

Basis for Hope Seen in Rapprochement Between Socialist and Capitalist Systems

Continued From Preceding Page

resources, from fertile black earth to coal and forest, from oil to manganese and diamonds. It must be borne in mind that during the period under review our people worked to the limit of its capacity, which resulted in a certain depletion of resources.

We must also bear in mind the strike effect, in which the Soviet Union adopted principles of industrial organization and technological development previously tested in the United States. Examples are the method of calculating the national fuel budget, assembly-line techniques, audiotapes, nuclear power, oxygen converters in steel-making, hybrid corn, self-propelled harvester combines, strip mining of coal, rotary excavators, semiconductors in electronics, the shift from steam to diesel locomotives, and so forth.

There is only one justifiable conclusion and it can be formulated cautiously as follows:

1. We have demonstrated the vitality of the socialist course, which has done a great deal for the people materially, culturally and socially and, like no other system, has glorified the moral significance of labor.

2. There are no grounds for asserting, as is often done in the dogmatic vein, that the capitalist mode of production leads the economy into a blind alley or that it is obviously inferior to the socialist mode in labor productivity, and there are certainly no grounds for asserting that capitalism always leads to absolute impoverishment of the working class.

Progress by Capitalism

The continuing economic progress being achieved under capitalism should be a fact of great theoretical significance for any nondogmatic Marxist. It is precisely this fact that lies at the basis of peaceful coexistence and it suggests, in principle, that if capitalism ever runs into an economic blind alley it will not necessarily have to leap into a desperate military adventure. Both capitalism and socialism are capable of long-term development, borrowing positive elements from each other and actually coming closer to each other in a number of essential aspects.

I can just hear the outcries about revisionism and blunting of the class approach to this issue; I can just see the smirks about political naivete and immaturity. But the facts suggest that there is real economic progress in the United States and other capitalist countries, that the capitalists are actually using the social principles of socialism, and that there has been real improvement of the position of the working people. More important, the facts suggest that on any other course except ever-increasing coexistence and collaboration between the two systems and the two superpowers, with a smoothing of contradictions and with mutual assistance, on any other course annihilation awaits mankind. There is no other way out.

Two Systems Compared

We will now compare the distribution of personal income and consumption for various social groups in the United States and the Soviet Union. Our propaganda materials usually assert that there is crying poverty in the United States, while the Soviet Union has something entirely just, entirely in the interests of the working people. Actually both statements contain half-truths and a fair amount of hypocritical evasion.

I have no intention of minimizing the tragic aspects of the poverty, lack of rights and humiliation of the 22 million American Negroes. But we must clearly understand that this problem is not primarily a class problem, but a racial problem involving the racism and egotism of white workers, and that the ruling group in the United States is interested in solving this problem. To be sure the government has not been as active as it should be; this may be related to fears of an electoral catastro-

pher and to fears of upsetting the unstable equilibrium in the country and thus activate extreme leftist and especially extreme rightist parties. It seems to me that we in the socialist camp should be interested in letting the ruling group in the United States settle the Negro problem without aggravating the situation in the country.

At the other extreme, the presence of millionaires in the United States is not a serious economic burden in view of their small number. The total consumption of the United States is 20 per cent, that is, less than the total rise of national consumption over a five-year period. From this point of view, a revolution, which would be likely to halt economic progress for more than five years, does not appear to be an economically advantageous move for the working people. And I am not even talking of the blood-letting that is inevitable in a revolution. And I am not talking of the danger of the "irony of history," about which Friedrich Engels wrote so well in his famous letter to V. Zasulich, the "irony" that took the form of Stalinism in our country.

There are, of course, situations where revolution is the only way out. This applies especially to national uprisings. But that is not the case in the United States and other developed capitalist countries, as suggested, incidentally, by the programs of the Communist parties of these countries.

