

THE WAR FOR A BETTER WORLD

The belated war declaration contained in the President's last "fireside chat" indicated the continuation of the war on an enlarged scale. That Mr. Roosevelt did not consider his "talk on national security" a "chat on war" probably refers to the term "chat" which would be a truly surrealistic expression for a declaration of war. In other respects too his reluctance to call a spade a spade was in keeping with the spirit of the time. Actual war declarations are as now outdated as Mr. Churchill's hats.

The President insisted, in proof of a continued "short of war" policy, that "There is no demand for sending an American expeditionary force outside our own borders". To understand this statement better it is only necessary to remember that not so long ago it was declared that "America's frontier is on the Rhine". There might be some quibble as to the difference between "frontier" and "border", a quibble unbecoming a nation which proudly proclaims that on her territory also the sun never sets. Borders are variable anyway, almost as variable as the speeches and intentions of statesmen. We may trust in God that a reason will be found to "demand" the inclusion of an expeditionary force in the "short of war" policy. The appetite of the adventurous is already whetted with descriptions of the daring exploits of "khaki-uniformed figures stealing with machine-gun-bearing motor cycles" into Nazi-occupied territory to "terrorize and harass the German forces thinly strung out to a point of great vulnerability over a thousand-mile coastline".¹⁾ The war department announced that it would ask Congress to appropriate a supplemental 3 billion dollars to buy arms for 2 million men at once and provide manufacturing facilities to supply an army of 4 million. Experts believe that, in addition to the British forces, 2 million soldiers will be needed for a successful invasion of Germany.

America has been in this war since its inception and will stay in as long as it lasts.²⁾ "Neutrality" is only a specific form of warfare.³⁾ The President is quite right in saying "It is no more unneutral for us to supply England than it is for Sweden, Russia, and other nations near Germany to send steel and ore and oil and other war materials into Germany every day". And though one may say that some of the nations supplying Germany have no choice in the matter, from the viewpoint of capitalistic interests America is equally forced to deliver. It is also inconsequential what is sent into the belligerent countries — raw materials or finished war products. That has something to do with the established international

1) W. M'Gaffin in *The Chicago Daily News* (1/4—41)

2) See "Long Live the War" in *Living Marxism*, Vol. V, No. 2.

3) See "The War is Permanent" in *Living Marxism*, Vol. V, No. 1.

division of labor, but not with morals or international law. Whose ships, whether America's or England's, are used for the transportation of planes, tanks and munitions is simply a question of power. Thus far it suits America better to sacrifice English tonnage instead of her own including the neutral and axis ships in American harbors. Britain cannot as yet back up a demand for parity in losses. Thus an American Navy and Merchant Marine "second to none" is in the process of realization. And progress is made not only at sea, but also at home. At a time when factories, docks, and mines are being blown to pieces in England and on the continent, when raw materials are disappearing into the reddened skies, when laborers are shaking in the knees and becoming less productive, America strengthens her industrial base, builds up a powerful army, and gets her people drunk with expectations of an enormous war boom with profits for everybody.

Why declare war? America will win anyway with or without participation in the bloody part of the business. As long as the fighting lasts in Europe — and the longer the better — America has a chance to make her second important step in the direction of world supremacy. The last world war made America independent of European capital; the new world war is to make Europe dependent on America, — that is, if all goes well. There are however some doubts as to the outcome of the European war and thus there are differences of opinion as to what course America should pursue. Those differences find expression in organizations such as the "Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies" and its apparent counterpart the "America First Committee". At first glance this is somewhat bewildering since it seems to be clear that a policy that helps Britain short of war would be exactly the one that serves America first. The interventionists, however, though still insisting with their leader Roosevelt that they do not mean to send troops and warships to Europe, are nevertheless organized for that very purpose. The isolationists, though quite willing to support Britain, think the time inopportune for decisive intervention. A more cautious policy is set against a more adventurous. But both groups are interested neither in Britain's success, nor in that of Germany. Both represent finally no more than American imperialism. As soon as "unity" becomes essential to the interests of imperialism, they will be united.

