to recognize that there are no further real frontiers of development for America under capitalism. Indeed the whole world can find new frontiers only under socialism.

In the hands of you young folks rests the future welfare of our people. You must be prepared to defend and improve your living standards and civil liberties. To this end you will have to fight through your student organizations, through the American Youth Congress, and in so doing you should cooperatively act with the trade unions and other progressive forces. At the same time you must study socialism, both on the basis of American potentialities and Soviet experience. You should investigate the Soviet political system as diligently as the Russians have studied our industrial system. To this end I recommend to your attention the Dean of Canterbury's book entitled, *The Soviet Power*. This book, written by a sincere Christian, a close observer and an honest critic, gives an authentic picture of what is actually going on in the U.S.S.R. No open-minded person can read the Dean's book and still believe in the absurd anti-Soviet slanders now so widely current in this country.

Fourth, the American people should develop a better understanding with the Soviet Union, because in the stormy world situation ahead the United States will imperatively need strong friends. The Soviet Union, stretching over one-sixth of the earth and located very strategically, with a population of almost 200,000,000, with limitless resources and the greatest industrial system in Europe, and with tremendous mechanized defense forces, is a very powerful country.

Let me again quote Commander Seeley, who says (p. 39):

“It is my considered opinion that no nation, or possible combination of nations in the world today, could overthrow the present Russian system of government.”

As part of the bitter capitalist hatred and misrepresentation campaign against the U.S.S.R., the attempt is being made to picture that country as a weakling. But Hitler, who has to deal with realities, apparently does not agree with such wishful thinkers. There was nothing he wanted more than to seize the golden Ukraine, one of the most favored spots on this earth. For years he openly announced his plans to grab that rich Soviet state and he built his anti-Comintern axis with this end in view. Moreover, Tory England and France would have been very joyful had he made the attempt and could have been relied upon by him for help. The United States Government, too, would have been far from unhappy over such a venture by Hitler. But when it came to the real showdown, Hitler preferred to face battle with England, France, Belgium, Holland,

Poland, Denmark and Norway simultaneously, and with the United States looming in the background, rather than to tackle the U.S.S.R. In this course Hitler followed the line of least resistance; he knew where the easiest pickings lay.

Japan also did not fare too well with its long planned anti-Soviet drive. It took a few bites on the Soviet granite in the Far East and then let go, openly admitting it had been defeated by the Soviet mechanized Red Army. Now, regardless of Japan's strong objections, the U.S.S.R. goes right ahead furnishing vital war supplies to nationalist China. Refuting American anti-Soviet journalistic slanderers, experience shows clearly that the U.S.S.R., vigorous and powerful, is quite capable of taking care of itself in this world of war-mad capitalist states.

The United States and the U.S.S.R. are from a military standpoint the two potentially most powerful nations in the world. In friendly collaboration for peace their power would be irresistible. Such collaboration on their part would give a tremendous stimulus to the other huge, peace-loving, democratic forces of the world—the peoples of China, India, Latin America, the oppressed nations of Europe and the international labor movement, which, all taken together, are the only forces that can develop the necessary program and strength to save humanity from the wars, famine, enslavement and general chaos attendant upon the collapse of the world capitalist system.

To develop at least a measure of friendly relations with the Soviet Union, it is not necessary that our Government become Socialist or Popular Front. The Soviet

Government enters into cooperative relations with all capitalist governments, and lives up to them loyally. There is no sound basis, therefore, why our present Administration cannot greatly improve its relations with the Soviets. Labor and progressive forces generally should demand that this be done. In fact, there are already some tentative steps being taken toward this general end. Those who may be hoping, however, that these steps will lead to a war alliance in which the U.S.S.R. will do Wall Street's fighting in the Far East will be disappointed.

HALT THE ANTI-SOVIET POLICY

From the birth of the U.S.S.R., the American Government has been sharply anti-Soviet. President Wilson in 1918-20 sent troops to take part in the general armed attempt by England, France, Japan and other countries to overthrow the Soviet Government. After this war intervention failed, our Government participated in the savage economic blockade which was designed to starve the Socialist Soviet people into capitulating to world capitalism; and for sixteen years after the Russian Revolution successive Federal administrations refused the U.S.S.R. diplomatic recognition.

President Roosevelt finally granted such recognition, but ever since he has followed a policy of harmful bickering with the Soviet Union. During the Soviet-Finnish conflict American official sources even encouraged the British-French attempt to organize a general capitalist war against the U.S.S.R.

This anti-Soviet orientation must be changed. There is every good reason for collaboration between the two

great peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union. As we have already indicated, much can be done in this direction even under the present Government, but when the workers and farmers play a far greater role in our political life than they do now, when they liquidate our Government's imperialist policies, then American-Soviet collaboration will reach its highest levels.

The American people yearn for peace, democracy and prosperity. All of us Americans wish to win our way to these great goals. Friendly relations with the Soviet Union, as part of a general policy of peace cooperation with the peoples of India, China and Latin America and other progressive and downtrodden peoples, would provide a major key to the achievement of this better life by our people.

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By **HEWLETT JOHNSON**

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