

menon. These masses had brought religion with them as a tradition out of their earlier petty-bourgeois or peasant mode of production. But, thrown together as workers into capitalist industry, they learned to conduct the class struggle, they learned a few things regarding the development of society to socialism, they recognized that their deplorable situation was owing to natural and understandable causes, and they saw the possibility of putting an end to that situation thru their own strength. In the most important practice of life, their minds had occasion to concern themselves only with realities, with the understanding of real things, and so the traditional fantastic thinking was bound to be dispelled and gradually vanish. This process is still going on.

The connection between society and ideas is not to be conceived mechanically as a formula, prescribing necessarily to each definite class a definite mode of looking at things. Society works upon us continually thru all the influences and forces of our surroundings, hence upon each of us differently in various particulars; and so the doctrines impressed upon us in youth and the traditions of earlier states of existence are gradually overcome, in one case more rapidly and in another more slowly. Differences may also occur in accordance with occupation: wherever workers are exposed to unforeseen catastrophes -- as in the case of miners and fishermen -- even tho they may know that inadequate safety measures play a part under capitalism, there remains in their minds a deeply rooted religiosity.

Another factor to be considered is the development of the labor movement itself. In the early days of its rise, when clear indoctrination with principles prevailed, the enlightenment was the most thorough-going. When, later, the great droves of fellow-travelers arrived, -- those who came to socialism only by reason of electoral successes and direct interests, not by reason of a profound transformation of their basic views, -- the traditional religion which they had brought along out of their petty-bourgeois surroundings remained practically unaffected. When the Social Democracy became a party like any other, in competition with the others, and the churches learned to compete with it by way of social slogans, social measures and labor organizations of their own, the dissemination of materialistic thinking among previously religious workers came to an end. There is also the fact that the theoretical indoctrination as well as the inner assurance regarding the future are weakened as a result of the reformistic degeneration of the movement. The bourgeoisie proves to be more powerful, the goal farther away and duskier than was formerly thought. And the

devastating forces of society reveal themselves, in war, in general disorder, in world crisis, mightier and more uncontrollable. All that could be opposed to them was merely a certain vague belief that finally after all the workers would win. But this belief expressed itself more as an ethical love of peace and declarations of the fraternity of the peoples than in strong and militant preparedness for the revolution. It is obvious that in such a labor movement tendencies of a religious coloring come forth more and more strongly and a sort of christian socialism gains in influence. And so we find, together with the political, also an intensified spiritual rapprochement with the bourgeoisie.

In apparently complete opposition thereto, we have the anti-religious propaganda of the Communist Party, which, following the russian example, includes in its activities that of combatting religion directly. Such a thing may appear quite radical, especially to those workers who themselves were obliged to overcome the religious traditions and have continually met with religion as a great impediment among their comrades. But in reality it is very superficial, remaining attached to the surface and the outer layers. To be radical is to get at the roots of things. The root of religion is the social essence, in this case the dependence and powerlessness. To attack this root requires -- so long as society is not itself transformed -- the bringing of such insight into the social development as to give rise to the certainty that liberation can be attained thru human effort. It is only that which can set aside the power of religious thinking. It does not come about thru theoretical discussions directed to demonstrating the falsity of religious dogmas; that is nothing more than an attack upon the outer form, upon the effect, while the cause, the inner essence, is left unclarified. Only a clear understanding of the forces by which society is driven and of how the thinking and acting of human beings are determined by vital needs of an economic nature, -- it is only this that makes the belief in supernatural explanations superfluous and senseless. Without this understanding, however, unbelief or atheism is just as much a dogmatic belief and just as lacking in solid foundations as is religion.

The atheism which is being propagated by the C.P. and the vague religiosity of many socialist circles are, one as much as the other, bourgeois modes of thought. Atheism and religion have this in common, that they are unconscious expressions of a sentiment produced in human beings by society. They are accordingly both dogmatic; that is, they regard themselves as absolute



truth and combat and persecute each other because they hold the opposed ideas to be determining as regards the practical struggle. In making use of the name Materialism as the doctrine of reality -- the doctrine which investigates, with a view to understanding, only reality, the real forces of the world -- we at the same time deny that atheism has any right whatever to bear this name. As a descendant of bourgeois materialism, atheism sees, to be sure, the reality of nature, but not the reality of society, hence only that of the less significant half of the universe. Its value is that of an empty hull, of a negative solution, because it merely asserts that the religious explanation of the world, the one by means of supernatural beings, is out of order. The thing that might give it a positive content, -- the real explanation of the world's development, a clear knowledge of the forces and their effects by which our life is governed, -- that is lacking. This content can be given only by Marx's historical materialism.

