

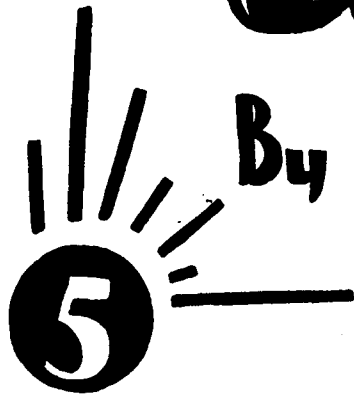
WHY we

Defend

The Soviet

Union

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

FOREWORD

THIS PAMPHLET consists of a series of six articles published in the SOCIALIST APPEAL (Feb. 10-Mar. 16) for the purpose of explaining and justifying the general policy of the *Socialist Workers' Party* with reference to the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union as applied to the Soviet-Finnish war.

The peace that ended that war does not bring to an end the question of whether or not the working masses should defend the Soviet Union. That Stalin offered peace to Finland before he conquered all of that country, as it was his obvious intention to do when the Red Army first invaded Finland, was due primarily to his desire to avoid a major war and thus avoid the danger of being overthrown either as a result of a revolution or of a successful imperialist attack.

Many among middle-class democrats and radicals of various types would have us believe that Stalin has entered into a partnership with Hitler for the purpose of destroying and dividing the British Empire between them, yes, even of conquering and dividing the whole world. The invasion of Poland and Finland and the concessions that he compelled Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania to give him furnish the evidence for this theory. But these actions of Stalin can be explained far better by the theory that he is anxious to obtain defensive footholds against a possible future attack either by France and England or by Germany or by all three combined. It should be obvious to all who are not blinded by hatred of Stalin or anxious to incite the masses against the Soviet Union that the U.S.S.R. is totally unprepared to wage a sustained offensive against a first class power—something Stalin would have to do if he were seriously contemplating the seizure of any substantial portion of the world now under the control of any of the great powers. It must be assumed that Stalin knows this as well as anybody else.

But the ruler of the Kremlin can only propose. His intention to avoid a major war does not mean that he will succeed in doing so. When Finland refused to accept his terms he launched an attack in order to save his prestige as well as to obtain defensive bases. The invasion almost involved him in a war with France and England.

According to all indications the period of peace for Stalin will

be of shorter rather than longer duration. Be that as it may the principle of defending the Soviet Union regardless of the actions of Stalin will be applicable whenever the Soviet Union is at war with a capitalist country. We do not base our policy of unconditional defense upon Stalin's diplomatic or military maneuvers. We have been condemning these maneuvers in no uncertain terms and shall continue to do so. The existence of nationalized property established by the November Revolution and representing a tremendous step forward in the history of mankind is the basis of our defense of the Soviet Union.

As against capitalism we shall defend the Soviet Union regardless of Stalin's crimes.

Written for popular consumption the articles do not presume to give a thorough analysis of the nature of the Soviet Union and the reasons and methods for its defense. The interested reader is referred to the writings of Trotsky for an exhaustive analysis of the whole subject. In the Feb. 1940 issue of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* there appears the theses of the *Socialist Workers' Party*, giving in succinct form all the important aspects of the problem.

Sufficient, I hope, appears in the following pages to indicate that the only certain defense of the Soviet Union lies in the extension of the socialist revolution. Surrounded by a capitalism which, if not overthrown by the working masses, must inevitably be subjected to the rule of fascism, the Soviet Union cannot hope to endure. In the end it will be either the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries or the end of the Soviet Union.

By his policy of alliances with one imperialist bandit as against another Stalin is unable to defend the Soviet Union. Not that we contend that such an alliance is impermissible in and of itself. What is criminal is to create the illusion that these alliances can save the Soviet Union and depend upon them rather than upon the extension of the revolution. It is no longer possible to trust Stalin with defending the Soviet Union. The workers must clearly understand that only they can defend the Soviet Union and primarily by carrying the class struggle to its logical conclusion, the establishment of a soviet government in their own countries.

Not only does Stalin create the impression that his alliances with capitalist governments are all-important; he actually calls a halt to the class struggle in those capitalist countries with which he is allied. The Communist parties, at his command, advocated fighting for capitalist democracy at the time when Stalin was angling

for an alliance with France and England against Hitler; now the same parties are strangely silent about Hitler Germany and concentrate their attacks on British and French imperialism. For revolutionary Marxists it is a matter of principle to continue the revolutionary struggle against the capitalist class of countries at war with the Soviet Union and those allied with the Soviet Union.

In defending the Soviet Union by revolutionary methods, independently of the Stalinist bureaucracy and against it, we are defending only those gains of the November Revolution not yet destroyed by the Stalinists. We are not defending the "socialism" of Stalin—a "socialism" that furnishes to the working masses a low standard of living, extreme inequality, suppression of every form of democracy and freedom; we are not defending the bureaucratic degeneration. We are defending the basic structure of the socialism of tomorrow: collectivized property in the means of production.

It is not an easy task that we have undertaken. The crimes of Stalin make it well-nigh impossible to convince the average worker that he ought to defend the Soviet Union. He sees no distinction between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union. But the difficulty of the task cannot possibly deter us from following a policy demanded by the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

Destroying the Stalinist bureaucracy and regenerating the Soviet Union is a sacred duty of revolutionary workers everywhere. That means defending the Soviet Union against imperialism and above all it means the education and organization of the masses for the destruction of their "own" imperialism.

March 29, 1940

BY THE AUTHOR

Why We Defend the Soviet Union

I.

WHAT attitude should a class-conscious worker adopt towards the Soviet-Finnish war?

The problem is in reality not so difficult as some people would have us believe. The worker who does not permit himself to be confused by the propaganda of the capitalist press, by the whinings of all the varieties of middle-class intellectuals, including those who call themselves "socialists" and those who use Marxist phraseology; the worker who bases himself on the fundamentals of revolutionary Marxism and who approaches the whole problem from the standpoint of the historic interests of the working class, will readily agree that the policy adopted by the Socialist Workers Party is not only clear and simple to understand, but is the only policy that is in harmony with the principles of revolutionary socialism and therefore one hundred per cent correct.

