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Capitalism,
Socialism,
and the War

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CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM and the WAR

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THE STATUS OF CAPITALISM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

When the capitalist rulers of the world, in the first line the British imperialists, in their insatiable greed for profit and power set out to butcher millions of people, to enslave the masses, to destroy incalculable wealth, and generally to disorganize society, as they are doing in this imperialist war, they pose the question of socialism before the masses in the sharpest form and put into jeopardy the very existence of their capitalist system. The workers, farmers and other toilers deeply hate war. When the imperialists in their brutal wars confront them with a perspective of slaughter, slavery and pauperization, it constitutes a ruthless challenge to these masses to stop the war as best they can and to find the path out of their intolerable situation by abolishing the monstrously obsolete capitalist system and instituting socialism.

The workers and other toilers in all countries are fighting for peace, to prevent the spread of the war and to defend their living standards, organizations and civil rights. This struggle leads inevitably to the accomplishment of the central task of the workers, that of ending capitalism, of abolishing the monstrous system that gives birth to this brutal slaughter and countless other outrages. The workers' answer to the imperialist war is not support of either Allied or German imperialism, but a fight for socialism.

A first consideration, if the toiling masses are to fulfil their socialist mission in this crucial period, is carefully to evaluate their forces and those of their capitalist enemies. Such an evaluation is doubly needful because of the current attempts of many renegades from Communism, Social-Democrats, and "Left liberals" to minimize or discount altogether the strength

of the world anti-capitalist forces. In an ever-increasing flood of books, articles and speeches, Corey, Thomas, Eastman, Lovestone, Cannon and many others of a similar stripe are not only denying the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, but are asserting that the revolutionary movement has been defeated all over the world. Many of them are also attacking Marxism-Leninism in principle, declaring that the class struggle is non-existent and that the proletarian revolution is only an illusion. To protect the masses from these poisonous defeatists a thoroughgoing evaluation of the present status of world capitalism and the struggle of the revolutionary forces is a prime requisite.

THE DEGENERATION OF WORLD CAPITALISM

A practical way to approach such an evaluation is by comparing the present international economic and political situation with that obtaining at the outset of the World War in 1914. Since 1914 a profound change has taken place in the relative strength of the class forces, of the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces.

The fundamental basis for this change is the fact that during the interim of twenty-five years the general crisis of the world capitalist system has been vastly deepened and intensified. Capitalism has not recovered from the devastating economic and political shocks it received from the World War, especially its loss of one-sixth of the world to socialism. Moreover, throughout the succeeding years it has been subjected to the disintegrating effects of the ever-sharpening contradiction between the increasing producing power of the workers and farmers and the restricted capacity of the international capitalist market. This basic and incurable contradiction, inherent in the private ownership of the industries and the land, together with the planless method of capitalist production, has been greatly aggravated by the increasing dominance of monopoly capital during the period since 1914. In its final monopoly stage the whole capitalist system has sunk deeper and deeper into decline and decay.

Consequently, the first major difference to note between the two imperialist wars is that capitalism, as the present war begins, is far weaker than it was at the beginning of the World War in every aspect: economic, political and social.

Economically, this capitalist weakness is clearly illustrated on a world scale by the facts that industrial production in early 1939 lagged far behind 1929 levels and that agriculture had sunk into a chronic crisis. World commerce was also far below previous figures. The gold standard had been shattered, both in the internal economies of the various countries and in their international dealings; and more than two-thirds of the world's gold supply had become monopolized by the United States. More and more the barter system had come into operation between nations, and various countries were resorting to the undermining principles of autarchy. They had also repudiated their international debts and degraded their treaties into mere scraps of paper.

The economies of the leading capitalist countries on the eve of this war were in a sickly condition. All of them, the rich United States included, have had to grant government subventions to industry and agriculture during the past decade, in the form of work relief projects, housing programs, huge armaments, and the like, in order to prevent complete economic collapse. National debts were piled up sky high and tax rates also had soared. Nevertheless, this pulmotor treatment, or shot-in-the-arm economics, had failed completely to revive capitalism, both in the fascist countries and in the "democracies." Everywhere the masses suffered catastrophic declines in their living standards. This economic stagnation we can see typically in the United States, where even the New Deal spending of twenty-five billions of government money could not rehabilitate the national economy. Industry still languishes, agriculture remains in crisis, twelve million idle workers walk the streets, and the government has now embarked upon the deadly expedient of building up the country's economy on the basis of war orders, a vast armaments program and actual entry into the war.