It was said above that the C.P. has propagated atheism and combatted religion, but the statement is in reality too favorable. It is the free thinkers who combat religion with fairly considered arguments. What has been done by the organs of the C.P. was not much more than jeering and offensive outbursts against religion. It is perhaps the clearest indication of the intellectual poverty of the communist parties that, in their intellectual dependence on Bolshevism, they came out in western Europe against religion with the same simple means with which the muzhiks were impressed in Russia. And of course it was not intended as serious combat, -- in such matters, that is beyond the capacities of the Russian Bolsheviks, -- but was designed merely to harass the bourgeoisie and to impress the workers with a bit of theatrical boldness. It is the old method of external appearance in the place of inner strength, -- a method which is at work also in their policy of employing high-sounding words, behind which there is only a reformistic striving for outward successes with a view to power. And as proof by example to show how faintly communist and how completely bourgeois this alleged materialism is, there comes as the last somersault the slogan of tolerance: now that Russia is making its peace with the western powers, the Communist International seeks to get on the good side of the bourgeoisie and, to that end, proclaims religious tolerance, the old bourgeois principle.

To the bourgeoisie, it is a principle. The bourgeoisie has received -- as a troublesome legacy from the earlier centuries when class struggles were reflected

in religious differences -- the various religions and churches, now contracted to rigid articles of faith. In spite of the fact that each must assume, according to his own doctrine, that the other fellow is forever lost, one must respect the other's belief, as otherwise no business could be conducted among the different sects. Business does not admit of any dispute about religious beliefs, and business is the main matter. And so in the capitalist world one must tolerate. Also in the case of political affairs.

The real communism is not tolerant. A communist worker whose deepest desire is to bring his class to a strong unity of action does not tolerate having his comrades remain without understanding of the social development. He knows that so long as clarity is lacking regarding society, the mind is filled with some belief or unbelief. The conversion of a belief to an empty unbelief does not bring his class any strength. He will set about with all his power to provide insight, clarity, understanding of society, insight into the goal and the struggle of the working class, in order that the workers may see with clear eyes the reality of the world by which their destiny is determined. It is then that the supernatural traditions lose their force. In this way the unity of action of all workers as a strictly coherent and conscious class is prepared and secured.

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## C L A S S S T R U G G L E I N W A R

### Second World War Inevitable.

The first world war was a consequence of the rise of German imperialism which began seriously to threaten the power of England and France. German heavy industry, more modernly equipped than the English, was a dangerous competitor in the world market. At the same time German imperialism reached out its tentacles to the raw-material districts hitherto dominated by England and France. The famous episode in which the cruiser 'Panther' was sent to North Africa to demonstrate for the mining interests of the German Mannesmann concern in Morocco was an eloquent example of this. Mainly, however, the power of German imperialism was directed toward Asia Minor (Bagdad Railway, Balkan policy, annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.). The developments, following the Balkan wars, finally resulted in the world war.

Today similar signs appear and the forebodings of a new world war are increasing. Another world war is inevitable, for the development of the productive forces cannot be arrested and with their development the newer countries become imperialistic and fight for a place in the sun against the older ones. Since the Asiatic countries have been drawn into the circle of world capitalism and machine production has been introduced there, and because they begin with a technique and productive methods at the highest stage of development, these young capitalist countries reach an enormous degree of economic, political and military power. They demand "their share" of the world market and try to secure for themselves raw material sources.

Japan, not undeservedly called the Germany of the East, in many respects recalls the situation of Germany in 1914. In addition it must be remembered that the semi-feudal conditions in the interior of Japan make possible a degree of working class exploitation that seems impossible even today in the older capitalist countries. It seems that Japanese capitalism has become a competitor that can no longer be defeated by economic means.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Japan swallows one Chinese province after the other, while extending economic control over the more distant territories of English and Dutch India, Australia, etc. That English imperialism is vitally threatened thereby is well known, and therefore it is generally expected that the occurrences in Eastern Asia are but the prelude to the new world war.

Russia's development to an industrial and military power of the first rank intensifies the strain of the situation further. Russia, too, is trying to extend its influence in China (Soviet China, uprisings in Turkestan and conflict over the Chinese-Eastern railway, 1929). Full and skillful advantage is being taken of the disintegration of the great Chinese empire which no longer represents an economic or political entity.