Revolutionary Roots of the Soviet Union

THE revolutionary worker, in trying to arrive at a correct conclusion as to what attitude he should take towards the struggle between the Soviet Union and Finland, cannot possibly forget the different roots of these two states. The Soviet Union was born as the result of the greatest revolutionary upheaval in the history of mankind. Under the leadership of Lenin the Russian masses destroyed the capitalist army, police force, jails, legislative, executive and judicial organs, in a word, the capitalist state that protected the interests of the Russian capitalists and landlords. Under the leadership of Lenin the Russian masses created a new type of state, the Soviet state, based on the idea that the workers should control their own destinies both politically and economically. The workers' state proceeded to nationalize all industry. The capitalists fled the country.

It is true that the terrible conditions under which the revolution was consummated did not permit the workers'

state to put into practice the degree of democracy that Lenin dreamed of, but in spite of everything the Russian workers had greater freedom and greater rights under the early Soviet regime than any group of workers ever had in the history of mankind. Their victorious struggle against the armies of the Russian, French, English and American capitalists testifies to that fact.

Reactionary Roots of Bourgeois Finland

Now let us take a look at the origin of Finland. The story is simple. Under the leadership of Mannerheim and supported, first by the German imperialists and then by the English imperialists, the Finnish white guards succeeded in defeating the Finnish workers, exterminating tens of thousands of them physically and establishing on their blood and bones a country which was to serve as one of the buffer states against the Soviet Union. In the course of some years a veneer of capitalist democracy was smeared over but hardly succeeded in concealing the capitalist exploitation which exists there. Essentially it is the same Finland that was created by virtue of the defeat of the Finnish workers and the same Mannerheim is still at the head of this country.

Is Anything Left of the Russian Revolution?

IS THERE anything left of the revolution, of the work of the Russian masses guided by Lenin? This is the second question that we must ask ourselves. For, obviously, if there is nothing left of the revolution we need not concern ourselves at all with the question whether or not to defend the Soviet Union. The revolutionary worker can make up his mind only on the basis of the answer to the question: Is there anything worth while saving in the Soviet Union?

The leaders of the revolution of November 1917 had as their fundamental aim the achievement of socialism, the establishment of a social system where the means of production would be owned by society as a whole, where every human being would have a very high standard of living, where there would be no classes and consequently where there would be no state, that is, no instruments of force for the purpose of keeping any section of society under control. The advanced workers, however, understood

well enough that such a social system could not be achieved unless the proletarian revolution was extended to the most advanced capitalist countries.

The more immediate aim, therefore, of the advanced Russian workers was to overthrow their own capitalists, establish a workers' state to prevent a possible restoration of capitalism, to organize production, and continue to work for the extension of the revolution. The rule of the workers expresses itself fundamentally in the fact that they have abolished private property in the means of production and have established nationalized property.

The rule of any class can assume different forms. Under capitalism we have absolute or limited monarchies, democratic or fascist governments. The rule of the working class can also assume different forms depending upon the particular conditions prevailing. But the aim of the advanced workers has always been and should always be to achieve the greatest possible degree of democracy in a workers' state. That was the aim of Lenin and of the Russian workers.

Democratic Soviets to Bureaucracy

BUT circumstances prevented the achievement of the ideal of a democratic Soviet state. The extreme backwardness of Russia, the imperialist war, the civil war and the throttling of the proletarian revolution in Germany by the Social Democratic leaders, made impossible the attainment of a really democratic state. The bureaucratic forces generated by these objective conditions finally gained control. The victory of Stalin over Trotsky expressed the victory of the bureaucratic over the democratic forces.

Step by step the bureaucracy under Stalin's leadership consolidated its control. Soviet, party, trade union democracy were crushed. Initiative and freedom of thought were suppressed. The process of degeneration set in and the advanced Russian workers were unable to stem the tide of reaction. The bureaucracy gained complete control.

Some overly-hasty people who either do not know or have forgotten that for Marxists the basic criterion is an economic one, jumped to the conclusion that, since the Russian workers lost all their democratic rights, there was no longer any workers' state. On the other hand Trotsky

and those who accept his theories have been tireless in pointing out that so long as the basic achievement of the November revolution remains, so long as nationalized property has not been destroyed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, so long does the Soviet Union remain a workers' state. It is true, no longer the kind of workers' state that we would like to see; it is true, that it is now a workers' state that has degenerated; but it is still a workers' state and will remain such so long as nationalized property and the monopoly of foreign trade remain essentially as they were established by the revolution.

Political Revolution in the Soviet Union

FOLLOWING and analyzing events in the Soviet Union, Trotsky has proposed certain changes in our attitude to the Stalinist bureaucracy. For a long time it appeared possible to change the nature of the regime by methods of reform, but when that possibility disappeared Trotsky did not hesitate to propose the idea, and the Fourth Internationalists did not hesitate to accept the proposal, that reform was no longer possible and that a political revolution was necessary to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy.

No one denies that Stalin has introduced some changes which affect nationalized property in the Soviet Union. No one denies the danger of a change in property relations by virtue of Stalin's policies.

But such a change has not yet been consummated. And once a revolutionary worker, by analyzing all the factors involved, comes to the conclusion that the Soviet Union is still a workers' state, though degenerated; once a revolutionary worker clearly sees that nationalized property still exists and that therefore there is something worth while saving he can easily solve the problem of what his attitude should be in the war that is being waged between the Soviet Union and Finland.

II.

SINCE its birth our party has stood for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist world. And for many years before the existence of the Socialist

Workers Party, the Trotskyists considered that idea as absolutely essential to their program.

Our policy of unconditional defense is based on the fact that nationalized property constitutes the foundation of the Soviet state and for us nationalized property is a tremendous step forward in the development of mankind. Marxists consider the development of the productive forces as the basic criterion of progress. That the destruction of capitalism in its period of decay and the substitution of nationalized industry permits the productive forces to develop at a remarkable rate has been proved by the great industrial growth that has taken place in the Soviet Union, and this in spite of the Stalinist leadership. The unconditional defense of the Soviet Union means the unconditional defense of nationalized property against the capitalist world.

Distinction Between Stalin and U.S.S.R.

THROUGH all the years that we have been insisting on the necessity of defending the Soviet Union unconditionally against imperialism we have been the most consistent and implacable opponents of the Stalinist regime, from the revolutionary point of view. Every important policy pursued by Stalin we attacked; but we never swerved from our policy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. Some people thought we were inconsistent; but they failed to understand that we make a fundamental distinction between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union as a "complex of social institutions" based upon the October Revolution. Just as a revolutionary worker makes a distinction between his trade union and its reactionary leadership.

