

It Is Bigger Than You Think

by Robert Minor —

Reply to a letter from Mr. J. Hart, printed last Friday, disagreeing with an article of mine of Nov. 7.

THIS is a time of the greatest change that has occurred in the world in several centuries.

The first phase of the change was the revolution of November, 1917, which established a Socialist state in one country alone, while all other great states remained capitalist. Lenin and Stalin were correct in the theory of "Socialism in one country." The Socialist state proved able to live surrounded by capitalist states, withstood the heaviest hardships and became the strongest state in all of Europe and Asia.



The second phase of the change is that enormous transformation in relations between nations which is expressed in the alliance of the Socialist state with the most advanced capitalist states for the war and for long time peace. Mr. Hart made the point that Socialism is "the next higher form of economy" as compared to capitalism. History has proved precisely that, and more.

But the consequence of this superiority of Socialist economy is not what Mr. Hart assumes. The consequence of the colossal strength of the Socialist state, and the discovery of that strength by the western democracies, together with the discovery by these western democracies that they can survive in an alliance with that Socialist state and that they will go into a suicidal world chaos, without it—is not that they imitate the economic and political structure of that socialist state, but that they form an alliance with it to preserve their own quite different structure.

I WONDER whether my critic gets the full force of my statement that "the greatest military defeat and destruction of feudal empires in both of the two centers of world population, in Europe and Asia," brings about "the corresponding change in the relationships of the surviving states."

Such matters are never understood unless we look at them in concrete form. What states, precisely, will be the surviving states in Europe and Asia after the defeat of Nazi Germany and feudal Japan? Which among them will

maintain the Hearst-Dubinsky-Norman Thomas-Ham Fish-Hoover dream of an anti-Russian bloc on the two continents of Europe and Asia that contain three-fourths of the 2,000,000,000 population of the world? None will.

The one certain thing in this whole world is that there will never again be an imperialist domination of either Europe or Asia, which are three-fourths of the world. Think of that. It is a strong statement. It is meant to be so. Challenge it if you will. But if you do, be concrete: name the states that you think capable of such imperialist domination. Political sagacity and scientific caution do not consist of timidity or that lack of initiative which is called skepticism. All of the states of Europe and Asia hereafter will be states in which there are no conspiracies against Soviet Russia. In the "two centers of world population"—the continents of Europe and Asia which comprise most of the population of the world and most of the market of the world—there will be a stabilization of peace and democracy such as has never existed and could never have existed before. The strongest, the incomparable stabilizing force — and nobody seriously questions this any more — will be Russia. This stabilizing force would be absent if Russia were not a Socialist state.

WHAT then did I mean when I said "the corresponding change" would be wrought in "the conditions for the continuation of the prevailing world system of production?"

The system of production in all modernized countries is capitalist, except Russia where it is "the next higher form of economy." The world system of production is not, however, wholly capitalist, and never again can it be wholly capitalist. And this is not a disturbing element in the stabilization of world economy, but on the contrary, is the most essential force for stabilization, under the conditions of the alliance.

So we see that the "conditions for the continuation of the prevailing world system of production" that "correspond" to the destruction of the "feudal empires in both of the two centers of world population, Europe and Asia," are conditions of a vast stability extending across three-quarters of the world, directly, creating the best condition for solvency, rising standard of living upon a democratic base of support in each country, such as has never been a prospect for the world before. If communism is sought, we would

have to refer to the transformation and rejuvenation that came to Europe through the discovery and opening of the American continent four centuries ago.

The opening up of a world market in which our own United States of America can and will play to a large degree the leading role, with a rising standard of living and a growing labor movement is an achievement of colossal proportions and for the good of all mankind.

This will occur under historic conditions wherein the whole initiative of most nations will be thrown into it as a task of capitalism, of the expansion of the world capitalist economy in huge proportions. I said "Within these limits and under these conditions ... for the present interest of the American people, labor included, not socialism but capitalism is the best system of production." This is not a statement of abstract truth, but of concrete truth. As such it is correct, important and necessary to face. If offered as an abstract truth, independently of these limits and conditions—as something true "at any time"—that is, if offered as a general proposition that capitalism is "preferable"—the statement would conflict with the greatest historic reality of this century, that socialism is "the next higher form of economy," as Mr. Hart puts it. But we have to face the truth in its concrete form, and not to do so would be to oppose the forward development of history.

IF COMMUNISTS were sectarians, engaged like the Utopians of Thomas More's time, more than 400 years ago, or like the middle-class socialists of the generation before Marx and Engels, in simple fantasies over what would be "better" "at any time"—we would, of course, merely invent a pure Socialism for the whole world immediately. But we dropped that pastime of the leisure-class socialists when Marx and Engels came upon the scene and brought the powerful instrument of scientific method to the labor movement. We learned that Socialism is a matter of this world, and the tough-mindedness of the modern working class, its patience, the very discipline that is instilled into it by capitalist society, its capacity to assimilate the scientific method with the highest ideals of mankind, its will to struggle—displaced forever the purely fanciful inventions of what is "best" independently of time and space and history.

More next Friday.