The big conflict over a redistribution of the world can break out any moment, therefore all countries are arming at a feverish pace. The great battle will not be long delayed. Probably it will not begin directly as a world war but as a conflict between two countries into which the others gradually will be drawn. Therefore every armed conflict today between two countries is at the same time an advance skirmish to the second world war.

### The Ideological Preparation for the Second World War.

Armaments are proceeding with feverish haste in all countries. But they are not limited to the production of physical means, such as tanks, poison gas, bombs, etc. More important than these is the ideological preparedness for the war, so that, above all, the working masses will participate enthusiastically. A working class forced to participate in war against its will means resistance and insubordination; and strikes that endanger the successful pursuit of war break out too easily. No matter how well equipped technically the war machine may be, it can function in case of war only if supplied with all necessities by the labor in the factories of the whole working population. That is why the ruling class must, above all, prepare the working class ideologically. A systematic propaganda, equipped with all the means of modern society, has long been at work to influence the thinking of the working masses to create the belief that in case of war they will be fighting to protect their own interests.

Of course this ideological preparedness is not accomplished by openly proclaiming that the conflict will be over the redistribution of markets and raw material sources. The workers are called on to defend "their own" (national) culture, as was done in the world war of 1914. Then it was the horrible specter of bloody Czarism with its savage Kossacks that was used to drive millions of German workers into the arms of the militarists. The French workers were urged to overthrow the Prussian rule of force and German monarchism while the English and American workers were fighting to bestow the blessings of Democracy on the world.

Today similar methods are invoked.



The hopeless economic conditions in Middle Europe have forced a union of all national forces thru which monopoly capitalism gained the strength to begin the struggle for a redistribution of the world. The fascist governmental form, which subordinates all capital and working forces of the nation, is but the preparation of these countries for this struggle soon to begin. Fascism and National Socialism thus drives irresistibly toward war. However, this is also true of the great powers of the West, altho with them it is a question of maintaining their privileged position. What they have seized and stolen in the course of years, they want to keep. Both fascist and democratic powers are driving toward war. Capital in the fascist countries must extend its sphere of power; capital in the democratic countries cannot permit this and heads for "war against fascism". This struggle of "democratic" against "fascist" capital is skillfully being camouflaged into a struggle in which the working masses will be directly interested.

In the fascist countries the great capitalist powers of the West are accused of exacting tribute from the whole world and the whole "people" are rallied to fight as one to find the way out of need and misery to a better future. In the western countries, on the other hand, Fascism and National Socialism are exposed as the rule of force that barbarously suppresses all free expression and above all robs the workers of their political rights and independent organizations. Therefore the slogan "Against Fascism!", becomes the rallying cry of all open and concealed partisans of the ruling class and serves to enroll the broad masses in the war front.

Revolutionary workers will not be fooled by such propaganda. They know that the war is not over Fascism; that victory for one as for the other means no better future for them. It is a matter of indifference to them who the victors may be in this struggle for a redistribution of the world. They know they will have to pay the bill no matter who wins.

The condition of workers in the "democratic" countries is generally better than in those where fascism rules. But this does not mean that fascism is to blame. If the living standards of the masses are higher in countries like England, France and Holland, than in Germany, it must be remembered that capital there has greater reserves, that have been accumulated by unbridled exploitation of the colonies. This exploitation of the colonies still makes possible comparatively good standards for workers in Western Europe. Counterbalancing this is the immeasurable misery of the hundreds of millions of the colonial populations. On the other hand, living standards in the fas-

cist countries did not drop because fascism seized power, but fascism became predominant because of worsened economic conditions.

A new war only brings greater misery and sharper exploitation for the working masses. Whoever wants war against fascism in order to arrest the further decline in living standards deceives himself. The workers will gain nothing by their support of such a war.

Must not the working class defend the political rights granted by bourgeois democracy against Fascism? Can they sacrifice without struggle what generations of workers have achieved and what has been realized only at the end of the last war: free and universal suffrage, right of organization and assembly, freedom of the press, i.e. bourgeois democracy also for the working class? No one can deny that fascism when it destroys these recently acquired rights confronts the working class as an enemy. But he who concludes that therefore the working class in the democratic shall join its bourgeoisie in war against the fascist countries deceives not only himself but the working class as well.