Unconditional defense has never meant and could not possibly have meant that we support the Red Army in every engagement into which Stalin sees fit to lead it.

It is only when the Red Army is fighting a capitalist enemy and thus protecting the Soviet Union from that enemy that we favor and work for the victory of the Red Army. Unconditional defense against imperialism means exactly what it says: whenever and wherever the Soviet Union is involved in any struggle against a capitalist enemy

we are for the defense of the Soviet Union, regardless of the causes or circumstances that led to the war.

Bureaucracy and Nationalized Property

IS THE Stalinist bureaucracy interested in defending nationalized property? It is a bureaucracy of the degenerated workers' state based on nationalized property, and the interests of that bureaucracy are bound up with the nationalized property, which it must defend in order to preserve its existence. Green and Lewis are "labor lieutenants of capitalism" in the ranks of labor; but they are compelled to defend the trade unions against the bosses because their very existence depends on the existence and strength of the trade unions.

It is undoubtedly true that neither the Stalinist bureaucracy nor the bureaucracies led by Green and Lewis defend the interests of the workers and their institutions effectively. Their policies weaken those institutions. But that is a reason why the workers should get rid of them, and not an argument for refusing to defend the workers' state or the trade unions.

A principle that our party has taught and shall continue to teach is that the workers must never turn over the task of removing the Stalinist bureaucracy to the capitalist enemy. They must reserve that privilege and duty for themselves because the destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the capitalist enemy can lead to nothing but reactionary results.

It is only necessary to analyze the war between the Soviet Union and Finland in the light of the general principles mentioned above and in the first article of this series, in order to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the policy which a class-conscious worker should follow. In other words, it is necessary to ask if the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist or imperialist world is applicable to the war in Finland.

Who Was "Aggressor" Doesn't Decide Question

IN THE first instance it is essential to exclude the factor of who first attacked whom. The fact that in 1914 Germany began the actual hostilities by launching an attack on Belgium was a matter of indifference to Lenin in arriving at

his conclusion that the war was an imperialist war and that it was necessary for the workers in both imperialist camps to follow the policy of revolutionary defeatism. The fact that Germany attacked Poland could not possibly lead any revolutionary Marxist to urge the workers to defend the reactionary Polish state. For Marxists the character of a war "is determined not by the initial episode taken by itself but by the main moving forces of the war, by its whole development and by the consequences to which it finally leads." This is what the thesis of the Fourth International states and the statement can not be challenged successfully. Not the violation of neutrality or threats or an invasion by any particular country but the underlying economic and social factors and the probable consequences of the war should determine our attitude to it.

This does not mean that we condone the invasion of Finland by Stalin. I shall deal with this crime later. But in determining our attitude *while the struggle is actually going on* that factor is not the determining factor.

Finland An Outpost of Imperialism

ONCE more we remind the reader that Finland was born as a result of a victory of the counter-revolution led by Mannerheim and supported first by the German and then by the Allied imperialists. It is this state which is at war with the Soviet Union. Simpletons of the Socialist Party and lackeys of the capitalists in the Social Democratic Federation will point to the fact that representatives of labor and the farmers are in the Finnish government. But Marxists understand that the real rulers of the country are the capitalists and landlords, and these are inextricably tied up with the imperialist world. Finland is a buffer state, an outpost of imperialism, and its struggle against the Soviet Union is, in the last analysis, a struggle of the imperialist world against the Soviet Union.

To convince oneself of that simple fact, it is only necessary to consider the reaction of the capitalist world to the invasion of Finland. It is certain that even in Germany the sympathy of the ruling class is entirely with Finland but this sympathy is muted for the present because Hitler needs Stalin's support. In the whole capitalist world, outside of Germany, all the "democrats," including the Pope, Franco

and Mussolini, have not hesitated to show on whose side their sympathies lie and this fact alone should almost be sufficient by itself to indicate to a class-conscious worker that he should be on the opposite side.

When Hitler invaded Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, the other imperialists grumbled a little because a rival of theirs had the nerve to do things in such a high-handed fashion. When Ethiopia was invaded by Mussolini there was also a tempest in a tea pot. But when Stalin invaded Finland the reaction was altogether different. For the simple reason that in a struggle between the Soviet Union and any part of the imperialist world, imperialism as a whole feels threatened.

The League of Nations, dead as a dodo under ordinary circumstances, suddenly revived and expelled the Soviet Union in one day. The Spanish fascist press, echoing the Pope, called for a Christian army to fight the Soviet Union. The "humanitarian," Herbert Hoover, took the lead in defending the "democracy" of Mannerheim. Roosevelt, who was responsible for the embargo against Loyalist Spain in its life and death struggle against Franco, is assuming the leadership in the movement to help the Finnish capitalist army defeat the Soviet Union.

Imperialists Seek the Defeat of the U.S.S.R.

CONDITIONS are such as to make inadvisable, at the present moment, an open declaration of war against the Soviet Union by France and England. Bolder imperialist voices in those countries are demanding just that; but more cautious counsel may continue to prevail. Nevertheless, with the passing of every day, it is becoming more clearly recognized that the Finnish-Soviet struggle is one of the fronts of the war, in fact today the only active front. Daladier and Chamberlain have stated openly that much more help has been sent to Finland than the average citizen is aware of and that still more aid will be forthcoming.

And is there any revolutionary worker naive enough to believe that Chamberlain and Daladier are interested in saving democracy, Finnish or otherwise? Can there be the slightest doubt that the imperialist world looks upon Finland as its protagonist?

No matter what the results of the Finnish-Soviet war may be—whether Stalin succeeds in his designs (as seems more probable) or gives up his attempt to conquer Finland; whether the Allies will openly declare war on the Soviet Union or will refrain from doing that; or whether a peace can be patched up between Hitler and the Allied imperialists and a combined attack made upon the Soviet Union—no matter what may develop in the near future, it is certain that right now the struggle in Finland is essentially the beginning of a struggle of the imperialist world against the Soviet Union.

