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# THE ELECTION

and the

# COMING

# WAR

by

R. Palme Dutt

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By  
**R. Palme Dutt**

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# The Election and the Coming War

By R. PALME DUTT.

Over this election looms a gigantic shadow—the shadow of the coming war.

The issue of the coming war will never be put to the “free” electors of this country by any of the three governing parties. In this “democratic” country the issue of war, the greatest issue determining the future of every man, woman and child, is never submitted to the electorate. **War is prepared in secret on top, and, when the moment comes, will be let loose without warning.**

The last General Election before the World War of 1914 was the General Election of 1910. What was the issue of that election? The nominal issue was “the Lords versus the People.” The reality behind that screen was the coming war. All in the inner councils of the ruling class knew since 1905 that it was approaching, and were preparing for it to the last detail, as their records and memoirs have since shown. But this issue was never brought before the election. The Liberal Government of Asquith and Lloyd George, maintained in office by the Labour Party, appealed to the electors for their votes against the tyranny of the dukes. The electors gave them their votes. The Government used their power to carry through the final preparations and let loose the war of 1914. And so soon as the war came, all the three parties, Conservative, Liberal and Labour, who had appeared before the electors with the words of peace on their lips, united to support the war.

To-day we are face to face with an even more menacing repetition of the same position. Renewed world war is visibly drawing close. **This General Election may easily be the last before new world war breaks out. This is the great hidden issue of the election, which must be dragged into the light of day.** Once again the three governing parties speak of peace, but they are preparing war by their acts. And once again, when the time comes, they will unite for war.

Let every elector remember 1914, let every elector face this issue, before determining how to vote. For this time there is a new factor in the situation. There is a new party before the electors. This party is committed to war against the warmongers, to war against all imperialist treaties and military obligations, to war against all capitalist armaments, and to carry on the struggle,

not only to prevent war, but also, if war nevertheless breaks out, then, also **after** war has broken out, to continue and intensify the fight against it by every means. This party is the Communist Party, the party of the international working class. For the first time the issue of imperialist war is brought into the arena of the election.

## Capitalism is Driving to War

Every intelligent man and woman can see to-day that the Great Powers are preparing war. War preparations are going forward more feverishly and on a larger scale than before the last war; and they are increasing every year.

Why are they preparing war? Why should war come?

**Modern war is the outcome of capitalism.** The greater the scale of capitalism, the greater its powers of production, the more intense becomes the conflict between the great capitalist Powers for markets, for raw materials, for colonies and spheres of influence, for new regions to open up and export capital and exploit. Monopoly capitalism, or the modern advanced stage of capitalism of the great Trusts, linked up with their respective States or groups of States, has developed this conflict to an extreme point. This is the stage of Imperialism. Hence the seeming contradiction that the scale of murderous violence and war all over the world grows ever greater, the more capitalist civilisation advances in technique and organisation. The conflicts of the rival groups of capitalists throughout the world are backed up by the diplomatic and strategic forces of their respective States. Sooner or later this ceaseless and ever-growing conflict results in war.

The World War of 1914-1918 was the first strategic explosion of this conflict, the coming of which revolutionary socialists had long ago predicted as the inevitable outcome of capitalist development. But the crisis of capitalism which led to the world war of 1914 was not solved by that war. On the contrary, it has been increased a hundredfold by its effects, by the intensified antagonisms and inequalities, by the robber "peace" treaties and the seeds laid of future wars. At the same time, new and larger antagonisms have grown up from its ruins, between the Old World and the New, between Britain, America and Japan, over China and Asia, around the Pacific.

**To-day the imperialist antagonisms are far more intense than they were before the war of 1914.** The competition for the world market is far more severe, with the growth of a whole series of new industrial powers. Trusts and concentrations of capital are organised on a far more gigantic scale. All the capitalist Powers are engaged in carrying through rationalisation, i.e., the highest possible concentration of organisation to increase their produc-

tion and competitive power. The headlong advance to war is thus more rapid than ever before.

Within capitalism there is no solution or outcome to this gathering crisis save war. The dream of a harmonious solution, of peace between the imperialist Governments, of a future " Ultra-Capitalism " or World Capitalism which will peacefully organise world production, is an idle, lying dream, which ignores the realities of capitalism. Capitalism is built on inequality and competition; between its changing component parts, the rising and declining industrial and financial powers and blocs, there can be no lasting peace; for there is no common basis. Even the temporary agreements and compromises and alliances, the ever-changing partial international cartels and the like, are only stages in the development of the larger antagonisms. Only international socialism can organise world production on a single harmonious basis; for this is only possible when the means of production cease to be the property of warring capitalist groups and become the social wealth of organised human society. Only so can the causes of war be finally eliminated. This cannot be accomplished without the overthrow and expropriation of the capitalist class, and final realisation of the World Socialist Republic.