The ruling class in the democratic countries are no less of an enemy to the working class than the master class of the fascist countries. It is an illusion to believe that the working class in capitalist countries can use bourgeois democracy as a means to defend its interests within these countries; that it can assert itself thru it and finally will be able to use it as the lever to secure political power. The working class never possessed such power. On the contrary, the working class never received political privileges until the great labor organizations were able to insure that no "misuse" of their privileges would occur. Those privileges were not to be used to enforce the interests of the working class against the ruling class. Where such efforts have nevertheless been made, the recognized labor organizations openly aligned themselves on the side of the ruling classes. They denounced such efforts as illegal and declared as wild-cat strikes those actions of the workers that refuse to subordinate themselves to their compromising leadership. Then, political rights, right of assembly, freedom of the press, and the right to organize and strike are abolished by the democratic order as efficiently as by the fascists. Armed force is on parade and demonstrates the absolute power of the owning class.

Those political rights that the working class can exercise only thru the recognized labor organizations serve only to subordinate the working class to the democratic order. They merely impose the duty of submission to the labor leadership and to the ruling class. But the fiercer the class



struggle, the more the workers are compelled to fight without political rights and against the labor organizations who use these rights as the means of proletarian subjugation.

It is but a step from this condition to the general abolition of political rights and democracy when the labor organizations prove unable further to restrict the activities of the working class.

In Germany and Italy these measures by the ruling class have already been taken and undisguised dictatorship has become a fact. In the countries as yet democratic there need be no doubt that the same methods will be pursued once the labor organizations recognized by the state can no longer "deliver" the working masses. The stern reality of an intensified class struggle destroys the illusion that "political rights" lead to the emancipation of the working class, and the workers are confronted by the undisguised dictatorship of the ruling class. The bourgeoisie is as fascist here as there. It is its own bourgeoisie that binds the workers to capitalist domination by means of "democracy" and "political rights", and applies the open fascist dictatorship when democracy fails.

The working class must fight capitalism everywhere, regardless of whether it uses democratic or fascist forms of government. It is exploited by capital in a democracy as well as under fascism. Therefore we workers can be indifferent about who wins the victory in the war. A class conscious worker cannot think of supporting his "own" bourgeoisie; he has only one enemy - the ruling class that oppresses him. Whether his "own" country's war activities suffer thereby, even tho the military defeat of his "own" bourgeoisie were to result from this attitude, he has no reason to adopt a conciliatory attitude toward his "own" ruling class.

The workers everywhere in the world are an oppressed class. If they are to emancipate themselves from wage slavery and take over control of production, they must everywhere and at all times fight the owning classes.

#### The Jingoism of the "Working-Class Movement"

The so-called working class movement has already assumed the role of driving the workers to war on the side of "their" national bourgeoisie. The owning class never tires of professing its love of peace, while in order to "insure" peace it increases its armaments. Similarly, the Social Democracy and the trade unions proclaim themselves the champions of peace, while preparing the masses for a war against Fascism.

The bourgeois slogan "In times of peace, prepare for war", is adapted by the labor movement to read: "If we want peace, we must prepare for war against fascist Germany and Italy". Of course they (still) condemn the imperialism of the democratic countries, but fascist imperialism receives the bulk of their condemnation. The socialist parties and the trade unions with their bureaucracies no longer present a hostile front to the democratic state. The state recognizes them; their function is that of mediator between bourgeoisie and proletariat in the democratic order. The democratic state forms the basis of their existence, - a victory of fascist imperialism threatens that existence. Fascism where victorious with the destruction of democracy also destroys the labor organizations based on democracy and replaces them with the fascist party organization. The old labor organizations disappear, but the classes remain within a new, fascist framework. The capitalist class of the democratic countries makes its peace with fascism. It can adopt fascism in its own country without recourse to war. It can become co-ordinated (gleichgeschaltet) under the fascist imperialism; can make the fascist dictatorship over the proletariat its own.

Not so the labor bureaucracy. Its existence is interwoven with that of bourgeois democracy. It is an instrument of that democracy and therefore defends and fights not only for democracy, but for its own privileged position when it demands war against the fascist countries.

Since the emergence of Russia as a great-capitalist power, the policies of the Third International have also been changed. Russia follows a policy of alliances with other capitalist powers and the policies of the Third International have been adapted to this new trend.

In France, which has entered into an alliance with Russia, the Communist party has formed a united front with the Socialists and thus has joined the "national front". In the other countries, too, such as England, Holland and Belgium, this united front has become a chief objective. The slogan for this united front wooing is: "Rally all forces against fascism." They say Nazi-Fascism threatens the national independence of the masses in all democratic countries. The Communists should stand in the first ranks of the fighters for national independence.

