

'Two worlds, two paths' from Pravda (1 January 1949)

Caption: On 1 January 1949, the Soviet daily newspaper Pravda describes a Europe divided into a capitalist and a socialist sphere and compares the two systems.

Source: Pravda. 01.01.1949, n° 1. Moskva. "Dva mira, dva puti", auteur:D. Zaslavskii , p. 3.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/two_worlds_two_paths_from_pravda_1_january_1949-en-b534b250-2ae0-4ce7-98db-of73cfob5cob.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

Two worlds, two paths

Europe has been split in two. In one part capitalists are busy at work, and in the other, the builders of socialism. The year has come to an end and we may now compare the results.

The most significant event of the year in Western Europe was the arrival of American businessmen. George C. Marshall, Paul G. Hoffman and Averell Harriman staged a play for the people of the capitalist countries, a parody of the legend in which the Slavs summoned Rurik, Sineus and Truvor for assistance. But the latter were the inventions of a writer while these three distinguished Americans are really being summoned to Europe by the bourgeoisie, by the deafening cries of capitalist suffering. They admit that our land is great and bountiful, but it's a mess everywhere and even our best efforts are not enough to put things right. Come and restore us to economic, financial and political order!

These conquerors of Europe crossed the ocean at the head of an army holding calculators and banking ledgers. These were no crusaders, but businessmen, warriors from the banks and stock markets, knights of speculation and swindling. Business is an American word meaning commercial activity, enrichment, gains and profit, nothing more! But the key is in knowing your business and the market.

American capitalists proclaimed to anyone who would listen that they had come to 'rescue' Europe; that they were supposedly not even thinking of personal profit and gain; that they were here only as a crisis-management team.

American capitalism chose its best and most trustworthy people to 'rescue' Europe. Marshall, Harriman and Hoffman are stars of Wall Street, dollar stars in the same sense as Hollywood film stars. They studied science and life on boards of trustees and directors; they have managed and continue to manage dozens and hundreds of companies; they know all the secrets and mysteries of the stock market. Hoffman is a Studebaker incarnate, a powerful American truck who pushes aside all the other vehicles in the capitalist markets. Who better to run Western Europe than this king of American trucks!

Marshall and Harriman are also stars of American capital. They came and pitched their tents on the banks of the Thames, the Seine and the Tiber. They formed Wall Street branches in all the capital cities of Western Europe. American machines were on the verge of collapse everywhere, and the nimble and cocky businessmen appeared all over the place to 'rescue' Europe, to teach the Europeans and show them what American capitalism was all about.

From the very outset, rescuing Europe was regarded as big business, as a commercial enterprise, a new concern with three directors at the top. Naturally, the dollar took the leading role. They sanctified its omnipotence. Western European cabinet ministers, stock market gurus and patriarchs of financial 'families' all humbly yielded to Marshall, Hoffman and Harriman, bowing to their superiority in economic and financial affairs.

Marshall's reputation preceded him. He was once a General, but that is not so important. He was an adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. American imperialism appointed him to this important post. He helped to unleash the war in China. And with all the wisdom gained from his experience in China, Marshall came to Europe. After being adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, he began to advise Western Europe on how to implement strict capitalist order and unite against the workers and the communists, how to discredit socialism and incite a war.

But alas, worldly glory soon passes! Chiang Kai-shek was not terribly pleased about the fact that he had followed Marshall's advice. The seemingly compliant adviser turned out to be a dangerous enemy. Such was the American business of war in China.

But what of Western Europe?

The place was still in a mess. In fact, there was more of a mess at the end of the year than at the beginning. The financial management of the United Kingdom, France and Italy is in complete chaos. In the United

Kingdom, by the greatest of efforts, Cripps somehow managed to make ends meet in the annual budget, though mainly on paper. Gay, on the other hand, did not manage to make ends meet in France and the franc is falling through the floor. The situation in Italy is desperate. In all Western European countries unemployment has risen and the standard of living of the working class has dropped.

Marshall began by ordering Europeans to form a single line for some US dollar soup. This was called the 'unification of Europe'. They united and changed formation for a whole year, but no line was formed. The United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Italy are all creeping forward, pushing each other aside, each with their own financial plan, their own foreign trade plan, and then they are surprised to find German fascist capital at the front of the queue. Everything is promised to them — loans, dollars and factories. The United Kingdom is gloomily chewing on horseflesh. The Italians are fed on the dry vegetables which nobody in the USA will buy.

And what, for example, is Greece from a business point of view? It is a European version of the Chinese Marshall plan. Hundreds of millions of dollars invested knowingly into corrupt enterprises.