The fight against war is thus necessarily the fight against capitalism. Support of capitalism means support of war. Every party that supports the existing capitalist order, whether openly (the Liberals and Conservatives), or as a supposed " evolutionary " stage to a peaceful development to socialism (the Labour Party), is in fact supporting and helping forward the advance to war. All appeals for " More Production ", Industrial Peace, Rationalisation, Mondism and the like, are in fact appeals to intensify international commercial competition and hasten the advance to war. The faster capitalism develops, the faster the approach to war.

The Labour Party " socialists " speak of their method of " peaceful " approach to socialism, and on this basis support the existing capitalist order, its State machine, empire, etc. The reality of this " peaceful " approach to socialism is—imperialist world war! 1914 showed thus. It will be shown again, if the workers are not strong in time to prevent it.

**Capitalism means war. The fight against war can only be realised as part of the fight against capitalism. Only the power of the working class can end capitalist war.**

## **The Capitalist Statesmen Admit that War is Near**

The closeness of war has become so visible, that in the last year or two the imperialist statesmen themselves have had to admit it, even while paying the homage of lip-service to peace. We shall find that the leader of every party in this election admits the closeness of war.

**MacDonald**, the leader of the Labour Party, has declared :—

“ No one can go through Europe to-day, and talk as he goes with diplomatists and political leaders, without feeling how alarmingly **affairs are falling back into the ruts in which they moved prior to the war in 1914.**”—(“ Forward,” 27.10.28.)

**Lloyd George**, the leader of the Liberal Party, has declared :—

“ Unless Europe advances beyond Locarno to arbitration and disarmament, I say, from a long knowledge and a profound knowledge of the conditions of Europe, **war is inevitable.**”

“ The conquering nations in the Great War had at the present time in the aggregate ten million trained men, not merely well equipped, but better equipped for war than they were in 1914.

“ Their machinery was more perfect—if by perfect was meant more ghastly—more terrible and more shattering than was seen in the Great War, and it was getting more terrible every year.”—(Speech at the Aldwych Club, 7.11.27.)

“ As long as they had these huge armaments in the world, arbitration and conciliation would be made quite impossible. **At present there were in Europe fifteen million men training for slaughter, with equipment such as the world had never seen for horror and devastation.**”—(House of Commons, 24.11.27.)

**Chamberlain**, the Conservative Foreign Secretary, has declared :—

“ We have from the first declared that we base our foreign policy on the League of Nations. **I would not have you lull yourselves to sleep with the idea that the constitution of the League of Nations makes war impossible. That is a result which may never be obtained.**”—(Speech at Torquay, 23.2.29.)

Even more frank is the statement of Mussolini, the darling of the bourgeoisie, with reference to the Kellogg “ Peace ” Pact :—

“ But above and beneath and alongside these Pacts there is the reality. . . . What this reality is, is this—**the whole world is arming.** We must have no illusions about the political state of Europe. When a storm is approaching, everyone talks about peace.”—(“ Observer,” 9.12.28.)

The statement of the military and naval experts, of the general staff chiefs and service magazines, are still more direct and uncompromising.

**Thus every leader of every party in this election admits the closeness of war. But the policy they all follow, the policy of imperialism and imperialist aims and commitments and building up of armaments, is one that makes war inevitable.**



## The Communist Party Fights for Peace

The Communist Party alone fights against capitalist armaments and capitalist war, against the whole policy of imperialism which leads to war.

Only the working class struggle against capitalism can lead the fight against war. The support of capitalism and of the capitalist state machine inevitably means in practice the support of imperialism and war. This is why bourgeois "pacifism", the pacifism of words which seeks to separate the fight against war from the fight against capitalism, can only in practice serve as the passive tool and screen of imperialist war. Only the mass struggle of the working class can check even for a breathing space the advance of capitalism to war. Only the overthrow of capitalism, the victory of international socialism and the establishment of the World Socialist Republic, can finally end war. This is the aim of the Communist Party.

**The Communist International was born from the struggle against the World War of 1914-18.** The old Socialist International was pledged to the revolutionary working class fight against war; by the Congress resolutions of 1907 and 1910 every party in it (including the Labour Party) was pledged, in the event of war,

"to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and with all their energies to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the masses of the people from their slumbers, and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination."

