

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

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REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF LABOR, USA (ROL, USA) AND
CINDY SHEEHAN'S SOAPBOX DENOUNCE AND CONDEMN

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S CRIMINAL MISSILE ATTACK ON THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF SYRIA

by CINDY SHEEHAN and RAY LIGHT

On Thursday, April 6, U.S. President Trump launched 59 Tomahawk missiles onto an airfield in the sovereign state of Syria. It was an unprovoked act of war by the U.S. Empire's still new commander in chief. Trump's attack on Syria was a sudden reversal of his oft-stated policy. In 2013, when Obama was in his shoes and looked like he was going to defy Congress if he had to, in order to unleash a U.S. war on the same Syrian Regime, citizen Trump had opposed Obama and agreed with the Founding Fathers that it would constitute an unconstitutional act, a criminal act. Thus far his only explanation for this change is that Trump, whose whole personal history shows a single-minded pursuit of his own selfish interests, was suddenly moved by photos of Syrian children allegedly being harmed and destroyed in Syria, the children he wouldn't let come here as refugees.

Do you know who said it??

"President Trump's environmental onslaught will have immediate, dangerous effects ... Dirty air, the kind you get around coal-fired power plants, kills people ... It's much the same as his policies on health care or refugees: Real people (the poorest and most vulnerable people) will be hurt in real time ... But there's an extra dimension to the environmental damage ... we have only a short window to deal with the climate crisis or else we forever lose the chance to thwart truly catastrophic heating ... The species that go extinct as a result of the warming will mostly not die in the next four years, but they will die. The nations that will be submerged won't sink beneath the waves on his watch, but they will sink. No president will be able to claw back this time—since we're right now breaking the back of the climate system."

Hint: This person is a highly regarded environmentalist, not a "surprise" commentator at all.

—Still stumped? See page 3 for the mystery answer.

Don't forget that Trump had rejected the unanimous "findings" of all U.S. intelligence agencies on alleged Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election just a month or two ago. So, both the U.S. President and the U.S. Intelligence Community have made clear that neither of these major props of the U.S. Empire lets the facts stand in their way. In fact, Trump's "humanitarian" justification, Assad's alleged poison gas attack on Syrian children ("Fake News?" "Fake Media?"), smacks of the "justifications" for the U.S. invasion of Iraq — Saddam's phantom WMD ("weapons of mass destruction") and wild and false allegations of Saddam's Iraqi troops throwing infants out of incubators in Kuwait. The almost universal media acceptance of Trump's poison gas propaganda hearkens all the way back to the U.S. War in Vietnam, where the U.S.-fabricated "Tonkin Gulf Incident" was used to mobilize the U.S. population to support the initial invasion and the barbaric U.S. role that was immortalized with the U.S. policy on "strategic hamlets;" namely, "We have to destroy the village to save the village."



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Moreover, Trump's missile attack on Syria was carried out without a declaration of war by the U.S. Congress or any prior deliberation by Congress. It was, therefore, a blatantly unconstitutional act since the Framers at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, in Article I, were not willing to put such awesome and destructive power in the hands of one individual (they had just overthrown the King of England) and clearly assigned this grave responsibility to the least undemocratic branch of the federal government.

In less than a hundred days in office, Trump has already revealed *unprecedented hostility to the courts* that blocked his Muslim travel ban twice. He's shown *unprecedented hostility to his own Republican Congress* that was unable/unwilling to pass his "repeal & replacement" of Obamacare (i.e., the Obama-led current healthcare system), for now, making it almost a certainty that there will be no Trump Tax bill providing huge tax breaks for the wealthy that was planned to follow the multi-billion dollar bonanza that TrumpCare was to realize from the disappearance of healthcare for millions of the 99% of us. And, finally, he's displayed *unprecedented hostility to the media* (Trump has declared them "an enemy of the American People") after they exposed some of the Trump Regime's most obvious lies and broken promises, from the size of the crowd at his inauguration to his failure to prosecute "crooked Hillary" Clinton, to the perjury under oath of Attorney General Sessions and forced resignation of National Security Adviser (General) Mike Flynn, as they were being vetted by Congressional committees for their top level Trump Administration appointments.

So, if there really were two distinct political parties operating in the U.S. Congress, Trump's criminal invasion of Syria would have been met with strong opposition, especially in light of the Trump Regime's continual efforts to intimidate the courts, the Congress, the intelligence services and the media. For his hand can only be strengthened by becoming a "war president, using war powers." Such a war posture could indeed become Trump's "Reichstag Fire" false flag operation. (In early 1933, Hitler's storm troopers set fire to the Reichstag, the parliament, blamed the Communists, and rode the hysteria to absolute power by the summer of 1933.)

Despite the Democratic Party's demonization of Trump over these past months, and in spite of the very real **domestic fascist as well as**

international dangers posed by the emergence of this new war president, the two current leaders of the Democratic Party, Senate minority leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) and House minority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), both loyal representatives of Wall Street imperialism, late on the very same day of Trump's missile attack, offered Trump their support! Mainstream Republican "critics" of Trump, including Elliot Abrams, neo-cons such as William Cristol, major media pundits such as CNBC's Jake Novak and print and TV media star Fareed Zakaria all embraced Trump as suddenly "presidential."

