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The Crisis in the Russian Revolution

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were taken from the hands of the exploiters and placed in the ownership and control of the revolutionary state. The land was given to the peasants who tilled it. The press and education were taken from liars and perverters who used them for their own corrupt ends, and made the enlightening instrument of the new order. During all the drawn-out and devastating crisis of the Civil War, step after step was steadfastly taken.

So well were the foundations laid in the early years, that in spite of all the poverty, backwardness, and exhaustion of the country, it was able, after the breathing space of the New Economic Policy, to march forward at a rate unprecedented in history, in the development of the productive plant, the elimination of illiteracy, the extension of social services and safeguards. The pattern of the new society had been drawn during those heroic years.

The Isolation of the Revolution

Throughout the world, the electrifying effect of the revolution stirred the masses. In every country they arose in great struggles, to defend the revolution, to protect it against intervention, and to carry it through in their own country. In Poland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the workers stood on the threshold of power. The decisive advance of the international revolution was in the balance.

But the still remaining resources of capitalist imperialism, the exhaustion of the masses from the sufferings of the war, and above all the treachery of the workers' own leaders, proved for that stage an insurmountable obstacle. The revolution was thrown back at one after another salient on the international front. The reformist social-democracy, faced with the rising workers' power, joined with the bourgeoisie to slaughter the revolutionists and handed back the power to finance-capital. An ebb tide of the international revolution set in.

Revolutionary Wave Recedes

As the revolutionary wave receded, the workers' regime within Russia found itself in an ever widening isolation. The revolution in the West, upon which the leaders of the Russian Revolution had relied in order to place at the disposal of socialism the machinery, resources, and skills of at least some sections of advanced European economy, had, at this stage, failed. The Soviet power was left with only the pitifully inadequate productive plant bequeathed to it by Tsarism and weakened by the effects of the Imperialist War and the Civil War; with the primitive, undeveloped agriculture; with the cultural and social backwardness of a people hounded and brutalized by centuries of reactionary despotism.

The Russian people themselves were reaching the end of their rope, physically, morally, spiritually. The imperialist war, the socio-economic crisis, the break-down of industry, the famines, the Civil War, had drained them to the bone. There were not sufficient moral resources left with which to face firmly the spectacle of temporary defeat of the international revolution, and to chart an unswerving course through the period of isolation in the light of the spirit and strategy of revolutionary internationalism.

The Degeneration of the Revolution

The revolution retreated. Its retreat was worldwide; and the Soviet Union could not, did not, escape from the world movement. Out of the defeat of the revolution internationally, the economic, social, and cultural backwardness of Russia, and the exhaustion of the Soviet masses, arose Stalinism—the symbol, expression, and organizer of the degeneration of the revolution.

Basing themselves upon the defeats, the exhaustion, backwardness, prejudices, through their cynical and wholly reactionary "theory" of building

socialism in single, isolated Russia, and taking advantage of the lassitude of the masses, Stalin and his clique proceeded to entrench themselves in power. One by one, they destroyed the agencies of workers' and party democracy and control. Around themselves they solidified a totalitarian bureaucratic regime.

The Corrupt Rule of the G. P. U.

The trade unions, the factory committees, the soviets, the revolutionary party, all are destroyed as organs of the working class, and remain only as puppets in the manipulating hands of the bureaucracy. The power of the bureaucracy is enforced by repression, lies, terror, exile, execution. The faintest opposition or suspicion of opposition is met by the torture-chambers and guns of the G. P. U. The aim of the bureaucracy has become exclusively the preservation and increase of its own power and privilege. History, education, science, art, law, are re-written and perverted in accordance with the bureaucracy's conception of its own interest. Corruption, spying, bribery, falsehood have become the rule and norm of social and political life.

In desperate and frantic adventures the bureaucracy attempts to correct the fissures in the internal economy which its own police regime make inevitable and cumulative. It re-introduces capitalist methods of speed-up; continually increases the wage differentials in the effort to raise production norms, and through the inequalities thereby created multiplies the sources of social conflicts; extends the free market, private property on the collectives, and partial rights of inheritance; punishes its own lack of efficiency and foresight by the imprisonment and execution of workers; arbitrarily and bureaucratically interferes with management, juggles administrators and technicians, re-arranges production and output schedules; falsifies statistics; resorts constantly to administrative and terrorist methods, to the G. P. U. to try to correct economic defect, thereby only increasing and deepening the defects.

Differences in Social Rank

Similarly, the bureaucracy re-introduces and increases the differences in social rank and privilege, in the army and in society generally, hoping thereby to aid in the maintenance of its own power and privilege by a system of "rewards and punishments", but in practice only accentuating the impetus to the re-consolidation of a new bourgeoisie, a new ruling class, and the definitive restoration of capitalist exploitation.

The last year, the twentieth year of the Revolution, with its gigantic purge in which virtually every leader of the Revolution itself, every potential rallying point of opposition, has been executed or imprisoned, and with the shameful fraud of the new Constitution providing juridical sanction for the liquidation of the political power of the soviets and the workers' organs generally and for the bureaucratic monopoly of power, this last year brings the whole Stalinist system to a head.

Stalinism and the Revolution

Stalinism poses as the inheritor of the Russian Revolution, the legitimate heir of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin; and in this picture it paints of itself it is supported by the entire reactionary and bourgeois press, as well as by the reformists, Mensheviks, anarchists, and the whole crew of deserters from Marxism and the road of the workers' revolution.

No lie could be more gross and vicious, nor more disastrous in the entire struggle for socialism.