But the working class movement was not yet strong enough and ready when the test of 1914 came. The corrupted reformist leaders who dominated the parties in England, France, Germany and other countries, the Hendersons, Scheidemanns and Renaudels, grown into ever closer union with imperialism, betrayed their faith in the testing-time, and entered into war-coalition with the capitalist class of their respective countries. Instead of fighting for international working class solidarity, they hounded on the workers to slaughter their fellow-workers. From this treachery and collapse of the old Second International arose the Communist International to replace it and carry on the fight.

It was the revolutionary Marxist Socialists of the old International, Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, Liebknecht and the German Spartakists, and the revolutionary groups and parties in every country, who stood firm by the International and led the fight against the world war. Through their leadership, from the hell of the world war arose the working class socialist revolution and the beginning of a new period in the history of humanity. From the groupings that stood true to the International in the fiery test of the world war and revolution, was founded the new working class International, the Third or Communist International.

**Lenin, Liebknecht and their fellow revolutionary leaders of the workers showed in action the workers of the world how to fight war along the path of revolutionary struggle.** The revolutionary action of the Russian workers ended the war in Eastern Europe. The revolutionary action of the German workers ended the war in Western Europe.

To-day, the Communist International, faithful to the traditions of Marxism and International Socialism, carries forward the militant working class struggle against war in every country. War can never be ended by pacific phrases or individual passive abstention. War is bound up with capitalism, and above all with its modern phase of imperialism. The fight against war can only be successfully conducted as part of the fight against capitalism, against imperialism. So long as the capitalist class retains power in its hands, so long war will continue. The aim of the working class must be to disarm the capitalist class, to overthrow the power of the capitalist class, to win power in its own hands and establish international socialism. The working class in alliance with the colonial peoples must overthrow imperialism. Only so, only at the price of this struggle, can war be ended.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the pioneer and leader of the workers' socialist revolution, is the only State in the world to-day that fights for peace, that stands with the oppressed and subjected in every country, with the workers and colonial peoples, against capitalism and against imperialism. The workers and peasants of the Soviet Republic maintain their armed force only for defence against the imperialist bandits and marauders, who would otherwise, as they have shown in action, intervene at once to wipe out the advance to socialism and subject them to servitude. The Soviet Republic has formally and officially, through their representatives at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, called on the capitalist and imperialist governments to agree to total disarmament; and offered to disband every military formation and dismantle every military factory, provided the capitalists would do likewise. The capitalist and imperialist governments have refused. By their refusal they have exposed their true character before the world.

The imperialist "pacifists" accuse the Communists of standing for civil war. This was the language of Chamberlain in rejecting the Soviet total disarmament proposals. The accusation is one that falls back on those who seek to maintain capitalist servitude by armed force and violence all over the world. The aim of the Communists is to end capitalist servitude and thus establish the conditions of permanent peace. To realise this aim, they are prepared to face whatever conditions of struggle the capitalists impose. But the responsibility for the struggle, and for the character of the struggle, rests with the capitalists and with them alone. **Until the capitalist class is disarmed, war**

**will not be ended. The pacifist who does not face this fight is in reality the passive accomplice of imperialism and of imperialist war. The fight of the Communist Party is the true fight for peace.**

## **The War Offensive of British Imperialism**

British Imperialism is to-day one of the principal forces driving to war throughout the world.

The imperialist statesmen, Conservative, Liberal and Labour, all speak of peace. They hold out before the public view the League of Nations and the Kellogg Peace Pact. They express their hopes of disarmament.

**But the reality of their policy is different. The reality is shown in the armoured warships parading every sea of the world, in the strategic fortresses from Gibraltar and Malta to Hong Kong and Singapore, in the troops and machine-guns holding down hundreds of millions over Asia and Africa, in the bombing aeroplanes sent to do their deadly work in all quarters of the globe.**

The British Empire is an empire of conquest and violence. In the words of one of their chief statesmen with regard to India, when he was Viceroy of India, it is "won by the sword and held by the sword." The handful of white exploiters in the City of London dominate and draw their profits from four hundred and fifty millions, or more than one-quarter of the human race.

The expenditure of the British Empire on armaments is the highest in the world. In 1926-7 the figures were: British Empire, £176 millions; United States, £119 millions; France, £53 millions; Italy, £45 millions; Japan, £43 millions (Labour Year Book, 1928).