And what about the notorious Berlin question in business terms? The American capitalist press is jumping for joy at the 'airlift' in Berlin, where coal and foodstuffs are transported by cargo planes. But what is so special about that? If you have coal and you have planes, then of course you can transport coal by plane. If you wanted to, you could even wrap each lump of coal in pretty wrapping paper, cover it in cellophane and write on each one: 'All praise the wise Clay!' The only question is: how much will this plan cost and who will pay gold prices for coal? There has never been no much squandering of money since the creation of the stock exchange.

The Americans transport the cargo and the Germans pay for it.

A year has passed and two thirds of the American rescue fund for Europe has been spent, but nothing decisive has been achieved. The situation was bad last year, but next year it will be even worse. The British bourgeois press has hailed the British Government's White Paper outlining the four-year financial 'plan' as the most 'gloomy document' it has seen for years.

Disillusionment is growing in Western European capitalist circles. Even though Marshall's press tries to conceal the fact, it is unable to do so. The truth will out. The rescue team of businessmen has been caught in a scandal. If anything like this had happened in any big US company operating with shareholders' money, the unsuccessful businessmen would have been kicked out in disgrace. But the 'European rescue mission' is operating with US money and nobody is threatening the bankrupt businessmen.

And are they really bankrupt, not in terms of rescuing Europe, but in terms of their real objectives and their military policy? They could answer the critics by saying yes, we have not helped Western Europe but we have rescued hundreds and thousands of US businessmen from bankruptcy, we have propped up thousands of decaying businesses in the USA, helping them to sell unsold goods to Europe. Maybe we have worsened the crisis in Europe, but we have postponed the crisis in the USA. And the main thing is that we have built military bases everywhere and we produce a lot of military hardware which the people do not need but which is necessary for the US stock exchange, gambling with blood and filth.

Throughout last year, American businessmen were creating in Western Europe and throughout the capitalist world an atmosphere of alarm and anxiety required for war. They have tried to infect Western Europe with pre-war fever. In fact, war is the main business of the USA, and the rescue team of businessmen has engaged in inciting war wherever it can — in Greece, in Palestine, in Indonesia.

In Western Europe, businessmen have worsened the decay within the ruling classes. They have bought off the press, political parties and scientists. They have cultivated around themselves an atmosphere of general corruption and dishonest profit. They have corrupted everyone who has hired their services. They have slung mud at honest people, at all the patriots who did not wish to sell their homeland. Most of all, they have tried to corrupt, divide and disgrace the working classes in Western Europe.

Can these businessmen really brag of great successes in this endeavour? No. They have not been successful in their attempts to deceive and corrupt the people of Western Europe. For example, they did all that they could to set the French people against the Soviet Union. But the working classes of France gave them the response they deserved. Workers denounced the Marshall Plan, the plan to transform free citizens into white slaves of America. They declared that they would never take up arms against the Soviet Union. And the demented cry of fury in the capitalist press is evidence that, with their response, the French workers have touched a sore spot in the American business of war.

This heralds the failure of the Marshall Plan. Businessmen pre-empt the blame game by passing the buck on to their subordinates. Hoffman scolded Léon Jouhoux for not managing to divide the working classes in Europe. Dollars were wasted, and what were the results? *Force Ouvrière* was formed to glorify, among the entire working class, the generosity and wisdom of the businessmen and to advertise the advantages of capitalism over socialism. But, in reality, the businessmen turned out to be bad, talentless and unskilled managers.

Of course, this was not because Marshall, Harriman and Hoffman were themselves talentless people. No, US capitalism really did send its most skilled businessmen, its most energetic entrepreneurs to Europe. These are businessmen in the full sense of the word. But business turned out not to be powerful enough to address the major historic challenges. Managing citizens is not the same thing as managing pen-pushers in huge companies. The people tore the masks off the faces of the 'saviours of Europe'. They frustrated the American policy of war. Bankrupt capitalism can save nobody, not even itself.

The policy of peace and free labour in the Soviet Union and in the countries of popular democracy is there for all the world to see.

* * *

No matter how hard the business magnates try to penetrate other parts of Europe, they are unable to do so. They shake their fists in rage, but their arms are too short to reach. They watch with powerless fury as the historic work of consolidating, spreading and improving socialism goes on in this part of Europe.

It progressed well last year. Socialist activists have been very successful. At the beginning of the year, the capitalists still harboured the hope that some socialists would call on them, the businessmen, for help. But they were denied that pleasure. In countries with national democracies, not only did the socialists not call upon the businessmen, they removed from power and management positions their own businessmen in disguise.

In that part of Europe that is free from business, the pure atmosphere of socialist labour prevails. The Soviet peace policy has a voice and is reflected in the healthy and calm mood. There is no sign of a stock exchange anywhere, with its bustling, shouting, agitated, swindling crowd; there is no capitalist press with its shrill, hysterical screams and its nervous lies. There are no swindlers creating artificial panic in order to fleece the pockets of the public more easily. There are no businessmen, because there is no business.