While, in our view, Assad is a reactionary misleader of the Syrian working class and masses, his political future should be in *their* hands. Yet, even those on the "left" end of the U.S. imperialist spectrum, such as Bernie Sanders and Noam Chomsky, have joined the chorus of condemnation of Assad as "the worst dictator." According to them, too, *the U.S. Empire* is perfectly justified in driving Assad out of *his* country. (Obama, the previous helmsman of the U.S. Empire, treated Kadafi in Libya similarly.) Disagreeing only tactically with Trump, both Sanders and Chomsky are criminally silent on the main culprits in the brutal and bloody disintegration of the sovereign state of Syria over the six year "civil war," the Saudi Arabian-led sheikdoms of the Middle East, sponsoring a proxy war by Islamic fundamentalists, including ISIS, all propped up by U.S. imperialism. Thus, even though Sanders mildly "protests" that Trump should have come to Congress before waging war in Syria and warns of an unending war scenario for the U.S. in the Middle East, Sanders and Chomsky are both helping to strengthen Trump's war presidency and his march to fascism in the USA.

Finally, after being hidden away from the U.S. public for the past five months since the election, Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, incredibly reappeared hours before Trump's war crime against Syria. Even more incredible, she seemed to "go public" in order to give Trump the very specific direction to try to destroy the Syrian air force, the very course Trump then followed! Was Clinton's public statement what Trump demanded from Wall Street before he would undertake this action?!

In 2013, Obama and Clinton tried to launch a U.S. / British war on Assad and Syria. The British Parliament and the U.S. people, including many "red state" supporters, successfully blocked the event. And Vladimir Putin of all people saved

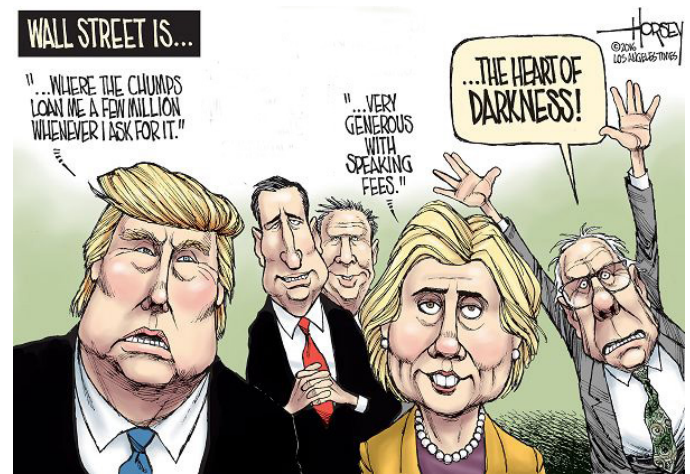
(contd. on p. 3)

(Joint Statement against Syrian missile attack continued)

Obama from a major political defeat when he convinced Assad to turn over his stores of poison gas, etc. But the military strategy of Wall Street imperialism remained as follows: to remove the Assad Regime from Syria so that Iran, the main regional competitor for Saudi Arabia (and U.S. imperialism) in the oil-rich Middle East, would be vulnerable to be bombed, invaded and defeated by the Israeli settler regime in combination with U.S. imperialism. This would have the effect of pushing Russian influence back out of the Middle East and leaving the U.S. Empire once again in a position to dictate to much of the rest of the world.

In the days since Trump's attack on Syria, his leading general in Afghanistan dropped the most powerful non-nuclear bomb ("MOAB"), allegedly on ISIS forces, near the border with Pakistan. This seems to be aimed at intimidating Russia with regard to both Afghanistan and Syria.

Likewise, it is no accident that, on April 7, Trump was having his first face to face meeting in Florida with the leader of the Chinese government, President Xi Jinping. No doubt the sudden U.S. missile attack in Syria was also an attempt to intimidate the Chinese leadership: to back them away from any support of the North Korean government, allowing U.S. imperialism to bully or even bomb North Korea. Such intimidation of President Xi and the Chinese leadership could also give the ignorant and brutal Trump Regime of the U.S. Empire in decline much needed leverage in dealing with the superior Chinese strategic economic and political position along with its expanding military power.



Clearly, the Evil Empire we need to worry about today is the United States Evil Empire. Dominated by Wall Street finance capital and still represented politically by the "Republicrats," the mainstream Democratic and Republican party forces have now embraced the Trump Regime as it has embarked on the bloody course of imperialist war outlined by Clinton and Wall Street, at least for now. And this is the road to fascism in the USA and ongoing terror against the international working class and oppressed peoples everywhere.

**In the Unconquerable Spirit of MAY DAY—
*Workers of the USA and the World and
Oppressed Peoples Unite!
Down with the Clinton-backed Trump
Regime and the U.S. Empire!***

**Still stumped?! See answer below
to front page mystery quotation.**

Bill McKibben is a veteran environmentalist who is a founder of 350.org. Bill teaches environmental studies at Middlebury College. The quote is excerpted from his article, entitled, "The Planet Doesn't Have Time For This." It appeared on the front page of the *New York Times Sunday Review* (4-23-17) Let's read it and heed its warning to act now.

