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WAR AND THE WORKERS



BY
JOHN WEST

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INTRODUCTION

War is no longer something in the vague future, something to be prophesied and argued about. War has begun. The airplanes and machine guns of Italian Fascism are blasting their corpse-strewn road into Ethiopia. Once again the columns of the newspapers are filled with stories of attacks and counter-attacks, of cities destroyed, of plains laid waste, of the dead and wounded and dying. But far more ominous than the stories of the actual campaign now being fought in Africa are the reports in the neighboring columns: of the concentration of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean; of the new moves of the Japanese in the campaign against China; of the war games of the United States Fleet in the Pacific; of the behind-the-scenes deals in the League of Nations; of twenty-four hour operation in all the munitions plants of the world; of the new German submarines and airplanes and gases; of the new French forts along the German border; of daily changing alliances and counter-alliances.

The war begun by the campaign against Ethiopia—the deliberate, cold-blooded, unprovoked rape of the last of the independent nations of Africa—will not, cannot end in Ethiopia. This is the first great, terrible truth which we must learn and which we must teach. The war in Ethiopia is the introduction, the prelude to the new imperialist world war. It may be that England, France, and Italy will find some “solution” that will prevent the new war from spreading immediately and directly to include the rest of the world. But a solution of this kind can be at the best a short, temporary postponement. Italy has made the first open move in what can only be the new world war, the new armed struggle between the imperialist powers to re-divide the world.

In this struggle the fate of human society will be decided. Remembering the last war with its more than 40,000,000 dead and wounded, and knowing the thousand-fold advances in military technique since the last war, no man can predict

adequately the horror of the coming war. Mankind stands now at the crossroads: On the one hand, the continued domination of finance-capital will mean that in the approaching series of imperialist struggles civilization will be literally wiped out, and human society will be thrown back again into the most frightful form of barbarism. There is only one other path: the utilization of the imperialist crisis for the overthrow of finance-capital, and the construction of a new order of society which, while releasing the productive forces to serve the needs of men, will wipe war and the threat of war from the face of the earth. But the overthrow of finance-capital and the construction of the new society can be achieved only by the action of the international working class under the leadership of the revolutionary party.

Thus the problem of war is above all the problem of the working class and its party. The problem of war is, indeed, the supreme test for the working class and the party of the working class. This test now faces us. It is for us to meet it.

War and the Workers

I.

THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF MODERN WAR

To many persons, war seems to come as if it were a law of Fate. In former days it used to be thought that war was a punishment send by God to punish men for their sins. Others believe that wars are due to the ambition or "lust for power" on the part of certain rulers or warriors. Still others think that wars result from what they call "racial or cultural antagonisms". To many of these people it seems that war is a special and peculiar and frightful event that happens every so often, no matter what we try to do about it. Some of them, on the other hand, conclude that we could get rid of war if only we could get enough people to want to get rid of it, if we could develop a "will to peace" among men.

All views of this kind are absolutely useless in helping us to understand what war is; and are therefore equally useless in the struggle against war—since we cannot struggle effectively against war unless we understand the true nature of war.

The first, the very first thing we must know clearly about war is that war is not something "special", not something that "just happens". War is, on the contrary, an essential and necessary part of the society we live in, that is, of imperialist-capitalist society. War is just as much a part of capitalism as wage labor, or big corporations, or lending money at interest.

There are in the modern world six great capitalist powers: Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan. These six nations control the world, with the exception of the Soviet Union. All other nations and peoples are subject to them, either directly as colonies, mandates, and dominions; or indirectly, through treaties, alliances,

financial control, or some similar device. The real rulers of these six nations are, of course, those who own and control their productive plants—namely, their respective finance-capitalists. In one degree or another, the finance-capitalists of each of these nations face a similar problem:

The finance-capitalists control enormous amounts of capital. This capital must be put to use, that is, must be set to work making a profit. A profit cannot be made, however, unless a market can be found in which commodities can be absorbed at a price sufficient to cover "costs of production" plus a profit. But in none of these six nations is the internal or "home" market adequate to provide an outlet for the available capital. In part the finance-capitalists strive to overcome this deficiency by lowering their productive costs, and thus squeezing more out of the home market. To accomplish this, besides "internal" means such as reducing wages and building better machines (which as a matter of fact only exaggerate the difficulty), they must seek ever cheaper sources of the raw materials which enter into production—oil, coal, iron, copper, cotton, etc. In part, they are forced to try to sell their commodities in other, "foreign" markets. Above all, at the present time, they seek *new outlets for capital investment itself*, new fields outside of their own national territory where capital can be poured in and an additional market created. It is this last feature particularly, the drive for external capital investment, for what is called "the export of capital", which is the distinguishing mark of *imperialism* on a world scale.

Thus the finance-capitalists of *each* of the six great powers are faced with the same set of necessities, which they *must* strive for if capitalist production is to be kept going. These necessities depend not on their "wills" or "desires", but upon the very nature of capitalist production. The choice of each group of finance-capitalists is: these things, or ruin. (1) Each must strive to gain control over the great sources of basic raw materials. (2) Each must fight for commodity outlets in "foreign markets"—must attempt to build up export trade. (3) Each must find new outlets in extra-national territory for capital investment, in order to

employ profitably the idle capital funds for which there is no use at home. In addition: (4) Each group of finance-capitalists must struggle to monopolize the home market, by means of tariffs, import and exchange restrictions, etc.; and (5) each must contend for control of incidental sources of profit, such as shipping, insurance, tourist trade, etc.

If we glance even for a moment at the history of the United States since the War, we can see these inescapable tendencies everywhere manifesting themselves:

International Telephone & Telegraph Co. builds and operates systems in Spain, Latin America, South America, and the Near East. General Electric buys heavily into the electrical industries not only of "backward" countries but of Germany, France and England. New York banks and investment houses exploit the copper mines of Africa and the silver mines of Peru. The Standard Fruit Co. owns and operates the great orchards of Mexico; United Fruit, the orchards of Central America. Standard Oil of New Jersey sends its geologists into Mexico, South America, the Near East, China. Firestone and United States Rubber build up plantations in Africa and Pacific islands. The automobile companies ship cars and trucks to every country of the world. The Aluminum Corporation corners the world supply of aluminum. Carefully controlled tariffs prevent foreign competition in the home market. The merchant marine is heavily subsidized by the government. The American Sugar Refining Co. expands its refineries in Cuba. Curtiss-Wright builds an airplane factory in China. Standard Oil and Texas Co. build oil refineries and operate filling stations all through the Far East, as well as in Bolivia, Venezuela, and Mexico. The automobile companies build plants in Canada and even in England and Germany.

But exactly the same tendencies drive on the capitalists of England, Germany, France, Italy, and Japan.

The world, however, is limited in extent. The areas available for new forms of capital expansion and exploitation are growingly restricted. Conflict is therefore inevitable.

The truth of the matter is this: In the stage of imper-

ialism, capitalist society is continuously at war. This is of the essence of imperialism. It is not a question of one war starting, then stopping, to be followed in a decade or two by a new war. It is war all the time, changing only in the form it takes, in the degree of violence.

Conflict at the "economic level" continues without interruption: economic struggles for sources of raw material, for new markets, for new fields of exploitation; tariff and exchange battles; competition for shipping and loans; exploration to discover new mines, oil wells, land for rubber and coffee and cotton plantations; and all the rest.

But the conflict can never remain at the purely economic level. The stakes are too high—failure at the economic level means the destruction of the defeated economic group. Therefore, the finance-capitalists must utilize constantly their political servants—the governments of their respective countries. And the governments are not slow to answer. They build up their military and naval armaments to almost unbelievable heights. They are ever ready to unseat a Central American government, threaten a native prince, wipe out "red bandits", stop or start a revolution, send a flotilla of warships or a regiment of marines, resent an "insult to the flag", if necessary set two countries—Bolivia and Paraguay, for example—flying at each other's throats to settle the dispute of Standard Oil and Shell over rights to an oil field. At the beck and call of finance-capital, the government, with the guns and cruisers and airplanes, snaps quickly to attention. That, indeed, is what the governments are for.

The economic conflicts and "minor wars" of capital expansion, of tariff and exchange and armament and competitive exploitation, reach a point where the attempt is made to find a political solution of the economic and social contradictions through war, open and undisguised: imperialist-inspired wars between subject nations; wars of subjugation by imperialist nations against subject peoples; and, finally, the world-wide war of the imperialist nations among themselves, fighting for the re-division of the world. But, though producing a temporary "boom" by loosening the bonds on

capital expansion, by the destruction of existing capital values and by credit expansion, the open wars, far from solving the conflicts, only express their depth, and prepare for still more bitter conflict to come.