Let the revolutionary worker ask himself: what would be the reaction of the imperialists to a defeat of the Red Army by the Finnish capitalist army? Would not the counter-revolutionaries the world over, including those still living in the Soviet Union, be overjoyed?

A class-conscious worker can be fairly certain that what will bring joy to the imperialists, to the Hoovers, Roosevelts, Chamberlains and Daladiers, has nothing in it that is good for the workers.

The only conclusion that the class-conscious worker can possibly reach is that, as between the Red Army connected with and, in its own way, defending the Soviet Union based on nationalized property, and the Finnish capitalist army connected with and representing the imperialist world, he must favor and work for the victory of the Red Army. Analyzing all the factors involved, the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union is applicable in the present struggle in Finland.

III.

IT WOULD indeed be fortunate if, once having arrived at the conclusion that to defend the Soviet Union is the duty of every worker, we could simply proceed to say to the Russian, the Finnish and the workers of all other countries: do your utmost to see to it that the Red Army is victorious and to make Finland part of the territory of the Soviet Union.

As simple as all that would be our task if Lenin and Trotsky were still at the helm in the Soviet Union. The problem, at present, alas, is not so simple.

The degeneration of the workers' state under the Stalinist regime makes the task of defending the Soviet Union

far more complicated. At the same time that we are engaged in defending it against the capitalist army, it is necessary to struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

They who look for a simple solution can find it either in defending bourgeois Finland or in being indifferent to the victory of either side. The Stalinists also have a simple solution: defend the Soviet Union by defending everything that Stalin does. Revolutionary Marxists, however, must carefully analyze all the factors involved and decide what they are defending and how they should defend it.

Why We Irreconcilably Struggle Against Stalin

OUR struggle against Stalin has been motivated fundamentally on the ground that his ideas and policies weaken the Soviet Union and consequently the world revolution. The proposition can likewise be put the other way around. Stalin's ideas and policies weaken the world revolution and consequently the Soviet Union. The two are inextricably bound together.

The Russian workers have two enemies, the imperialists without, the bureaucracy within. Both endanger the existence of the state which the Russian workers created by superhuman sacrifice. The question arises: does the defense of the Soviet Union require that, during a war against imperialism, the struggle against the bureaucracy should cease? And the answer is a decisive "No!" If the Russian workers see a chance to overthrow the Stalinist regime they should do so even when the Soviet Union is involved in a war. The Soviet Union will thereby be strengthened tremendously.

The Main Enemy Is World Imperialism!

BUT it must be clearly understood at all times that the struggle against the bureaucracy should be subordinated to the struggle against the imperialist enemy. The main enemy is imperialism and during a war between the Soviet Union and imperialism it is absolutely imperative for the workers to prevent a victory of imperialism. It would be a tremendous victory for the workers if *they* should succeed in overthrowing the Stalinist bureaucracy but it would constitute a disastrous defeat if the *imperialists* should destroy the bureaucracy, because the destruction of the bureaucracy

by the imperialists would result in the destruction of the Soviet Union.

During the Civil War in Spain the Fourth International followed a tactic with reference to the Loyalist forces that the Russian workers should follow with reference to Stalinism. The advanced Spanish workers had the double task of fighting against Franco and, at the same time, trying to mobilize the workers for the overthrow of the Loyalist government. We stated that unless the Spanish workers succeeded in kicking out the Stalinist-backed Negrin, the fascists would be victorious. We proved correct, but at the time of the struggle against the fascists it would have been criminal for us to urge the workers not to fight the fascists because it was also necessary to overthrow the Loyalist government. At that particular time the main task was to destroy fascism.

Revolutionary workers in a union controlled by reactionaries understand very well that during a strike the reactionary leadership does not and cannot conduct the most effective struggle against the bosses and they would not hesitate to oust the reactionary leadership even during a strike. But they also understand that during a strike the main enemy is the boss and they concentrate their efforts to win the strike against the boss. In other words, they subordinate the struggle against the reactionary leadership to the struggle against the boss.

Revolutionary workers in an imperialist country at war consider that the main enemy is at home and carry on the struggle against the ruling class regardless of the effect on the front. Not so in the case of the Soviet Union, a workers' state, based on nationalized property. There they must at all costs prevent a victory of the imperialist armies.

A Revolutionary Policy for the Finnish Workers

REVOLUTIONARY internationalists have always insisted that in any war against the Soviet Union the primary task of the workers outside of the Soviet Union is: the proletarian revolution, the best method of defending the Soviet Union. And the Finnish workers have that task now as they had before the invasion by the Red Army.

To that extent the task of the Finnish workers does not differ in any way from the task confronting the Polish workers in 1920 when the Red Army under Lenin and Trotsky invaded Poland. But only to that extent. In 1920 the Polish workers did not have to fear the Soviet regime; it was their regime as well as that of the Russian workers; they could fight not only for the revolution in Poland but also for the joining of Poland to the Soviet Union. They did not have to make a distinction between the Soviet Union and the Lenin-Trotsky regime.

But in 1940 the advanced workers of Finland find their task far more complicated and difficult than that of the Polish workers in 1920. They are confronted by the possibility of being swallowed up by the Stalinist regime and can hardly look forward with enthusiasm to that possibility. It is only a lesser evil in comparison with the evil of permitting the imperialists, through the Finnish army, to defeat the Red Army and thus prepare for the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The revolutionary workers in Finland should be agitating for that best of all possible solutions: a Soviet Finland independent of the Stalinist regime. In a struggle between the army of a Soviet Finland and the army of Stalin we would do our utmost to—help defeat Stalin's army.

The Red Army's Victory Is A Lesser Evil!

BUT while the politically advanced workers of Finland should constantly keep the goal of an independent Soviet Finland before the eyes of the Finnish workers, they dare not be indifferent to the actual struggle that is going on between the Red Army and the Finnish capitalist army representing the interests of world imperialism. Understanding what is at stake, the class-conscious Finnish workers must unhesitatingly choose the lesser evil of a victory of the Red Army.

Those who have been thrown off their balance by the crime of Stalin in invading Finland will exclaim: what, you want the Finnish workers to accept slavery under the Stalinist regime? No, we do not want that. If all the Finnish workers would act as we would like them to, they would immediately establish a Soviet Finland and struggle for its independence against the Stalinist bureaucracy, call-

ing upon the Russian workers to join them. But at present it is a question what the advanced workers should do *before* they get a majority and *while* the struggle is actually going on. Understanding the historic importance of defending what is left of the October Revolution, of defending nationalized property, they will do their utmost to prevent a defeat of the Red Army at the hands of the Finnish capitalist army.