Of course mere tactical considerations do not fully explain existing differences on the question of war. The "riddle" of pacifistically inclined capitalists may be solved in many ways. There are some who fear that actual participation in war will bring fascism to the United States. They insist that we should first put "our own house in order" before meddling in European affairs. Though opposed to fascism, they are looked upon as fascist because, being good capitalists, they are not opposed to a fascist policy against the workers, but wish it carried through in their own exclusive interests. They oppose the increasing national debt, rising taxes, "pampering" of workers by social legislation, and they insist that the tradi-

tional policy in respect to both internal and external questions is best. In short, though being suspect of harboring fascistic ideas, they are merely old-fashioned, conservative, and possessed by fears that the government — all powerfull in the event of war — will drive them out of business. It must be a queer world for the men of yesterday. Though opposed to fascism at home, they are forced to foster it abroad by refusing to fight against it.

But times are also bad for the men of tomorrow, the "appeasers" of the Lindbergh variety. They do not want to enter the war and thus hasten the fascization of America because they see the war as a superfluous undertaking, an unnecessarily expensive way of carrying through needed fascistic reforms. They are forced to lengthen the life of "democracy", while trying to shorten it, by refusing to fight in its name. They think that a German defeat would only interfere with, and stupidly set back, the natural course of development toward the fascization of the world. For them an old world goes under with the fall of democracy and a new one is born with the conquests of fascism; and they hold with Nietzsche that one should help to destroy what is already crumbling.

Then there are those engaged in anti-interventionist work for the money there is in it; those who have greater business interest in Germany than in Britain; those emotional types working for their "mother countries" which happen in this case to be the axis powers; those whose concepts of imperialistic expansion find more opposition in England than in Germany; those who simply admire Hitler too much; and finally, those who actually are against the war because it hurts.

There is not in America, however, evidence of an open cleavage such as exists in the ruling classes of England. In Britain there are, besides the aspirants for governmental and administrative positions in a Hitler dominated fascist England, large and quite powerful capitalistic groups more interested in the maintenance of their relations with the European continent than with safeguarding the far-flung Empire; forces more interested in striking a bargain with Hitler at the expense of America, France, and Italy, than of putting the Empire, the maintenance of which becomes more and more questionable, under the "protection" of America. Though these "Fifth Columnists" are submerged at present, they have not disappeared.

The American "appeasers" may or may not be in love with fascism. They are certainly not in love with German fascism. When Roosevelt spoke of them as "citizens who are aiding and abetting the work of evil forces, and do exactly the kind of work that the dictators want done in the United States", he only betrayed a petty sensitivity to criticism, and foreshadowed the government's attitude in the coming American *Gleichschaltungs*-process; but he did not do justice to his "fellow-citizens" who are not so fond of "sacrificing American boys on the altar of European quarrels". The American "appeasers" are skeptical as to England's chance of winning the war, or of even lasting through it despite all the help that

America could possibly give. They do not think it wise to be on the side of the losers, and, being aware of the cleavage in England, they ask themselves the question: How secure is Churchill? What will become of British "national unity" when American help forces Hitler to invade England immediately? What if Hitler is not beaten back? What if, with the dwindling of English "morale" through incessant bombings and the destruction of tonnage, the English "appeasers" once more gain the upper hand and come to terms with Hitler? They do not trust England any more than they trust Germany.⁴⁾ And if America, entering the war openly, should not be able to prevent the invasion of England and bring about a German defeat, will she then be strong enough to successfully oppose Japan in Asia, a Japan now also acting in behalf of Germany? Will America be able to oppose Nazi-European and Asiatic interests in South America? Could she enforce her will in the Western hemisphere, or will she possibly be sabotaged by South American interests closely allied to Europe and encouraged by the German success. Is boldness advisable in face of the possible threat of fighting engagements in two oceans? How long will it take to destroy Europe in such a measure and to militarize America to such a degree that what her imperialists desire can really be gained and kept? What if the Nazis act and succeed before the military plans of America can be carried out? To enter the war now is too great a risk to take, though it is a risk only if Hitler takes the still greater risk of trying to knock out England with one bold and hazardous stroke. But why tempt Hitler? Is it not wiser to restrict the world conflagration, to win time, until, in a possibly further-changed world situation, the American forces are really strong enough to insure victory. Otherwise, and for a long time to come, the realization of the "American Dream" in Asia and South America may be shattered altogether.