Thus the British and American "pacifists" lead the world in armaments!

The Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties are equally devoted to the maintenance of this Empire. All alike are united to uphold it by force. "We love our Empire," are the words of J. H. Thomas; and the Labour spokesmen are anxious to show that the Empire is "in as safe hands" with them as with the Conservatives.

Even at this moment, while the electioneering words of peace are being spoken, armed police are shooting down unarmed strikers in Bombay, and aeroplanes are bombing helpless tribes in the Middle East. This happens equally under a Conservative, a Liberal or a Labour Government.

**The policy of British Imperialism to-day is directed towards intensified preparations for renewed world war. The reason for this lies in the whole present position of British Imperialism.**

At the present day, the basis of the British Empire and of the old British world monopoly is being increasingly threatened on many sides. Already before the last war it was clear that the old secure supremacy was gone. New capitalist powers were arising to challenge it. The Anglo-German rivalry which was the expression of this situation was at the root of the last war. British Imperialism succeeded, at a cost of slaughter and destruction without parallel in history, in smashing for the time being its German rival, seizing its colonies, sinking its navy, confiscating its shipping, and shackling its economic life under an unprecedented burden of tribute. But its own instability was only increased a hundredfold by the effects of the war. New forces sprang up; the colonies were in revolt; the workers' revolution spread over half Europe; the British workers advanced to gigantic struggles; new World Powers beyond Europe shot forward, and especially American Imperialism, which advanced to world hegemony; prolonged industrial crisis and mass unemployment at home revealed the economic decline.

For ten years British Imperialism has fought to recover its position. It has, for the time being, suppressed in blood and terrorism the colonial revolts in India, in Ireland, in Egypt; though to-day, as events in India show, these only arise again in greater force. It has for the time being struck down the British workers by the smashing of the General Strike and by the Trade Union Act, with the aid of the reformist Labour traitors; but the forces of the British workers already begin to arise again, the stronger for the revolutionising lessons of defeat. It has for the time being arrested the advance of the Chinese Revolution and secured the victory of the counter-revolutionary forces by the sending of the Expeditionary Force. But it has not solved the economic crisis of its continuing decline. And in two directions it has gained no success. The Workers' Soviet Republic in Russia, despite all the blockades, wars, interventions, subsidised civil war and economic and financial boycott, remains unbroken and yearly growing in strength, the world fortress of the working class. And American Imperialism advances from strength to strength, pressing British Imperialism ever harder.

**To-day the policy of British Imperialism abroad is consequently concentrated on two fronts: first, the organisation of war against the Russian Workers' Republic; second, the organisation of war against the United States.**

The Anglo-American antagonism to-day occupies the position of the Anglo-German antagonism before the last war. America is pressing Britain economically to-day harder than ever Germany did before the last war; and every year the pressure grows greater. The battle of these two giants extends over every sphere, in every market of the world, in every region of financial domination: over exports and manufactures and mass-production; over

oil, over rubber, over cotton, over shipping; over the export of capital, financial hegemony and the gold standard. The conflict has already reached the open plane in the ever-sharpening naval issue, and the breakdown of the Geneva Naval Conference.

British Imperialism, economically weaker than American, is seeking to build up a diplomatic and strategic combination to outreach its rival. The revelation of the Anglo-French Military-Naval Agreement last year laid bare the preparation of a common front against America. At the same time the Anglo-Japanese Entente is being revived in spite of Washington. There is already in process of formation two World Blocs around the central Anglo-American antagonism: on the one side, Britain, France, Japan and their satellites; on the other side, the United States and its satellites in the two Americas, and, possibly, Germany and Italy.

The tone of imperialist statesmen and the Press in both Britain and America is already the tone of approaching war, whether in the overflowing peace-talk or in the thinly veiled menaces and hostility. Already we find the former Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, accusing America of "imperialistic tendencies" and comparing the official utterances of the United States to those of "Germany previous to the tragedy of 1914" (speech on December 5th, 1928). So rapidly does the "next war" replace the last.

## Preparing War on the Soviet Union

Even more immediate is the war offensive of British Imperialism against the Workers' Socialist Republic in Russia.

