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The Development of Policy in Soviet Russia

Editor's Note:—This is the second and concluding installment of I. Malski's article, reproduced in the Clarion from the "Manchester Guardian Commercial," July 6, 1922. The first installment appeared in the Clarion Aug. 1, and ended with the question: Can the retreat really end in pre-war capitalism? There follows now the author's opinion on the matter which, of course, is subject to the judgment of time and events.

Certainly not. It would be an historical absurdity. The enemies of the Soviet Republic count upon the aid of crude counter-revolutionary forces to re-establish pre-war capitalism in Russia.

The Forces of Counter-Revolution.

But do such forces exist?

Certainly not inside Russia. Counter-revolution of every shade and colour has been decisively defeated, and it is vain for the bourgeoisie to hope for its resurrection in the ranks of the peasantry. With the introduction of the new economic policy of the Soviet power the village will never rise up against the proletariat. It will permit the free activity of the Communist town as long as the latter pays attention to its essential and immediate interests. And that the Communist town is paying attention to these interests is sufficiently proved by the recent utterances of Lenin at the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist party.

Do such forces exist in the West?

No. It is true that the Socialist revolution in Europe has been delayed; nevertheless, ever since the outbreak of the Great War, the whole of civilised humanity has entered upon the transition from capitalism to Communism.

The Decline of Capitalism.

Capitalism is clearly perishing. A symptom of this was the imperialist war, which made it clear to the whole world what frightful destruction threatens mankind by the capitalist methods of solving international conflicts. Another symptom is that profound economic crisis in the throes of which Europe and America have been agonising for three years. This crisis is evidence that capitalist resource is incapable of solving the greatest of all economic problems—the problem of production. Another symptom is that warm sympathy which the Soviet Republic awakens in the best minds of world culture and civilisation. Anatole France, Romain Rolland, Brandes, Steinmetz and a number of other well-known men of science and literature openly declared their sympathy for the Workers' and Peasants' Republic. We see here a repetition of what occurred at the end of the eighteenth century in France before the great Revolution: the best and the shrewdest representatives of the dying class are coming over to the side of the new class to whom the future belongs.

The Impotence of the Bourgeois World.

Because capitalism is growing decrepit, it cannot sum up sufficient force to annihilate the Communist power in Russia. From 1917 to 1920 the whole bourgeois world levied war against the Soviet Republic; nevertheless the Republic held its own. Why? First of all, of course, because Russian workers and peasants, at the cost of incredible suffering, were able to defend their revolution. But there was another reason. That reason was the impotence of the capitalist world itself.

Today in Europe there are two camps—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Neither camp possesses sufficient strength to overthrow its adversary. The Bourgeoisie is already unable completely to maintain its dictatorship. The proletariat is still not strong enough to accomplish the social revolution. Of course, the strength of the proletariat constantly increases and the strength of the bourgeoisie constantly declines, but as yet the strength of the two sides is too equal. Neither can display sufficient energy. Just for this reason the intervention of the European bourgeoisie from 1917 to 1920 was not strong enough to overthrow Communism in Russia. Just for this reason it will be no more powerful in the future. For all who have eyes, it is clear that the force which will crush Russian Communism cannot come from the West.

Russia's Immediate Future.

But if the restoration of pre-war capitalism in Russia is impossible, what, then, will happen?

It is evident that something is going to take place which history has never before seen. The Soviet Republic is the first State in the world where the workers and peasants, not only in name, but in fact, hold power in their hands. It will be an economic structure, embodying a transition from Capitalism to Socialism. It will not be pure Socialism, the day of which has not yet come, and it will not be pure Capitalism, the day of which is already declining. It will be a unique union of the past and the future—the co-existence and intermingling of elements of Capitalism and Socialism. It is upon this intermediary line that the retreat which was begun by the Communist party a year ago will cease. Here is the limit beyond which it will not retire. And the Soviet Republic has now reached that limit.

What the appearance of that State economic organism which has developed as the result of the Revolution will be it is still difficult to say with any definiteness. The Russian Communists are now moulding its concrete outline, and, naturally, like all pioneers, in the process they are making many voluntary and involuntary errors. But the crux of the matter does not lie in the errors; it lies in those essential foundations upon which the workers and peasants' State is to be constructed, and which must combine the inevitable compromises of practical life with the unshakable revolutionary ideal of the proletariat. The Russian Communists consider that at the present historical stage these essential foundations are the following:

1. The nationalisation of the land.
2. State capitalism embracing the basic industries and branches of national economy.

These two fundamentals the Soviet Republic cannot repudiate without repudiating itself. Upon them stands and falls the whole historical significance of its existence.

But are we simply imagining the protracted existence of the Soviet Republic? Are we simply imagining an economic structure combining a powerfully developed State capitalism with a multiform system of private capitalism?

Nobody hitherto could prove with conviction that it is impossible. In fact, why should it be impossible? Is it because it is something entirely new, because nothing of a similar nature has hitherto ex-

isted? But is that an argument? Was not the October Revolution something new, something hitherto unknown in history? Yet it came about. Is not the form of the Soviet State something new, without precedent in the centuries of human development? Yet it has been brought about.

Every truly great revolution creates something new, and thereby makes a step forward. The Russian Revolution has also produced its novelty. It gave to the world the Soviet State. That State is now groping forward in the pains and torments of the Soviet economy, the connecting link between two great historical epochs. But it is moving forward, and no obstacle will prevent it reaching its goal.

The bourgeois world is accustomed to think according to its old standards. Its consciousness is a conservative one. It possesses neither elasticity nor enterprise, for it is nearing its decline. Its gaze is not forward, but to the rear. Therefore it will not and cannot understand that new economic and political structure which the Soviet Republic has introduced. It appears to it a Utopia which must end inevitably by falling back into the capitalist swamp. The bourgeois world is terribly deceived. The men who are now directing the affairs of Soviet Russia are not dreamers, and they are not bourgeois. They are Communist realists, and on that account they are capable of constructing a new Russia, a Russia of the toilers, without its parallel in bourgeois countries, representing a great step forward upon the path of the political and economic creativeness of humanity.

Russia and the Capitalist World.

This fact has tremendous significance not only for Russia but for the whole world. For a certain period upon the continents of the Old World there will co-exist two distinct economic systems—the capitalist and the Soviet,—and the question of their mutual relationship is of first-class political and economic importance.

The world of capitalist economy at present finds itself in an extremely difficult situation, and the power of the Soviet Republic extends over the richest areas of the terrestrial globe. It is enough to mention Siberia with her inexhaustible soil and timber and mining resources. Every attempt to control even temporarily the machine of world economy inevitably centres round the exploitation of the economic resources of Russia. And therefore that inflow of foreign capital into Russia, the desirability and necessity for which has time and again been expressed, is a matter in which the Soviet Republic and the whole capitalist world is equally interested. This is not a question of charity; it is a question of enlightened self-interest. Worker and peasant Russia does not refuse and never has refused this kind of relationship, as long as it is not accompanied by the restoration of the system of private property. This policy it will maintain in the future.

The Russian Republic and World Reconstruction.

The Soviet Republic is at the present time the advance post of the social, economic, and political progress of mankind. For the moment she stands alone, but one must be blind not to perceive the world-wide influence of Social ideas. The complete

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