With this the Third International has joined the front of "ideological armament"; it co-operates with the ideological preparation for war that is essential for the waging of any modern war. In this respect, conditions differ from 1914. Then many workers had not expected the co-operation of the Social Democracy and the trade unions with the bourgeoisie. Like lightning in a clear sky came the



surprise of the war and also the betrayal of the working class. Today, when everyone is convinced that the war will break out any moment, both fronts are already occupied. There is no doubt today that the so-called labor movement will co-operate. Not only, as Bebel said in 1912, by shouldering the musket in the hour of danger in order to defend the fatherland, but by preparing the workers for the war with constant and insistent propaganda at this early stage.

### National Independence and Leninism

The question of nationality and especially the defense of national independence plays an important role in the labor movement. With Marx we say, "the workers have no fatherland!" The nation is the organizational framework within which the owning class regulates the exploitation of the oppressed class. But the struggle of the working class is aimed at the abolition of this exploitation, and the owning class of a nation with its national exploitation organization. In this conflict the workers of all countries confront the exploiters of all nations as comrades, and their aim is the communist organization of production throughout the world. Therefore, a proletarian revolution cannot stop at national boundaries. It smashes, if it has the power, all national boundaries in order to build the communist world order. The revolution, instead of stopping at national boundaries, fights to abolish them, - not the defense of national independence, but its destruction, is its aim. The victorious working class builds the communist world economy in place of the various nations in constant warfare with each other. If this world economy is divided into districts of production, these divisions are not national barriers because such an organization has no exploitative character, - the districts are not antagonistic to each other.

Revolutionary Marxism has long expressed itself unequivocally on this question. It remained for Lenin to surrender this concept and to sow confusion in the camp of the workers with the theory since known as Leninism.

"Leninism" teaches that oppressed nations fighting for national independence are the allies of the proletariat. The theory therefore demands that workers of countries oppressed or threatened by the imperialist powers assist their own bourgeoisie in the struggle against the foreign oppressor. Thus the Third International urged the workers in Lithuania to defend their fatherland against Poland; the proletariat of Turkey was urged to support its ruling class in the defense of national independence, while Soviet Russia gave material aid to the economic and military strengthening of the Turkish nation. The Turkish nation in turn showed its gratitude by suppressing strikes and

other forms of the class struggle with barbaric severity.

Similarly, the national war of deliverance in China was hailed as revolutionary in the proletarian sense and the Chinese proletariat was urged to rally to the support of the Kuomintang (People's Party). The bourgeois General Chiang Kai Shek was honored by the Communist International as the leader of the Chinese "Red Army", and the impression was created (in 1927) that the world revolution would start anew in China. It took but a short time before this illusion spread by the Third International was shattered. The young Chinese bourgeoisie took clever advantage of the working class support in Canton, Shanghai, etc., while national independence against imperialist England, America and Japan was at stake. But hardly had it secured a measure of independence when it turned against these same workers. On command of the same "red" general, Chiang Kai Shek, a reign of repression ensued that was marked by barbarous mass executions, tortures and massacres, without consideration of their previous service to the Chinese "nation". The workers were caught completely by surprise. They were not prepared for this. Had not the Communists themselves pictured Chiang Kai Shek as the red general, the leader of the revolution?

The president of the United States gave birth to the twin of this Leninist theory, namely, the "right of self determination of nations". After the war, this theory served the imperialist powers in partitioning up the Austrian monarchy, in the cutting off of Germany from important markets and sources of raw material, and to create independent border states around Russia. Their purpose was to prevent any of these countries from becoming great powers and the "right of self determination" served them to good purpose in this.

The "national independence of oppressed nations" of Leninism, where realized, has the same effect as Wilson's "self determination of nations". Both are supposed to safeguard the existence of the small independent countries against the imperialist great powers, but interpretations differ on the application of the theory to specific cases. Then the great powers decide in line with their own interests and the safe-guarding of their own power. Soviet Russia thus strives to develop forces that will resist the great imperialist powers, but only to strengthen its own position.

Thus this theory, whether in its Wilsonian or Leninist form, plays a role in the quest for power of the ruling classes in the new capitalist countries where a young bourgeoisie strives for political independence, as well as in the policies of the modern industrial countries (including Russia) that support national "independence" or "self determination"



where it accords with their interests, but fight and destroy it where it conflicts with them.