The aim of the British bourgeoisie to smash the Soviet Union, which was openly and unconcealedly revealed during the first years after the war in the direct military intervention, armed blockade, expeditionary forces, and wholesale subsidising and equipping of brigands of the Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel, and Yudenitch type—this aim has never been abandoned. It is to-day more alive than ever. The defeat of the first direct assault by the Russian workers in unity with the international working class has only meant that a revision of plans has had to be effected, and attention concentrated on building up a more elaborate strategic preparation and combination. Through "recognition" and non-recognition alike this aim has gone forward. **This aim, as a host of official statements and first-hand evidence from a host of countries testifies, is the principal governing aim of British foreign policy in the present period.**

Locarno, the winning of Germany to the Western Powers, the renewed Anglo-French Alliance, the domination of the Baltic States, of Poland, of Finland and of Rumania, the incessant activity of British and French naval and military missions and

staff officers in all these border countries, the military preparations and activities in the Middle East and strengthening of the base of India for an Asiatic war—all these are links in a single chain.

Most recently, the Groener Memorandum has illustrated the dominant trend. The Groener Memorandum, published in the "Review of Reviews" for January, 1929, and since admitted as authentic, was a secret report of the German Minister of Defence, General Groener, to the German Government and party leaders on the European military situation (in connection with the building of their new cruiser). In this Report, based on inside knowledge and not written for publication, General Groener summarised as the essence of the present European military situation:—

**"The antagonism between England and Russia is notorious. . . . The fighting out of this antagonism is only a question of time; and Germany runs the gravest risk of being drawn into the struggle."**

This preparation of war against the Soviet Union will go forward, equally whether there will be nominal "recognition" of the Soviet Union or not. All the business concern of a section of the British industrialists to secure orders from the Soviet Union and develop economic relations should not blind the eyes of the workers for a moment to the basic strategic aim of the British bourgeoisie.

Against this attack there can be only 'one answer' of the working class—the militant unity of the workers in every country in defence of the Soviet Union. **For the workers the Russian Socialist Republic is the world fortress of the working class, their true fatherland, their socialist fatherland.** In the event of such a war the workers and soldiers in every country will need to unite against the imperialists and stand shoulder to shoulder with their Russian brothers. And the first steps in preparation for this need to be taken at the present General Election.

## **The Hypocrisy of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact**

The imperialist statesmen, while preparing war, hold before the workers the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact and Disarmament Conferences as the lines of defence against war and the guarantee of peace. Behind the screen of these, they go forward with their war preparations and seek to lull the workers to sleep before the coming war.

This is an open mockery. **What is the League of Nations? It is the union of the imperialist governments that are preparing war.** It is completely dominated by the imperialist Great Powers,

which are the principal instruments of war. Its basis is the criminal Versailles Treaty and the brigand division of the world among the handful of Great Powers. Its constitution is committed to maintain this brigand division of the world by force.

In all the wars of the imperialist Great Powers of the past ten years, whether of Britain and France against the Soviet Union and Turkey, of France against Morocco, or Britain against China, the League has never intervened against them.

The League of Nations is not only not an instrument to prevent war. It is a **direct instrument for making war**. Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant lay down that if any State, whether a member or not a member (i.e., the Soviet Republic or United States), shall commit what the Council may consider an act of aggression, then

“ it shall, *ipso facto*, be deemed to have committed an act of war against all the members of the League, which hereby undertake to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations. . . . **It shall be the duty of the Council in such cases to recommend to the several governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenant of the League.**”

This is a direct military obligation far exceeding any of the alliances and commitments that preceded the last war. When the time comes, it will be brought into operation, and the true nature of the League will be revealed as the direct instrument and organiser of war against the Soviet Republic, or, if need be, against the United States. This is the reality behind the pacific sentiments.

**The pacifists who appeal to the workers with soft words to support the League in the name of peace, are in reality attempting to organise the workers behind the imperialists, behind the Poincarés, the Chamberlains and the Mussolinis, for war.**

The hypocrisy of the Kellogg Pact is even more transparent. The Kellogg Pact is in reality the American counter to the League of Nations, as their screen and sanctification of future war. The Kellogg Pact solemnly repudiates war “ as an instrument of national policy.” But it leaves untouched wars of “ self-defence ” or in pursuit of aims other than “ national policy ”; and what nation ever went to war save in “ self-defence ” and for the highest international aims? It leaves untouched the wholesale reservations on either side, with reference to existing treaties, rival Monroe Doctrines and the rest. The value attached by the British Government to their signature of the Pact was sufficiently evidenced by the statement of their official representative, Lord Cushendun, immediately after signing it:—

**" Nobody imagined that by the signing of the treaty war would be finally abolished "** (" Times," 28.8.28).

The League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact are thus not instruments for the prevention of war, but for the legalisation and sanctifying of future war on behalf of rival imperialisms in the name of " international obligations." They are moral and diplomatic screens for the preparation of the coming war.