The economic decay of capitalism had spread like a cancer, in the period before the present war began, to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. These lands, chiefly producers of agricultural products and raw materials for the great capitalist countries, were all more or less chronically prostrated economically. Also, their prospects of one day evolving into industrialized capitalist countries, already rendered remote by the repressive colonial policies of the imperialists, had become doubly impossible by the advancing general decay of world capitalist economy.

The decline of the capitalist economy under the growing rule of finance capital inevitably led to the degeneration of the capitalist political system. Hence the widespread decay of bourgeois democracy everywhere and the growth in many countries of fascism, which is the open dictatorship of the most reactionary sections of finance capital. Capitalist culture had gone into a decline, marked among other manifestations by the cutting down and distortion of scientific investigation and the growth of religious superstition, medieval obscurantism and pagan mysticism.

This picture of economic, political, and social degeneration is quite different from that at the beginning of the World War. Then, although the world capitalist system as a whole had already entered into its epoch of monopoly and decay and was sinking into its general crisis, it still possessed great vitality. The grip of the monopolies upon society was not nearly so strong as it is now. Many of the countries were still developing industrially, and none required the stimulus of the government lending-spending programs characteristic of present-day capitalism. Industrial crises were relatively short and readily overcome, as contrasted to the devastating, almost permanent economic collapses of today. There was no great constant army of unemployed, and at least the upper layers of the working class enjoyed a comparatively high standard of life. The gold standard prevailed almost universally. World commerce was on a much freer basis, and there was no talk of autarchy. In consequence of this better economic

situation, capitalism did not yet so clearly show its decay politically and socially. Treaties and international law still had some validity, bourgeois democracy retained much vitality, and the decay of science and culture was not so marked as today.

A basic result of the present weakened state of capitalism is greatly to sharpen all the economic and political antagonisms within the capitalist system; to render them deeper, more complex, and more clearly insoluble than they were in 1914. Thus, the class struggle between the capitalists and the toilers over the products of labor has grown far more acute. The antagonisms between the great capitalist powers and the colonial, semi-colonial and small capitalist countries have vastly sharpened. The conflicts between the capitalist imperialist powers themselves also have grown more profound, desperate, and all-pervading. And, lastly, of the most fundamental importance is the far-reaching and ever-deepening antagonism between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union.

War is therefore a far greater necessity for capitalism now, both politically and economically. Capitalist leaders are deluded by the futile hope that conquest and destruction can solve their deepening economic and political problems, their multiplying contradictions and antagonisms. Things have now come to the point where the great monopoly financiers, the rulers of the capitalist world, are almost as afraid of peace as of the consequences of war.

The central lesson to be drawn from this comparison is that the capitalist system, as it embarks upon its present cold-blooded imperialist slaughter, is structurally much more vulnerable both to the economic and military effects of the war and to the blows of the revolutionary forces. This is all the more true because modern war, with its greater mechanization, puts a much severer strain upon the capitalist economy and the general social system than war did a generation ago.

THE STRENGTHENED ANTI-CAPITALIST FORCES

Now we come to the counterpart of the weakened state of

the capitalist system: the present greater strength of the anti-capitalist forces. This change also was produced by the deepening of the general capitalist crisis.

1. *The Rise of the Soviet Union.* The greatest advance of the world's anti-capitalist forces since 1914, making for the establishment of international socialism, was the birth and growth of the U.S.S.R. This has enormously weakened the whole world capitalist system, economically and politically. The vast Soviet Union, extending over one-sixth of the habitable globe, has become a power so strong that no combination of capitalist countries has been capable of successfully attacking it. With its new socialist industries, the biggest in Europe, its modern collectivized agriculture and its powerful Red Army, it is an impregnable fortress of world socialism. Because of its growing strength and the fact that it is a living demonstration of the practicability of socialism, the U.S.S.R. constitutes a beacon light of hope and inspiration to uncounted millions of oppressed toilers throughout the world. It is playing a gigantic role in the growing struggle between the forces of capitalism and of world socialism.