The full story does not end even here. For throughout the bloody imperialist chaos, and expressing the deepest of all the conflicts, there is being fought constantly the basic and decisive war of our age: the revolutionary war of the working class against its exploiters. This war, which, after generations of preparation, began on a world scale with the October Revolution in Russia, continues within every country in a thousand varying forms, from strikes to armed uprisings to preparations for intervention in the Soviet Union, and will continue until the final issue is decided.

The war between the working class and the bourgeoisie is utterly irreconcilable, in a far more profound sense even than the titanic struggles between the imperialist powers themselves. It can never stop short of complete victory. And this will serve to demonstrate how vain is the belief that the Soviet Union can stand aside, even for a short while, from the imperialist struggles, in a pseudo-socialist "isolation". In spite of its traitorous leadership, the Soviet Union still remains a working class state. The basic conflict between the Soviet Union and all the imperialist powers, therefore, is deeper than that between any of the imperialist powers themselves. The fate of the Soviet Union is bound up inextricably with the fate of the whole world. The coming open imperialist war will involve in its roots the life or death of the Soviet Union.

The moral, religious, racial and ideological disguises that war wears must not be allowed to hide the fundamental conflicts which are the true source of modern war. The general conclusion is inescapable: Modern war is neither accidental nor due to the evil of human nature nor decreed by God. War is of the very essence of imperialist-capitalism, as much a part of capitalism as wage labor. To speak of capitalism without war is like speaking of a human being without lungs. The fate of one is inextricably bound to the fate of the other.

II.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR

Even such a brief study of the nature and causes of modern war is sufficient to prove that war is an essential part of capitalism. The inner conflicts of capitalism lead and must lead to war. All Marxists, and in fact many pseudo-Marxists or even liberals, accept (or pretend to accept) this conclusion.

Nevertheless, wide-spread and disastrous misconceptions are held in following out the consequences of this conclusion so far as they apply to the struggle against war.

The most common mistake made in the attempted struggle against war comes from the belief that this struggle is somehow "independent" of the class struggle in general, that a broad union of all sorts of persons from every social class and group can be formed around the issue of fighting war, since—so the reasoning goes—these persons may be all equally opposed to war whatever their differences on other points. In this way, war is lifted from its social base, considered apart from its causes and conditions, as if it were a mystic abstraction instead of a concrete historical institution. Acting on this belief, attempts are made to build up all kinds of permanent Peace Societies, Anti-War Organizations, Leagues Against War, etc.

This kind of attitude is about as effective as it would be for doctors to treat the high fever in acute appendicitis by putting the patient in an ice-box. The only way actually to get rid of the high fever is to remove the cause of the fever—that is, to take out the diseased appendix. The same thing is true for war: the only way to get rid of war is to remove the cause of war.

War is not the cause of the troubles of society. The opposite is true. War is a symptom and result of the irreconcilable troubles and conflicts of the present form of society, that is to say, of capitalism. The only way to fight against war is to fight against the causes of war. Since the causes

of war are part of the inner nature of capitalism, it follows that the only way to fight against war is to fight against capitalism.

But the only true fight against capitalism is the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. It therefore follows that the only possible struggle *against* war is the struggle *for* the workers' revolution.

Marxists must be absolutely clear on this point. There is no "separate" or "special" struggle against war. The struggle against war cannot be divorced from the day-to-day struggles of the workers so far as, in their historical implications, these lead toward workers' power. No one can uphold capitalism—whether directly, as an open adherent of the capitalists, or indirectly, from any shade of liberal or reformist position—and fight against war, because capitalism means war. Only a revolutionist can fight against war, because only a revolutionist takes the road to the overthrow of capitalism.

To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common "program against war" with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not merely powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program *for* revolution—the program of the revolutionary party of the workers.

The workers' revolution can and will eliminate war because, by overthrowing capitalist economy and supplanting capitalism with a socialist economy, it will remove the causes of war. Under socialism there will no longer exist the basic contradictions that lead to war. Artificial economic barriers based on national boundaries will be removed. The expansion of the means of production, under the ownership and control of society as a whole, will proceed in accordance with a rational plan adjusted to the needs of the members of society. Socialism will remove the limits on consumption, and hence permit the scientific and controlled

development of production. Thus, under socialism, war will disappear because the causes of war will be done away with.

Since the victory of socialism, and this alone, will defeat war, every step on the path to socialism is a blow at war. In the struggle against war, properly understood, every militant workers' demonstration, every broad mass labor defense fight, every well-led strike, and in general every advance of the workers toward power, is worth a thousand "Peace Leagues".

Meanwhile, in carrying on the daily struggle, it is the duty of the Marxists to prepare for the war crisis. To this end, they must constantly expose the war plans of the imperialist powers; they must resist the militarization of the masses; they must make clear to the working class each step in the progress toward war; they must combat the patriotic war propaganda; they must help strengthen, ideologically and materially, the organizations of the workers, so that these will not be crushed at the outbreak of the war. And they must everywhere and at all times expose the misleaders and the betrayers in the fight against war, from whatever camp—those who make ready, by a thousand and one devices, to turn over the workers to the war-makers.

But in the war crisis itself, the Marxists do not suspend their struggle. On the contrary, the struggle becomes immensely sharper, the duties infinitely heavier. On the war question, Marxists are not "neutral"; they do not withdraw into a shell until the war disappears into the past.

One of the great aims of the revolutionary movement is the elimination of war forever from the world. But, as we have seen, this can be accomplished only by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism—that is, by the victory of the working class in the class war. This requirement is due not to the wishes of Marxists, but to the actual realities of history. Thus, in struggling against every war undertaken by any capitalist power, Marxists cannot take a merely negative pacifist position of being against "war in general". They are actively *for* the victory of the working class in the class war, since only through such victory can war in general be done away with.

Therefore it is the business of Marxists not to stand aside, but to support actively, in every possible manner, any armed struggle that is aimed against, and capable of weakening, capitalism: for example, the revolts of colonies against their imperialist oppressors, and the uprisings of all oppressed and exploited races and nations—just as Marxists support strikes or any other manifestations directed against the capitalist class or its governments.

And, similarly, Marxists are not “neutral” in an imperialist war. Their duty is to lead the working class in delaying the outbreak of the imperialist war as long as this is historically possible, since imperialist war, besides murdering millions of the finest of the workers and the youth generally, makes incomparably more difficult the organization of revolutionary struggle. But when the imperialist war nevertheless, in the end (as it must), breaks out, the task of the Marxists is to work to turn the imperialist war, which ranges the peoples of one group of nations on the battlefields against the peoples of another group, into a class war, a war of the masses under the leadership of the working class and its party for the overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of the rule of the working class. The Marxists fight, but within each country they fight not for the victory but for the defeat of their own government—not for its defeat by the opposing capitalist powers, but for its defeat by its own working class. The true enemy is *at home*: the class enemy and its political representative, the state. *This* is the enemy to be defeated, in every country. And this is the aim of the Marxists in the coming war—in every country, the overthrow of the class enemy, the setting up of the workers’ state, the joining together with the working class of the entire world for the defeat of finance-capital on an international scale, and the international victory of the working masses.

This struggle—the only true struggle against war—requires at every stage the utmost clarity and realism. Any illusion whatever weakens it mortally. Above all, the working masses of every country must understand *who* their enemy is. They must understand that the enemy is not the

people of Germany, or France, or Italy, or Japan, or of any other nation against whom the home government may wage war, but that the real enemy of the masses of every country is the enemy at home—the bourgeoisie and the government of “their own country”. They must understand that *any* war which “their” country undertakes will be a war to serve the interests of finance-capital, no matter what noble talk about “democracy” or “peace” or “defense” or “collective security” is used to justify it. And therefore they must resist to the utmost any and every conception of patriotism, class peace, national unity, or support of the government for the conduct of the war. To such conceptions must be, at all times, opposed—struggle *against* the war, struggle to turn the war into a civil war for the defeat of the government and the bourgeoisie, and the achievement of workers’ power.

This is the *only* struggle against the coming imperialist war: the struggle on an international scale for the victory of the workers, for a world socialist society.

III.