## **The Labour Party as a War Party**

The Labour Party, like the other imperialist parties, the Conservative and Liberal Parties, appeals to the electors in the name of international peace. Labour spokesmen, who used to deny the war danger as mere Communist alarmism, now admit the closeness of war, and call on the workers to replace a Baldwin by a MacDonald in order to prevent war. Many, like Brailsford, even advocate a Liberal-Labour coalition to prevent war—in the face of the experience of 1906-14.

Such appeals for a change of statesmen on top, while the imperialist machine continues as before, as a means to prevent war, are based on the illusion that the cause of war lies in the personal character and machinations of individual statesmen, and not on the real forces of capitalism which inevitably work to war, whatever imperialist party is nominally in office. The fight against war cannot be separated from the fight against capitalism. The experience of the Liberal-Labour " pacifist " coalition of 1906-14 and its outcome should have smashed this illusion once and for all.

The Labour Party is based on the maintenance of the existing capitalist state, of the existing capitalist and imperialist machine and its armaments. Its policy is the policy of capitalist reconstruction, as set out in the Birmingham Programme and the Melchett-Turner Report. This policy can only lead to intensified international commercial competition and accelerated approach to war. The Labour Party can only be a war party in reality, whatever its pacific professions.

**But in fact the foreign policy of the Labour Party is identical with that of the Conservative and Liberal Parties.** All alike believe in the " continuity " of foreign policy, and declare that foreign policy is " above party "—i.e., that the imperialist machine must continue its course, whatever party is nominally in office. The " Labour " Government of 1924 continued the Conservative foreign policy of the Dawes Report, and in relation to Egypt, India, etc.; and the Conservative Government, on taking over the reins in its turn, congratulated the Labour Party on its achievement. Recently the Conservative Prime Minister, **Baldwin**, declared:—



“ Of this I am quite sure, that **whatever Government is in power in this country, and to whatever party it belongs, the broad lines of our foreign policy will not greatly change** ”  
(Speech to Foreign Press Association, “ Times,” 21.3.29).

**J. R. Clynes** declared in the House of Commons on March, 15th, 1923 :—

“ There was far less difference between the parties behind the Government and the Opposition than ever there had been in foreign affairs. **They had got nearer in these matters to national unity. The differences were more apparent than real** ” (“ Times,” 16.3.24).

**Macdonald** wrote in the “ Spectator ” of December 6th, 1924, on “ Continuity of Foreign Policy,” that it was the duty of every Government to “ keep foreign policy out of the ordinary partisan arena ”; and in the “ Daily Herald ” of November 29th, 1924, declared :—

“ **There was a very good rule, which he certainly would do his best never to break, and that was that there should be continuity in the foreign policy of this country.**”

**J. H. Thomas** declared at the Australia Day lunch in January, 1924 :—

“ **The great change of the seals of office merely meant that the Old Country and the Old Empire still went on** ”  
(“ Times,” 29.1.24).

The Labour Party supported the imperialist war of 1914-18, like the other traitor Social Democratic Parties in defiance of their pledge before the Socialist International, and participated in the successive War Coalition Governments.

The Labour Party supported the robber Treaty of Versailles, voted its ratification and has assisted to enforce it.

## **How the “Labour” Government Prepared War**

The MacDonalld “ Labour ” Government of 1924 carried on the Conservative foreign policy and imposed the Dawes Slave Report for squeezing reparations from Germany under the control of the Anglo-American financiers. It broke off negotiations with Egypt on behalf of the strategic aims of British Imperialism. It imposed on India the Bengal Ordinance system of imprisonment without trial or charge. After being forced by working class pressure to “ recognise ” the Soviet Republic, it refused to send an Ambassador, and began the destruction of Anglo-Soviet relations by the infamous Note, largely drafted by MacDonalld himself, on the Zinoviev forgery.

On armaments, the “ Labour ” Government was actually more warlike than the preceding Conservative Government. **It raised the expenditure on armaments from £105.8 millions in 1923-4**

**to £114.7 millions in 1924-5** (the "Labour" Budget's estimate being actually as high as £115.3 millions). It laid down the five post-Washington cruisers which initiated the post-Washington naval competition leading up to the Anglo-American breakdown of the Geneva Conference of 1927.

