

2 Views on the Road to Peace & Socialism

Anna Louise Strong

(We reprint below excerpts from the article by Anna Louise Strong which appeared in the Aug. 5 issue of the National Guardian.)

Socialism, which was man's crusade for a century, is no longer man's chief crusade. This is a fight already won, whose details will now be worked out by reporting, statistics, local struggles, by choices of nation after nation. Most crusaders for socialism are hazy about this. That is the reason for what has been called "twilight on the left."

Man's new crusade lies elsewhere: it is for the survival of the human race and its planet. We call it prosaically the fight for co-existence; it might more aptly be dramatized as the crusade of existence against non-existence, of One World against No World, of human life against planetary death.

The line-up is not the old line-up between promoters of socialism and defenders of capitalism. It is a line-up between those who see the earth as a unit—from Stringfellow Barr in "Let's join the human race" to science-fiction writers who speak of us casually as "earthlings"—of those who exalt their own nation, class or creed above man's survival, such as Pentagon spokesmen who willingly incur worldwide risks of strantium-90 in "America's interests." This is the basic line-up now.

THIS DOES not mean that the fight for socialism is over; but it takes such a different form that I think we injure it when we promote it as a world crusade. Stalin recognized this when he abandoned the direct crusade for world socialism, first in 1927 to promote socialism in one country; then in 1942 when he dissolved the Communist International to promote the anti-Hitler alliance; lastly after 1945 in the crusade for world peace. The American Communists sensed it, though not so clearly, when they pushed the Progressive Party, and stopped pushing socialism, on the ground that the American workers did not want it yet.

For a century the fight for socialism was man's chief crusade. This began far back when British Utopians saw that the brutal energy of the industrial revolution must be harnessed for the benefit of mankind. Marx gave the crusade its "science" by tying it to the class struggle of the industrial workers. What crystallized in history was Lenin's revolution.

There might have been better answers, but this was what history gave us. Russians said to me in the early 30's: "If you

Americans had made it first, with your know-how, or even those industrious Germans, this socialism might be better made. But we, dark peasants, what socialism shall we build?"

THEIR ANSWER lies on the record. They did the job, the rest of us didn't. They built a system in which the basic means of production belongs to the state. They changed an illiterate peasant land into the world's second industrial power, devised forms of union for a hundred nationalities. This system is copied now by one-third of mankind.

Its crimes also lie on the record, spread there by its chief promoters, crimes that derive more from the Russian past than from any individual. They are less important for history than the new forms that were built.

These new forms have cornered the name "socialism." Despite those who claim that what Russia achieved isn't really socialism, despite the fact that it lacks some benefits that socialism was supposed to bring, one-third of the earth's people claim it as socialism and say they are building it, and the rest of the world recognizes them as the "socialist bloc."

THIS VITALLY changes the form of the struggle. To promote world revolution becomes hardly distinguishable from a crusade to expand Soviet power, and this, in a world made up of nations, becomes treason to the U.S. and direct incitement to world war. This, of course, is why the Soviet leaders abandoned the world crusade. It is also one source of the trouble American Communists have with the government.

The worldwide struggle continues but not as a world crusade. In the socialist third of the world it becomes a struggle to improve socialism and adjust it to man's complex needs. How much centralization? How much individual enterprise? As Mao Tse-tung has noted, there will be 100 answers, and these will be tested by experience, by research, by laws.

The rest of the world looks at this socialism and copies what it likes. This occurs even in the most hostile U.S.

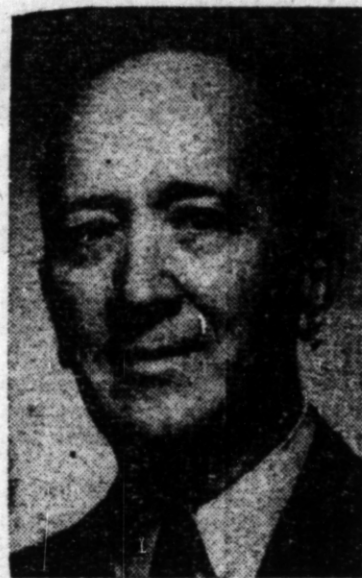
In the days of Marx the eight-hour day was considered part of socialism; we got it decades ago. The minimum wage; old age pensions, social security, denounced a generation ago as socialism, arrived under capitalism, yet indicate increasing social control of production's fruits. Some of this we learned from the U.S.S.R.; more of it came by direct crusade of American workers and progressives. They did not crusade for "socialism;"

A Discussion

We publish on this page today excerpts from an article by Anna Louise Strong which appeared in the National Guardian of Aug. 5, and a comment by William Z. Foster. We see these articles as part of the discussion now in progress on the Left. We invite our readers to comment on the views of Miss Strong and of Foster.



