

The Cowardice Of Leonid Brezhnev

L.I. Brezhnev has become the laughing stock in the hallways and toilet rooms of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown and Brzezinski's National Security Council for ordering the reversal of the policy to push through the transfer ruble to replace the bankrupt dollar in the Eurodollar market.

As a result of this blunder, the aging politician's public career cannot but soon end in one of three possible ways. Either he will somehow be removed from power by more rational and more determined forces in the USSR, probably under the nominal accusation of "harebrained scheming" in some, mercifully unrelated area of policy; or some new version of a public anti-personality cult campaign will clip his wings and force him, while staying in office, to comply with an aggressive policy of pursuing a transfer ruble offensive along with other features of the U.S. Labor Party's International Development Bank strategy.

The third alternative will be for Secretary Brezhnev to succeed in maintaining his present course and thus see the world go up in thermonuclear smoke, probably before this year is out. This is what will become of his pathetic pursuit of detente through capitulation.

The first signs of this capitulation began emerging during the latter part of January when the Carter team apparently wrung out of him the promise to reclassify the so-called "Rudakov disclosures" pertaining to major Soviet breakthroughs in plasma physics, and to consider a Salt III round of disarmament negotiations for banning research and development for qualitatively new weapons — the one area where the USSR maintains an identified marginal advantage.

That capitulation might have been construed at the time of its occurrence as a strategic deception maneuver, and it might have thus been sold to reluctant Soviet commanders. However, it lost its potential character of such a brilliant strategic bluff when it became known, from the second week of February onward, that the USSR Politburo's majority is forcefully pushing to reject the gold-backed transfer-ruble-based solution to the world monetary crisis, as that proposal was then being pushed by Hungarian, Czech, East German and other officials along with a large contingent of anti-Atlanticist Italian industrialists then visiting Moscow.

The more spectacular maneuvers in the push for the transfer-ruble included major statements by the head of the Hungarian Central Bank, moves by Soviet officials through the Moscow Narodny Bank to order implementation studies at London banking houses, and impressive press coverage in primarily the Italian and British press.

Even though many of these efforts are still alive, the momentum has been ordered to stop dead in its tracks.

However, the Monetary Commission of the COMECON has scheduled the transfer-ruble to be one of its top

agenda items in its sessions throughout the remainder of this year.

East European and Soviet political leaders will be making a fatal error if they credulously buy the rationalization that Soviet leaders such as Brezhnev oppose the transfer-ruble proposal for "ideological" or "economic" reasons. The reason that Brezhnev is backtracking is fear of provoking Wall Street's wrath — he has lost nerve at a moment when the pressure of responsibility has reached a peak and he preferred to beat a disastrous retreat.

Therefore, any remedy to the current Soviet leadership disaster must include, for Brezhnev, the usual kind of treatment reserved for commanders who have suffered a loss of nerve at critical turning points. Leonid I. Brezhnev has reacted to the demands of crisis in the typical way L.D. Trotsky was known to react: do nothing and hide behind self-righteous slogans. Hence we have the pathetic spectacle of third rate party flunkys, in vociferous tones denouncing the transfer-ruble proposal as "revisionist." This is accompanied by similar such posturing in Pravda and Ivestia where the hysterical refusal to single out the New York financiers and the Rockefeller family as the party of fascism and war is covered up by childish "tough" "analyses" designed to make the point that "all capitalists are war mongers," and "only softies distinguish between industrial and financial capitalist factions."

These are no Maoist shenanigans, nor is Brezhnev about to launch a fire-eating "Third Period" spectacle. He is simply trying to sidetrack the forces pushing for the transfer-ruble because he is afraid the United States will retaliate with all the horrible things needed to rest his detente strategy in ruins.

The Geopolitical Issue

This fear of a U.S. retaliation is unfounded, in the sense that it proceeds from a notorious inability of Secretary Brezhnev and his associates to conceptualize what political transformation would crystallize *in the West* as a result of a determined push of the transfer-ruble solution by the USSR.

In the context of economic-industrial correlation of forces operative at the present time, there exists no alternative to Lower Manhattan's hyper-inflated dollar and the institutions which keep it alive, other than the gold-backed transferable ruble around which international trade can be restored and launched out of the present depression depths. The reason for this have been identified on numerous occasions in U.S. Labor Party publications.

The Soviet Union's vigorous propagation of this solution would inevitably have the immediate effect of solidifying the Western European industrialist-based governments' presently strong tendency to break away from the dollar in favor of the only available alternate

world arrangement — the one based on the transfer-ruble. Such Western European motion, as has been repeatedly demonstrated in recent weeks, tends in turn to reinforce the Arab oil producers' propensity to break away from the Eurodollar financial bubble in favor of productive investment venture. This is especially the case in the developing sector and in those industries in the advanced sector whose output is indispensable for a worldwide technology-transfer policy in favor of the Third World. Concomitant with this Western European and Arab motion, is the tendency of developing nations' governments to break with the dollar by means of debt moratoria and outright repudiation of debt to New York banks.