As far as our country is concerned, here, too, we should avoid painting an idyllic picture. There is still great inequality in wealth between the city and the countryside, especially in rural areas that lack a transport outlet to the private market or do not produce any goods in demand in private trade. There are great differences between cities with some of the new, privileged industries and those with older, antiquated industries. As a result 40 per cent of the Soviet population is in difficult economic circumstances. In the United States about 25 per cent of the population is on the verge of poverty. On the other hand the 5 per cent of the Soviet population that belong to the managerial group is as privileged as its counterpart in the United States.

The Managerial Group

The development of modern society in both the Soviet Union and the United States is now following the same course of increasing complexity of structure and of industrial management, giving rise in both countries to managerial groups that are similar in social character.

We must therefore acknowledge that there is no qualitative difference in the structure of society of the two countries in terms of distribution of consumption. Unfortunately the effectiveness of the managerial group in the Soviet Union (and, to a lesser extent, in the United States) is measured not only in purely economic or productive terms. This group also performs a concealed protective function that is rewarded in the sphere of consumption by concealed privileges.

Few people are aware of the practice under Stalin of paying salaries in envelopes, of the constantly recurring concealed distribution of scarce foods and goods for various services, privileges in vacation resorts, and so forth.

I want to emphasize that I am not opposed to the socialist principle of payment based on the amount and quality of labor. Relatively higher wages for better administrators, for highly skilled workers, teachers and physicians, for workers in dangerous or harmful occupations, for workers in science, culture and the arts, all of which account for a relatively small part of the total wage bill, do not threaten society if they are not accompanied by concealed privileges; moreover, higher wages benefit society if they are deserved.

The point is that every wasted minute of a leading administrator represents a major material loss for the economy and every wasted minute of a leading figure in the arts means a loss in the emotional, philosophical and artistic

wealth of society. But when something is done in secret, the suspicion inevitably arises that things are not clean, that loyal servants of the existing system are being bribed.

It seems to me that the rational way of solving this touchy problem would be not the setting of income ceilings for top members of the managerial group, but simply the prohibition of all privileges and the establishment of unified wage rates based on the social value of labor and an economic market approach to the wage problem.

We consider that further advances in our economic reform and a greater role for economic and market factors accompanied by increased public control over the managerial group (which, incidentally, is also essential in capitalist countries) will help eliminate all the roughness in our present distribution pattern.

An even more important aspect of the economic reform for the regulation and stimulation of production is the establishment of a correct system of market prices, proper allocation and rapid utilization of investment funds and proper use of natural and human resources based on appropriate rents in the interest of our society.

A number of socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are now experimenting with basic economic problems of the role of planning and of the market, government and cooperative ownership, and so forth. These experiments are of great significance.

Rapprochement Advocated

Summing up, we now come to our basic conclusion about the moral and ethical character of the advantages of the socialist course of development of human society. In our view, this does not in any way minimize the significance of socialism. Without socialism, bourgeois pragmatism and the egotistical principle of private ownership gave rise to the "people of the abyss" described by Jack London and earlier by Engels.

Only the competition with socialism and the pressure of the working class made possible the social progress of the 20th century and, all the more, will insure the now inevitable process of rapprochement of the two systems. It took socialism to raise the meaning of labor to the level of a moral feat. Before the advent of socialism, national egotism gave rise to colonial oppression, nationalism and racism. By now it has become clear that victory is on the side of the humanistic, international approach.

The capitalist world could not help giving birth to the socialist, but now the socialist world should not seek to destroy by force the ground from which it grew. Under the present conditions this would be tantamount to suicide of mankind. Socialism should enoble that ground by its example and other indirect forms of pressure and then merge with it.

The rapprochement with the capitalist world should not be an unprincipled, antipolitical plot between ruling groups, as happened in the extreme case [of the Soviet-Nazi and Maoist] in 1969-70. Such a rapprochement must rest not only on a socialist, but on a popular, democratic foundation, under the control of public opinion, as expressed through publicity, elections and so forth.

Such a rapprochement implies not only social reforms in the capitalist countries, but also substantial changes in the structure of ownership, with a greater role played by government and cooperative ownership, and the preservation of the basic present features of ownership: the means of production in the socialist countries.