BETRAYAL IN THE STRUGGLE

Most people believe that they are opposed to war. Modern war is so terrible in its methods and results that only a small number of perverts or professional soldiers or completely ruthless financiers can support it *in their minds*. They must at least pretend to themselves that they are against war. But we have seen that wars do not result from what people wish and believe; and that being against war *in the mind* does not prevent people from acting in a way that helps bring war about.

The truth is that the most dangerous enemies in the struggle against war are not those who openly support war or are obviously in a position to benefit from war. The masses usually do not listen to, and are not deceived by, such persons. The really dangerous enemies are those who *seem* to be against war, who *seem* to be friends of peace. And of these, the most dangerous of all are the false opponents of war within the working class itself. These last are the betrayers in the full sense—they are the traitors.

It is necessary, therefore, to review first in a general way how the false struggle against war serves to betray the true struggle against war—the revolutionary struggle.

1. *The League of Nations*

The League of Nations was founded after the last imperialist war. The statesmen of the victorious Allies advertised it as the institution which would take the place of war henceforward in the world. It was to be “the collective guarantee” of peace. From then on disputes between nations were going to be settled in Geneva, not on the battlefield.

At once liberals, pacifists, and reformists took up the song. The League was hailed as the greatest stride forward toward peace in the history of the world. Everyone was told to support and aid the League, and to rely on it. Even when the reformists said that perhaps the League was not

entirely satisfactory, nevertheless they announced that it was a step in the right direction, and should be supported and strengthened.

The attitude of the liberals and the reformists—including the reformists of the Socialist and Communist parties—remains the same up to the present day. In the Ethiopian crisis, we are once again told by them to look to the League.

Now, as at its foundation, only one force has ever told the truth about the League: the Marxists. What is this truth? Is the League, in any sense at all, an agency for peace?

The League was established by the Allies, after their victory over the Central Powers, as an integral part of the "Versailles system"—that is, as an agency to enforce the peace terms dictated by Great Britain and France, with the consent of the United States. Thus, its real purposes were: (1) To enforce the Versailles Treaty, and ensure the hegemony of France on the European continent; (2) To protect the colonial empire of Great Britain, and to prevent any attempt by Germany to regain its colonies; (3) To make a temporary imperialist "united front" against the post-war threat of international proletarian revolution; and (4) to provide a legal and moral coloration for the next war which the dominant imperialist member states might undertake.

These were the real purposes of the League. How could it have been otherwise? The imperialist powers could not change their spots by joining a Society of Nations. The League did nothing, and could do nothing, to eliminate the conflicts of modern society—the causes of war. It was not, and could not be, an instrument of peace. It was, and remains, on the contrary, an *expression* of the intra-imperialist conflicts, not an agency to get rid of them. It is, in fact, part of the preparation for war, a stamping ground where the great powers can jockey for the most advantageous position for the start of open conflict. If at times it seems to settle a war situation "peacefully", that is only because the interests of the dominant powers is against an immediate outbreak. Postponement serves only to assure a greater

conflagration when the time comes. Like the Kellogg Pact, Naval Treaties, Disarmament Conferences, the League serves, in point of fact, as an additional means whereby the great powers can carry out their imperialist aims.

Every lesson of history since the foundation of the League serves to confirm this analysis. Whenever an international conflict rises above diplomatic maneuvering, it immediately and automatically goes outside the League framework—as in the case of the Chaco War, the Manchurian invasion, or German rearmament. The only alteration has been that the League is becoming an outworn instrument even to serve its original purposes. One great task for it, however, remains: to help provide a legal and moral coloration for the approaching imperialist war. This task it is carrying out in the present war crisis: as we shall see more at length later, under cover of the League, of the defense of “peace” and “collective security”, Great Britain is lining up her own working class and as much of the rest of the peoples of the world as she can, to serve her own imperialist purposes.

But what follows from this analysis of the role and function of the League? It follows that the struggle against imperialist war requires the most scathing exposure of the role of the League. Far from giving any support whatever to the League, far from creating any hopes in what it can do to preserve peace, the League must be shown before the masses as an instrument of imperialism, of the war-makers. Its “moral authority” must be, not bolstered, but smashed. Only thus can it be removed as an obstacle to the struggle against war.

What then must we say of those who promote these illusions about the League in the eyes of the masses? These brave liberals and false socialists and pious ministers—these Litvinovs and Blums and Browders? We must brand them, for this, as what they are—as betrayers. By binding the masses to the League, they bind them thereby to the controlling member states—they join them to the class enemy, and prepare, through the instrumentality of the League, to hand the masses over to the war-makers when the war, after

suitable anointing by the League, begins.

2. *Pacifism*

When we speak of "pacifists", we mean all those who believe that the struggle against war can be carried on "independently" of the class struggle in general, those who take a negative and defensive position—*against* war "in general"—and think that a union of all persons "honestly" for peace can be built up and can stop war. Pacifism has a great following, from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee to World Peaceways, Inc. to the World League Against War and Fascism.

We have already seen the complete fallacy of the pacifist position as a means of preventing war. But it is necessary to go further. Not merely is pacifism powerless to prevent war. In the modern world it is, in effect, *a means of preparing for war.*

Harsh as this conclusion may seem to pacifists themselves, many of whom are personally sincere in their convictions, it can be proved by both theory and history.

Pacifism in any form aids the preparation for war because:

(1) It spreads illusions about the nature of war and of the fight against war (advocating disarmament, conscientious objection, naval treaties, the League, etc., as solutions), and thus prevents a real struggle against war, which can be based only on a true understanding of the nature and causes of war.

(2) Pacifism turns aside the working class from its struggle for power, the only genuine way to fight war. In this way it redirects the revolutionary struggle against war into "safe" channels—that is, channels safe for imperialism.

(3) Pacifism subordinates the working class—the only class which can lead the fight against war—to middle class ideas and middle class individuals (preachers, fake liberals, professional "anti-war agitators"), and thus weakens the class strength of the workers.

(4) Most dangerous of all, in the case of pacifism, is the

fact that, by exploiting the desire of the masses for peace and yet completely deluding the masses about the character of the struggle against war, pacifism leaves the masses helpless when war actually comes. At that time, the middle-class and pseudo-liberal leaders of the pacifist movement and organizations for the most part go over at once to the side of the war-makers. They continue to shout that they are against war "in general", but they find that *this particular war* is justified because it is "to make the world safe for democracy", "to defeat militarism", "to end fascism", "to uphold the League of Nations", or for some other noble purpose. Thus the masses who have listened to these leaders are bewildered; having had confidence in the pacifist leaders' support of peace, they are confused into believing their justification of the actual war. The pacifist organizations, overnight, change from "anti-war" groups into fertile propaganda and recruiting grounds for the war. The experience of the last war in all countries proves this to be the logical outcome of pacifism. We shall discover how the same logic applies in the coming war to such organizations as the pacifist American League Against War and Fascism, with its front of pious liberals, ministers, women's club presidents, and Y.M.C.A. secretaries.

The problem of pacifism is particularly acute for the United States, because, among other reasons, a pretended pacifism—under slogans of "neutrality", "splendid isolation", "freedom from foreign entanglements"—is not only wide-spread among all groups of the population, but is more or less the "official" policy of the government. What meaning these slogans have was well shown in 1916, when Wilson was re-elected on the pacifist banner, "He kept us out of war" during the very time when the preparations for drawing the U. S. into the war were being completed. The situation has not changed. Ironically enough, Roosevelt's pacifist neutrality speech in California (August, 1935) was given the day before he reviewed the greatest naval demonstration in U. S. history. The true U. S. war policy is shown not by the phrases of the officials, but by their deeds. For example, the U. S. spends more on armament than any other

country in the world, and the strategic basis for the army and navy is throughout designed for a *purely offensive war*.

The struggle against war in the U. S. must at all times resolutely expose the "neutrality policy" of the government; and must further demonstrate how this policy is actually used to cover up the preparation for the coming war. The myth of U. S. isolation must be exploded. The causes of war are international, not confined to one nation or group of nations. The U. S. can no more avoid being drawn into the imperialist struggle than her finance-capitalists can avoid the effects on their operations of the world market.