IV.

MANY and serious have been the crimes of Stalin from the very beginning of his regime. In fact, his internal and his foreign policies constitute one colossal crime against the interests of the workers of the whole world.

Bitterly as we condemn and fight against his crimes and betrayals, nevertheless we do not yield an inch of our fundamental position of defending the Soviet Union against the capitalist world. We distinguish between the Soviet Union based on nationalized property and the Stalinist bureaucracy capable of the worst crimes against the working class.

When Stalin expelled, hounded and jailed the Bolshevik-Leninists led by Trotsky; when he made an alliance with French imperialism and ordered the French Communists to cease their anti-military activities; when, by frameups, by torture, by outright murder he exterminated the generation of Bolsheviks who organized and led the revolution; when he bought his way to the leadership of the Spanish Loyalists and crushed the Spanish workers' revolution;—when he committed these crimes we did not eliminate the slogan of Defense of the Soviet Union from our program? Why?

Because the crimes of Stalin, taken separately or together, did not change the nature of the Soviet Union. They undermined the basic structure; they weakened the Soviet Union but they did not destroy nationalized property and we therefore continued to insist on the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

Came the Hitler-Stalin pact. The liberals were dreadfully shocked. They had depended on Stalin to save their democracy and now the great savior changed playmates and left them holding the bag.

Sad to say, some of our own sympathizers were shaken

out of their equilibrium by Stalin's "betrayal" of the "democratic" nations.

Did Stalin betray anyone when he signed the pact with his erstwhile arch enemy? Undoubtedly, he betrayed the working masses, but essentially no more and no less than when he made a pact with imperialist France. If we are going to measure betrayals by degree, his crushing of the Spanish revolution was by far worse than the signing of the pact with Hitler.

Stalin's Alliances—Crimes Against The Workers

IT MUST be clearly understood that, in and of itself, there is nothing criminal for the leaders of the Soviet Union to make a temporary alliance with one imperialist nation against another. Existing in an imperialist world, a workers' state must of necessity take advantage of the conflicts between the imperialist nations in order to strengthen itself to a certain extent.

What constitutes Stalin's crime in making these alliances is that he ties the working masses to that section of the imperialists with which he enters into an alliance. When he was courting the democratic imperialists, his agency, the Communist International, was backing France and England against Hitler. Now that he has entered into an alliance with Hitler, the Communists are in fact supporting Hitler. Not so openly, it is true. But openly enough so that an intelligent worker can see what their real game is.

In his alliance with Hitler, Stalin proved his contempt for the workers—he did not hesitate a moment to violate their democratic sentiments. He proved that he never was interested in fighting fascism because it is the mortal enemy of the workers but simply because it represented a danger to his regime. As soon as conditions made Hitler willing to make peace with him, Stalin dropped the fight against fascism.

We Predicted the Stalin-Hitler Pact

OUR party was not shocked, not even surprised, by the pact. We foresaw the possibility of such an alliance; we warned the workers against that possibility. The Stalinists

raged at us; the Stalinist liberals sneered at the "fantastic" idea that Stalin could make an alliance with Hitler.

We turned out to be correct. And events have demonstrated that the pact was a betrayal of the workers. Recognizing it as such, we ask all our critics: what change in the economic structure of the Soviet Union did the Hitler-Stalin pact usher in? We have thus far heard no answer. In fact the economic structure remains the same, and our policy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the imperialist world must still be followed.

Following upon the heels of the pact came the invasion of Poland by the Red Army. More liberals left the Stalinist movement. The whole capitalist press began to howl about Stalin's "imperialism." Norman Thomas and his followers took up the cry; the Lovestoneites joined in, and, alas, some of our close sympathizers permitted themselves to be led astray by the crime of Stalin and by the pressure of capitalist public opinion.

We too condemned the invasion, but from a totally different viewpoint. All others condemned it as an "imperialist venture." We condemned it because it confused the masses, undermined their faith in the Soviet Union and thus weakened it in the struggle which some or all of the imperialist nations will inevitably wage against it. We condemned the invasion in the same way that revolutionary workers condemn reactionary activities of the leaders of their trade union, activities which would not in the least prevent them from defending the union against the bosses.

Revolutionary socialists do not look upon boundaries as sacred. When the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1920 and Georgia in 1921 no class conscious worker hesitated for a moment in supporting it. "Socialists" condemned the invasions of those years as "red imperialism" but that was to be expected from lackeys of the capitalists. If and when it is necessary for the Soviet Union, in order to defend itself, to invade the territory of some capitalist nation, it would be perfectly justified in doing so. But it should be done under circumstances where the workers of the world can clearly see the necessity for the invasion. The sentiments of the workers must be taken into consideration

because in the last analysis the defense of the Soviet Union depends upon them.

Gains From Invasions Outweighed by Damage

Now it is true that to some extent the Soviet Union has gained certain advantages by occupying a section of Poland. But all of the advantages put together cannot compensate for the damage the invasion has done because of the terrible effect it has had on the workers of the world.

Had Stalin invaded Poland in order to struggle against Hitler, no class-conscious worker would have objected; it was criminal for him not only to invade Poland but to permit Hitler to seize the best section of Poland. The invasion, in and of itself, is not the crime. The circumstances under which it took place and the effect on the workers make it a crime.

The same thing is true of the invasion of Finland. It is only a simpleton who can condemn Stalin for wanting to fortify important bases on the Gulf of Finland, in order to protect Leningrad against an attack either by England and France or by Germany or by all three. Only middle-class liberals or middle-class "socialists" will take the attitude that the Soviet Union has no right to ask a smaller state to cede important bases for its defense. Class-conscious workers make a distinction between capitalist states and the Soviet Union. It does not at all follow that what we oppose as far as capitalist states are concerned we should oppose in a workers' state, even though degenerated.