Lord Haldane, the "Labour" Lord Chancellor, declared:—

"Whether it were in the Navy, Army or Air Force, in the main continuity was being observed, and the Government had no desire to do anything else" ("Times," 13.2.4).

And the "Labour" Under-Secretary for Air, William Leach (ex-pacifist), announced in answer to the questioning of the Conservative, Sir Samuel Hoare, whether the Labour Government would continue in "national defence" the schemes of the preceding Conservative Government:—

"I am going to tell him, in plain and explicit terms, that there is no change in the policy of the Government for the time being on this matter. Continuity has been agreed to by the Government. It had taken over the responsibility left to it by its predecessors" (House of Commons, 19.2.24).

**A Second "Labour" Government in 1929 will no less "take over the responsibility left to it by its predecessors," and carry forward the war policy of the Baldwin Government.**

## How the Labour Party is Helping War Preparations To-Day

To-day the Labour Party continues its support of the imperialist foreign policy and armaments of the Baldwin Government. It takes part in the Simon Commission to India. It supports the Baldwin anti-Soviet preparations with a calumnious anti-Soviet campaign. Snowden has declared that the Labour conditions for recognising Russia are identical with those of Baldwin ("Reynold's," 6.1.29). The Second International (Kautsky Memorandum) openly prepares the ground for armed intervention. Macdonald has declared:—

"Suppose, it is said, a war breaks out between Russia and Poland or Rumania—where shall we stand? If Russia is the aggressor, without the Protocol, the Covenant binds us to assist the State attacked by economic action and also to be advised by the Council as to what military means ought to be adopted. . . . Its (Russia's) policy of revolutionary imperialism is bound if pursued to bring international strife" ("Forward," 24.9.27).

The open calculation of future war on the Soviet Republic is here plain. Even if nominal "recognition" is carried through once again by the next Government, whether Labour or other,

for reasons of bourgeois expediency, this will not affect one whit the continued activities and war preparations of the staffs.

**Above all, the Labour Party and trade union leaders are supporting and helping forward the coming war by their policy of capitalist reconstruction and industrial peace.** The war-preparations of the bourgeoisie are not confined to armaments and foreign policy; they are equally directed to maintaining control of the civil population and of the working class in war; for they know that against the active opposition of the working class no modern State can conduct war. The Trade Union Act and Mond Conferences in Britain, the Militarisation Act (drafted by the "Socialist," Paul-Boncour) in France, and similar measures in every country, are essentially part of the war preparations of the bourgeoisie. And in these war-preparations the Labour Party and Social Democratic Parties of the Second International play the most active part. By the passive acceptance of the Trade Union Act, by Industrial Peace and the Mond Conferences, the Labour Party and trade union leaders are paralysing the independent action of the workers, are tying the workers hand and foot to capitalism, at the moment when capitalism is driving to war. **In this way, the Labour Party and trade union leaders are already acting as war-lieutenants of the capitalist class in preparation for the coming war.**

### **The Labour Sham "Pacifists" and the Real Fight for Peace**

A tiny handful of "pacifists" in the Labour Party, of the type of Lansbury, Ponsonby and others, proclaim their opposition to war, call for "no more war" and disarmament, and advocate individual passive resistance to war service in the event of war as the "solution" of the war danger.

This "solution" is in itself worthless, and pitifully inadequate to the realities of modern war. **The passive resistance of a handful, who keep themselves unsullied while millions are slaughtered, is nothing but passive acquiescence in war and assistance to the war-mongers.** War can only be fought by the mass action of the working class, by revolutionary struggle against war, against capitalism and imperialism.

But, in addition, this propaganda is in reality open hypocrisy. It is freely permitted and encouraged by the jingo chiefs of the Labour Party, who know that it is harmless and serves to lull the workers to sleep with the talk of peace. **And while the Labour "pacifists" are lulling the workers to sleep with the talk of peace, they are at the same time supporting in reality the whole programme and policy of the Labour Party, which is a programme and policy of imperialism and war; they are calling**

on the workers to vote for the Labour Party and accept the discipline of the Labour Party; and they are thus revealing themselves as in reality an integral part of the imperialist Labour Party machine, which is driving to war. The Labour "pacifists" are thus the most dangerous enemies of the real working-class fight against war.

The clearest expression of this hypocrisy is revealed in the **Independent Labour Party**. The Independent Labour Party at its Conference in Easter of this year has passed a resolution calling on its Members of Parliament to oppose war credits. But the I.L.P. Members of Parliament are actually the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party, which pursues an entirely opposite policy. And these Members of Parliament have already declared even at the Conference that they have no intention of carrying out the resolution, since they are bound as members of the Labour Party. The whole hypocrisy of the "pacifism" of the Independent Labour Party could not be more clearly revealed.