—the Editor

The October Revolution and the Working Class of Russia and the World Achieve Unprecedented Victories:

Part 2 of 2 Part Series

by RAY LIGHT

The Great October Socialist Revolution Immediately Faces A Brutal Civil War and Global Imperialist Intervention

Yet, already in the first half of 1918, two definite forces took shape ready to embark on the overthrow of the Soviet power; namely, the foreign imperialists of the Entente and the Russian counter-revolutionaries at home. The imperialists of Great Britain, France, Japan and the USA, leading the Entente coalition, began their military intervention with no declaration of war. In their far-flung attacks each of these imperialist powers backed local Whiteguard (old Tsarist military) revolts. From Archangel and Murmansk in the north to Vladivostok and the Maritime Province, from the North Caucasus to the Volga Region and Siberia to the Don (with the secret and separate support of German imperialism despite the fact that it was still at war *against* the Entente powers and had signed a peace treaty *with* Soviet Russia.)

The Soviet Union was cut off from her principal sources of food, raw materials and fuel; and conditions were extremely difficult. With a shortage of bread and meat the workers were starving. Factories were at a virtual standstill owing to the shortages. But neither the working-class nor the Bolshevik Party lost heart. The Party proclaimed the country an armed camp and placed its economic, cultural and political life on a war footing. And the Soviet government introduced "*War Communism*," including compulsory labor service.

The Eighth Bolshevik Party Congress made a subtle shift in its policy and received new domestic support. It passed from a policy of neutralization of the middle peasantry to a policy of *stable alliance* with them for the purpose of the struggle against the Whiteguards and the foreign intervention and for the successful building of socialism. Gaining the support of the middle peasants, the bulk of the peasantry, on that basis was a crucial factor in the Soviet power prevailing in the Civil War.

Indeed, as this war continued the new Soviet Regime also received international support, especially in Europe. There were increasing numbers of cases where the military expeditions sent by the Entente imperialist powers and Germany began to rebel against their own rulers after receiving fraternizing contact from the proletarian-led revolutionary army of the Soviet Republic. With this growing fraternization among

enemy troops and their revolutionization against their own rulers, the tide of revolution broke out first in Germany, then in Austria and then in Hungary where a Soviet Republic arose. The victorious October Revolution was now providing a basis for the formation of a new union of Communist parties, *the formation of the Third Communist International*. In January 1920, Great Britain, France and Italy decided to call off their blockade, an important breach in the wall of imperialist intervention.

Finally, there was a temporary breathing space in which Soviet Russia could devote some attention to economic problems. During the Civil War many skilled workers had left industry due to the closing down of factories and mills. Now measures were enacted to return them to work at their trades. Several thousand communists were assigned to restore railways that were in grave condition. The organization of food supply was addressed and improved. The drafting of a plan for electrification of Russia was undertaken. Nearly five million Red Army men were under arms and could not be demobilized because of the continuing war danger. In this situation, part of the Red Army was converted into labor armies and used in the economic field.

From April 1920 until the end of the year, the Polish state and General Wrangel's forces waged war on the young Soviet state. Their defeats largely ended the intervention. However, liberation of a number of the oppressed nationalities within Russia required more Soviet triumphant efforts. And Japanese intervention in the Soviet Far East lasted until 1922.

The Blossoming of Working Class Power in Russia and the Formation of the Communist International

Karl Liebknecht, who, along with Rosa Luxemburg, was the leading communist in Germany at the time, expressed the inspired response of revolutionary-minded workers all over the world to the victorious October Revolution. Liebknecht wrote: "The Russian Soviet Republic has become the banner of struggle, the banner of the International; it heartens others, it fills the vacillating with courage, it increases tenfold the valour and resolution of the fighters." (Quoted in *Outline History of the Communist International*, 1971, p.48) Tragically, Liebknecht and Luxemburg were murdered by German fascists in January 1919, before the founding of the Third Communist International.

(contd. on p. 5)

(Great October Socialist Revolution continued)

Inspired by the Great October Revolution in Russia and in repudiation of the betrayal of the world's working class by the social-democratic parties of the Second International in World War I, Communist Parties now emerged all over the world. Among many others, important Communist Parties were formed in Argentina in 1918, in Mexico in 1917 and reconstituted in 1919, in Bulgaria and in the USA in 1919 (in the USA, two parties arose and were merged by the C.I. in 1921), in Great Britain, France and Indonesia in 1920, in China and South Africa in 1921, in Vietnam in 1925 and in the Philippines and Indochina in 1930. In addition, mass worker-based "Hands-off Russia Committees" were formed in many countries in support of the October Revolution during the civil war and intervention period and the founding of the C.I.

The First Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from March 2-March 6, 1919. There were 35 delegates from 19 parties and organizations with voting powers and 19 delegates from 16 organizations with a consultative voice. At the Second C.I. Congress, held in 1920, the International "adopted terms of admission which required that all decisions of the Comintern are binding on all affiliated parties." However, it included the need "to take into account the diversity of conditions in which the various parties have to fight and work and to adopt decisions binding only on matters in which such decisions were possible." (Jose Maria Sison, *Impact of the Communist International on the Founding and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, 2006) Thus, from 1920 until its dissolution in 1943, the Comintern functioned as a world communist party.