2. *The Awakening World Working Class.* The proletariat in the capitalist world has today greater revolutionary maturity than in 1914. Faced with mass unemployment, declining living standards, fascism and war, the workers in all capitalist countries are rapidly losing their bourgeois illusions. One striking expression of this is their almost universal recognition of the fact that capitalism cannot go along as before, creating new and seemingly endless vistas of development. They see capitalism now as stagnant and shriveling and as requiring constant financial shots-in-the-arm from the respective governments in order to keep going. Fewer and fewer workers now cherish the hope of one day becoming small manufacturers or shopkeepers, and millions have almost lost hope even of ever securing a steady job. Another expression of the workers' political maturing is their all-prevailing peace sentiment, their general opposition to the war, in belligerent as well as in neutral countries. They simply do not see that they have anything

to fight for in this imperialist war. Never have the great mass of the workers in all countries had so little faith in the capitalist system as at the present time, and never was the awakening to class-consciousness so marked.

The workers' growing anti-capitalist moods internationally, confused though they may still be, represent a big advance over their political outlook at the outset of the World War. The workers at that time had not yet faced chronic industrial collapse, mass unemployment, fascism, and recurrent imperialist wars. The capitalist system by no means looked so hopeless to them as it does today. Ideologically, the working class everywhere is now much more prepared to perform its revolutionary role than it was a generation ago.

Moreover, today, the world workers have a more powerful political revolutionary movement than in 1914. True, at that time the Second International was composed of large political parties, trade unions, and cooperatives in nearly all European countries; it carried on Socialist agitation—of its own opportunist brand—and it adopted many ringing declarations against imperialist war, making a showy appearance of Socialist strength. But when the great test came in the World War and during the years following, the Second International demonstrated that it was neither Socialist nor anti-imperialist. Its decisive leadership gave full support to the imperialist war and used all its power to defend capitalism against the revolutionary upheavals at the end of the war. The truly revolutionary elements, those who understood and dared to take a stand against the war and for socialism, had not yet crystallized into a revolutionary party. The one great exception was in Russia, where, under Lenin's and Stalin's leadership, they were strong enough to strike tsarism and capitalism to the ground and establish the Soviet Government.

Today, as the second imperialist war gets under way, the world proletariat is politically much stronger, possessing a real revolutionary vanguard. We now have the Communist International, with its leading detachment the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its Communist Parties all over

the capitalist world. Many of these parties are numerically and politically strong, and even those compelled to work underground are very influential among the masses. The organized Communists of today are giving incomparably stronger socialist leadership to the masses than could the scattered and inexperienced Left Socialists of early World War days.

The breakdown of the Second International in Germany, Austria, Poland and many other countries is not an indication that the revolutionary socialist forces have grown weaker. On the contrary, the controlling bureaucracy of the Second International, with its policy of reformism and class collaboration, was in 1914, and is today far more brazenly, part of the bourgeois camp. As capitalism declines and abolishes its limited democracy, so also its arm among the working class, the opportunist Social-Democracy, decays simultaneously. The weakening of Social-Democracy is a phase of the weakening of the capitalist system itself. The true measure of world socialist strength is not the decadent, now counter-revolutionary, Second International, but the anti-capitalist forces analyzed in this section, whose world expression is the expanding Communist International.

3. *Intensified National Revolutionary Movements.* The anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist forces have, moreover, been vastly strengthened since 1914 by the growth of national revolutionary movements in the colonial and semi-colonial lands. Thus, China is in open war for its national independence. India, too, is surging up and will soon begin to march militantly along the path of colonial revolution. French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies are also stirring, and a long war in Europe will doubtless set them actively in struggle for independence. The Philippines and many Latin American countries also, during the past generation, have developed a new spirit of independence and are much more capable of resisting American and other imperialist domination.

These national revolutionary movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, only incipient at the beginning of the World War, today represent a grave danger to world impe-

rialism, to world capitalism. They constitute a great reservoir of strength to the forces making for world socialism.

4. *National Minorities and Small Capitalist Nations.* During the World War the oppressed national minorities were an important factor in disintegrating the empires of Russia, Germany, and Austria. But as the present war is going on the national minorities are vastly more dangerous to the great empires. This is because they are today more heavily oppressed and also because they have all developed a far stronger spirit of national independence.