The Third International not only championed the national independence of Turkey, Lithuania and China, but in the period from 1921 to 1925 Germany was included in the list of countries oppressed by the imperialists whose national interests must be defended. The secret military treaty (Rapallo 1922) between bourgeois Germany and Soviet Russia was justified on these grounds. This treaty enabled the German bourgeoisie to build factories in Russia for the manufacture of war supplies that Germany, according to the Versailles treaty, could not erect within Germany itself. With Russia's help, the German bourgeoisie was armed in its struggle against the imperialist oppressors, France and England. When this "national emancipation" of Germany finally assumed the form of the National Socialist Hitler government, hostile to Russia, the Third International reversed its former attitude to Germany. Germany is now damned as a fascist imperialist country, the worst enemy of the national independence of small nations, whose national independence is threatened by Hitler fascism.

The Leninist theory of the struggle for national independence has caused enough mischief in the German revolutionary movement since 1921. Leninism, as propagated by the German Communist Party, demanded co-operation with its own bourgeoisie in resistance against sanctions by the entente and the occupation of the Ruhr by French troops.

The Communist Party claimed to be the national party of Germany and Clara Zetkin offered the government the assistance of the Red Front Fighters. And all this while the masses in various parts of Germany were in revolt against the bourgeoisie.

And this phase of Leninism has not yet been out-grown. In 1916 in "Against the Stream," Lenin wrote that wars of national liberation in Europe are not impossible. The first practical application of this theory was in the national emancipation struggle of "oppressed" Germany, and today it reappears in the United Front tactic that throws the various Communist parties into the "struggle for national independence" of the countries that are threatened by the now "free" fascist Germany. The Tribune of Holland, Oct. 2, 1935, says: "But Lenin has already pointed out, among others in his discussion of the Junius pamphlet of Rosa Luxemburg, -that even for the future national wars are not impossible in Europe and not every war in Europe need be an imperialist one. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International now presents this possibility in concrete form. Why? Because the victory of German fascism, which is the chief force driving toward war, threatens the national independence of a number of small states. Such

countries as Czechoslovakia, the Baltic states, Austria and Holland are indicated.

The Seventh World Congress considered it likely that in case of war in defense against fascist attacks the national bourgeois resistance would assume the character of a national war of liberation.

While Holland, for example, is not immediately threatened, its bourgeoisie would be not only that of a small nation, but the oppressing, imperialist bourgeoisie of a great colonial empire.

What is the duty of Communists in such a situation? The Seventh World Congress answered: "The Communists will fight in the front ranks of the struggle for national independence."

Again the Third International is being used to throw the revolutionary working class into the struggle for the interests of the industrial great-state Russia, and Leninism supplies the theory for the justification of the fact that the working class is thus being surrendered to the national bourgeoisie and the war craze.

#### The Fourth International (Trotzky Opposition) and "Leninism".

The so-called Fourth International of which Trotzky is the prophet which is still in the hopeful prospect of organization claims to be the unadulterated representative of Leninism. It advocates the support of oppressed nations in their struggle for national liberation. "Unser Wort", Sept. 1935, No. 9, Trotzky half-monthly organ, says: "An international boycott against Italy and its Allies in the Abyssinian war must be organized. Every shipment, every Italian ship on which there are goods for Italy must be stopped". Further on in the same publication of that date it says: "The proletarian can emancipate himself only if he simultaneously fights for the emancipation of the oppressed colonial nations. The proletariat therefore fights for the victory of Abyssinia and the defeat of Italy. The only question is with or against its own bourgeoisie.... We must expose the fraud of imperialist sanctions and advocate revolutionary proletarian sanctions against the world bourgeoisie. The proletariat with its own organization must carry on the boycott not only against Italy's war but against the war preparations of Great Britain as well. The transport workers' strike in all imperialist countries must be advocated and organized."

The "Neue Front", Nov. 21, 1935, says: "Before any of the others, we have advocated the determined defense of Abyssinia; but also before the others, we have opposed the



sanctions of the league of nations and advocated those of the working class.....If the sanctions are left in the hands of the imperialists, the working class loses all control of future developments and helplessly confronts the danger of war consequent to the sanctions."

The "Nieuwe Fakkell", Holland Trotzky organ, of Sept. 6, 1935, calls for the defense of the rights of the Abyssinian people, but not in common with the British government because the latter is concerned only with the power and prestige of British imperialism."

Very well, they want independent action of the working class. But, overlooking that such action in reality fits into the plans of the English government, or of the League of nations, or of the Second or Third International, the question arises: what are these peculiar rights of the Abyssinian people? So far as we know, there exists no "people" for the revolutionary working class. That concept remains for the ruling class. The "independent nation" consists of classes that stand in direct contradiction to each other. The rights of "the people" always were but the rights of the ruling class.