Lenin Speaking at the Third Congress of the Comintern

A few comments are in order:

1.) Ho Chi Minh, who had been a founding member of the French Communist Party when he worked in Paris as an immigrant cook in elite restaurants, was also a founder of the Vietnamese party in 1925 and a founder of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930! He was still the outstanding national hero of Vietnam when its heroic people drove U.S. imperialism

out of Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, in 1975 and remains so today.

- 2.) Comrade Joma Sison, in the 2006 article cited above, authoritatively describes the great assistance that the Comintern provided to the Philippine Revolution in the establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Quite significant is the fact that comrade Sison is an avowed Maoist. And Maoists in the post Chinese Cultural Revolution period have generally taken a dim view of the Comintern's historical record. Yet, as a principled revolutionary and scientific socialist, comrade Sison generously shared intimate details of the Comintern's overwhelmingly positive role in the Philippines that contradicts the bourgeois nationalist hostility of many so-called Maoists of our time. In this light, the study of comrade Sison's fine article has been promoted by Revolutionary Organization of Labor (USA) since its publication more than a decade ago, while the anti-revisionist party founded by comrade Sison has seemed to pay it little attention. Today the so-called communist left worldwide is severely afflicted with this bourgeois nationalist, anti-comintern disease.
- 3.) The period of CPUSA affiliation to the Comintern, was from 1919 until 1940 when a new, repressive U.S. law and arguably other tactical considerations led the CPUSA to disaffiliate. It was precisely during this period of affiliation that the CPUSA made its greatest contributions to the struggle for Afro-American national liberation and socialism in the USA. Indeed, the Comintern led the largely immigrant worker-based U.S. party in dealing with the U.S.-historically specific Afro-American national question (see the 1928 and 1930 C.I. Resolutions and comrade Harry Haywood's *Black Bolshevik*) and intervened in the U.S. party in the late 1920's to defeat the sectarian behavior and factionalism that was then rampant in the U.S. party. The CPUSA also benefited greatly from its participation in the Seventh Congress of the C.I. in 1935, the last Comintern Congress before its dissolution. There the Congress prepared the world's proletarians for the titanic Soviet-led victory over fascism in World War II. Principled Comintern resolution of these three questions played a vital role in making the CPUSA an effective leader of the U.S. working class and labor struggles as well as the Afro-American people and the anti-fascist cause for most of the thirty years or so between 1919 and 1950.
- 4.) Bulgarian Communist leader, Georgi Dimitroff, was a printer by trade and a trade union leader.

At an early age he had participated in the proletarian revolution in Bulgaria and been imprisoned after its defeat. In 1933, at the very beginning of Hitler's reign of terror, Comrade Dimitroff operated in Nazi Germany and had been one of its major targets. Yet, he not only lived through it but became, next to Stalin, the most prominent leader of the communist-led defeat of German fascism!

In early 1933, right after Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany, his storm troopers set fire to the German Reichstag (Parliament), blaming it on the Communists. As William L. Shirer reported in his acclaimed *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, "despite the subserviency of the court to the Nazi authorities," the Hitlerites were exposed there by the courageous and brilliant Bulgarian communist, Georgi Dimitroff, as the perpetrators of the Reichstag fire. "But it came too late to have any practical effect." For, on the day after the fire, "Hitler prevailed on President Hindenburg to sign a decree" "suspending all constitutional individual and civil liberties." The Nazis immediately launched attacks on all opposition parties. By midsummer 1933 the Nazi Party was the only political power in Germany. (Shirer, pages 188-204)

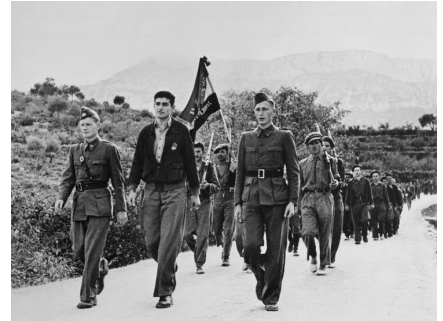
Dimitroff's exposure of the Nazis in court was so thorough that the Hitlerites quickly got Dimitroff and his two fellow Bulgarian communist defendants out of the country. In 1935, during the Seventh Comintern Congress Dimitroff was the principal leader whose speeches and discussion helped craft the United Front Against Fascism policy that the Comintern and the world proletariat, spearheaded by the Soviet working class and peoples, used to heroically crush the fascist Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan in World War II.



After the victory, Dimitroff became the first leader of the Soviet-liberated Bulgarian state. Finally, these comments underscore the fact that Lenin and Soviet Bolsheviks were correct in providing the foundation of the Communist International as one of their first tasks and achievements. For not only did Lenin and Stalin recognize their proletarian internationalist duty to help the rest of the workers of the world to win their freedom. They recognized, at the same time, that the continued freedom of the Soviet peoples and proletariat was vitally interconnected with the fate of

the proletarians and oppressed peoples of the earth. And the finest sons and daughters of the Vietnamese, Filipino, U.S. and Bulgarian working class, as mentioned above, were among the many forces who answered the call globally to rally around the heroic Soviet working class and peoples in the titanic life and death struggle to defend the Soviet Union and vanquish the fascist foe.