The national minority problem is being rendered still broader and more explosive by the fact that the great empires, under the pressure of the war and the world capitalist crisis generally, are swallowing up the small capitalist nations and transforming them into oppressed nations and national minorities to an extent quite unknown during the World War. Owing to the activities of Germany and Italy on the one side, and England and France on the other, the independence of every small nation in Europe is either already gone (Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Albania, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium), or grievously menaced (Sweden, the Balkans, Switzerland). The United States is also actively working to reduce Latin America economically and politically to its sway, under cover of defending it, while Japan and the U.S.A. busy themselves along similar lines in the Far East. This increased oppression of national minorities and subjugation of small independent nations, which is characteristic of the present situation, bodes ill for the great empires in case of a devastating war.

5. *The Growth of the People's Front.* Still another factor of importance is the powerful radical trend now evident among the poorer farmers and the lower urban petty bourgeoisie. Pressed by the chronic agricultural crisis and the stranglehold of monopoly capital upon industry and trade, and faced by the dreaded perspectives of fascism and war, these sectors of the population have definitely sharpened their opposition to the big bankers, landlords, and industrialists.

They are showing decided tendencies to make joint cause with the workers against the common big capitalist enemy. This trend is observable in many countries and its organized form is the people's front, powerful expressions of which have been seen in Spain, France, China, Mexico, and Chile, and in incipient forms in the United States.

Although, like the colonial and national liberation movements, the people's front does not of itself aim at socialist objectives, it must, like them, be counted an anti-capitalist force of major significance. The people's front directs its blows against finance capital, the backbone of war-making imperialism, weakening the foundation of modern capitalism, and thereby opening up the way for real advances toward socialism by the masses under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. Especially in the event of a destructive war, the people's front, with peace as its main issue, will play a big role in the developing class struggle.

THE TWO-PHASED WAR POLICY OF WORLD IMPERIALISM

The war-making imperialists, rulers of the capitalist world, are quite conscious of the elementary facts presented above. They know that as the war is beginning the capitalist system is much weaker and the revolutionary forces are much stronger than they were at the outset of the World War. This realization shapes their political objectives in the war and modifies their military strategy.

Consequently, the imperialists of all countries, the United States included, have a haunting dread of socialist revolution. They are afraid, and with good reason, that if the present hostilities develop into a mass slaughter such as that of 1914-18, or result in a similar economic exhaustion, the forces of socialism will put an end to capitalism.

When launching the World War, the butchers of the people had little or no fear of revolution, except in tsarist Russia. The German, British and French rulers correctly relied on the Social-Democratic leaders to sabotage the revolutionary movement. Certainly the American imperialists had not the

slightest reason to doubt the loyalty of the A. F. of L. leadership. It was only after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia that an acute fear of the revolution entered the heart of the world bourgeoisie. In the present war, however, the imperialists are already stricken with dread. This fear delayed the outbreak of the war; it was a factor in hindering the bombing of the industrial centers and the launching of a murderous offensive on the Western Front; it is causing the exclusion of Communists and other militant workers from the air service, tank corps, artillery and other key military branches in the belligerent countries; and it is already making the various governments, especially the American, think seriously about "reconstruction" measures after the war. Thus, while the World War at its inception was almost solely a conflict between the two rival groups of imperialist powers, the present war from the very beginning is not only a struggle between the imperialist powers but also a struggle of world imperialism against the forces making for social revolution.

This fear of revolution, however, does not cause the imperialists to neglect their respective imperialistic designs upon each other and upon the weaker peoples. With Great Britain as the main war instigator, they murderously lunge into one another, while at the same time, in bourgeois-democratic as well as in fascist states, they try to stamp out the menacing fires of revolution. Thus in Germany, Italy and Japan, the workers face an iron repression. In England the government is using the Labor officialdom to hamstring the labor movement; the Communist Party is threatened with suppression. In France the Communist Party has been outlawed and opponents of the war face the death penalty. In the United States the Communists and other advanced workers are being hounded, and the M-Plan is ready for application. In Central Europe the German fascists and other reactionaries are also brutally repressing the restive national minorities, while England's abrupt rejection of India's demand for independence and the new aggressiveness of the United States towards Latin America are characteristic of the stiffer atti-

tude now being taken generally by the imperialist powers towards the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

The imperialists of all countries, while watchful to check every phase of the revolutionary movement, are agreed that the Soviet Union constitutes the main revolutionary danger. They see in it the great rallying center for the world's oppressed—the workers and farmers of the capitalist countries, the great colonial masses, the downtrodden national minorities and the threatened weaker capitalist nations. They know too that the success of its socialist system constitutes a living exposure of the rottenness of capitalism. Further zest is lent to their anti-Soviet aims by the hope of one day dividing up the rich territories of the U.S.S.R. To smash the U.S.S.R., therefore, is the job which all the imperialists agree must eventually be done if they and their system are to remain safe. Hostility towards the Soviet Union is the element of unity in the policies of the world imperialists. It is an ever present factor, even in the midst of their bitterest internecine conflicts.