The worst that could happen anyway in case Germany wins is to resume business with her under probably less favorable terms than heretofore. But if a war-tired Germany requires a lengthy peace, it may even be possible that great concessions will be made to the United States. Besides, participation in a lengthy war might mean conscription of all the "national wealth", and what would be the use of gaining the whole world and losing one's capital? What, furthermore, would a defeat of Hitler mean? English dominance in Europe? Revolutions on the continent and in the colonies. Transformation of the imperialist wars into full-fledged civil wars? There

4) When it was recently disclosed in the English parliament that Britain continues to supply Japan's army with war goods, that is (under pretense of being forced to do so in order to obtain foreign currency) continues to play the old imperialistic game of hampering American ambitions in Asia by fostering those of Japan (a policy that came also to light in the reluctance with which England bowed to the American demand to open the Burma Road) the "appeasing" CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE (1/6-41) wrote bitterly: "Some Americans certainly will think it is a bit thick for the British to urge a willing American government to put all American war supplies at their disposal and then use some of their own to strengthen an axis partner who is threatening to turn his guns on America". England, however, counting on the possibility of winning the war, also counts on the possible resumption of her old Asiatic policy and thus will not give up easily to America what she considers her interests.

are a thousand questions and not one single assuring answer. Let us then play safe. Maybe England will hold out, maybe a compromise solution will be found. *We* might end the war by having no part in it, thus forcing England to make concessions to Hitler. His terms might be harsh, but it might still be the lesser evil for both England and America.

Thus run the arguments of the isolationists. But their "cause" is already defeated. There will be no need to suppress them. They will soon silence themselves in order that they too may profit from an undesired war situation. It is much too late to avoid intervention. Only the complete and immediate success of Germany could possibly keep America out of the military war at this time. England will for this reason do her utmost to prevent an immediate German success. Besides this, she is already in a position to "blackmail" America into ever greater commitments. The threat that England may quit the war at a time when America alone could not possibly oppose successfully the world policy of a Nazi-dominated Europe, the threat that in case of Churchill's fall following a German-English peace move, England might copy the French example, co-operate with Germany and hand over her fleet to Hitler, makes the increasing support of Churchill an American necessity unless she forfeits all her imperialistic ambitions for years to come — years that may be decisive. America's staying out of the war would be equal to a major American defeat. In a third world war she might face, not an atomized Europe, but one consolidated into a mighty power bloc with enormous influence in the Western hemisphere, Asia and Africa. She might have lost her chance for world supremacy by missing her cue in World War No. 2.

Both the American and English imperialists will see to it that the cue is not missed. They recognize quite well that those English interests more akin to Hitler than to Roosevelt may end the Churchill government as soon as defeat gives them enough public support to overthrow the "imperialists" willing to incorporate the Empire into the United States of America. The "revolution" which might end the Churchill government might be able to prevent deliverance of the fleet. It will try to do so anyway in order to secure better peace terms for the new regime. Thus, considering even the event of an English defeat, America must support Churchill. The support must be the greater the more precarious his position becomes in order to save enough of the fleet and of the empire to make worthwhile the new Anglo-American Empire of pooled resources and interests. As long as sufficient American help reaches England shores, Churchill is secure. As long as he is secure quite a lot of damage can be done to the axis partners. But to keep him secure, more and still more help is needed. Finally, only the declaration of war on the part of America will strengthen English "morale", that is, Churchill's policy. If even this fails because of a few million of additional German bombs, American troops will be needed to bolster "morale". Besides all this, what English newspapers⁵⁾ wrote in response

5) Quoted from the liberal NEWS CHRONICLE and the Laborite DAILY HERALD in the CHICAGO DAILY NEWS (1/3-41).

to Roosevelt's speech is true, namely, that though Roosevelt urged his country to give speedy help to Britain, yet

"no country has, in fact, been able to mobilize its whole industrial potential without going to war. It was not until Britain was fully and formally at war, and was feeling the force of the imminent dangers that beset her, that her war production reached anything like a war tempo. America is no more likely than was Britain to put her giant industrial machine on a war footing and to turn out the avalanche of supplies of which she is capable unless the American people have staked their all on victory and the United States administration is equipped with war emergency powers to organize production for a single end."