Leo Tolstoy once said of the writer who fills his stories with monsters, ghosts and skeletons: 'He frightens, but I am not afraid.' Churchill frightens, but socialists are not afraid. This year, we heard the calm, forceful and dignified words of Comrade Stalin who said that the people do not want war and that the Churchills of the world will not draw them into war. Experience confirms what he said.

The capitalists will not succeed with the Marshall Plan. The socialists will meet and exceed their plans. In this, socialism has a huge historic advantage over capitalism. It is recorded in the chronicle of 1948. The Soviet Union's state plan is expressed in roubles. Like its preceding plan, it was exceeded. The plan for Czechoslovakia was expressed in korunas; in Hungary in forints; in Rumania in lei; in Bulgaria in levs; in Poland in zlotys. They exceeded their objectives. The budget of the once proud United Kingdom is expressed in US dollars, and cannot be met without those dollars.

Soviet socialists can look back on last year with satisfaction. So much creative work has been undertaken. There has been a huge step forward towards a great increase in people's living standards, towards meeting all the people's needs and aspirations, towards an abundance of everything, towards a glittering blossoming of culture, towards communism! The 5-year plan has been achieved ahead of time and the outlines for 10- and 15-year plans have been clearly laid out.

The economy and culture of the popular democratic countries develop under the protection of the Soviet policy of peace and friendly cooperation between peoples. Last year was a very successful year for them. Large-scale industry has been nationalised, land transferred from the landowners to the peasants with the aid of the democratic state, and socialist culture has grown apace.

The socialists have managed to overcome huge obstacles. Businessmen piled up the obstacles, stuck spanners in the works, put pit-holes in the way and intimidated and threatened ... The people have taken the old proverb 'that which God does not give, the pig does not eat' and made it fit their own ends: they have replaced God with democracy, but kept the pig. The pig did not eat, the spanners have been removed and the very people who dug the pit-holes have fallen into them. With this growth in output, nations that have adopted the Soviet Union's science of labour and socialist competition have achieved great things.

A major building programme is underway in the country of the Soviets and in countries with popular democracies.

In capitalist parts of Western Europe, the dollar goldfish is splashing the muddy water with its tail, while the capitalist businessmen are no better off than when they started. Even Western Europe is no better off, as it sits there dreaming of ruling the waves.

Businessmen watch the popular democratic countries with horror. From where, from whom did the workers and peasants learn to manage the country in such a short time, to conduct complex financial affairs, create order in the factories and increase production?

How is it possible that, in one short year, people who had never played the stock exchange or operated private banks were able to fend off inflation now raging in Italy, France and other countries under the trusteeship of the illustrious financial wise men of capitalism? The socialists succeeded where the businessmen had failed.

Capitalists and socialists are two historically opposing sides.

The socialist is a builder. He gets his economic education not in the stock market or through managing banks, concealing scandalous theft with columns of figures. The socialist knows about the economy not from share prices. For him, metal is not a stock market bulletin but a blast furnace or open-hearth furnace. For him, bread is not the inflated prices of dumped exports but wheat in a farmer's field.

Socialists are workers, farmers, intellectuals. In the Soviet country, under the direction of the Communist Party, based on the ideals of Lenin, under Stalin's wise leadership, they have been running a huge national economy according to their plans and in strict order for more than 30 years. The Second World War showed the whole world what the Soviet people were like, as masters of their country, defenders of their homeland, irreconcilable enemies of reaction, true and mighty supporters of peace and culture.

The agents of capitalism have thrown morality, conscience and honour to the wind, removing them from their political and economic science and from their economic policy. Putting profits and gains at the heart of their production and trade, they have soaked their foreign and domestic policy in blood and dirt. They need a war for profits, and profits for war.

Socialists combine superior morality with the socialist economy. They know the value of profits, for the nation. They economise, for the nation. They save up, for the nation. Excessive enrichment is disgraceful,

while enrichment of the nation is honourable. Socialists develop their national economy to maintain peace. They need peace to develop their economy ... The foreign policy of the Soviet Union and national democratic countries is based on peace, on maintaining peace and serving peace. Everyone, all mankind, knows this. And if the capitalist press were to bark a hundred times louder and the capitalist radio were to yelp a hundred times louder, the voice of peace, coming from the Soviet Union, would still drown out all the shouting, howling and screaming.

The socialists have beaten the businessmen. This is a fact of history for 1948 and the same will happen in 1949.

The businessmen have had their day. The death knell has sounded 12 times for them at midnight with a call for the last round. Nothing good is awaiting the businessmen and Marshall's friends in the new year. They are despondent, turning their backs on the future.

Socialists, communists, workers, progressive peasants and the national intelligentsia will celebrate the new year with a further step forward, to new victories, to communism!