Great Britain, like its ally, France, has been an inveterate enemy of the Soviet Union and is the leader in the world capitalist attempt to destroy the great stronghold of socialism. It deliberately strengthened Hitler-Germany, with the intention of turning the fascist bayonets against the Soviet Union. Still clinging to this cold-blooded scheme to make the Soviet Union and Germany wear each other out in a war of attrition, England at Munich and thereafter rejected the U.S.S.R.'s offer of a powerful world peace front to halt the war and thereby assumed the chief responsibility for the outbreak of the present armed conflict. Now that the war is going on, England's central political strategy is to transform the struggle into a general capitalist war against the Soviet Union, by forcing Hitler or some puppet successor into an anti-Soviet war. Determination to protect and extend the British and French empires against the blows of German imperialism, and against the looming threat of the international revolutionary forces, makes the Allies almost desperate in their eagerness to realize their war against the U.S.S.R.

American imperialism, also with a record of bitter hatred of the Soviets ever since their establishment, is cooperating fully with the British and French imperialists in their war plots against the U.S.S.R. This was made quite clear, for instance, by Roosevelt's provocative and belligerent anti-Soviet policy during the Finnish conflict. What with denunciations of the Soviets, war loans to Finland, Sweden, and Norway, the establishment of the "moral embargo," the encouragement of recruitment of volunteers, etc., Roosevelt's anti-Soviet policy verged upon open hostilities. The powerful capitalism of the United States has always been especially hostile towards the young socialist giant, the Soviet Union, and will let no opportunity pass to work for its destruction.

Fascist Germany, bound closely to its allies, Japan and Italy, in the anti-Comintern pact, and instigated by England, also actively pursued for several years the avowed policy of a general military crusade against the U.S.S.R. But Hitler had to abandon that policy for a number of very important reasons, among which were: the rapid increase in the economic strength of the Soviet Union and the growth of its Red Army; the smash-up of Hitler's Trotskyite-Zinovievite-Bukharinite agents; the bogging down of Japan in China and the weakening of Italy in the Ethiopian and Spanish wars; the fear that the German workers would rebel if they had to fight against the U.S.S.R.; and the growing realization that Germany, in a desperate war with the Soviets, would be sacrificing itself in the interests of British imperialism. Although Hitler was thus forced to call off his anti-Soviet war, it would be the height of folly to conclude therefrom that he has abandoned it finally. Hitler's strategy is to knock out England with a blitzkrieg and then to try to avoid the revolutionary consequences of the war by setting up a system of fascism to dominate Europe with the help of the fascist "fifth column" elements in the various countries.

By the Soviet-German pact and the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty, the U.S.S.R. dealt smashing defeats to the world imperialists in their attempts to destroy the Soviet Union. These

victories made the position of the U.S.S.R. far stronger and rendered much more difficult the attack by the imperialists. But we must not assume that they have given up their nefarious plan. Even while the imperialists are warring like wolves against one another, the danger of their ganging up for a joint attack against the U.S.S.R. always remains acute.

POLICIES OF THE WORLD ANTI-CAPITALIST FORCES

How are the anti-capitalist elements developing their policies in the war situation? In line with our previous analysis of the general status of these forces, we can best discuss them under three general headings:

1. *The Role of the Soviet Union.* The U.S.S.R. has condemned this war as an imperialist struggle, for which Great Britain bears the major blame. It does not support either side. While the capitalist powers tear into one another, the U.S.S.R., with its Marxist-Leninist strategy, takes advantage of the capitalist contradictions to strengthen its positions and thus advance the interests of the international socialist and anti-imperialist forces. It continues to work for world peace as it has done consistently ever since its foundation in 1917, in inspiring the fight of the masses everywhere against the war, for a just peace, for socialism.