3. *Social-Patriotism*

The word "social-patriotism" became current during the last war. It is used to describe the betrayal of the revolutionary struggle against war by those within the working class movement itself. At the outbreak of the last war, the social democratic leaders in the warring nations went immediately over to the side of the war. This action they "justified" by saying that war was an "exceptional" event; that the working class must defend the "fatherland" (Germany) or "democracy" (England) for the period of the war, or, if it did not, all the achievements of the working class in building toward socialism (including the trade unions and the Socialist parties) would be crushed to pieces by the war machine, and the coming of socialism would be set back indefinitely.

Thus the social-democratic leaders declared "class peace", and built up "national unity" to defend "their" country. And they became, literally, the recruiting sergeants of the war-makers within the working class. The workers, who would not have answered the call of the bourgeoisie, enlisted at the prompting of "their own" leaders.

This is the greatest of the betrayals. The complete falsity of the social-patriots' justification of their position is sufficiently evident from the analysis of the principles of the revolutionary struggle against war. Social-patriotism—whatever form it takes—is a means of binding the working class to the state and thus through the state to the

bourgeoisie; its actual effect is to hand the working class over to the class enemy, the true enemy. The social-patriots are, in actuality, the agents of the class enemy within the working class. The most elementary duty of Marxists in the revolutionary struggle against war is to fight to the end against the social-patriots.

4. *General Character of Betrayal*

Betrayal in the struggle against war takes a thousand forms, depending upon the concrete circumstances of the threatened or actual war situation. It can never be treated merely in the "abstract". A verbally correct position on war may be carried out in concrete issues as betrayal. In Section V, we shall see certain prominent forms which betrayal is taking in the present war crisis.

However, a few major principles underlie most forms of betrayal, and by them we can test positions on the war question: (1) Treatment of the struggle against war as a special struggle independent of the revolutionary struggle for socialism. (2) A merely negative attitude "against war". (3) Refusal to support armed struggles—of colonies, suppressed peoples, etc.—which advance the cause of the workers and weaken the imperialist forces. (4) Advocacy of any form of class peace or class collaboration in a war situation. (5) Above all, perhaps, confusions on the nature of the state as the political instrument of the class enemy. Thus any war policy advocating "anti-war" actions (sanctions, defensive war against Fascism, collective action by *nations* to defend peace or Ethiopia or the League or what not) by capitalist governments means necessarily betrayal, since the *effect* of such advocacy—no matter what "reservations" are made in words—is always to tie up the working class with the state, and through the state with the class enemy: that is, to disrupt, weaken, and disarm the revolutionary struggle against war, which can be carried on only and under all circumstances *against* the state and the class enemy.

IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENT WAR CRISIS

The present Italian campaign, narrowly considered, is the external expression of the violence of the internal economic and political conflicts of contemporary Italy. It must be remembered that in the Versailles Treaty, Great Britain and France repudiated most of the secret promises of territory and colonies by which they had induced Italy to enter the war on the side of the Allies. It must also be remembered that Italy is exceptionally poor in many of the basic raw materials (e.g., oil, iron, coal, cotton). Such factors as these combined with the social and political character of the Fascist regime to precipitate economic crisis in Italy before most other nations, and to ensure that the world economic crisis would have more terribly damaging effects Italy than in perhaps any other nation.

No possible internal measures have been able to alleviate the Italian crisis. The lowering of the standard of living and real wages of the Italian masses to almost unbelievable depths has only exaggerated the conflicts, and further narrowed the possibilities of the internal market. The economic and social conflicts, in spite of the severest repressions, have shaken the political stability of the Fascist regime. Italian finance-capital must acquire sources of raw materials, new markets, and new fields for the investment of capital funds for which there is no employment at home. Mussolini must seek a re-unification of the Italian masses around the Fascist regime by directing their attention away from Italy and toward foreign conquest.

Thus both the basic economic and political factors require an "external solution"—require a war of aggression.

For a variety of reasons, the eyes of the rulers of Italy turned toward Ethiopia. Here was the last of the independent nations of Africa, not yet officially claimed by any of the imperialist powers. Control of Ethiopia would fit in nicely with other Italian colonies in Africa. Ethiopia pos-

sesses certain, if unknown, amounts of raw materials; and, more important, the exploitation of Ethiopia would open up vast outlets for Italian capital, and would create a new market.

Italy began preparations carefully. Italian Eritrea and Somaliland were strengthened. During 1934, "border incidents" were systematically cultivated, culminating in the famous Ualual incident, as a sequence to which, in December 1934, Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations. From then on, Italy began large scale war preparations, and put a great army into the field in Africa. In these preparations, the League served Italy well, for Ethiopia, forced to rely on the League and consequently to avoid any charge of provocation, was thereby prevented from making any defensive military preparations.

But the Ethiopian campaign naturally could not remain a "purely Italian affair". Italian control of Ethiopia directly threatened Great Britain's control over Egypt, and exposed the British Empire's line of communication through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Furthermore, Great Britain, and to a lesser extent other powers (notably the United States) were also interested in sharing in the exploitation of Ethiopia. But much more than this is involved. The matter cannot end with Ethiopia. War in Ethiopia can be only the start of the new armed struggle to re-divide the world. Italy will have to go on to other campaigns. Germany only waits for the most advantageous moment to begin her struggle to regain her pre-war colonies, to strike out to the East in Europe, and to destroy French hegemony on the Continent. Japan has already begun her conquest of China, and her moves toward the Soviet Union in the Far East. Great Britain, who has the most to lose, sees her vast empire everywhere menaced by the hungry powers. Likewise, Great Britain fears the repercussions of colonial struggle in arousing the oppressed masses in her own colonies and dominions.

In this light, the heroic efforts of Great Britain to preserve peace and to uphold the sanctity of collective agreements and the League become intelligible. British finance-capital uses the slogans of peace and support of the League

to defend her empire and to try to line up as much as possible of the rest of the world on her side before the world imperialist struggle begins. In this effort, her problem with France is particularly thorny. For France is not immediately concerned in the Ethiopian affair to any considerable degree. And France is not sure whether Britain's side or Italy's side at the present moment will prove in the long run more advantageous for France. But France must have protection on the Continent against possible German aggression. At present, in the light of the Franco-Soviet Pact and the defeat—for the time being—of the French interests wanting agreement with Hitler, such protection can come best through the League. France therefore faces the contradiction of wishing to sabotage the League (i.e., Great Britain) in the Ethiopian affair, while still allowing for future strong League action in the event of German aggression. To solve this, France attempts to secure a pledge from Great Britain for future action on the Continent, in return for supporting Britain in the League now. But Britain does not want to give an unequivocal pledge for the future which would involve a final break with Germany.

This—together with British use of the crisis to hold a new election with the assurance of a Conservative victory—is in brief the background of the daily ebb and flow of the Ethiopian affair. In its light, the actual fighting in Ethiopia sinks to minor importance. Four points need special emphasis:

(1) The Ethiopian campaign can in no sense be regarded as a local matter. It cannot be understood except as the prelude to the new imperialist world war. A temporary "solution", satisfactory to Italy, Great Britain and France, may very probably be worked out; but this can only prove to be a short postponement. Italy's aggression is the demonstration that the conflicts of world imperialism have gone beyond the stage of economic competition, "police" measures, trade wars, to the stage of armed struggle for the re-division of the world. Since the conflicts of imperialism, as we have seen, operate internationally, it follows that the approaching war will be international in scope, involving all

great nations—and, indirectly at least, the entire world.

(2) The League of Nations, throughout the development of this crisis as in every other, has acted as the tool of the dominant member states. In no sense has it been an agency for peace. The League has been a convenient maneuvering ground for the diplomats. Above all, the League has been serving as the instrument of British imperialism. Support of the League in any manner is in the present crisis nothing else than support of British imperialism; or, in another sense, of the future plans of French imperialism.

(3) The approaching world war must necessarily involve the Soviet Union in a decisive manner, must indeed decide the fate of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. The idea that the Soviet Union by some magic can remain aloof is in complete disregard of historical actuality. In the development of the present crisis, the traitorous government of the Soviet Union has throughout played the game of the League of Nations. This means necessarily that it has throughout played the game of British imperialism and the future requirements of French imperialism. Litvinov acted at Geneva as the stooge of Hoare and Laval.

(4) The United States is not involved directly and immediately in the Ethiopian crisis to the extent of Great Britain, France, and Italy. It is, of course, to some extent involved even immediately—as the tremendous increase in exports to Italy during the last year and the Rickett concession affair show. But the United States above all is involved in the world imperialist crisis. In the approaching world struggle, the United States will make its bid for domination in world imperialism. This in fact is the determining and decisive feature of the approaching struggle. Because of her geographical and economic situation, the U.S. will not enter at once into the armed struggle. But, in the later stages, when the other powers are to some degree exhausted, she will necessarily launch out for world hegemony.