And before that, the Soviet working class and masses and the Comintern affiliates self-sacrificingly rallied in support of the Spanish Republic that faced a fascist onslaught of the Spanish military backed by Hitler



Abraham Lincoln Brigade

and Mussolini. Forty thousand people from around the world volunteered to fight in the International Brigades in a dress rehearsal to World War II.

In addition, the Soviet working class and peasantry had to heroically do their part *on the job* too.

The Amazing Transformation in One Generation of Backward Tsarist Russia into the Modern Powerful Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Finally, in 1921, the Soviet state could turn to peaceful development, but the circumstances were extremely hard. The country had been reduced to a state of ruin by almost four years of the First Imperialist World War and then three years of civil war and intervention. Gross output in agriculture in 1920 was only about half of prewar output. Even worse was the plight of industry: output of large-scale industry in 1920 was about one-seventh of prewar production. Most mills and factories were at a standstill. Iron and steel industry was much worse than that — about three percent of prewar output. There was an acute shortage of such prime necessities as bread, fats, meat, footwear, clothing, matches, salt, kerosene and soap.

Now that the war was over, the War Communism that the Soviet state had used to appropriate all surplus produce from the peasants as had been required for victory, was no longer necessary. Lenin said the whole system of war communism had come into collision with the interests of the peasantry and the spirit of discontent began to affect the working class as well. The class basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat was being weakened: workers were scattering, decamping for villages, ceasing to be workers and becoming declassed. Others showed signs of discontent from hunger and weariness. A tax in kind that would allow the peasantry to keep more of its surplus would make possible the revival of agriculture,

(contd. on p. 7)

(Great October Socialist Revolution continued)

extension of cultivation of grain and industrial crops required for industry and to create a new foundation for the alliance of workers and peasants.

Furthermore, the prime task, the revival of industry could not be done without the *support of the working class and its trade unions*. The workers could be enlisted in this work when shown that the economic disruption was just as dangerous for the people as the intervention and blockade had been. Finally, the party and trade unions could succeed if they exercised their influence on the working class not by military commands, as had been the case at the front, where that was essential, but by methods of *persuasion*.

Despite efforts by Trotsky and other opportunists who tried to retain “commandism” in their relations to the workers the Leninist position of persuasion was successfully adopted.

In the years of transition to the peaceful work of economic restoration, the Party was able to effect the difficult turn from the policy of War Communism to the New Economic Policy and this reinforced the alliance of the workers and peasants on a new economic foundation. *The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, with its pioneering voluntary union of nations, was formed toward this end, too, entering a new period of industrialization of the vast multi-national country.

By the end of 1927, the decisive success of the policy of Socialist industrialization was unmistakable. The gross output of agriculture and industry had reached and even surpassed the prewar level. The socialist sector of industry was rapidly growing at the expense of the private sector (81% of total output in 1924-25; 86% in 1926-27; with the private sector going from 19% down to 14%). The displacement of the private dealer in the sphere of trade had his share in the retail market fall from 42% in 1924 to 32% in 1926-27) And in the wholesale market, the share of the private dealer had fallen from 9% to 5% in the same period. Even more rapid was the rate of growth of large-scale socialist industry, which in 1927, the first year after the restoration period (prewar standard) increased its output over the previous year by 18%, a record increase beyond even the most developed capitalist countries.

Agriculture was a different story. Even though as a whole it had passed the prewar level, the gross yield of its most important branch — grain growing was still only 91% of pre-war while the amount of grain sold to the towns scarcely attained 37% of the prewar figure. The only solution was to change to large-scale farming which would permit the use of tractors and agricultural machines. Rather than take the road of large-scale capitalist farming which would lead to the defeat of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry and

of Socialism in the countryside, the path forward was the amalgamation of small peasant holdings into large Socialist farms, *collective farms*.



Collective Farming

The collectivization of agriculture was key to the five year plans that Stalin and the Soviet leadership deemed necessary to sustain the USSR in a world of capitalist encirclement. And, at the beginning of the 1930's, the struggle to collectivize agriculture in the vast Soviet countryside became itself another monumental achievement of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

“By the end of 1934 the collective farms had become a strong and invincible force. They already embraced about three-quarters of all peasant households in the Soviet Union and about 90% of the total crop area. In 1934 there were already 281,000 tractors and 32,000 harvester combines at work in the Soviet countryside. The spring sowing in that year was completed fifteen to twenty days earlier than in 1933, and thirty to forty days earlier than in 1932, while the plan of grain deliveries to the state was fulfilled three months earlier than in 1932.” (*ibid*, p. 346)

Comrade Stalin's speech to the First Conference of Industrial Managers in February 1931 included the following dramatic challenge: “We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make up this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us...”



Less than ten and a half years later(!), in June 1941, Hitler's Nazi War machine launched the most powerful

military invasion in human history on the USSR! Yet the fulfillment of the two unprecedentedly ambitious five year plans, backed by the collective farms, had brought the Soviet Union from an economically backward to an advanced country, in the allotted time. For, when the time came, the USSR had accumulated sufficient economic strength, coupled with its extraordinary political will, to meet and defeat the Nazi hordes.