As recent events show, however, the Soviet Union's independent peace policy does not imply that country's standing passively by without regard to what is happening in the war. On the contrary, while maintaining neutrality in the imperialist war, the Soviet Union, as in the past, pursues an active policy in the interests of the world toilers. It has given real support to the peoples of Spain and China; it has taken active steps to improve its strategic position in the Baltic in the interests of peace; and it has employed its great Red Army to liberate the peoples of Western Byelo-Russia and Western Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the war, it has brought thirteen million people under the flag of socialism. Thus the Soviet Union sets the example to the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist forces the world over.

The policy of the U.S.S.R. carries with it the possibility of mobilizing, under Soviet leadership, the potentially irresistible world mass peace forces, which are at the same time the world anti-capitalist forces. Such a mobilization—of workers, farmers, oppressed nationalities, small nations and colonial peoples—could bring the war to a sudden halt. It would also make it impossible for the imperialists to put across another Versailles or super-Munich peace treaty. Should the war be prolonged, this force would constitute a threat to the very existence of the capitalist system.

2. *The Workers and Other Toilers in the Imperialist Countries.* In the great capitalist countries, the policy of the proletariat and other toilers in their struggle against the war and against capitalism is summed up in the slogan of the Communist International, "For Peace, Bread, and Freedom." These demands express the fundamental needs of the masses in the present situation, and the longer and more destructive the war becomes the more potent they will grow in organizing the workers, the farmers, the intellectuals and other toiling elements in anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle.

The fight for peace brings these masses into direct conflict with the imperialist war-makers and as the war goes on it will bring them into firmer unison, under class-conscious leadership, for the decisive struggle against the capitalist system itself. The fight for bread—for the living and working standards of the masses—is another broad road to direct struggle against the war and, eventually, against capitalism. The fight for freedom is at once a struggle in defense of the people's civil liberties, for national independence, for socialism.

3. *The National Minorities, Small Nations and Colonial Peoples.* By bringing greater oppression to these groups, the war is inevitably throwing all of them increasingly into conflict with the imperialist powers. The fight against imperialism in this period of capitalist decay is in the long run a fight against capitalism itself. The oppressed peoples of the world will not be slow to take advantage of the difficulties of the imperialist masters as the war progresses. The raising of in-

dependence demands by India at this time is highly significant; it gives the correct cue for oppressed peoples of all categories throughout the world.

A factor of great importance in the increased movements of revolt and struggle among the colonial and other oppressed peoples is their tendency to turn towards the Soviet Union for help and leadership. The October Revolution and the peace policy of the Soviet Union are having profound repercussions among these peoples. China is the most outstanding example of the growing recognition that the U.S.S.R. is the only state that defends the weaker peoples. An expanding pro-Soviet sentiment is also in evidence among the Baltic, Balkan, Scandinavian and Latin American countries. As the war goes on this tendency is bound to increase. When peace is negotiated, the proposals of the Soviet Union will have great support from the oppressed of the world. The turning of these peoples toward the Soviet Union, to prevent their being destroyed by imperialist powers, ominously threatens the war-makers and their plans of capitalist exploitation.

THE WAR PERSPECTIVE

Because of the more advanced stage of the general crisis of the capitalist system, the tempo of the breakdown of capitalism and the growth of the revolutionary forces during this war will be much faster than it was in the World War. The World War gave capitalism a blow from which it has not recovered; the present war will deal it a still heavier blow. The capitalists' gnawing fear of revolution is well-founded.

One thing, however, is certain. Capitalism, as Lenin pointed out so many times, will never fall of itself. There can be no automatic victory for the forces heading towards socialism. The capitalists will fight to the end to maintain their rule. They will use every kind of military force, fascist demagoguery and terrorism to suppress the people's discontent. The British Tories, if successful in the war, would drive no less ruthlessly towards world fascism than would the German Nazis, in the endeavor to save the tottering capitalist system.

The extent to which this imperialist war will result in a further demolition of capitalism and the enlargement of the socialist sector of the world will depend primarily on the degree to which the growing anti-capitalist forces can be strengthened, coordinated, and led in effective struggle. The world Communist movement is the only guarantee of accomplishing this.

As for the Second International, dominated as it is by reactionaries, it is a dangerous enemy of peace and socialism. Linked up with the bourgeoisie in the respective countries, its policy is one of supporting the war and of hampering all anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle. In England and France the Social-Democrats are members of the bourgeois war cabinets; in Germany, and also in the United States and all non-belligerent capitalist countries they are openly supporting Allied imperialism. And everywhere their influence is being expended to prevent the growth and action of the revolutionary elements. The world Social-Democracy is a force, not for, but against, peace and socialism.