We condemn the invasion of Finland not because the Soviet Union has become "imperialist," but because under the circumstances it had a terrible effect upon the workers of the world. It was not proved to the workers that the invasion was absolutely necessary to defend the Soviet Union. No attempt was made to appeal to the Finnish workers before the invasion took place. Ridiculous lies were spread about Finland threatening to attack the Soviet Union. The same tactics were used by Stalin in invading Finland as by Hitler in invading Poland. Even if Stalin gets what he wants, it will not be sufficient compensation for the loss of faith in the Soviet Union amongst the workers.

We Defend Unions Despite False Leaders

BUT the invasion is one thing and the defense of the Soviet Union is another. If we condemn Stalin's invasion, that does not mean that we change our attitude to the Soviet Union.

There are those who argue that even if we consider the Soviet Union as a workers' state we cannot defend it in every struggle that the Stalinists see fit to throw it into. Suppose a trade union, they argue, calls a strike to compel a boss to exclude Negroes. Revolutionary workers would not support that kind of a strike. Very true. But if that strike, called for a bad purpose, develops into a struggle between the union and the boss and the defeat of the union by the boss must inevitably result in the weakening of the union, then class-conscious workers defend the union against the boss regardless of the cause of the strike. The workers themselves must punish the treacherous leaders and not permit the boss to defeat the union.

Even if we should consider that Stalin's invasion had an objective which we would condemn, it would not alter our attitude, because the struggle in Finland is essentially, as I explained in a previous article, a struggle between the Soviet Union and capitalist Finland representing the capitalist world. In such a struggle we defend the Soviet Union.

Stalin's Overthrow Is Task of the Workers

STALIN's objective, however, as I mentioned above, is not something that we can condemn. The invasion is what we condemn. Frequently it happens that reactionary trade union leaders want to organize a section of workers who are opposed to unionism and the reactionary leaders, instead of educating these backward workers, send up gangsters to beat and intimidate them, thus antagonizing not only these but other workers. Nevertheless, if a strike should develop under circumstances where the union is placed in a bad position in the eyes of public opinion, including the public opinion of workers, there would be nothing else for us to do except to support the union to the utmost.

Because we condemn the reactionary leaders of the Soviet Union for invading Finland does not mean that we should permit the Finnish bourgeois army representing world capitalism to defeat the Red Army representing the workers' state.

Because of its criminal acts against the working masses the Stalinist bureaucracy must be overthrown—but only by the workers. As against the capitalist world the Soviet Union must be defended at all costs.

V.

THE WAR being waged between France and England on the one hand and Germany on the other is an imperialist war. A great many people make that assertion without, however, understanding the real meaning of the term "imperialist". There are many who dump the Soviet Union into the class of imperialist countries and to prove this they point to the invasion of Poland and Finland. The net result of applying the term "imperialist" to the Soviet Union is to give the workers the idea that it is folly to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist countries because it too is an imperialist country.

When we say that Germany, England and France are fighting an imperialist war we mean something more than that the people who happen to be at the head of the government of those countries have bad motives. It is true that Hitler's aim is to destroy the British Empire and obtain the colonies that Britain now possesses. But it is important to understand that German industry needs these colonies in order to obtain raw materials, markets for its products, and for the investment of German capital.

Great Britain on the other hand wants to retain these colonies for the same reasons that Germany wants to get them. The ruling classes of both countries desire to exploit the hundreds of millions of colonial peoples. The same is true of the French ruling class.

Why? Because these countries are imperialist countries: their competitive capitalism has developed into monopoly capitalism; the banks (finance capitalism) have replaced industrial capitalism as the real power; every one of these countries needs colonies in which to invest their surplus capital and sell their products.

If and when the United States enters into the war it will be an imperialist war on its part no matter how many times Roosevelt will assert that it is a war to save the world from fascism. The United States, being an imperialist nation, cannot wage a war that is not imperialist in character.

Lenin's Definition of Imperialism

MARXISTS have insisted on a very strict use of the term "imperialism"; especially since Lenin wrote his pamphlet on imperialism, in which he severely condemned everyone who did not use the term "imperialism" to characterize the latest stage in the development of capitalist nations. It should be used only to apply to the expansionist policy of finance capitalism.

There are of course many people who use the term "imperialist" to designate any kind of aggression, but they are not Marxists, although they might claim to be such.

When the Red Army, in the early days of the Soviet Union, invaded Georgia, the reactionary "socialists" set up a howl about "Bolshevik imperialism." At present every writer in the capitalist press, every liberal and every pseudo-socialist insists that the invasion of Finland by the Red Army is a sign of "red" or "Stalinist imperialism."

Marxists, however, will continue to ask: Is the Soviet Union a capitalist country? If not, then the term "imperialist" to characterize Stalin's invasions and policies is absolutely incorrect and can only result in confusing the masses and weakening their struggle against real imperialism.

Some radicals of various kinds and types insist that we can recognize the difference between the economy existing in the Soviet Union and that of the capitalist countries and still use the term "imperialist" to describe Stalin's policies. They even attempt to justify the use of the term by stating that the aim of Stalin is to increase the "revenue, prestige and power" of the bureaucracy. This is undoubtedly true; but it can be pointed out to these people that the aim of every bureaucracy, including that of the trade unions is to gain "revenue, prestige and power". That, however, is hardly sufficient to transform the trade union bureaucrats into imperialists, unless one wants to use the term in such a broad sense as to make it meaningless.

Imperialism Is the Main Enemy!

CALLING the Soviet Union an imperialist country conceals the fact that the imperialism of France, Germany, England and the United States is the most reactionary phenomenon of modern society and the greatest enemy of the working class and of mankind in general. It is the imperialism of the capitalist countries that causes wars, exploits hundreds of millions of colonial slaves and its "own" workers, causes unemployment and retards the development of the productive forces.

The Russian workers, by expropriating the capitalists and landlords delivered a terrific blow to imperialism. By means of the foreign trade monopoly the Russian workers erected a wall to prevent the economic penetration of the Soviet Union by the forces of imperialism. One-sixth of the earth's surface was thereby closed to the imperialist world which was unable freely to sell its products or invest its capital in the Soviet Union—the greatest blow imperialism has ever received.

It has been the policy of revolutionary Marxists to defend colonial and semi-colonial countries, regardless of the reactionary character of their government, against attack by imperialist countries. When Italy attacked Ethiopia we defended Ethiopia even though its ruler, Haile Selassie, was a slave driver of the worst type. We defend China against Japan even though Chiang-Kai-shek has butchered tens of thousands of Chinese workers. In defending the colonial and semi-colonial nations we follow the principle that, as against imperialism, the independence of the backward countries is progressive. The defeat of any imperialist country trying to subject a colonial people, is a blow to all of imperialism, and revolutionary Marxists consider it their duty to help defeat their main enemy, imperialism.