In his book, *“Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR,”* Martin Nicolaus, one of the few serious Marxist writers in the USA over the past fifty years, took an historical materialist approach to the relationship of the Soviet industrial working class with the Soviet Socialist means of production. In the process, he explains why and how the USSR blossomed economically and was able to meet comrade Stalin’s challenge. He also explains why the advanced capitalist countries were all in the throes of the Great Depression.

Nicolaus observes that, “The history of the USSR during the 1920’s and the 1930’s was like a long march to reunite the workers with the means of production. It was a complex and protracted struggle to revoke the historic divorce, arising at the dawn of capitalism, between the peasant and the land, between the weaver and the loom. This schism constantly reproduced and universalized by the capitalist order, creates and recreates on the one side the millions of empty-handed workers and on the other side the relative handful of owners of the means of production. On this separation are founded the twin markets in commodities that characterize the capitalist order and distinguish it from all others: the market in labor power between the capitalist and the worker, with the workers always the sellers and the capitalist in the buyer’s role, and the market in means of production, with the capitalists buying and selling from each other. Once the basic schism is suspended, these markets lose their reason for being; labor power and means of production shed their commodity character and become transformed step by step into social property. Such in broad outline was the path of Soviet development toward socialism and in the socialist period.”

Nicolaus asserts that the first step taken by the Soviet power to reunite the working class with the means of production was the nationalization of production by the workers state, the political basis for the whole process. Beyond that, he describes wave upon wave of mass initiatives and movements that spurred on the socialist transformation of Soviet society and gave it life. Nicolaus mentions several innovative mass movements pioneered by the Soviet working class. One of the earliest ones was the practice of *subbotniks* or “Communist Saturdays” first organized by workers at the chief repair shop of the Moscow-Kazan railway in May 1919. “Working voluntarily and without pay

after the regular shift ended, the workers toiled out of political inspiration alone, in order to save and to strengthen the Soviet power against its foes during the Civil War.” “Following the first local initiatives, the party organized nationwide subbotniks with excellent results throughout the Civil War period and the practice was revived again and again.”

Probably the most well known of these “new shoots” of communism (Lenin) was the *Stakhanovite movement*. Beginning in 1935 “it emphasized reorganizing the division of labor, and developing teamwork to achieve higher output. But it contributed also a stress on quality output, and, above all, on improved work technique and technology. The redesign and innovation of machinery and machine processes by the workers themselves — frequently over the objections of conservative engineers and technicians, as Stalin pointed out in his “Economic Problems of Socialism” (1952, p. 28) — was the keynote of the movement.” Nicolaus notes that the Stakhanovite movement too was popularized by the party and was spread to large sectors of industry, mining and transport.

Nicolaus points out: “Such mass initiative brought about extremely rapid increases in labor productivity. During the first five year plan, beginning in 1929, labor productivity had risen 41%; during the second plan, when the Stakhanovite movement began, it leaped 82 percent; and it grew by another 33 percent on top of this higher base during the third plan period. (Borisova, p.206) By this time unemployment, the chief spur to greater worker effort (speedup) under capitalism, and also the chief result under capitalism of technological ‘rationalization,’ had ceased to exist in the USSR.” Clearly, labor productivity is *qualitatively* different under Socialism.

Nicolaus sums up as follows: “Such advances in the development of the forces of social production were the fruit of the reunion between the working class and the means of production. The mass initiatives and movements both reflected and deepened this profoundly new relationship of production, whose political precondition was the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The first two five year economic plans, beginning in 1928, both of which were fulfilled ahead of time, *were so successful* that virtually all bourgeois experts, even during the McCarthy Period in the USA, had to admit that, “No ten years in the history of any Western country ever showed such a rate of industrial growth ...” (*A History of the Modern World*, R.R. Palmer, Second Edition, 1956)

In A. Leontiev’s *“Political Economy: A Beginner’s Course,”* the Soviet economist shares two charts on pages 258 and 259 that dramatically demonstrate the

(contd. on p. 9)

superiority of socialist economy and the crisis producing crippling nature of capitalist economy, especially as it was manifested in the midst of the Great Depression. The first chart depicts volume of industrial production for five countries for the four Depression years following 1929, using 1929 volumes as the base year for each country. 1933, the last year shown, reveals that the USA has the smallest volume as compared with the USA in 1929—just 64.9 percent. (The 1932 number for the USA, the worst number on the chart is just 53.8 percent or just over half the volume of industrial production that it had in 1929!!) Germany's 1933 number is 66.8 percent; France has 77.4 percent and England 86.1 percent. Only the USSR's volume of industrial production is greater in 1933 than in 1929. *The USSR's number is 201.6 or more than double its 1929 volume of industrial production!*