V.

BETRAYAL IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

In the face of the developing war crisis, the forces for the betrayal of the workers in the struggle against war are maturing rapidly. From all sides, in all countries, the liberals, the pacifists, the reformists, the social-patriots, under the cover of what look like anti-war and pro-peace campaigns, are in actuality preparing for sell-out to the war-makers, are making ready to turn over the masses to the imperialists.

Again, as before the last war, we find the old ways and methods and slogans of betrayal. But the old methods are not enough. New appearances must be added: the masses cannot be deceived again in precisely the old ways. It therefore becomes of crucial importance to analyze the new and special forms of betrayal which are appearing in the present crisis.

1. *"Good" and "Bad" Capitalist Powers*

The most fatally dangerous doctrine, a doctrine which has been systematically propagated during recent years by liberals and by both the Socialist and Communist parties throughout the world, is the theory that a basic distinction must be drawn between the comparatively "good" capitalist nations, the "peace-loving" nations—Great Britain, France, and the United States, on the one hand; and, on the other, the altogether "wicked" capitalist nations—Italy and especially Germany.

This theory reasons as follows: Fascism, especially Hitlerism, means war. Therefore, the fight against war is the fight against Fascism, and especially against Hitlerism, the worst form of Fascism. The success of Fascism means the destruction of all democratic rights. The destruction of democratic rights means the crushing of the organizations of the working class, and thus defeat for the revolutionary movement. But Fascism, especially Hitlerism, can

succeed only by war, and, since Fascism means war, will inevitably undertake war.

What then follows? What follows is the betrayal of the working class of France, England and the United States. For, on the basis of the above chain of reasoning, to support the democratic nations in a war against Hitler is to defend democratic rights against Fascism; thus to defend the organizations of the working class; and thereby the revolution. The wheel completes its circle. Defense of the national state—that is, defense of the imperialist bourgeoisie of England, France and the United States—becomes, through this theory, a revolutionary duty!

The mortal fallacy in this position is easy enough to understand when once examined from the point of view of Marxism. The statement, "Fascism means war" is incomplete. It is not Fascism that means war. *Rather is it the continued existence of capitalism that means both Fascism and war.* Fascism means war only in the sense that it marks outwardly a great intensification of the inner conflicts of capitalism, and is thus an indication of the more rapid drive of the whole capitalist system toward the highest expression of these conflicts—imperialist war. But in the linked chain of causes that make war an inevitable concomitant of the continued existence of capitalism, the democratic nations have as integral a part as the Fascist nations. From the point of view of the working class, there can be no "good", no "peace-loving" capitalist states. Every capitalist state, democratic as well as Fascist, represents one or another form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class, and is thus the implacable enemy of the working class. To defend the democratic rights of *the working class* is one thing. But this has nothing in common with the defense of the "*democratic*" capitalist state. The former is a primary duty of every working class party; the latter is the occupation of traitors. The latter will be put forward as the only way to protect the working class *against* war and Fascism; in practice, it will give the working class *both* war and Fascism, for the bourgeoisie of the democratic countries will not overcome the necessity for a resort to Fascism during

the decline of capitalism merely by success in the next war. Indeed, the outbreak of war will in all probability be the signal for setting up Fascist governments in the "democratic" countries.

The business of the working class within any country is never under any circumstances to defend "the government"—that is, the political executive of the class enemy—but always to fight for its overthrow. To Fascism as to war there is only one answer: the workers' revolution.

2. *Defense of the Soviet Union*

A closely similar preparation for betrayal has gone on under cover of the slogan, "Defend the Soviet Union!"

As has already been indicated, the defense of the Soviet Union is one of the primary tasks of the working class in the coming war. But, to a Marxist, what does defense of the Soviet Union mean? The essence can be summed up quickly. It means: "Extend the October revolution." It means to strengthen the economic and political organizations of the world proletariat, to carry the class struggle on a world basis to ever higher levels, to drive toward workers' power. It means to put all faith in the working class. It means to achieve victory in the capitalist nations. And it means these things quite openly and realistically. For these are the only possible defense of the Soviet Union.

To Stalinism, however, and to the cynical Austro-Marxists, defense of the Soviet Union means: support the program of national Bolshevism; no word of criticism of Stalin and his bureaucratic associates; put all faith in diplomatic deals with bourgeois powers, in military alliances with France and Czechoslovakia, in maneuvering in the League of Nations; reduce the working class parties to branches of the foreign office of the Soviet state. And it means: do not carry on genuinely revolutionary activities within your own country, because this would upset "peace"; permit the working class of Germany and Austria to be crushed under Fascism rather than risk one ounce of cement at Dnieprostroy or one tractor at Stalingrad. And, lastly, it means: support the war policy of your democratic government, and

offer the working class to the coming imperialist war in all nations where the bourgeoisie finds its imperialist aims best served by a temporary alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy.

Naturally, Marxists do not maintain that the Soviet Union should not, whenever possible, utilize the antagonisms and contradictions among the imperialist powers to its own advantage. This was the tactic of Lenin. But this tactic can only be understood as subordinate to the strategy of the world revolution, and this strategy can base itself only on the international working class. Stalin's "maneuverings" with imperialist powers are the direct contrary of Lenin's. For Stalin "maneuvers" in such a way as to *subordinate the working class to the capitalist powers*, not to advance its interests. The Franco-Soviet Pact is the most striking example of such subordination—whereby the French working class is turned over hand and foot to the French bourgeoisie, so long as the Pact formally endures—but this is only one aspect of the consistent and continuous policy of Stalinism. Lenin, to prevent the capitalist powers from attacking the Soviet Union, placed his full reliance on the only possible force which could in actuality defend the Soviet Union: on the *working class of the various capitalist powers*. If the working class and its party were sufficiently strengthened in a given country, Lenin reasoned, the government of that country would not dare to attack the Soviet Union, since it would realize that such an attack would only pave the way for its own overthrow. Stalin, with his eyes focussed on national Russian socialism, asks only for "peace" elsewhere, to let him build at home. He places *his* reliance, thus, not on the international working class, but on the "friendly" capitalist governments, on any agreements or treaties or pacts he can come to with them. But to secure such friendship, he must direct the Communist parties in the various nations not toward revolutionary struggle *against* their governments at home (which would endanger the government's "friendship" for Stalin), but toward putting pressure on the home governments to line up with the Soviet Union; and, then, to essential support of the home government so long as it stays or pretends to stay

lined up. This necessarily weakens and destroys the revolutionary struggle, which is always *against* the home government; and thus, in the end, disrupts the only possible defense of the Soviet Union itself, which must be a defense against and an attack on the international bourgeoisie and all their political instruments—the capitalist governments, never a collaboration with them.

We shall see the workers of France, England and the United States rallied to the flag by the leaders of the Communist party. "Defend the Soviet Union! Enlist in the army, and—fight against war and Hitlerism! Defend the Soviet Union!"

This policy of betrayal has, also, been systematically developed over a period of many years. The recent Congress of the Communist International made it official for the sections of the C. I.; and the Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution on war advances it within world social-democracy. Unlike the situation at the beginning of the last war, the betrayers this time wish to be fully ready beforehand.

3. *Sanctions*

A special and profoundly important feature of betrayal in the present war crisis revolves around the question of "sanctions". The Covenant of the League of Nations provides that when a nation has been declared an aggressor against a member state, certain financial, economic, and even military measures shall be—following an elaborate procedure—invoked by the other League member states against the aggressor nation. These measures are called "sanctions", and the term "sanctions" is being extended to include measures which might be taken by nations on their own initiative (e.g., closing of the Suez Canal by Great Britain) as well as measures taken collectively by the League members.

This extension of the use of the word "sanctions" is significant. It indicates a new and ingenious method for turning opposition to war into support of war. All that is necessary is to *call* the war an "application of sanctions". Then it becomes the duty of all "friends of peace" to support it.

This, indeed, is the real meaning of the doctrine of sanctions. League sanctions are, of course, nothing else than sanctions undertaken by the leading member states of the League. The League, as we have seen, is only the instrument of its dominant members. Support of League sanctions, therefore, is exactly the same as support of sanctions applied by individual nations—e.g., by Great Britain or France.