If we defend Ethiopia against Italy and China against Japan, how much more is it obligatory upon us to defend the Soviet Union against the imperialist world, in spite of Stalin? The Soviet Union is completely closed to the imperialist world whereas the colonies, whether they are independent or not, are subjected to imperialist exploitation.

Far-sighted leaders of the capitalist class understand just as well as Marxists that, in the last analysis, the Soviet

Union with its nationalized property and its planned economy must be destroyed or else the whole capitalist world is in danger. Although Stalin's policies have been of tremendous help to the imperialists, nevertheless, it is hardly possible for the imperialists to permit one-sixth of the world's surface to be excluded from their clutches and to be dominated by a different form of economy.

This does not mean that the rivalries and conflicts between the imperialist countries cease to exist. They continue and, as a matter of fact, the imperialists have succeeded in dragging the Soviet Union under Stalin into their conflicts. At times, as at present, the inter-imperialist conflicts may succeed in pushing into the background the contradiction between the social system in the capitalist world and that in the Soviet Union. From all appearances it seems that England and Germany have decided to fight it out to the last before settling scores with the Soviet Union. But they make a serious blunder who close their eyes to the fundamental contradiction that exists between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union, even under the Stalinist regime. Sooner or later that contradiction must lead to an attempt by the imperialist world to destroy the Soviet Union and open up its territory to capitalist exploitation.

Why Stalin Has Nationalized Property

THE UNDISPUTED FACT remains that, within the territory occupied by the Red Army, territory which formerly belonged to Poland, the land and the banks and larger industries were nationalized and thus another section of the world was taken away from capitalism. Stalin could not afford to permit a different ruling class to remain in the territory annexed to the Soviet Union. It is not because Stalin is anxious to advance the interests of the social revolution. All he is anxious to do is to save and strengthen the Stalinist bureaucracy, but by virtue of the fact that this bureaucracy rules over a state where nationalized property exists, it is compelled to destroy capitalism in such territories as it makes part of the Soviet Union.

When Stalin invaded Finland he set up a government which immediately issued a program for the expropriation of the big landlords and for state control of large industry. His aims in Finland were not realized so quickly but the

fact remains that Stalin's course in the territory that he invades and occupies is fundamentally different from that pursued by Hitler—or Chamberlain. Stalin's actions in nationalizing property in the territory he occupied is a confirmation of our theory that the character of the Soviet Union is fundamentally different from the character of capitalist states. It is absolute folly to call imperialism that which in actuality narrows the base of imperialism.

Invasion Reactionary—In What Sense

WHEN the contention is advanced that the invasion of Finland is reactionary, we say: yes, yes, that is true. But reactionary in what sense? Reactionary in the sense that it has discredited the Soviet Union in the eyes of its only real defenders, the working masses. But look on the other side of the battlefield and you behold the imperialist world, the most reactionary thing in existence.

The victory of the Red Army may temporarily strengthen the Stalinist bureaucracy but the defeat of the Red Army will surely strengthen the main enemy of the working class, the imperialist world. Under no circumstances, therefore, can a revolutionary worker be indifferent in a struggle between the Red Army and any army connected with the imperialist world. To work for the victory of the Red Army in such a struggle as against the capitalist army is a duty of every worker, in the Soviet Union, in Finland or anywhere else.

VI.

“TERRIBLE”, cried every middle-class democrat, beginning with the liberals and going on through Norman Thomas and his *Socialist Call*, the Lovestoneites, and even close sympathizers of our movement when we came out for the defense of the Soviet Union although condemning the invasion of Finland. This showed that either they did not understand our program or expected us to do what they did: cave in under the pressure of the bourgeois democrats. The difference between all of these people and ourselves is the difference between the revolutionary Marxists led by Lenin in 1914 and the others who called themselves “socialists.” Lenin did not yield an inch to the capitalists when war actually came, while the others showed that in

reality they were nothing more than middle-class democrats.

"Democratic" Arguments For Support Of Finland

THESE pseudo-Marxist critics almost invariably falsify our position by insisting that our party supports Stalin's invasion. They omit the obvious fact that from the very beginning we have condemned the invasion on the ground that it has discredited the Soviet Union in the eyes of the working masses.

The Socialist party of Norman Thomas and the Lovestoneites have approximately the same position: more or less open support of the Finnish capitalist government. The Lovestoneites are a little more careful and use a few more Marxist phrases than the Thomasites, but essentially they agree that the Red Army should be defeated by the Finnish bourgeois army.

Let us take a glance at the position of our critics, especially those who claim to speak in the name of Marxism. We need not argue with the liberals, the social-democrats and labor bureaucrats, with the people, that is, who openly support the falsehood that the war between England and Germany is a war for democracy against fascism, with the people who, in advance, have promised their whole-hearted support to the American government when it deems it advisable to enter the war. The advanced workers understand these people well and there is no danger that they will follow them.

If there is any danger that the advanced workers, due to their justifiable hatred of the Stalinist bureaucracy, will be led to take a wrong position, it is because there are those who glibly speak in the name of Marxism and advance the false theory that on the basis of Marxist principles we must either support the Finnish government against the Soviet Union or else be indifferent to the victory of either side.

To justify their position both the Socialist party and the Lovestoneites point to the "democratic character" of the Finnish government. They furnish us with figures showing that there are 85 "socialists" in the Finnish parliament and "143 representatives of workers and peasants."

On the same basis, however, the workers should be asked to support France and England. Are there not more representatives of the workers in the parliaments of those countries than in the Reichstag of Germany? These "Marxists" have found a new criterion to determine whether the workers should support one capitalist country as against another, namely, the relative number of representatives of workers in the parliaments of the countries at war!

Revolutionary Marxists can only look with contempt upon these people who have not yet learned or who have forgotten that the capitalist state remains a capitalist state no matter how many "socialists" there may be in parliament, that the capitalist state, in any war, defends the interests of the capitalist class and these interests are of no concern to the workers.