Our allies along this road are not only the working class and the progressive intelligentsia, which are interested in peaceful coexistence and social progress and in a democratic, peaceful transition to socialism (as reflected in the programs of the Communist parties of the developed countries), but also the reformist part of the bourgeoisie, which supports such a program of "convergence." (Although I am using this

term, taken from the Western literature, it is clear from the foregoing that I have given it a socialist and democratic meaning.)

Typical representatives of the reformist bourgeoisie are Cyrus Eaton, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and, especially, President John F. Kennedy. Without wishing to cast a stone in the direction of Comrade N. S. Khrushchev (our high esteem for his services was expressed earlier), I cannot help recalling one of his statements, which may have been more typical of his entourage than of him personally.

On July 10, 1961, in speaking at a reception of specialists at his meeting with Kennedy in Vienna, Comrade Khrushchev recalled Kennedy's request that the Soviet Union consider policy and making demands, consider the actual possibilities and the difficulties of the new Kennedy Administration and refrain from demanding more than it could grant without courting the danger of being defeated in elections and being replaced by rightist forces. At that time, Khrushchev did not give Kennedy's unprecedented request the proper attention, to put it mildly, and began to rail. And now, after the shots in Dallas, who can say what auspicious opportunities in world history have been, if not destroyed but at any rate, set back because of a lack of understanding.

Bertrand Russell once told a peace congress in Moscow that "the world will be saved from thermonuclear annihilation if the leaders of each of the two systems prefer complete victory of the other system to a thermonuclear war" (I am quoting from memory). It seems to me that such a solution would be acceptable to the majority of people in any country, whether capitalist or socialist. I consider that the leaders of the capitalist and socialist systems by the very nature of things will gradually be forced to adopt the point of view of the majority of mankind.

Intellectual freedom of society will facilitate and smooth the way for this trend toward patience, flexibility and a security from dogmatism, fear and adventurism. All mankind, including its best organized and active forces, the working class and the intelligentsia, is interested in freedom and security.

Four-Stage Plan for Cooperation

Having examined in the first part of this essay the development of mankind according to the worse alternative, leading to annihilation, we must now attempt, even schematically, to suggest the better alternative. (The author concedes the primitiveness of his attempts at prognostication, which requires the joint efforts of many specialists, and here, even more than elsewhere, invites positive criticism.)

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In the first stage, a growing ideological struggle in the socialist countries between Stalinist and Maoist forces, on the one hand, and the realistic forces of leftist Leninist Communists (and leftist Westerners), on the other, will lead to a deep ideological split on an international, national and intraparty scale.

In the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, this process will lead first to a multiparty system (here and there) and to acute ideological struggle and discussions, and then to the ideological victory of the realists, affirming the policy of increasing peaceful coexistence, strengthening democracy and expanding economic reforms (1969-80). The dates reflect the most optimistic unrolling of events.

The author, incidentally, is not one of those who consider the multiparty system to be an essential stage in the development of the socialist system or, even less, a panacea for all ills, but he assumes that in some cases a multiparty system may be an inevitable consequence of the course of events when a

ruling Communist party refuses for one reason or another to rule by the scientific democratic method required by history.

[2]

In the second stage, persistent demands for social progress and peaceful coexistence in the United States and other capitalist countries, and pressure exerted by the example of the socialist countries and by internal progressive forces in the working class and the intelligentsia will lead to the victory of the leftist reformist wing of the bourgeoisie, which will begin to implement a program of rapprochement (convergence) with socialism, i.e. social progress, peaceful coexistence and collaboration with socialism on a world scale and changes in the structure of ownership. This phase includes an expanded role for the intelligentsia and an attack on the forces of racism and militarism (1972-85). (The various stages overlap.)

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In the third stage, the Soviet Union and the United States, having overcome their alienation, solve the problem of saving the poorer half of the world. The above-mentioned 20 per cent tax on the national income of developed countries is applied. Gigantic fertilizer factories and irrigations systems using atomic power will be built, the resources of the sea will be used to a vastly greater extent, indigenous personnel will be trained, and industrialization will be carried out. Gigantic factories will produce synthetic amino acids, and synthesize proteins, fats and carbohydrates. At the same time disarmament will proceed (1972-90).