But sanctions are war measures. They include withdrawal of financial credit, embargoes on trade, various forms of boycott. To enforce them genuinely would require a blockade of the country against whom the sanctions were invoked. The probable, the almost certain outcome of such a blockade, as history has so often proved, is war—since the blockaded nation cannot accept such a measure peacefully without surrendering political sovereignty.

Thus it follows that sanctions must be either ineffectual—a kind of large-scale bluff—or they must lead to war.

If they are ineffectual, support of them is certainly no aid to peace (or to Ethiopia). If they lead to war, support of them—no matter with what verbal reservations—means nothing else than support of war undertaken by the imperialist government applying the sanctions. In both cases, support of sanctions to be applied by capitalist governments (whether or not these are League members) is in effect support of these governments themselves. This means that such support necessarily leads to a betrayal of the revolutionary struggle against war, and the revolutionary defense of Ethiopia, which is always a struggle *against* the capitalist governments and the bourgeoisie whose governments they are.

It does no good to say, as the social-democrats and the Stalinists say, that we should support League and governmental sanctions, but at the same time “point out that the League and British and French imperialism are acting only in their own imperialist interests in applying them”; we are temporarily able to “use” the French and British governments to serve the interests of the working class, because their interests momentarily, though from “diametrically

opposite causes", coincide. This is the reasoning of a Stalin or a Blum, but not of a Marxist. The Marxist knows that we can never "use" capitalist governments for the interests of the working class, because what these governments *are* is instruments to be "used" for the interests of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, we must always fight inexorably *against* the governments, and their acts. The Marxist knows that advocacy of governmental sanctions in any form necessarily binds the working class to the state and the class enemy, necessarily weakens the class position of the workers and thus the workers' struggle for power, and necessarily prepares for turning the workers over to the sanction-applying government when the sanctions find their natural outcome in war. If we support sanctions, and the sanctions lead to war, then we have already by supporting the sanctions supported the war. It takes more than verbal reservations to crawl out of the inescapable logic of cause and effect.

The disastrous consequences of support of sanctions are already apparent. In Great Britain a year ago, the masses were turning rapidly away from the National Government. Then the British Labour Party and the British Communist party came out strongly for sanctions: that is, came out for the policy of British finance-capital and the National Government. This has, naturally, fatally obscured the class issue. No longer is there any clear line between the working class parties and the Conservatives on the war crisis. The Labour Party and the Communist party have done for Baldwin what he could not do for himself: they have brought about "national unity" on the war issue. Baldwin of course understands this; and consequently has called for the new elections to Parliament, confident of a substantial majority for the government. In France, the same result: The People's Front, advocating sanctions, becomes the main support of the "Republic"—that is, of French imperialism; Laval could reasonably apply for admission; national unity on the war issue mortally weakens the ripening *class* struggle in France, which poses on the order of the day the revolutionary struggle for workers' power and the overthrow of every form of capitalist government at the same time that

the workers' leaders lend all their efforts to upholding and defending the capitalist government.

Marxists, then, reject and expose as betrayal any and all advocacy of League or governmental "sanctions". Naturally, however, this does not mean that they take a passive, hands-off position in the present crisis or in any other. Marxists are not neutral in the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia. They are for the defeat of Fascist Italy and the blow to imperialism which such a defeat would be; and they are therefore for the victory of Ethiopia. But they propose to aid in such defeat and such victory not by appealing to capitalist governments and the imperialist League for their assistance and sanctions; but to the working class to apply its proletarian "sanctions". Only sanctions which are results of the independent and autonomous actions of the working class are of any value in the revolutionary struggle against war—since only these *separate* the class from the state and the class enemy, and only these build the fighting strength of the workers, which is alone the road to workers' power and thus to the defeat of war. Mass demonstrations, strikes, labor boycotts, defense funds for material aid to Ethiopia, refusal to load munitions for Italy, revolutionary agitation for Marxism as it applies to the war crisis, these are such sanctions as the working class must make use of. But these will be ineffectual in the immediate crisis? They are romantic and utopian? If so, then the revolutionary struggle is itself ineffectual, romantic and utopian. Perhaps such sanctions will not "solve" the present crisis. But they, and they alone, will help steel the class, materially and ideologically, for the struggle to come—the struggle for workers' power, which is, in the end, the only solution.

4. *Neutrality*

Careful notice should be given to a form of betrayal closely related to betrayal on the question of sanctions. This is a particular danger in the United States. In the United States, which is not a League member, the betrayers call, not for sanctions—which are formally irrelevant to

League outsiders—but for “neutrality legislation”. In the present crisis, this demand is only an American form of the demand for sanctions, combined with the worst type of ordinary pacifism.

In the United States all the rotten reformist organizations, from World Peaceways and the League against War and Fascism to the Socialist and Communist parties, are joining in this call for “mandatory” neutrality legislation to be passed by the next Congress, and are “demanding” a “strong neutrality policy” on the part of the U. S. government. What does this mean in the concrete? It means, in the first place, to spread among the people of the United States all the fatal pacifist illusions about U. S. isolation. As we have seen, the United States is necessarily linked up economically, socially, and politically with the rest of the world. Its pretended isolation is a complete myth. As we have also seen, the U. S. will inevitably be involved in the coming war, will in fact play a leading and decisive part in the coming war. Not to point this out honestly and straightforwardly, and instead to pretend that some form of neutrality legislation will succeed or even aid in isolating the U. S. in the world struggle is to deceive and disorient the masses, to disarm them ideologically, to turn them aside from the genuine struggle against war, and to teach them to put reliance in exactly those forces which are preparing war—namely, the imperialist government of the United States and U. S. finance-capital, which that government represents.

Thus, as always, pacifism in the form of demands for neutrality legislation in actuality aids the war makers. It strengthens the hand of the U. S. government, strengthens its hold over the people. Since the policy of the government, like that of every imperialist government, is and must be a war policy, these demands are in reality doing their part in carrying out the war policy. The capitalists and the government officials are not slow to take advantage of the opportunity. Hearst and Roosevelt alike point out—just as does Baldwin in England—that to preserve a “strong neutrality and peace policy” the U. S. must build

up its "national defense". That is to say, they use the agitation for neutrality legislation as a basis for expanding the armed forces of U. S. imperialism, to build new and more powerful battleships and airplanes, and to mechanize still further the already highly "modernized" U. S. army.

But even more than this is involved in the so-called "neutrality legislation". The substance of such legislation, if actually put into effect, can only be sanctions as the U. S. can apply them—various forms of financial and economic restrictions, boycotts, etc. As in the case of sanctions proper, therefore, the neutrality acts would be in effect war acts, and the same conclusions must be drawn with respect to them as we have already come to in analyzing sanctions. Realizing this is enough to expose the pseudo-Marxists in the U. S. who so bravely denounce the policy of sanctions in other countries (Great Britain, France); and then in the next breath advocate them (under the title of "neutrality legislation") for this country.

Here, as in any other phase of the struggle against imperialist war, the fight for U. S. "neutrality" must be a working-class fight, using the methods and means of the working class. It is only the working class, operating as an independent force, which can be counted on—certainly we cannot expect imperialism itself to put an end to imperialism, which is what we do when we call on an imperialist government to avoid imperialist war. The fight must be not *for* a "government policy of neutrality", but always a fight *against* the government.

VI.

THE AGENTS OF BETRAYAL

The fight against betrayal on the war issue is not, of course, a mere battle of ideas. Our ideas must be clear on the question of war, but that is never enough. The ideas must be translated into action. Betrayal does not descend from the skies. It is carried out in practice by men, by powerful individuals and great organizations. The fight against betrayal is therefore necessarily—*the struggle against the betrayers*. There must be no illusions on this score. We must not be confused by pseudo-“moral” notions about the “sincerity” and “good intentions” of “opponents of war”. The effect of the actions of the betrayers, if they are successful, is literally to lead the working class to capitulation to the enemy and to slaughter. The struggle against the betrayers must be bitter, intransigent, unceasing. Our aim must be to smash utterly the influence of the betrayers and the organizations whose positions constitute betrayal. Nothing short of this is enough.

As to the outright pacifists—the Leagues for Peace and Freedom, the World Peaceways, the Councils of Churches for Peace, the broken down liberals—the problem is clear enough. We must aim to isolate them, to prevent their ideas from gaining any hold among the working class and its allies, and we must destroy the influence which these ideas have gained.