The war has already done colossal damage to the capitalist system and, even if halted now, would surely be followed by serious economic and political repercussions. And the prospect is that the war will be a protracted and devastating one.

The antagonisms between the warring imperialist powers have become so deep that it would be extremely difficult for these states to patch up even a temporary peace. A just and lasting peace can be achieved only if the workers and other toilers in England, Germany, France, the United States and Italy fire the Chamberlains, Hitlers, Roosevelts, Reynauds and Mussolinis, and similar agents of capitalism, get together with the peoples of the U.S.S.R., China, India, and Latin America, and, on the basis of progressive and socialist governments, crack the power of monopoly capital and work out a people's peace.

It is worth noting another element which operates against the imperialists' patching up an early peace. In spite of their fear of the revolution the imperialist rulers are still imbued with the belief that in a real pinch they could beat back the

revolution through a combination of their military strength, and by methods of fascist terrorism and demagoguery, aided by Social-Democratic treachery. They think that in a revolutionary crisis they could crush, or at least check, the Soviet Union, stifle the colonial movements, and stamp out the revolutionary sentiments among the workers. The betrayals by Social-Democrats during the last war and the post-war revolutionary upheavals, when they saved European capitalism from the revolution, as well as their abject surrender to the rising Hitler in Germany and their traitorous endorsement of the present imperialist war, have bred in the tomes of all countries a gross underestimation of the revolutionary strength of the workers and their allies. In the trap of this underestimation they may well meet their doom.

THE ROLE OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

In the imperialist war and in the far-reaching conflict between the world forces of reaction and of progress a most vital factor in determining the outcome will be the role played by American imperialism. As in the case of other capitalist powers, the policy of American imperialism is conditioned by the basic considerations of the weakened state of the capitalist system and the growing strength of the revolutionary forces. Hence, as American imperialism strives to advance its own interests it at the same time is alert to utilize every occasion to defeat the forces making toward world socialism.

On its own greedy account American imperialism is exploiting the war situation to reap huge profits from the sale of munitions and to seize all possible markets in Latin America and the Far East while its great rivals, England, Germany and Japan, are engaged in war. It is also seeking to strengthen itself politically internationally wherever it can. This time American imperialism, in consolidating its overlordship, is not going to rely, as it did during the World War, chiefly upon loans which can be repudiated. Now it is going in for territorial and other political guarantees. This explains the present great drive to strengthen America's grip on Latin Amer-

ica, to extend its imperialist power in China, to take over the British, French and Dutch islands in the Caribbean, to grab Greenland, and to establish an American protectorate over the Dutch East Indies. The aim of imperialist America is to win world domination for itself.

The Roosevelt Government, controlled by the greatest bankers and industrialists, is striving to further American imperialist interests and to beat back the world revolutionary forces on the basis of a general policy of supporting Great Britain and France in the war. The United States is not a neutral power. It is militantly pro-Ally, moving toward becoming a belligerent.

There was nothing neutral in the lifting of the arms embargo; the acceptance of the British blockade with little or no protest; the enforcement of the British blockade against the Soviet Union through the "moral embargo"; the financial support to the pound and the franc; the shipment of the most secret and best American war planes to the Allies; the ultra-hostile attitude against the U.S.S.R. in the Finnish situation; the anti-Soviet maneuverings with the Vatican; the violently pro-Ally war speeches and intrigues made by Ambassadors Bullitt, Kennedy and Cromwell; the curt rejection of the peace proposals of the U.S.S.R., Germany, and the Netherlands; the maneuvers to pull Italy into the camp of the Allies; and the repeated endeavors by the President to give ideological justification to the Allied cause. At the outset of the war the President said he was not neutral in thought, and he has followed this up by being thoroughly unneutral in action. He has, indeed, taken "all measures short of war" in support of the Allies and has already involved the country deeply into the war.