**Those workers who still look to the Labour Party or to the Labour "pacifists" (Independent Labour Party) to lead the fight against war will meet with bitter disillusionment. The Labour Party is the principal instrument of capitalism in preparing the subjection of the workers to war.**

## **The Communist Party Leads the Fight Against War**

Only the mass struggle of the working class can successfully fight war.

But this mass struggle can only be successful if it is ready and strong to confront the whole capitalist and imperialist state machine. To prepare, unite and organise this struggle requires the leadership of a strong and centralised revolutionary party of the working class. It is to the preparation of this great task that the Communist Party calls on all the workers to help.

Modern wars cannot be fought against the active opposition of the mass of the workers in the industrial centres, in the munition factories, in the lines of transport and the ports. If the workers in the industrial centres are strong, and if their fellow-workers in the army stand by them, and if the revolutionary party of the workers is ready to lead, then the power of imperialism collapses, and the way to the new social order is open.

It is the fear of revolution that is the principal force still holding back the imperialists in hesitation before renewed world war, when already more than once they have been upon the verge. **If the agitation and action of the workers is strong and ready, then they can defeat the menace of war again and again, as in 1920. So long as capitalism remains, the menace of war will still**

return with ever greater force. But if the workers are able to overthrow capitalism before war breaks out, then—and only then—they can even prevent the horrors of the second world war ever being realised.

The Communist Party fights to arouse the workers to the war danger, to arouse and organise the workers for the struggle to prevent war, for the struggle to end capitalism.

**If the war nevertheless breaks out, then the Communist Party renews and intensifies the struggle all the more, to arouse and organise the workers to end the imperialist war and transform it into the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.**

The Communist Party in every country fights first and foremost its own capitalist and imperialist class—and not as the traitor “socialists” who condemn imperialism in other countries (as the Labour Party condemned the Kaiser and the German Majority Socialists condemned the British Empire), while supporting and joining hands with “their own” capitalist and imperialist masters.

Every Communist candidate and every Communist representative in Parliament is pledged, and under revolutionary discipline, to oppose all capitalist armaments, to oppose all capitalist war credits, to oppose all capitalist and imperialist treaties and war commitments, to fight imperialist oppression and for the independence of the subject peoples, and to fight without reserve in the revolutionary struggle against war and capitalism.

The success of the fight against war depends on the strength of the militant working class movement. The Councils of Action in 1920, the direct action of the workers that checked the war on Russia, showed the power of the international working class against war. The defeat of the General Strike in 1926 through the treachery of the reformist Labour leaders, led directly to the war on China and the break with the Soviet Union in 1927.

**Therefore the Communist Party places in the forefront of the fight against war the fight against Industrial Peace, against Mondism, against the disruption of the unions, and for a powerful and revolutionary working class movement.**

If the international working class is strong enough in revolutionary solidarity, war can be stopped. But the path to this lies, not in empty boasts and idle promises, but in active preparation, in revolutionary agitation and organisation to-day, in carrying forward the independent working class struggle in every sphere.

**But if war comes, if the imperialists let loose world war again, then let them beware. For the path of world war to which they drive the human race will prove the path of Social Revolution.**

\* \* \* \* \*

War, more terrible than ever before in any experience, beyond the power of conception of any living, is close at hand. The

next war will be a war of extermination. It will obliterate all distinctions of front and rear. Air bombing that can destroy whole cities, chemical warfare, poison gas, disease germs—all these are being laboriously prepared, invented, organised on a monster scale in the laboratories of the "civilised" world. They are not being prepared for play; they are being prepared for use. To this pass has capitalist "civilisation" in its highest, most "scientific" stage, brought humanity. The only salvation is the path of the international working class revolution, of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of international socialism and human brotherhood.

**The Communist Party calls on every honest worker to join in the fight against war, against capitalism, against imperialism, while there is yet time.**

**Down with the imperialist war-mongers!**

**Down with the Labour lieutenants of the imperialist war-mongers!**

**Forward with the international working class struggle against war, against capitalism, against imperialism!**

**A vote for the Labour Party, for the Conservative Party or for the Liberal Party is a vote for war.**

**Workers! Vote for the Communist candidates.**

**Agitate in every constituency for the Communist programme of the revolutionary struggle against war.**

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