Ethiopia forms no exception to this. On the surface, the Italo-Ethiopian war appears as a conflict in which Ethiopia appears as the defender of national independence. In reality what takes place is a conflict between two great-capitalist powers: England and Italy. Ethiopia had long been partitioned off among the great powers, to the disadvantage and dissatisfaction of the Italian bourgeoisie. They demand expansion of their sphere of interest, and the free disposal over the still remaining mineral resources. What the feudal exploiting caste of Ethiopia does or does not want, does not matter. This caste, still trying to maintain these medieval methods of exploitation has subordinated itself entirely to the league of nations,--in this case, France and England. Ethiopia fights for national independence only insofar as it desires to perpetuate the existing conditions of exploitation. But in this fight for "national independence" it must subject itself to the interests of the great powers. Ethiopia is but a figure on the political checkerboard that is moved at will by the great powers. "Independent" Ethiopia, therefore, has not made a single independent move in this whole matter, but from the beginning has allowed England to dictate its policies. Italy is not waging war against an independent Ethiopia, but against England; a war as yet fought on Ethiopian soil because England must conserve and prepare its forces for greater conflicts to come.

In the Italian-Ethiopian conflict, the imperialist antagonisms of the great powers have unavoidably collided. So far this conflict is but a preliminary of the incipient

second world war; it can become the spark to ignite the whole capitalist powder barrel. This does not mean, however, that the second world war must follow directly.

The ruling powers, of course, will try to avoid the world conflagration as long as possible; for, though they may know where they begin, no one can say how it will end. In the final analysis, it is not the will of the ruling powers that decides, but the necessity of maintaining their control. All the more is it the duty of revolutionary propaganda to fight the ideological hegemony of the ruling class to prevent complete destruction of the working class.

The Fourth International, which, even as an opposition to the Third International, still defends Soviet Russia, has accepted Leninism as its political guide. But Leninism is a theory adapted to Russia's development as an industrial great-power, and drives the workers who support it irresistibly into one of the imperialist fronts.

#### Prevention of the War.

The attitude of the labor organizations on the war problem offers a gloomy picture. The Social-Democratic and Communist parties and labor unions already have joined the national fronts. The Fourth International adopts an equivocal attitude; it wants to fight against fascism and for the "independence of oppressed nations", but at the same time also against the internal bourgeoisie. But equivocation in such a question is impossible; it leads either to political bankruptcy or to a theoretical opposition to all imperialism simultaneously with actual support of one.

Besides the various political and trade union organizations already in the tow of nationalism there are still various groups, such as pacifists, revolutionary idealists, anarchists and left Marxists, etc., though few in number who refuse to be drawn into the whirlpool of nationalism but direct their energies to prevent war. The question is only - can the war be "prevented"? This can be answered only after reviewing what the working class can do, what forces it has at its disposal, what implements of resistance it has and what objections are aimed at in resisting war.

Will the masses in case of war carry on an independent policy? Will they, in opposition to all political parties, unions and the government, reply to the mobilization order with the general strike and insurrection? So far, there are no indications of this. The masses would have to fight against the state and the whole so-called labor movement, and would have to carry on independently under their own direction. True, here and there signs of such a struggle



are visible, but in view of the great forces they would have to oppose in case of war, their influence seems negligible.

Since the waging of war becomes a question of existence for the ruling classes in the various countries, they prepare in advance against any pacifist or proletarian interference with their plans and immediately, at the outbreak of war, will ruthlessly suppress any attempt on the part of the masses. Therefore war against war cannot be waged in the sense of "preventing" it; the question involved is one of power. It is not a question of "preventing" war, but one of whether the working class can entirely vanquish the capitalist class and establish its own control over society.

The propaganda of the general strike to prevent war does not reckon with this eventuality. Of course the anarchists attach the slogan: "Thru the general strike to the social revolution", to their general strike propaganda. But in this form the slogan is sterile, because it presents a completely erroneous picture of the revolutionary process. For the general strike as conceived by the anarchists is an illusion. They picture the strike as a general and complete cessation of work by all proletarians. In actuality, however, the mass of workers follows the lead of the big labor organizations and is under the spell of nationalist ideology. The opponents of war, at its outset, constitute but a small minority. The illusion of the general strike and of the social revolution that is to follow, then collapses like a house of cards.