But it has already been made clear that the most dangerous of the betrayers are those within the working class itself. It is against these that the great struggle must be waged, for so long as they hold the allegiance of the working class, betrayal will succeed.

2. *The Second International*

The parties of the Second International engineered the great betrayal in 1914. Nothing fundamental has altered in their position since that time. They remain, as they were,

ready to hand over the workers to the imperialist governments when the war starts. Their whole course of action, not only on the war question but on every other, is to weaken the revolutionary struggle of the workers, which in turn is the only genuine struggle against war. The keynote of their policy everywhere is: compromise with—that is, capitulation to—the state; which means, capitulation to the chief instrument of the class enemy. Since this is the constant guide to their day-by-day activities, they could scarcely be expected to cease compromise in the greatest crisis of all: the war crisis.

Throughout the world, social-democrats of all shades support the rottenest types of pacifist organizations. Only recently they have swung behind the ridiculous and illusion-breeding plan of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom to secure 50,000,000 signatures "against war", and have praised this campaign as a great blow to war. Prominent Socialists in every country are conspicuous members of every pacifist organization.

During the development of the present crisis, the Socialists everywhere have supported the League of Nations, as the instrument to solve the present crisis. They have been vigorous advocates of League and governmental sanctions. The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Second International held in August officially endorsed this policy, going so far as to call on the British government to close the Suez Canal.

In England, the British Labour Party, affiliated to the Second International, has throughout played into the hands of British finance-capital by supporting government sanctions, and now finds itself with no policy for the coming elections fundamentally differentiating it from the Conservatives. It is significant that almost the only criticism of this course from within the Labour Party comes from a purely negative, pacifist, do-nothing direction. In France the Socialist party has held the same position, and has become the staunchest defender of the capitalist "republican" regime.

The recent Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution on war, presented for "discussion" to the parties of the Second Inter-

national, completely upholds the policy of governmental and League sanctions, endorses the League as an instrument for peace, and justifies support of "democratic" governments in a war against Fascist governments.

In some countries, notably the United States, "left" Socialists are objecting to the position on war which is being officially taken by the parties and leaders of the Second International. The "Militants" in this country have criticized the advocacy of sanctions, the Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution, etc., from what looks on the surface as a position close to Marxism. How far from Marxism it is in actuality is revealed by noticing the positions which the same Militants take on particular issues: They enthusiastically praise the A. F. of L. Convention resolutions which hailed the League and demanded "sanctions" by the U. S. government. They praise and push the "50,000,000 signatures against war" campaign. They hail the Socialist N.E.C. resolution on war (October, 1935) which, while rejecting sanctions for Europe, advocates the "neutrality" form of U. S. sanctions and a "reformed" League of Nations. They praise to the skies Norman Thomas' new book on War, which fails to meet a single one of the central issues in the revolutionary struggle against war. They speak lightly of a possible "general strike" at the outbreak of war, without pointing out that such a strike would be a revolutionary act, presupposing a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary party prepared to take power—all of which are extremely unlikely at the beginning of a war, when the capitalist state is normally at its most powerful and its most desperate. And, finally, the Militants nowhere draw the necessary conclusion that the revolutionary struggle against war is inconceivable apart from the struggle against the Second International and its parties and its leaders, whose official position of betrayal on a world scale has been clearly unfolded.

On the question of war, a position which is correct or approximately correct in the abstract, on the surface, is never enough. It must be correct in the concrete, on particular issues, before it amounts to anything more than juggling with words. This is the disastrous weakness of many

of the leaders of the left Socialists in this country. What are we to say when they come out with Marxist-sounding phrases, and then support actively the "united front" Student Mobilization for Peace (November 8, 1935), a united front that was actually a patriotic rally, having as its chief speakers throughout the country not merely social-patriots, but open chauvinists like President Robinson of City College, New York? It should be obvious that Marxists can never form "united fronts for peace" with betrayers and agents of the war-makers. Their duty on all occasions is to expose and attack the betrayers. What are we to say when these Militants are not merely silent about the illusions of pacifism, but actively propagate pacifist ideas and, especially, build up pacifist organizations? When they not merely accept but even formulate proposed government neutrality legislation? When they take no steps to purge the ranks of their own party of the hard and brazen social-patriots in its Right wing? We can only conclude that their "Marxism" is no more than a red veil, hiding beneath it weakness, equivocation, or outright capitulation to the war-makers.

There is only one conclusion to be drawn about the Second International and its parties. They are rotted to the core. They prepare—they already announce their preparation—only for a repetition of the betrayal of 1914. The struggle against war is inconceivable apart from the struggle against the Second International.

3. *The Third International*

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, held during the summer of 1935, during the course of the development of the present war crisis, stamped officially the repudiation of Marxism by Stalinism, and above all announced the betrayal by Stalinism on the war question. The Seventh Congress signed, sealed, and delivered the workers under Stalinist influence to the war-makers.

This is not a development of the moment. Once started on the course of sacrificing the interests of the world proletariat to the bureaucratic dream of building a socialist

Utopia within the national boundaries of the Soviet Union, Stalinism could not end short of capitulation to imperialism. In the place of the Marxist struggle for the extension of the revolution, Stalinism substituted diplomatic maneuvers to preserve "peace" by preserving the *status quo*. And to carry out this policy successfully meant the complete subordination of the sections of the Communist International to the Soviet foreign office; the Communist parties became propaganda agents and border patrols of the Soviet Union, not the revolutionary vanguard of the working class within their respective countries. Their chief occupation became not the struggle for power but the singing of the praises of their master. The Franco-Soviet Pact and its accompanying memoranda showed to the world that the duty of French Communists was no longer to fight the French bourgeoisie, but to uphold the French bourgeoisie if only it would give a paper promise to preserve the Soviet boundaries. When the imperialist League of Nations was tottering from the withdrawals of Japan and Germany, Stalin, instead of helping to drive the last nail in its coffin, entered the League, bolstered its waning authority with the prestige of the workers' state, and prolonged the League's fatal ability to disorient and weaken the masses and the revolutionary struggle against war.

Throughout the development of the present crisis, the Communist International and its sections everywhere have been persistently pro-League and pro-sanctions, thereby doing their part to serve the ends of British and French imperialism. Stalinism is the great source of the distinction between "good, peace-loving, democratic" capitalist nations, and "bad, war-loving, fascist" nations, and has drawn the appropriate conclusion—to support war undertaken by the former—"if only they are on the side of the Soviet Union".

Stalinism has gone far beyond even the social-democrats in lining up with the most degraded types of pacifists—from Father Divine to officers of the D.A.R. to cousins of the Pope—if only they will shout "Peace!" and say no word of criticism against "the peace policy of the Soviet Union". The Communist parties have built up throughout the world

the pacifist, anti-revolutionary Leagues Against War and Fascism.

In France, the Communist party in the People's Front has blocked the workers' struggle for power, and has taken the road of defense of the French state both externally (against Hitler) and internally (against the pro-German wing of the French bourgeoisie, and likewise against the revolutionary assault of the Marxists) in return for Laval's promises to Stalin. In England, the Communist party has taken its place alongside the Labour Party in support of the international policy of the British imperialists. In this country, the Communist party demands more strongly than the Socialist party the passing of U. S. government neutrality-sanctions.

The Communist party has *already* made clear that it proposes to act as the agent of finance-capital in enlisting the working class in the coming imperialist war within any nation that may be, or may pretend to be, "friendly" to the Soviet Union. The Communist International offers such services as a juicy bribe to aid Stalin in making alliances. The C. I. prepares, that is to say, to turn the working class in countries allied to the Soviet Union over to the imperialists.

The conclusion, as in the case of the Second International, is inevitable: the revolutionary struggle against war poses as a fundamental task the struggle against the Communist International and its national sections, demands the destruction of Stalinism.

VII.

MARXISTS IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

The position of the Marxists in the present war crisis has been made clear by the analysis of the nature of war, of the struggle against it, and of the forms of betrayal in the struggle against war. The Marxist position can best be summarized by quoting in full the Statement on the War Situation adopted by the Workers Party of the United States at the outbreak of hostilities in Africa:

* * *

1. The armies of Italian Fascism, after months of deliberate preparation, have now launched their attack upon the Ethiopian peoples. Driven by the intolerable strains of internal social and economic contradictions, Mussolini and the Italian bourgeoisie seek a solution in open imperialist aggression against the last of the independent nations of Africa.

