

Political Economy a Beginners Course

ment in capitalist countries have enabled and assisted some countries spasmodically to overtake others, have enabled the less powerful but rapidly developing countries to crowd out the more powerful ones.

"Thirdly, the fact that the old division of spheres of influence between individual imperialist groups is continually coming into conflict with the new relation of forces on the world market, that for the establishment of 'equilibrium' between the old distribution of spheres of influence and the new relation of forces, periodic readjustments of the world are necessary by means of imperialist wars."⁸

Wars of conquest, inevitable under imperialism, bring about tremendous changes in the relation of forces between the various nations. The imperialist war of 1914-18 brought about the smashing of Germany, the parceling out of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of a number of new states on its ruins. The unevenness of development of the various countries is manifested with particular clarity and explicitness in the post-war years. America gained most by the war. It profited most from the struggle of the others. Formerly, it was indebted to other countries, especially England. Now almost the entire world, including England, is in debt to America. A number of branches of industry in America almost doubled production after the war.

Less than 7 per cent of the world's population is concentrated in the U.S.A. which occupies about 6 per cent of the earth's surface. At the same time, up to the present crisis, 40 per cent of the world's coal mines, 35 per cent of hydro-electrical energy, 70 per cent of the oil, 60 per cent of the world's wheat and cotton, 55 per cent of the timber for construction purposes, approximately 50 per cent of the iron and copper and about 40 per cent of the lead and phosphates of the world were produced there. Up to the time of the crisis, the U.S.A. consumed 42 per cent of the world's output of iron, 47 per cent of the copper, 69 per cent of the oil, 56 per cent of the rubber, 53 per cent of the tin, 48 per cent of the coffee, 21 per cent of the sugar, 72 per cent of the silk and 80 per cent of the automobiles.

On the other hand, England, which had occupied first place:

⁸ Stalin, "Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviations."

in world economy before the war, declined rapidly. After the war England became a usurer-land, and a number of the most important branches of industry, particularly the coal industry, remained at the same level, while rival countries forged ahead.

The present crisis brought about tremendous changes in the relation of forces among the various capitalist robber nations. It hit different countries with different force. Thus it increased the unevenness of development still more. It affected the U.S.A. the most severely. That is why the United States does not occupy the same place now that it occupied a few years ago. Then, America was the sole "ideological ruler" of the European bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic menials. Now, the crisis has exposed all the deep contradictions of American capitalism. Not a trace of the much lauded American "prosperity" has remained. Of course, the U.S.A. is still the biggest and strongest capitalist country. Its weakening, however, strengthens the contradictions which are rending the capitalist world.

The law of uneven development, sharpened by the imperialist epoch, shatters all the utopian theories of the possibility of a last-

The law of uneven development and the proletarian revolution

ing peaceful agreement among the monopolists of various countries. The growth of contradictions among the imperialist robbers and the inevitability of military conflicts bring about a mutual weakening of the imperialists, bring about a situation where the world front of imperialism is most vulnerable to the onslaught of proletarian revolution. On this basis, a *breach in this front* results at the point where the chain of the imperialist front is weakest, where conditions are most favourable for the victory of the proletariat. Inseparably bound up with this law of the uneven development of capitalism, which reaches its point of greatest acuteness in the epoch of imperialism, is the Leninist teaching of the triumph of the proletarian revolution and the building of socialism in a single country—a teaching that was subjected to the severest attacks on the part of Trotskyism. Lenin has written about this as follows:

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in a few or even in one single capitalist country taken sep-

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