The chart on page 259 takes the same five countries and the same five years but makes the reference point a sixth year, *the prewar year of 1913*. In this chart, examining the year 1933, for example, Germany's and England's percent compared to their respective 1913 volumes are both less than 1913 (75.4 percent and 85.2 percent respectively), while the French and U.S. 1933 volumes (107.6 percent and 110.2 percent respectively) are slightly greater than their 1913 base volumes. Meanwhile, the USSR's number is 391.9; this means *the USSR's volume of industrial production is almost four times greater* than it was in 1913. These charts show, as Leontiev states, "While there is a considerable increase of production in the USSR every year, the capitalist world, caught in the iron vice of the crisis, curtails production to an unprecedented degree." (Leontiev, p. 258)



Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works 1930

No wonder, even a bourgeois historian such as Professor Palmer, cited above, strongly asserted: **"By 1939 it was clear that a new type of economic system had been created. However one judged the USSR no one could dismiss its socialism as visionary or impracticable."** (*opus cited*, page 751, My emphasis, ROL)

The veteran U.S. communist and trade union leader, William Z. Foster, was the candidate of the Communist Party, USA for U.S. President in the 1932 election. *Toward Soviet America* is the book put out under his by-line setting forth the CPUSA's program and policies in the midst of the Great Depression. He spends many pages promoting and praising the accomplishments of the Soviet workers in leading in the building of socialism in the USSR, the only country in the world not suffering from the Depression back then.

Comrade Foster and the CPUSA used the 1932 U.S. presidential campaign to spread the knowledge of the phenomenal Soviet achievements to a wider audience in the USA; at the same time, they used the Soviet achievements to help inspire the organization of the U.S. working class for a similar Socialist revolution in the USA.

Comrade Foster states: "Under Socialism wages are as high as the total economy will permit; under capitalism they are as low as the workers can be compelled to accept. Hence, with the rapidly expanding economy in the USSR, wages are swiftly on the increase, in contrast to rapid wage declines in all capitalist countries Calculating upon the principles of purchasing power and socialized wages, (which include social insurance, vacations, etc.) the wages of Russian workers are now about double what they were before the revolution. And the tempo of wage advance becomes ever faster in the Soviet Union, as the general economy expands, even as the rate of wage decline increases in the industrially decaying capitalist lands." (*Toward Soviet America*, p.101)

"In the question of the shorter working period, the Russian workers already are in the forefront of the world's working class. In the USSR the average work day is 7.02 hours, with a five-day week, as against an average of 8.50 hours per day in the United States, for an average 5.75-day week. In the USSR the maximum work day is 8 hours, with the 6-hour day for the youth and workers in dangerous and unhealthy trades (mines, chemicals, etc.); in the United States the sky is the limit for hours, with the 10-hour day widespread, 53% of the workers in the steel industry working 10 to 12 hours daily and 27% working the 7-day week, little or no limitations upon the hours of youth and women workers, etc. ... In the capitalist countries, despite the huge unemployment, there is actually a tendency to increase the length of the working day; whereas, of course, in the Socialist Soviet Union the working day is constantly being cut." (*ibid*, p. 102, 103)

Comrade Foster continues: "The social insurance of the Russian workers, already the most comprehensive in the world, also is being rapidly developed. It

(contd. on p. 10)

covers every form of disability — sickness, accident, unemployment, old age, child-birth, etc., etc. — and is fast reaching the stage of full wages under all conditions of disemployment. In the capitalist countries, as part of the program of thrusting the burden of the crisis upon the shoulders of the working class, the workers' benefits under State social legislation are being drastically reduced." (*ibid*, p. 103)

Among other points, comrade Foster cites, "the general rise in Russian living standards ... manifested by a large increase in consumption of the more nutritious foods." (p.106) Regarding education, Foster notes: "One of the great achievements of this vast work is the rapid wiping out of illiteracy. In 1913 only 25% above the age of 10 could read; 90% of women were illiterate. Illiteracy has now been practically eliminated from the industrial centers and it will also soon go from the villages." (p. 110 and 111) And "the Russian revolution is giving the greatest stimulation to science, literature, music, the theatre, etc. that the world has ever known." Foster cites the famed journalist, Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* (December 1, 1931), as follows: "There seems to be no parallel in history to the drive for learning in all branches of knowledge, from reading and writing to the abstruse sciences, now in progress in the Soviet Union."*



World Renown Soviet Metro

*An indirect proof of this fact is reflected in the recent Hollywood film, "Hidden Figures." The film focuses on three brilliant Afro-American women who made valuable mathematical contributions to the U.S. Space program two or three decades after Foster's writing here. Some of the many humiliating incidents these mathematicians experienced while working for the space program under the rigid segregation that was law and custom in 1950's Virginia are depicted. And the movie makes it clear that, *without the Soviet Union's lead in space and the desperate US imperialist need to catch up*, these outstanding women would never have had the opportunities to use their tremendous mathematical talents in the white supremacist USA.