2. The outbreak of war in Africa demonstrates that the conflicts of world imperialism have reached the stage of armed struggle for a re-making of boundaries, and a re-division of territories and colonial possessions. Though the Italian campaign in Ethiopia may not lead immediately and directly to a world struggle of the imperialist powers, this delay can prove no more than temporary. *The war in Ethiopia must be understood as the prelude to the new imperialist world war.*

3. In the preparation for the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, the League of Nations has once more demonstrated beyond any possible doubt its true role. The League is not in any sense whatever "the defender of peace". It is the legal and hypocritical cover for the maneuvering of the dominant imperialist powers. Since Ethiopia first invoked League assistance on December, 1934, the negotiations have served to permit uninterrupted preparations for the war by Italy, and to deter defensive preparation by Ethiopia. The League has been utilized above all to serve the ends of Brit-

ish imperialism. Behind its cover, the agents of Great Britain, France and Italy have haggled over the price in terms of treaties, guarantees, protection, and territories, which each was willing to pay to preserve its own interests. The threat of League sanctions has been made not to save Ethiopia—which the League report itself offered to sacrifice—but to safeguard British colonial possessions and lines of communication, and to try to close the opening for Germany in Central Europe. The League of Nations is the agency, not of peace, but of imperialist aggression.

The struggle against imperialist war demands the unremitting exposure of the role of the League of Nations.

4. No less than the European powers is U. S. imperialism bound by the iron chain of cause and effect to the events in Africa and to the new world conflict which they herald. The sentimental dream of U. S. isolation, Roosevelt's promises that the U. S. will remain "free and untangled," have no more force than the unctuous phrases of Wilson in 1916. The U. S. will, on the contrary, play the dominant and decisive role in the new imperialist struggle. Behind its pacifist covering, the Roosevelt government is pouring more funds into its war machine than any other nation in the world. Both navy and army are constructed on a purely offensive strategic basis. The U. S. bourgeoisie, waiting and preparing, expects to intervene in the later stages of the world struggle, when the other powers are mutually exhausted, to achieve the world domination of U. S. finance-capital.

The struggle against imperialist war is above all the struggle against U. S. imperialism.

5. The U.S.S.R. cannot avoid implication in the world conflict. The very life of the workers' state is threatened by the approach of war. A central task of the struggle against war is the defense of the U.S.S.R. But, in the last analysis, this defense can be based only upon the revolutionary advance of the international proletariat. Stalinist diplomacy, on the contrary, to an ever increasing degree, serves solely to disorient the international proletariat, break up the struggle against imperialist war, and thus undermine the real defense of the U.S.S.R. Basing itself not upon the

international working class, but upon military pacts with bourgeois states, upon diplomatic deals, appeals to pacifist and liberal anti-war sentiment, and the maneuvers of the League, Soviet foreign policy promotes the most disastrous illusions in the minds of the workers, and acts in effect to further the interests of French and British imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war requires the constant exposure of the foreign policy of Stalinism.

6. One of the most dangerous illusions fostered by the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, in company with demoralized liberals, reformists, and pacifists of all shades, is the notion that the world is now divided between "peace-loving democratic" nations and "war-loving fascist" nations. This notion is part of the preparation for support of the "peace-loving nations" in the coming war. Marxism rejects and dispels this illusion or any form of it. The idea that there are peace-loving as opposed to war-loving capitalist nations, like the idea that one or another nation is "guilty" in an imperialist war, is at best formalistic ethical sentimentality, not political realism. The causes of war are to be found in the internal structure of world capitalism, operating within all nations. The national state of every capitalist nation, without exception, is the political instrument of the class enemy, the first and implacable enemy of that nation's proletariat. The revolutionary party can make no distinction between "good" and "bad" capitalist states. It is the enemy of every capitalist state, to the death.

7. At the outbreak of the last imperialist war, the Second International revealed its internal degeneration by betraying the working class to the class enemy, by espousing the cause of national defense and patriotism, by a truce with the bourgeoisie in the interests of "national unity", by going over to social-patriotism and social-chauvinism. Already, *before* the outbreak of the new war, the leaders of the Socialist and Labour International have announced a repetition of the betrayal, are already preparing to turn over their following to the war-makers. In England, the British Labour Party, by calling for government applied sanctions and the closing of the Suez Canal, once again takes the posi-

tion of national unity—that is, solidarity with the class enemy—before the war danger, and of fully developed social-patriotism. In France, the leaders of the S.F.I.O. have taken the same position—to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie against “Hitler aggression”, and now to “implement the League Covenant” by government sanctions. In August, the Executive Committee of the Socialist and Labour International adopted a program of full-blooded social-patriotism.

The struggle against imperialist war means the struggle against the Second International.

8. During the past year, the Communist International has passed from a policy which weakened and disorientated the revolutionary struggle against war to an active espousal of the policies of class truce and social-patriotism. By the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Stalin-Laval communique, the conduct of the Soviet Union in the League during the development of the Ethiopian crisis, and above all by the Seventh Congress of the C. I., the Communist International stands unmasked as the heir of social-democracy’s betrayal on the issue of war, announcing itself as ready to do the hangman’s job of turning over the proletariat of England, France and the U. S. to their national bourgeoisie in the coming war, in return for paper promises of protection for the borders of the Soviet Union. In England, the Communist party applauds the position of the Labour Party; in France, the Communist party supports enthusiastically the worst betrayals of Blum and Herriot; and throughout the world the Communist International prepares the sacrifice of the working class on the altar of imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war means everywhere the relentless struggle against Stalinism.

9. Throughout the world the only organized forces conducting and advocating the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war are the parties and groupings of the Fourth Internationalists. The Workers Party of the U. S. carries on this struggle in the closest solidarity with its comrades in all countries.

Against the betrayers, the Workers Party rejects every

form of social-patriotism and social-chauvinism; it rejects every conception of national unity and national defense; it rejects all ideas of truce with the bourgeois state, democratic or fascist; it exposes the role of the League of Nations as the pawn of the imperialist member states; it rejects the sentimental illusions of pacifists and petty bourgeois liberals; above all it directs its attacks against the enemy at home, against U. S. imperialism.

The Workers Party places no reliance on the "peaceful" intentions of bourgeois-democratic nations, nor upon spineless "united fronts" of liberals, ministers, bourgeois women's clubs and "anti-war" professionals.

The Workers Party calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression, for the defense of the U.S.S.R., for unremitting struggle against the coming imperialist war. But for this defense and this struggle, the Workers Party calls at the same time for the sole means by which they can be, in fact, conducted: for the independent and autonomous action of the working class. It is the international working class, especially the Italian working class, together with the oppressed colonial peoples, who are the true allies of the Ethiopian peoples—not "peace-loving" Britain, nor the League of Nations, nor Stalin-Laval, nor Roosevelt, nor their own Christian Emperor and semi-feudal chieftains. It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples, not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states. And likewise for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and the struggle against the approaching world war, it is only the independent action of the working class together with its allies under its leadership which gives hope to the working and exploited masses—a struggle not in collaboration with the bourgeoisie through the national state, but in ever sharper attack *against* the bourgeoisie and the national state.

The struggle against war is not and cannot be conceived as an "independent" struggle, having a special status above class conflicts. It is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. The struggle against imper-

ialist war means the day by day building of working-class strength, means—not suspension of the class conflict until the war crisis passes—but the intensification of class conflict and the preparation to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the victory of the workers.

More clearly than any other phase of revolutionary activity does the struggle against war attest *the international character of the revolutionary movement*. It is an international struggle and must be conducted in terms of an international strategy, through an integrated international organization. Thus the struggle against war poses, in the most intense form, the central task of the present period: the building of the Fourth International, the dynamic generator to drive forward the revolutionary advance of the working class. Threatening as is the oncoming of the new war, relatively weak numerically as are the forces now ranged against it, there is no reason to despair. Out of the last world war came the first great step of the world revolution. Yet, in 1914, the internationalists were an organized force in only one nation, and the betrayal of social-democracy came to the great mass of the workers as a shock that was unexpected and not prepared for. Today, organized groups of revolutionary internationalists exist in nearly every nation, and are actively forging the parties of the Fourth International; today the Second and Third Internationals have announced their betrayal *beforehand*, and we will thus not be trapped by surprise; and today we have the rich experience and lessons of the past generation to draw from.

The struggle against imperialist war is the struggle for socialism; the struggle for socialism is the struggle for the Fourth International, for the world revolution.

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