If England should win, nothing is lost for America. Though the privilege of swallowing parts of the empire and units of the fleet will be lost, Europe will be disunited and her imperialistic forces shattered and tired. America will be able to take advantage of her relative strength, to become the absolute master of the Western hemisphere and the most forceful influence in Asia. Whatever may be in the offing for England — defeat or victory — America's support for Britain cannot thereby be influenced for this support is no "aid for the allies", and in so far as it constitutes such aid does so only incidentally. It is the necessary action for American imperialism. To stop the trend towards actual participation in the more bloody aspects of the war means to put an end to American imperialistic aspirations which, in turn, would mean the end of American capitalism. Short of this there is no escape, and mothers might as well start crying right away.

Of course the war will not be fought in the name of American capitalism, but in the name of "democracy". "Three powerful nations, two in Europe and one in Asia", said Roosevelt during his chat,

"joined themselves together in the threat that if the United States interfered with or blocked the expansion program of these three nations — a program aimed at world control — they would unite in ultimate action against the United States. The Nazi masters of Germany have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country, but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then to use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world".

Thus the defense of America is at the same time the defense or reestablishment of world democracy whether the world likes it or not. In his annual message to Congress, Roosevelt pointed out "four essential human freedoms" for which America is going to fight.

"The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want — which translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants — everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world".

But first the war must be fought because "No realistic American can expect from a dictator's peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion — or even good business". And as every "realistic" American is undoubt-

edly interested in good business he will rush to its defense and will not *even* mind listening to those more lofty human freedoms being thrown into the bargain. If they really would be realistic they might start laughing instead of fighting.

Democracy versus Fascism — really? Were not Austria, Poland, Abyssinia, and Albania dictatorships? And were they not attacked by the dictatorships of Germany and Italy? Are Greece and China democracies, “galantly waging war for democratic existence” as Roosevelt claims? No; the fronts are not marked by democracy and dictatorship. Hitler will not hesitate to ally himself in this war with any democracy willing to do so. Roosevelt and Churchill will kiss any dictator rallying to the defense of “democracy”. The issue is not dictatorship versus democracy, but for America, as Roosevelt also explained in his fireside chat, “it is a matter of most vital concern that European and Asiatic war-makers should not gain control of the oceans which lead to this hemisphere”,—and thus be able to muscle in on the “good business”.

The defeat of Germany, Italy, and Japan will not usher into existence that kind of world so beautifully described by Roosevelt as “the very anti-thesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb”. The President’s “kind of world” demands for its realization 50,000 airplanes, 4 million troops and countless people “who value their freedom more highly than they value their lives”. But those who value their lives highest because without them there can be no values at all, those “slackers or trouble makers in our midst”, the President wants first “to shame by patriotic example, and if that fails, to use the sovereignty of government to save government”. Thus charity does not begin at home, First, democracy must be saved — “anywhere” before it can be realized in America.

The President is quite right; the capitalist world of today precludes democracy, save as a war cry for imperialistic purpose. Only recently a group of the most democratically-inclined professors and instructors pointed out⁶⁾ to those people who propose some sort of self-government in industry to prevent totalitarian methods and loss of democracy arising from governmental control that in America also, or especially in America, “governmental control is preferable to self-government in industry”, because “industrial associations would be monopolists... and as monopolists they would greatly reduce freedom in the market”.. (thus)..., *more*, rather than less, government administrative control would be required if government were not to allow these cartels (of monopolists) to set their own prices”. But this is only to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire, because governments, just like monopolies, set their prices only to fit their own purposes. Furthermore, such industrial associations do not have to be formed; they have been in existence for a long time; they are monopolistic and set their own prices.⁷⁾

6) *Economic Mobilization*. By P. H. Douglas, H. Si Bloch, O. Lange, F. H. Harbinson, and H. G. Lewis. American Council on Public Affairs; p. 42.

7) See the article “The Workers’ Fight Against Fascism” in this issue.

Thus “democracy” already depends on government administrative control, a control which, when exercised in Italy and Germany, is called fascism. This is indeed a cruel world where even democracy in business, and thus democracy in other fields, has to be safeguarded by fascistic practices.