It is otherwise, if the social revolution is not viewed as an appendage of the general strike, but as a process that follows its course in time, thru "peace" and war, to its final conclusion. This process is the process of the evolution of the masses under their own direction. The official labor movement has no further concern in the defense of the class interests of the masses, because its essential element is one of cooperation between capital and labor which can result only in a worsening of the conditions of the working class. The class interests of the proletariat can be defended only by the sharpest struggle against the bourgeoisie and the old labor movement. This conviction is slowly gathering strength. That this is so is proved by the mass movements of recent years in Spain, France, Belgium and Holland. Among the workers the conviction is growing that every friendly relationship with the bourgeoisie must be destroyed,--that the working class can maintain itself only thru a ruthless class struggle against the capitalist class.

Thus the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat becomes irreconcilable and the world proletariat

finds its unity against the world bourgeoisie. This unity arises out of violent class struggles in all countries. The masses lose their old national conceptions that aim at the co-operation with their own bourgeoisie, making way for new aims - the overthrow of the national bourgeoisie, the destruction of capitalism, the abolition of wage labor and the establishment of a planned communist world economy. That is the revolutionary process of the mass movement. That is the genesis of the social revolution.

Though the concept of the general strike to prevent war is an illusory one, it is yet possible that large groups will resist. Such resistance in the form of mass strikes, although not universal, can be of great importance to the struggle against the war, but they cannot prevent it. Such mass strikes at the outbreak of war are of great value for the future struggle of the masses because they show the methods they will have to adopt finally. They prove indeed that they have not been corrupted by nationalism and that they are still fighting the class struggle; that they are still fighting to overthrow their own bourgeoisie. Mass strikes against war are of an essentially political character; they are not only anti-war actions and anti-bourgeois, but in addition a call to the whole working class to follow their example. Especially in time of war, when every kind of propaganda among the masses has been made impossible, such political mass strikes are indispensable to the revolutionary struggle. They are a rally call; they are an example; they become the program of the general insurrection and of the proletarian revolution.

#### The Enemy is Within the Country.

The revolutionary worker knows no fatherland. The owning class of the whole world is his enemy. But if he wants to emancipate himself from bourgeois rule, he can do so only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie that rules him. The enemy is his own bourgeoisie. Liebknecht coined the phrase: "The enemy is within our own country". The sentence should be modified. The immediate enemy is within the country, for the bourgeoisie of other countries is no less an enemy. But the working class of each country must first settle with its own bourgeoisie.

But let us not be deluded. At the outbreak of war large sections of the working class are not revolutionary. They are imbued with nationalism. The foreign bourgeoisie appears as their enemy. Powerful war propaganda will see to that. And because mass strikes and other actions against their own bourgeoisie at the same time seem to strengthen the foreign bourgeoisie, large numbers of workers will refuse to strike. Even revolutionary workers will waver at times. Naturally, the fear of fascist imperialism is greater than that of democratic imperialism. This is already



apparent in the attitude of the Trotzky Fourth International in the Italian-Ethiopian war, when it calls for the defeat of Italy in favor of Ethiopian victory. How much greater will be the influence of this fear on the policies of these groups if their own democratic country is threatened by the fascist or National Socialist enemy. And when the fascist enemy is strengthened or assured of victory by the class struggle against the internal bourgeoisie, we can safely predict that these groups will recoil from the consequences of such action. But the war will intensify suffering and misery until they are unbearable, and eventually forces the masses to resist. Then it becomes clear that the immediate enemy is within the country. The resistance of the working class grows and leads to mass movements. Then it will become apparent to what extent the essential character of this mass movement is understood by the workers, for on this largely depends the outcome of the movement. The more the workers realize that mass movements, directed and carried out by the workers themselves, are not mere actions of misery and desperation, but at the same time contain all elements of communist society, the more revolutionary will these movements become. They then aim directly at the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the rule of the workers' councils.

The task of the revolutionary workers, inseparable from the task of the working class as a whole, is clear. He who has freed himself from the magic formula, general strike, as the first step in the social revolution, who has finished with Leninism and its "defence of the independence of oppressed nations", who realizes that the prevention of war is possible only if the working class seizes power, and who is indifferent whether the internal bourgeoisie or the "enemy" are victors in the war, for him the matter is clear.

The workers in all countries, freed from the old movement with its democratic and other illusions, have only one goal: the development and strengthening of the independent mass movement of the workers in the whole world--in peace as well as in war--until the masses of the proletariat have seized all social functions and thus build the communist society throughout the world.

(Taken From RAETE KORRESPONDENZ)

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