ANNA LOUISE STRONG



FOSTER

this was a "dirty word."

The undeveloped, ex-colonial lands do it more openly. For them the dirty word is "imperialism." They cheerfully look at the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and pick what they want. The picking is not done by a rising of the proletariat; but by practical politicians, from Nehru to Nasser.

These undeveloped lands, as Leo Huberman notes in *Monthly Review*, can hardly develop national private capitalism for lack of capital. Their choice lies between public ownership of steel mills and foreign ownership, i.e., imperialist. Socialism thus appears to them as a road to national independence.

KHRUSHCHEV speaks with
(Continued on Page 7)

William Z. Foster

(We publish below an article by William Z. Foster in which he discusses the views set forth by Miss Strong.)

IN THE NATIONAL Guardian of Aug. 5, Anna Louise Strong calls for an intensive crusade against war. Generally, the Left and other democratic elements will welcome her stress upon the fight to preserve world peace against the efforts of those atomaniacs who would devastate humanity with nuclear war. For despite the easing of international tension following the historic Geneva conference of 1955, the war danger remains a most vital issue confronting the world. This is because, on the one hand, of the horror-perspective of atomic war generally, and upon the other, because the world mastery program of militant American imperialism keeps war fear alive throughout the world.

But Miss Strong tends to place the question incorrectly when she says: "Socialism, which was man's chief crusade for a century, is no longer man's chief crusade. This is a fight already won. Man's crusade lies elsewhere; it is for the survival of the human race and its planet. We call it prosaically the fight for peaceful co-existence. She sees only a sort of mopping-up operation for Socialism from here on.

It is premature, however, for Miss Strong to conclude that the fight for Socialism already won. Although it is true and during the past 40 years the workers and other democratic forces have struck many hard blows against capitalism and for Socialism, including the Russian, Chinese and European people's democratic revolution, the smashing of the colonial system in Asia and elsewhere, the breaking of the atom-bomb monopoly, etc., and although it is equally true that the Socialist world is rapidly overtaking and surpassing the capitalist world in many spheres—nevertheless, it would be stretching matters dangerously to assume, in theory and practice, that the fight for Socialism is safely won, while such capitalist powers as the U. S., Great Britain, Japan, West Germany, France, Italy and others still remain capitalist, militantly imperialist and warlike, and while they maintain a constant war threat against the Socialist world.

Great struggles for Socialism still lie ahead, and this struggle must continue to be prosecuted vigorously, although it does not always proceed in a straight line, with the same methods, or at the same tempo.

MISS STRONG is also in error in her testimony to separate the struggles against war and upon other urgent issues as against that for Socialism, or

even to counterpose the former against the latter. Actually, these fights are all part of the most basic struggle to abolish capitalism and they are inseparably intertwined. In fact, in point of urgency very often, usually indeed, many partial demands, solvable within the framework of capitalism—including the struggle against war for colonial independence, against Negro discrimination, for daily wage demands, etc.—Take immediate precedence over the direct fight for Socialism.

This has been the case from the earliest days of the labor movement, and it is still valid labor strategy. Solely during sharp revolutionary crises does the question of Socialism become the direct issue of struggle. It has been only the sectarians, of whom DeLeon was outstanding, who have tried to shove aside the burning questions of immediate demands and to substitute, under all conditions, the direct fight for Socialism.

All this does not, however, alter the basic fact that the most fundamental struggle of the struggle of the workers, the one which underlies and unites all their other struggles, even if not always the most immediately urgent, is the struggle to abolish capitalism and to establish Socialism. The great issue of our times, and this is currently valid as our guide, is to put Socialism in the place of capitalism, the breeder of war and a thousand other burning evils.