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In the fourth stage, the socialist convergence will reduce differences in social structure, promote intellectual freedom, science and economic progress and lead to creation of a world government and the smoothing of national contradictions (1980-2000). During this period decisive progress can be expected in the field of nuclear power, both on the basis of uranium and thorium and, probably, deuterium and lithium.

Some authors consider it likely that explosive breeding (the reproduction of fertile materials such as plutonium, uranium 233 and tritium) may be used in subterranean or other enclosed explosions.

During this period the expansion of space exploration will require thousands of people to work and live continuously on other planets and on the moon, on artificial satellites and on asteroids whose orbits will have been changed by nuclear explosions.

The synthesis of materials that are superconductors at room temperature may completely revolutionize electrical technology, cybernetics, transportation and communications. Progress in biology (in this and subsequent periods) will make possible effective control and direction of all life processes at the levels of the cell, organism, ecology and society, from fertility and aging to psychic processes and heredity.

If such an all-encompassing scientific and technological revolution, promising uncounted benefits for mankind, is to be possible and safe, it will require the greatest possible scientific foresight and care and concern for human values of a moral, ethical and personal character. (I touched briefly on the danger of a countless bureaucratic use of the scientific and technological revolution in a divided world in the section on "Dangers," but could add a great deal more.) Such a revolution will be possible and safe only under highly intelligent worldwide guidance.

The foregoing program presumes:

(a) worldwide interest in overcoming the present divisions;

(b) the expectation that modifications in both the socialist and capitalist countries will tend to reduce contradictions and differences;

(c) worldwide interest of the intelligentsia, the working class and other progressive forces in a scientific demo-

cratic approach to politics, economics and culture;

(d) the absence of unsurmountable obstacles to economic development in both world economic systems that might otherwise lead inevitably into a blind alley, despair and annihilation.

Every honorable and thinking person who has not been poisoned by narrow-minded indifference will seek to insure that future development will be along the lines of the better alternative. However only broad, open discussion, without the pressure of fear and prejudice, will help the majority to adopt the correct and best course of action.

Proposals Summarized

In conclusion, I will sum up some of the concrete proposals of varying degrees of importance that have been discussed in the text. These proposals, addressed to the leadership of the country, do not exhaust the content of the article.

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The strategy of peaceful coexistence and collaboration must be deepened in every way. Scientific methods and principles of international policy will have to be worked out, based on scientific prediction of the immediate and more distant consequences.

[2]

The initiative must be seized in working out a broad program of struggle against hunger.

[3]

A law on press and information must be drafted, widely discussed and adopted, with the aim not only of ending irresponsible and irrational censorship, but of encouraging self-study in our society, fearless discussion and the search for truth. The law must provide for the material resources of freedom of thought.

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All anticonstitutional laws and decrees violating human rights must be abrogated.

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Political prisoners must be amnestied and some of the recent political trials must be reviewed (for example, the Daniel-Sinyavsky and Galanskov-Ginzburg cases). The camp regime of political prisoners must be promptly relaxed.

[6]

The exposure of Stalin must be carried through to the end, to the complete truth, and not just to the carefully weighed half-truths dictated by caste considerations. The influence of neo-Stalinists in our political life must be restricted in every way (the text mentioned, as an example, the case of S. Trapznikov, who enjoys too much influence).

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The economic reform must be deepened in every way and the area of experimentation expanded, with conclusions based on the results.

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A law on geophysics must be adopted after broad discussion, and ultimately become part of world efforts in this area.

With this article the author addresses the leadership of our country and all its citizens as well as all people of goodwill throughout the world. The author is aware of the controversial character of many of his statements. His purpose is open, frank discussion under conditions of publicity.

In conclusion a textological comment. In the process of discussion of previous drafts of this article, some incomplete and in some respects one-sided texts have been circulated. Some of them contained certain passages that were inept in form and tact and were included through oversight. The author asks readers to bear this in mind. The author is deeply grateful to readers of preliminary drafts who communicated their friendly comments and thus helped improve the article and refine a number of basic statements.

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