This motion is presently threatened to collapse under the combined blows of a wide range of Brzezinski-Vance destabilization schemes in the West and the Soviets' treacherous retreat away from the transfer-ruble.

Indeed, as of the failed Italian industrialists' visit to Moscow in late February, the world situation has been deteriorating by leaps and bounds in the direction opposite to the transfer-ruble based New World Economic Order. Two historic editorials in the New York Times on March 5 and 6, entitled "Bailing Out Our Banks Abroad" and "Old Soldier Keynes," outlined with brutal lucidity the Trilateral Commission's immediate perspective: every single solitary government in the non-socialist sector of the world economy is to be transformed into a debt collecting agency for the New York banks *with no other administrative task than this*. Any government, however otherwise friendly and obedient, is to get axed the very minute it threatens to pursue anything but debt collection. The "human rights" campaign is geared up by the very personnel that conducted the Vietnam war, for use as a destabilization device for such occasions — the treatment of the Brazilian junta since its insistence on building nuclear power reactors is exemplary of this Lower Manhattan technique. Simultaneously, the Securities and Exchange Commission has announced plans to launch forty-four simultaneous "Lockheed scandal" type investigations of U.S. companies "bribing" foreign governments, for use in destabilizations against developed-sector governments.

The short-term strategic result of this is the encirclement of the socialist community by an undifferentiated sea of Lower Manhattan-controlled fascist regimes throughout the developing and advanced capitalist sector at approximately the time that available loot in that sector runs out to thus fuel a renewed *Drang Nach Osten*. As the New York Times "Old Soldier Keynes" editorial proclaimed, the era of economics in world relations is over — what counts now is political, covert-operations and outright military warfare.

What Is To Be Done?

The cause for this deterioration in world affairs is Leonid Brezhnev's retreat from the responsibility of shaping the world market into an environment favorable to the further growth of the socialist community's economies, via the internationalization of the transfer-ruble.

However, increasingly since 1973, leading forces and spokesmen have emerged throughout the Socialist bloc

who have systematically developed the perspective that any future growth of the socialist economies must necessarily be part of a deliberately guided effort to transform the world division of labor and thus the rates of productivity growth of the world economy as a whole. This is a cogent perspective first developed by what we can label the science-and-technology tendency in the bloc, composed mostly of statesmen and politicians who have developed an adequate grasp of the needs of the advanced-technology, capital-intensive sector of Soviet and East European industry. This is also the group which was first to grasp the unique necessity of the transfer-ruble as a political instrument to transform the present mess in the world market into an environment that fosters high growth rates and expanded world trade turnover.

The Brezhnev tendency, having abandoned this responsibility toward the world's productive economy, has fallen back into an introvert-paranoid orientation of "hard line" national defense: We won't lift a finger to clean up your mess in the capitalist world and as soon as fascism takes over, we hope it leaves us alone in our home, or else we'll blow you up. The Politburo majority at the present time is following the path toward war through capitulation.

There is evidence that it took a lot of armtwisting to get strategic thinkers in the Soviet military establishment to succumb to Mr. Brezhnev's Munich policy. Omitting the cumbersome details of how this was done during February, with articles of the Party's supremacy over the Armed Forces and what not, the important conclusion for anti-Atlanticist forces in the capitalist sector is that there exists, however subdued at this time, a powerful and maturing political tendency in the Socialist bloc which could take up that sector's responsibilities toward the world economy, including the fight to impose the transfer-ruble over the U.S. dollar in settling world trade imbalances.

Working-class and industrialist forces in the west, inclusive of the developing sector, have hardly any choices in this matter. They are, at present, being kept hostages for intense economic looting which will end at the time the Soviet strategic missiles will begin pouring in. Therefore, the only course left to them is action, singlemindedly pursuing two objectives: 1. Immediately bankrupt the New York banking faction by means of unilateral debt moratoria and 2. Strengthen the hand of the pro-transfer-ruble tendencies in the socialist camp itself.

If these forces, both inside and out of governments, find their courage inadequate for such a course of action, they might be helped by the thought that "Towards starve" and then get incinerated. A display of courage and statesmanship on their part, however, would go a long way in remedying the damage that Leonid Brezhnev's cowardice has already caused. The world has a legitimate interest and right to intervene in the internal political affairs of the Soviet Union in this fashion.

Once such an object is accomplished, Secretary Brezhnev's other more amiable qualities may be reconsidered in a friendlier light. His peaceable grandfather image could indeed be an asset to a world which will have successfully left behind it the present dramatic problems of war and peace.

—by Criton Zoakos