

It is a mental attitude, more than anything else, that makes people fight well. It may be caused by a number of means.
 The Freeman, October, 1942

The Secret of Russian Resistance

By JOSEPH PUSATERI

It seems that most Gorgists have joined the distinguished group of intellectuals who attribute everything to land, including love, honor and the Brooklyn Dodgers. I am referring to Harry Gunnison Brown's article entitled, "Russian Bravery and Russian Land." (Freeman, Sept., 1942). The Russians have proved themselves to be a brave and superb fighting people. Of this there can be no dispute. However, though we may praise their courage to the skies, we need not attribute their success to "Socialism," any more than they need attribute our success to "Capitalism." Have we already forgotten that our alliance with Russia was actuated by nothing but the force of circumstances! Yet it seems as though we have made a virtue of necessity.

Mr. Brown has made a vain attempt to link the land policy with the motive for Russia's resistance. He writes,

"What of the fact that all of Russia's natural resources ... belong to all the Russians? In other countries it is not so. They belong to comparatively few."

This is a mere assumption, unsupported by the facts. There is no proof that common ownership of land impels a nation to fight more bravely or efficiently. The Russians of 1812 did not repulse Napoleon's army because they owned natural resources. The Chinese are not fighting so bravely and resolutely for that reason, either. Russia's poor showing against Finland recently, despite a tremendous superiority in equipment and numbers, had no connection with Finland's private ownership of land, or Russia's common ownership. The British had challenged the Nazis while unprepared, and withstood severe bombings for a year. Surely the British people did not demonstrate this courageous resistance because of common ownership of their land, or for the British

landlords. The landless people there are out to smash Hitler. The Cliveden Set, who own most of Britain's land, are against the war! These facts positively contradict Mr. Brown's statement that "common ownership of land is the reason for Russia's resistance." If Socialism is responsible for Russian successes, then Socialism is equally responsible for Russian reverses.

What arguments, then, can be advanced to account for this resistance? Here are several factors that have undoubtedly played important parts in shaping the war to its present state:

1. The Russian people (like all others) deeply resent intrusion and unwarranted attack.

2. To support this feeling, Russia was prepared, politically and economically, due to the regimentation that is part and parcel of the Socialist system. She had a full year's preparation to arm to the teeth, while England and Germany were exhausting their supplies in battle, prior to the Russian invasion. Russia boasted of the largest standing army and air fleet in the world. Controlled radios and newspapers harped on the war theme for years. However, these points are not a credit to Russia any more than they are for Germany, who has made similar preparations. But it was this war economy advantage that gave both Russia and Germany a few years' start over the democratic nations.

3. Russia is self-sufficient. Her vast natural resources furnish her with an unlimited supply of war materials. Her great population gives her unlimited reserves. Her fertile lands yield her sufficient food.

4. The 2,000 mile border was a natural Russian advantage.

This long border scattered the Nazi army into much smaller units, thinning out the real massed power of the Nazi "Blitzkrieg" machine,

depriving it of its former effectiveness.

Nazi successes, or that of any other aggressor, can be attributed to promises of rich rewards at the expense of scapegoats, plus years of preparation and planning.

Mr. Brown, by failing to distinguish between common ownership of land under Socialism, and the collection of economic rent in a free society, has left the impression that the Socialist conception of common ownership of land is desirable. He writes, "No landlord can force the (Russian) people to pay him for location advantages that the people themselves have produced." Whereupon a Socialist might add, "But that isn't all. The Russian people own all the factories and machines. We do not separate these things in common, from land. Not only do we fight against re-introduction of landlordism, but also against capitalism, with its attendant extraction of surplus value!" Thus Mr. Brown would be forced to undertake the tedious task of proving that the Russians fight only because they own the land, and not for the other means of production.

No private landlord can, but the State landlord brings on new abuses that deprive the Russian workers of a large part of their production. The Russian people own their land as does the American tramp, who theoretically owns our parks in common. But the "Keep Off" sign is addressed to its very owners.

It is the unscientific use of land and capital that bring the Russian people down to a low standard of living. With the absence of competition in a free market, the value of land can never be accurately ascertained, and thus cannot be utilized to its maximum yield. For what may a parcel of land be used most economically—a farm, a school, a factory, a theatre, or a skyscraper? A school may be built on land that may yield

The Freeman, October, 1942

many times more for production purposes. The effect and social loss is the same as if all types of laborers were scrambled and placed at different and new jobs, regardless of their productive ability at certain trades. The tremendous loss under this "planned" use of land is apparent. Under the Georgist scientific use of land, it will be entrepreneurs who are willing to stake their life's savings upon their foresight and experience, to select the proper place for the proper business. Once his business proves to be a failure, it is removed from the market. Under Socialism, uneconomical enterprises are never discontinued, for there is no way of determining their success or failure because of the lack of competition. Losses are socialized, charged to the people, and become a heavy drain upon the nation's production.

As for private landlords collecting for the advantages of better sites, what happens when 50 million Russians seek location advantages, and only one million such places are available? Who obtains these advantages?

There is only one answer—the group that has the power to secure them—the minority Communist party and bureaucrats. They reap the rent privilege from the rest of the people. Thus, while the "Capitalist" nations pay landlords, the Socialist nations pay for similar abuse and misuse of the land. The income that might go to support private landlords, is more often never even produced. The manner in which a vast bureaucracy can devour national income causes surplus value to pale into insignificance by comparison. To quote Joseph E. Davies, Ambassador to Russia, "The great natural wealth of Russia makes her self-sustaining . . . not because of socialism, but in spite of it."*

Most wars are caused by internal failures. It is here that the land question enters. Interference with natural laws is bound to have its evil effects, and any nation, "Capitalist" or "Socialist," is apt to start a war for these reasons. They seek a solution beyond their borders at the ex-

pense of others.

In closing, I also wish to pay tribute to the heroic and courageous Russians for their great fighting, and also to the British and the Chinese, and all of the United Nations. Let us concentrate upon the task of winning the war, and let us not allow our enthusiasm to lead us to exaggeration, lest we create more work to be undone in the future.

*Mission to Moscow.