

# Communists and Civil Liberties—2.

By MAX WEISS

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(Conclusion)

THE VIOLATIONS of socialist democracy which are now being revealed in the current discussions within the Soviet Union had their origins, so far as we can judge, in a basically erroneous judgment about tendencies of the class struggle after socialism has been achieved. The thesis prevailed—and was accepted by the Marxists of our country as well—that the class struggle would continue to grow in intensity even after socialism had become victorious as a result of the frenzy of the dying classes. What was overlooked was the decreasing ability of these classes to translate their subjective frenzy into objective struggle within the country.

The impact of this thesis on the Marxists of the United States resulted in an incorrect approach to the conception of civil liberties under socialism in our country. It inhibited the correct development of our theoretical and political exposition of this subject. It brought grist to the mill of the enemies of socialism who accused us of "totalitarianism," of propounding a philosophy in which the individual

serves the state rather than the state serving the individual.

What will the situation be in our country when the majority of the American people become convinced of the desirability of establishing a socialist government and reorganizing society along socialist lines? By that time, the backbone of world imperialism will have been broken. Upon what outside forces will the advocates of the restoration of capitalism be able to count? None! The issue of whether the socialist reorganization of society effected in America should be retained or scrapped in favor of a return to capitalism will, under the conditions in which it presents itself at that future moment of our history, be decided exclusively by the relation of forces within our country.

Under such conditions, a socialist America will have nothing to fear from outside efforts to restore capitalism by violent means. The only outside pressures will be largely the moral ones brought to bear by the economic well-being and cultural flowering of the peoples in other socialist countries.

AS FAR AS the capitalist elements within our country are concerned, we do not expect

them to reconcile themselves graciously to the new socialist order. We know that, together with their hangers-on, they will make serious efforts to reverse the course of history. In doing so they will be able to count on the continued influence of strong remnants of bourgeois ideology among the people long after the material base for this ideology will have been eliminated. Hence the political struggle, even after the establishment of socialism in our country, will be stubborn and protracted.

But so long as these capitalist elements confine their opposition to the framework of socialist legality, and do not resort to force and violence, their right to dissent will be guaranteed by the socialist law of the land. Let them undertake to convince the American people by peaceful argument, debate and persuasion that they should relinquish the economic and social gains achieved under socialism and return the means of production to the tender mercies of the economic royalists. We have no illusions about the seriousness of the problems which will be created by such efforts to restore capitalism but we have no doubt about the ultimate and inevitable decision which will be made by the overwhelming majority of the American people.