IN SUBSTANCE, Miss Strong appears to see a contradiction between an energetic struggle for Socialism and the fight to prevent war. She declares, "To promote world revolution" (which can only mean to fight actively for Socialism in the respective capitalist countries) "becomes hardly distinguishable from a crusade to expand Soviet power and this, in a world made up of nations, becomes treason to the U.S. and direct incitement to war."

This conclusion is wrong in many respects, as, (a) it imputes the war danger basically to world Socialism rather than to its real source, militant American imperialism; (b) it fails to take into account that the stronger becomes the forces of Socialism, the weaker, actually and relatively, become those of war-making imperialism; (c) it also takes no notice of the elementary fact that it is the forces of Socialism which today are the main buttresses of peace; and (d) it ignores the current developments in the Socialist world, which are stressing the autonomy, initiative, and power of the individual Socialist states, especially in the central matter of

(Continued on Page 5)

Anna Louise Strong

(Continued from Page 4)

disdain of the many forms of "pseudo-socialism" that thus arise. But all these forms, from India's steel mills to Scandinavia's co-operatives, and even including Nasser's seizure of the Suez, modify the old private capitalism.

Socialism has thus won, in the sense that it exists, functions, improves itself and is copied. And, if the world can be kept on an even keel, it seems clear that the forms of socialism will spread to any part of the world they are found to fit. This will occur through pressure of the proletariat, the peasants, the politicians; it will come by the advances of scientists and by political struggles even to the point of civil war. Meantime the forms of socialism will be modified and made more flexible by struggles in the Soviet socialist bloc.

This is all to the good for mankind. But this process will continue only if world peace can be maintained. Even now the cold war and the arms race cripple socialist advance. Any

big nuclear war, even if, as Khrushchev claims, it left "communism" alive in men's souls, would destroy the bodies and productive mechanisms on which socialism depends.

It is lawful and useful for Americans to promote socialism for America if they think they get anywhere with it. It is lawful, and perhaps more practical, to promote specific forms of social control. It is useful to study the achievements of socialist nations and popularize them in the U.S. But all this is cashing in on a past crusade already won by others. It is not the real crusade for the desperate need of today.

Today's crusade is against the atomic bombs. It is a crusade for the survival of the human race . . .

(In the concluding part of her article which we have not reprinted for space reasons, Miss Strong outlined specific proposals for working for peace, including use of the United Nations and other possibilities.)

Foster on Peace and Socialism

(Continued from Page 4)

their building of Socialism.

ALTHOUGH stating that world Socialism has "already won" its fight, Miss Strong nevertheless underestimates its scope and power, when she paints a picture of various mass movements of workers in the capitalist countries and of the colonial peoples as picking and choosing what they please from the immediate program of Socialism, with the latter in a sort of passive role in the matter. The reality, however, is quite different from this. The vast growth of the innumerable democratic mass movements in the capitalist countries have been profoundly stimulated by the rapid expansion of Socialism in recent decades. In fact—although we have largely overlooked this—these mass movements are in themselves, at bottom, most essentially anti-capitalist forces. They constitute potentially so many building blocks of the new Socialist structure that is taking shape throughout the world.

The things that make clear these elementary realities are the people's front policy, or its variants (which can unite all these forces for struggle) and the parliamentary road to Socialism which can provide their natural route of advance).

MISS STRONG also under-

states the peace role of the world forces of Socialism—those of the Socialist regimes and those in the capitalist states. Thus, she says nothing about how these Socialist forces, mainly Communist-led, headed the tremendous peace struggle during the cold war years which broke the atom-bomb monopoly, defeated various military offensives of the imperialists (Korea, Indo-China), and generally brought the warlike forces of imperialism to book at Geneva in 1955. Had it not been for this powerful and effective mass peace resistance, the American monopolists, with their grip upon the atom-bomb, might well, ere this, have practically mastered the world.

It is, of course, highly necessary, as Miss Strong emphasizes, to cultivate the peace potentialities of the United Nations and all other sources and groupings. But in doing this let us not lose sight of the most important fact of all; namely, that in the future, as in the past, the most decisive forces making for world peace will be the Socialist nations, the colonial and ex-colonial lands, the Communist and other workers' parties and the trade union movement of the world. It is with them, above all, that the American peace forces must cooperate in the vitally important fight to prevent war and to establish peaceful co-existence of all nations.