The war will neither save American democracy nor will it restore democracy in the rest of the world. The program of further domestic reform and better social legislation outlined in the President’s message to Congress, more advanced than the war-promises of English labor leaders dared be, will remain on paper, because “we must all prepare to make sacrifices that the emergency demands”. The more produced the less consumed. The working-day will be lengthened in the armaments industries because all industries will become defense industries. “Let us work and work harder” is the slogan issued by Defense Commissioner William Knudsen to fight a barbarism “that drives women and children to live in cold wet holes in the ground”.⁸⁾ Let us build more bombers to make sure that they stay in the holes in the ground for another five or ten years. The ruling class of America is neither willing nor able to end the growing barbarism. It can enlarge the battlefield, throw in more men and more machines, but it cannot end the slaughter nor can it realize any of its promises.

If Hitler wins, it is true, there will be no peace, no socialism, no civilization, but only the preparation for greater battles to come, for future destruction. But if the “democracies” win, the situation will not be different. They will have ceased to be democracies even in their advertisements; they will do exactly the opposite of what they promised. There will be no peace, no socialism, no civilization, but only more brutal attempts to destroy for generations to come the possibility of establishing a social, economic, and international order capable of satisfying the needs of men. The world will be divided differently for different sets of exploiters — but that is all that can happen. Already now a dozen “governments in exile” and all that goes with them, sit over maps excitedly marking new borders and re-shuffling populations, waiting to be returned to rule as of old, possibly on a larger territory. People who “retaliate” for night-flights over Berlin by destroying whole communities in enemy territory are not capable of conceiving or carrying out a new social order beneficial to the powerless in society. But neither can this be done by people who cry, “Save London by bombing Berlin”.

What is needed today is to end a social and economic system divided in classes, groups, nations, and power blocs — a job which can only be done by those who do not profit from the existence of power blocs, nations, privileged groups, or class positions. The rule of naked power can be broken effectively only by those who are today still powerless. If the German fascists were really out to change the world into a better place for human beings to live in, they would first of all have to abolish exploitation, privilege, and national aspirations in their own country. If Roosevelt was really

8) Knudsen as quoted in the CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE (12/14—40).

out to make true what he declaimed in his congressional message he would first of all have to advocate the end of capitalist exploitation, privilege, and imperialistic desire in America. But neither the fighters for fascism, nor those for democracy as much as mention the basis for all the present-day misery in the world: the capitalist system of exploitation. If Hitler speaks against the "capitalistic democracies" and in favor of National Socialism, he speaks only of the fight between somewhat differently organized capitalistic exploitation systems. The democracies promise "reform" of the existing society, but no more; what this "reform" can possibly be is demonstrated precisely by Hitler's fascism.

This then is the problem of today: How can the powerless in society abolish power in society, that is, class power over other classes, national power over other nations. To state the problem does not solve it. To change society it is not enough to assert revolutionary aims. What should be done? There are a number of proposals. Some say, let Hitler win, he will do away with small nations in Europe, co-ordinate European economy, abolish in this very process more and more of the capitalistic mechanism and provide a greater and better stage for coming revolutionary struggles. Others say it would be better to defeat Hitler by supporting the democracies because in the latter there remain opportunities to organize and develop the revolutionary forces needed to some day bring socialism into existence. Furthermore, in the very struggle against fascism the democratic nations might be transformed into socialistic societies, or will thus be transformed at the end of the war. The victory of Hitler, however, would enslave the whole world, would lead to fascism everywhere and destroy probably forever all chances for a socialist society.

Mr. Ernest Bevin, the great labor leader and now Labor Minister, who only recently was authorized to carry through the most undemocratic of all measures of war, that of drafting labor — so despised when it was done in Germany — promised his followers the acceptance after the war of "social security as a main motive of all our national life. That does not mean", he rushed on to say, however, "that all profits and surpluses would be wiped out, but it does mean that the whole of our economy, finance, organization, science, and everything, would be directed together to social security not for a small middle class or for those who may be merely possessors of property but for the community as a whole". Though hardly necessary, he nevertheless made it clear that this national attempt at security must not be mistaken for a real revolution, but regarded as a means of coping with the aftermath of war, and as an instrument against a possible revolution. He continued:⁹⁾

"The greatest social implication arising out of this war is the effort to get rid of that horrible queue outside the labor exchanges... I am afraid that unless the community is seized with the importance of this you may slip into revolutionary action. What I am horrified at is the thought of a blind revolution of starving men that is undirected and that ends in disaster for the whole community."

9) Quoted by J. B. Reston in the *NEW YORK TIMES* (12/8—40).