A number of basic factors lead the decisive sections of finance capital and their Roosevelt Government to adopt a pro-Ally course: (a) their desire to reap rich war profits through the munitions trade with the Allies and to protect American World War loans and foreign investments generally in the Allied countries and colonies; (b) their determination to

occupy a key seat at the peace table to share the spoils of victory; (c) their active fear of the competitive power of a victorious imperialist Germany; and (d) their agreement with the anti-Soviet policy of the Allies. Furthermore, although American imperialism wants to clip Britain's wings, nevertheless it is moved to shield the British Empire (and its dependent French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese empires) from possible breakdown in the war, either through military defeat or by economic exhaustion. This is because the British Empire is the very cornerstone of the world capitalist system, the main enemy of everything progressive, and its serious weakening or overthrow by Hitler, or by the world revolutionary socialist forces, would shake the very foundations of the entire capitalist system.

It has become obvious that the Allies have little chance to win the war or even to stave off defeat without very substantial American assistance. Now they need airplanes; later it will be money, troops and warships. Although it will surely be tried, it will be difficult to get the American people to agree to war credits, which can only be outright war appropriations. Hence, all the greater the danger that a well-timed "incident" may be used to plunge this country into the hostilities. For the warmongers such a course would cut the Gordian knot of the people's resistance to the war. The more the military difficulties of the Allies grow the greater is the danger of the United States being dragged fully into the war. There can be no doubt that the American imperialists and their government leader, President Roosevelt, have decided to enter the war with America's full forces on the side of the Allies when they deem it necessary and possible. But the United States will make the Allies pay dearly for its "support." Clearly its aim is to muscle into domination over the associated empires of England, France, Holland, Belgium and Portugal.

The assertion that the United States, with its present government, can play a progressive role in the war is a gross lie. So far as the American people are concerned, military par-

ticipation in the war could only bring to them the sacrifice of many American boys' lives, a dangerous suppression of the people's civil liberties, the destruction of vast quantities of commodities needed to feed the impoverished here, and the strengthening of reaction on all fronts.

In the international arena, also, American war participation would have deeply reactionary effects. It would tend to spread, deepen and prolong the war, and also to make it more dangerously counter-revolutionary. The United States, a great capitalist stronghold, could only serve in the war as an armed guard to protect the decaying capitalist system from the assaults of the oppressed and outraged masses of the world. American military forces would not be used to defend world democracy but to destroy it. They would be employed to protect the interests of American and British imperialism, to attack the Soviet Union, and to beat down revolutionary and democratic movements in all the capitalist and colonial countries. At the peace table, also, the delegates from the present American Government would be the enemies of the workers and peasants of the world, would be the powerful defenders of the rotting capitalist system.

During and after the World War, the United States played a reactionary role, not only in general by its entry into the war, but also specifically by such acts as its participation in the formulation of the infamous Versailles Treaty, in the armed intervention against the Soviet Government, in strangling the Hungarian revolution, and in the post-war enslavement of the German people through the Young and Dawes Plans. In the present war the role of the United States would be even more militantly reactionary, because finance capital now has a greater grip on the country and its imperialist appetite is thoroughly whetted; but most of all because the weakened world capitalist system is in great danger from the strengthened revolutionary forces, and the United States would use all its power to save it.

The fight to keep this country out of the war can be won. The overwhelming masses of the people are definitely against

American participation in the war. But to make their peace desires prevail these must be translated into active struggle against the war. Only by such determined action can they win against the imperialists who, step by step, are involving the country in the war. These warmongers are daily becoming bolder in advocating war loans, the "limited war" and direct military aid to the Allies.

To defeat the imperialist warmongers, the flagrant war policy of President Roosevelt must be exposed and the people awakened to its grave danger. Every step taken by the government into the war must meet the organized opposition of the masses. This fight against the war can have a broad backing only if it is linked up with all the struggles of the masses for their immediate economic and political demands: to prevent the economic burdens of the war from being loaded upon the workers; for better wages and shorter hours; for the organization of the unorganized; for trade union unity; for jobs and unemployment relief; for the defense of civil liberties; in support of existing progressive labor legislation; against profiteering in life necessities; for a third, progressive party. All this must lead to the establishment of an anti-imperialist people's front, which would work with other progressive forces throughout the world for a just peace. In this great work of education, organization and struggle the Communist Party bears a central responsibility to give the masses correct and resolute leadership.

The fight to keep America out of the war is of historic importance. It is vital to the national interests of the American people. It is also fundamental to the success of the anti-capitalist forces of the whole world that the reactionary weight of the United States shall not be thrown against them in their struggle to free themselves during and after this war.

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