Stalinism is the dregs of proletarian defeat, the scourge of the revolution, and the destroyer of the Bolshevik Party.

Stalinism was vomited to the surface by the weariness, exhaustion, disillusionment of the masses. It is the heavy, terrible price paid for the failure to extend the post-War revolution. It is the symbol and organizer of the defeats of the international proletariat and of the backwardness of Russian economy and culture. In every nerve and bone and sinew it is reactionary and corrupt.

Stalinism, solidified into a monolithic monster, has become absolutely incompatible with the revolution, whether with the Soviet Union or internationally. The course of the Stalinist military-bureaucratic dictatorship over the Russian masses is now in direct and irreconcilable conflict with the expansion of the socialized economy, and the social and political interests of the masses. This is the present crisis of the Russian Revolution.

One or the other must win; one or the other must be destroyed. Either the Russian masses, stimulated and aided by a renewed upsurge on

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES

On October 4, the British Labour Party held its Conference at Bournemouth. The central point on the agenda was, of course, the question of war, masked by the cloak of "the defense of British Democracy." The military preparations of British imperialism demand the unconditional mobilization of the British workers, as an indispensable part of its war program. And it is an illuminating fact that prior to the Conference there was widespread concern, especially among the so-called liberal section of the capitalist press, about the possibility of "division" in the ranks of labor. That is to say there were some qualms in the ruling circles lest an opposition to their war plans might develop in the ranks of the Labour Party. The results of the Conference have left the British bourgeoisie positively gloating.

The social-patriots had a field day, after suppressing the pacifist "guinea-pigs." Here is how the Manchester Guardian, which was most concerned about the developments, summarizes the results: "The great mass of the Labour movement has moved to a position that even a year ago one would have thought it impossible for it to have taken up." (Manchester Guardian Weekly, Oct. 18.) By an overwhelming vote of 2,167,000 against 228,000 the Conference pledged allegiance to the next war slaughter. "Democracy Safer with An Armed Britain!"

The manner in which the "impossible" was achieved is likewise a source of gratification to the war-mongers. Mr. James Walker M. P., it is the general consensus of opinion, delivered a speech which "almost took the breath of the Conference away."

After pointing out that "it was the first big Labour Conference Speech for a generation that has struck the patriotic note", the Manchester Guardian comments gleefully as follows: "The words

[Walker's keynote speech] reveal the great change in the atmosphere of the party; they might have been used and cheered in a conservative meeting."

The thoroughness of the job is demonstrated by the fact that the minority vote included not more than 70,000 trade union votes, the rest representing those of local labor parties. Again hear the Manchester Guardian: "What seemed incredible a year ago has happened, and the Labour Party has achieved something like unity on defense."

It is a notable victory for British imperialism to have been able to achieve, even prior to its next war venture, that which in 1914 it could assure itself only in the actual course of the war. The international working class has suffered another major blow. Even though the British Stalinists find themselves spurned temporarily by the Labour Party, they can claim more than equal credit for the results attained.

Pravda, incidentally, carried glowing accounts of this Conference in its issues, and even claimed "success" for the partisans of the united front. Thus, in its issue for October 7 we find the following comment: "The acute struggle which flared up at the Conference of the Labour Party on the question of the united anti-Fascist front has terminated not quite in the manner desired by the right wing of the Laborites. To be sure, from a formal standpoint of the number of votes, victory was gained by this wing. But in reality the partisans of unity achieved great successes."

The revolutionary socialists have more than a fighting chance to avert a similar debacle in this country. Against the background of unfolding events, and the rapid approach of the second imperialist world slaughter, our coming Convention looms as a great historical sign-post.

The Result of the Cantonal Election in France

By juxtaposing the results of the recent French election with those of 1931, we can obtain some indication of the processes through which the class struggle

has been passing in France. It should be borne in mind that the cantonal elections in 1931 were held prior to the outbreak of the crisis. Here are the key figures:

	1937	1931
The Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.)	1,657,088	574,614
The Communist Party (Stalinists)	1,090,552	175,162
Radical Socialists	1,608,793	939,817
Independent Socialists	63,089	148,435
The Center and Right Parties	2,813,053	1,554,160
Fascists (P.S.F.—de La Roque)	296,537	
Fascists (P.P.F.—Doriot)	70,634	

Thus, in 1931 the four parties which today enter into the People's Front polled a total of 1,838,028 as against 1,554,160 for the right while in 1937 they polled 4,319,763 as against 2,813,000 for the right and over one-third of a million for the Fascists. On the surface these figures appear imposing. But even a cursory analysis shows what a disastrous effect the People's Fronters have had on the masses. The Radical-Socialists, the traditional party of French imperialism, were able to pass through

the crisis with their strength unimpaired, thanks to the cover provided by the Stalinists and the Socialists. And if the social democracy and Stalinism have experienced a growth, the forces of reaction have consolidated themselves, and the Fascists are beginning to assume mass proportions. Above all it must be born in mind, that the crisis in France will not be solved on the parliamentary arena. The Fascists are stronger in France today than Mussolini was when he made his successful bid for power in Italy.

Last Call!

DANCE and ENTERTAINMENT
Saturday, November 6th at 9 P. M.
IRVING PLAZA (Main Ball Room)

15th STREET and IRVING PLACE
Tickets: Fifty Five Cents

On sale at: LABOR BOOK SHOP
28 East 12th Street.

Auspices: Socialist Party (Left Wing) YPSL
(Fourth Internationalists)