Finally, Foster prophetically states: "... with the control of the industries and the land, with capitalist exploitation and robbery stopped, with rapidly developing Socialist industries and farms, they have the solid basis for such a prosperity as no working class in the world has ever even remotely approached. The rapidity with which this prosperity will develop and its great depth and breadth will soon astound the world. Capitalists ... sense the revolutionizing effect it will have upon the millions of workers in their countries who, in the growing crisis of the capitalist system, are falling deeper and deeper into poverty and starvation. ***This is the basic reason why the capitalists are redoubling their efforts to develop war against the Soviet Union.***" (*ibid*, p.108, my emphasis, ROL)

One year later, in 1933, Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany and led his fascist movement to power there. The Axis Powers (Japanese Imperialism, Italian Fascism and German fascism) that Hitler led in World War II were given that name because they represented the anti-Comintern Axis. It was the Soviet Union that led the Comintern, the Communist International! The USSR was the prime target of global German-led fascism. Comrade Stalin's 1931 speech (warning his comrades that the Soviet system had ten years to build or they would be crushed) was indeed prescient!

Foster, the working class hero from the USA, in *Toward Soviet America*, presents much concrete proof of the tremendous material, cultural and spiritual gains that the Russian working class had already made by 1932 through which the Soviet industrial working class had already proved to *itself* the superiority of socialism and proved that it was the ruling class in power in the USSR in the 1930's.

In the 1940's, the Soviet workers and Soviet masses fought with an unprecedented heroism that unmistakably reflected *their* certainty that this was the truth. From the immortal battle of Stalingrad they drove the previously undefeated enemy all the way back to Berlin.

CONCLUSION: This long presentation on the October Revolution and the Working Class makes it clear that, under the Lenin/Stalin Bolshevik leadership, the proletarian class did indeed play the central role, it was the main character, in the titanic struggles and accomplishments of the Soviet Union in its new and rising period. Moreover, the Soviet industrial working class carried on its broad shoulders the hopes of oppressed humanity.

From its revolutionary resurgence in response to the Tsarist massacre of the Lena goldfield workers in Siberia in April, 1912 for about forty years until

(contd. on p. 11)

approximately Stalin's death in early 1953, the Soviet industrial working class, under the leadership of Lenin, Stalin and the Bolshevik Party, had waged an indefatigable and victorious struggle against all the forces of reaction, — from Tsarism to monopoly capitalism and imperialism to the national bourgeoisie to the petty bourgeois opportunist “socialists” that Lenin described as “the extreme left wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie.” The Soviet industrial working class mobilized and led alliances with such an important ally as the Russian peasantry, especially its poorer strata, and during the Soviet period, with the millions of collective farmers. It mobilized and allied with the formerly oppressed nationalities of the Russian Tsarist prison-house of nations in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It inspired, organized and allied with the rest of the international working class in the Third Communist International as it provided the scaffolding of the global united front against fascism that emerged triumphant from World War II.

And, finally, with the military defeat of world fascism in World War II, the Bolshevik-led Soviet industrial working class, along with the Red Army, was the backbone of the emerging Socialist Camp. They had led the international working class and the oppressed peoples to the point where the situation in the world was objectively favorable for the triumph of world socialism over world capitalism.

Hopefully, the careful and militant reader of this article will never again allow to go unchallenged and unexposed the “conventional wisdom” that capitalism is the best system human beings can hope to build. Nor will the careful reader fail to expose the professional liberal nay-sayers, the NGOers and the opportunists of various stripes who help the monopoly capitalist and imperialist rulers spread doubt about the capacity of toiling humanity, under Leninist proletarian leadership, to bring about a socialist future. For now you know it has already happened once.

Moreover, in the U.S. Empire, “the belly of the beast,” where the Clinton-Trump presidential race and the Hitlerite Trump Regime in its first three months have exposed just how reactionary, chauvinistic, brutal and inhumane U.S. imperialism has become after sixty years of global imperialist hegemony — *armed with the immortal legacy of the Great October Revolution and the Soviet industrial working class*, how can we refuse to rise to the challenge of our time?



Outrage at the World's Number #1 Terrorist

by CARL PAPPOS and PAT KELLY

In order to justify the recent U.S. imperialist bombing of a Syrian army military base, Sean Spicer, Trump's White House press secretary, had these words of “wisdom” to say about the unproven use of chemical weapons by President Assad against a U.S. backed rebel area in Syria. “We didn't use chemical weapons in [World War II](#),” Mr. Spicer said. “You know, you had someone as despicable as Hitler who didn't even sink to using chemical weapons.”

Actually, Spicer, Hitler Germany used chemical gas to murder over 6 million Germans and other European Jews as well as thousands more trade unionists, communists, and progressive forces in German society.

U.S. imperialism has killed more people with chemical weapons than any nation in the history of human existence. In World War II the U.S. used

nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki killing over 200,000 people. But that is not all. Before unleashing this nuclear holocaust on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the United States used napalm to firebomb 67 Japanese cities killing hundreds of thousands if not millions of people. Two cities give the picture. Tokyo similar in size to New York, 51% destroyed. Nagoya similar in size to Los Angeles, 40% destroyed. Both of these cities are many times larger than Hiroshima or Nagasaki. And let us never forget the thousands of Vietnamese napalmed to death.

Like Bush and Obama and other republicrat presidents before him, with the recent bombing of the Syrian people and the military attacks against the people of Yemen, Trump continues to confirm once again that U.S. imperialism is the world's Number One Terrorist!

* * * * *

*“The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise.”*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O’ Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class “... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies.” In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that “our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action,” we welcome your comments.

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