It is only in a case of civil war between fascists and a capitalist democratic government that the workers can give material (but not political) support to the latter. That is what our party advocated in the Spanish civil war. In a war between imperialist countries, the only thing that can possibly be at stake are the rival imperialist interests. In a war between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Finnish capitalist army is not fighting for democracy against fascism. Regardless of the motives and intentions of Stalin, the war between the Soviet Union and Finland is a war of forces representing on the one hand nationalized property and on the other capitalist private property.

The Soviet Union Represents the Future!

BUT do not the Finnish workers live under better conditions than the workers in the Soviet Union? Do they not have a higher standard of living and greater "freedom"? They leave the ground of Marxism who present such arguments.

One thing that every worker must understand is that capitalism is in a stage of decay and with it capitalist democracy. Whether in Finland or in any other part of the capitalist world, the workers face a choice between fascist slavery or the proletarian revolution. Capitalist democracy is doomed and whether it is this year or in ten or twenty years it will be destroyed by the fascists—or by the proletarian revolution establishing a higher form of democracy.

Finland is part of the decaying capitalist world. The foundation of the Soviet Union, nationalized property, represents part of the future world of planned economy and the production of goods for the welfare of the people.

The advanced Finnish workers, considering the historic interests of their class have no alternative but to defend the Soviet Union from the capitalist world.

Helping Mannerheim by "Working Class" Methods

THE NORMAN THOMAS "socialists" have discovered a method by which they are able to claim that they are not helping the Finnish capitalist government but only the Finnish workers. They ask that help be sent through the Finnish trade unions, whose officialdom—house-broken "socialists"—support Mannerheim. But what class is in control in Finland? Have the trade unions the governmental power? Who controls the army which is the most important instrument of the state, especially during a war? Soft-brained "socialists" tell us that Mannerheim and his White generals have been deprived of power. Can one imagine greater nonsense! The creator of the Finnish capitalist state, the butcher of the Finnish workers, "deprived of power" and—and still the commander-in-chief of the armed forces!

Even more miserable are the arguments of the Lovestoneites, who are shouting that the Trotskyites have capitulated to the Stalinists. Coming from the people who up to a few years ago justified every crime of Stalin, including the Moscow frame-up trials, this leaves one flabbergasted. In an article by Donald Graham, in the Feb. 17 *Workers Age*, we are completely laid low by the profound argument that since we support China against Japan in spite of the fact that Chiang-Kai-shek is as ferocious a butcher as Mannerheim we can also support Finland.

For just one little reason, Mr. Graham, does our policy differ. China, a semi-colonial country, is attacked by Japan, an imperialist country; Finland, a capitalist country and the outpost and tool of English imperialism, is attacked by the Soviet Union, a workers' state even though a degenerated one. Isn't that a slight difference?

Yes, the Lovestoneites warn the Finnish workers not to trust the Finnish bourgeoisie "who cannot follow an

independent policy of revolutionary defense" because it is a pawn of imperialism. But please explain how the workers can fight under capitalist control and still "follow an independent policy of revolutionary defense." In a war one either fights under the control of the capitalist class and thus aids it or fights against the capitalist class in control of the government.

A "Radical" Version of Anti-Sovietism

A SMALL GROUP in the Socialist party advocates a policy of defeatism for both camps. The people who advocate such a policy don't want to be caught helping Finland, which they recognize to be a tool of imperialism, but they are for the defeat of both sides. That sounds more revolutionary than helping Finland against the Soviet Union; but assuredly it is just as much against the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

Lenin advocated a policy of revolutionary defeatism for both camps in an imperialist war. He insisted that to carry on the struggle against one's own capitalist class even at the risk of a defeat at the front was a lesser evil than class peace and victory at the front. He was perfectly willing to take the risk of a defeat of his "own" imperialist government. If one tries to get at the basic reasons for his attitude it is clear that Lenin formulated such a policy because on both sides of the war the same property relations prevailed. At the very worst, the workers fighting against their own capitalist class would come under the control of another capitalist class. There would be no change in property relations.

Far different is the situation where a workers' state is involved in a war with a capitalist state. A defeat for the workers' state means the destruction of nationalized property, a higher form of economy; and no revolutionary Marxist can be indifferent to such a possibility.

The argument is advanced that a defeat of the Red Army by the Finnish army would lead the workers in the Soviet Union to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. We cannot exclude that possibility but the far, far greater probability is that a defeat of the Red Army by a capitalist army would result in a capitalist counter-revolution.

History knows no example of a union defeated by the

bosses in a serious struggle coming under the control of revolutionary workers as a result of the defeat. A defeat of the union by the bosses means the destruction of the union. To be for revolutionary defeatism within the Soviet Union is like being for the defeat of a union in a struggle against the boss. All the crimes of a reactionary trade union leadership would not make it any less of a crime on the part of a worker to follow a policy of defeatism in a struggle between the union and a boss.

Will the world revolution gain through a victory of Stalin's Red Army in Finland? That question is supposed to slay all of us who are for the defense of the Soviet Union. We calmly answer: Will the world revolution gain by a victory of the Finnish capitalist army representing the imperialist world? A victory of the Red Army guarantees the continued existence of the first workers' state, thus giving the workers an opportunity to clean out the Stalinist bureaucracy. That will constitute a tremendous victory for the world revolution.

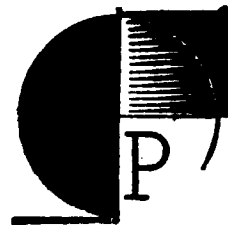
We Remain True To Our Program

How EASY it was to defend the Soviet Union before war actually came! And especially when Stalin was playing with the democratic imperialists! Many a time did we issue the warning that the "friends" of the Soviet Union would scurry to cover when the test of war would come. The Stalinists, the liberals, the "socialists," the Lovestoneites, all proclaimed us to be enemies of the Soviet Union. Why? Because we insisted on making a distinction between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union.

The war came and all these fair-weather defenders of the Soviet Union find one reason or another for scurrying to cover. It is not so easy now to defend the Soviet Union as it was when Stalin was flirting with the democratic imperialists.

Our party does not adopt a program to be followed only during times of peace. Our program of defending the Soviet Union was based on the fundamental fact that nationalized property makes of the Soviet Union a workers' state regardless of Stalin's crimes. No one has shown us why we should change that program.

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