No; the defenders of democracy a'la Bevin will not assist in changing society in such a way as to transform the present war into one that ends all wars, ends national rivalries and the exploitation of men. They fight for the preservation of democratic institutions "because they realize that victory for Hitlerism would mean the destruction of working-class freedom and the theft of union funds, as was the case in Germany when Hitler usurped power".¹⁰⁾ The kind of controlled capitalism they propose is not so much one that secures working-class freedom as one that "prevents the theft of union funds". But even this is possible only because it is in England and America still "an enormous asset that men whom labor trusts should now be lending their aid in invoking a ready response to the call for longer hours, fewer, if any, holidays, and unaccustomed restrictions".¹¹⁾ They will have to go after their services are no longer needed and in case they do present the bill of social reforms to their masters. Though in justified fear of their own future they feebly attempt some changes in the social structure today, and feel inclined, as Harold J. Laski has said, to "expect to see large-scale social reforms during the war"¹²⁾ they must feel quite uneasy just the same. Did not Laski point out¹³⁾ only three years ago that Chamberlain was correct in saying "that the result of the arms programme of Great Britain is the necessary postponement of social reform for a generation". If that programme postponed social reform for one generation, what will the war itself do to social reform?

The Bevins and Laskis and their American counterparts may seriously believe that they are fighting for the maintenance of democratic institutions, but their beliefs have no countenance whatever. Even if they thought differently, they would act exactly as they do. The luxury in which they can still indulge — that is, of having an interpretation of the war, which, in the last analysis, is only slightly different from that of their capitalist masters, and which expects not only to save democracy, but to bring about some sort of democratic socialism — remains their meaningless private affair, for they have no power of any kind outside of that granted to them by their capitalist masters. If today they proclaim with great gusto that to win socialism Hitler must first be fought, their good counsel to the English and American workers is not really important, for these workers would have to fight even if what their leaders proclaim to be true were not true, because as little as their organizations could the workers afford to disagree with their governments.

Finally, in defending the position that democracy as against fascism should be supported, it is pointed out¹⁴⁾ that, though it is true that in this

10) Editorial in "Labour" (London) Sept. 1940, p. 580.

11) *Britain's Reasons for Fighting*. By Brig. Gen. G. Cockerill, C. B. in the *NEW YORK TIMES* (9/8—40).

12) Laski in *THE NATION* (New York) 5/25—40.

13) "Liberty in the Modern State", Pelican Edition, p. 24.

14) Oscar Lange "The Socialist Attitude toward the War" in *THE MODERN QUARTERLY*. Vol. XI, No. 6, p. 12.

war imperialists oppose each other, still, differences between the adversaries must be recognized. British imperialism is saturated and disintegrating while German imperialism is vigorous and aggressive, making it more advisable to oppose the fascist imperialism, though it would mean to defending democratic imperialism. However, what could be said of the German can also be said of the American imperialism, young, vigorous, and aggressive as it is, if it were not altogether senseless to indulge in such comparisons. But on the basis of the comparisons it is then argued that *later*, after the war, it will be easier to get rid of democratic imperialism if only the fascist kind is out of the way. Oscar Lange says:

"The imperialism of liberal capitalist nations is based on export capital and leads to the industrialization of the colonies, thus preparing the social forces leading to emancipation; whereas, fascist imperialism is not moved by the quest for private profit but is part of the totalitarian state economy. It, therefore, does no aid the economic development of the subject people but merely exploits their natural and agricultural resources".

By this reasoning and by looking at the results of liberal imperialism, especially in India and China, imperialism must always have been "fascistic" despite its liberal promoters. If it were true, furthermore, that a German victory would establish "the rule of a young and vigorous imperialism much more oppressive and *stable* than the old one", this could only be true in case it would do better what liberal imperialism did so badly, for greater stability and greater exploitation depends on additional capital investments even for the exploitation of only natural and agricultural resources.

Anyway it is too early to worry about that. The colonies are still securely in the hands of liberal imperialism, and it might be better to ask the colonies their opinion before arriving at a judgement as to what masters they would like to have. But this argument of Lange's is carried over to the European scene. He thinks that for international socialism it would be better if Hitler were defeated than that the democracies should suffer such a fate, because, if there should be a chance at all, the chances for a socialist revolution would be greater in the first than in the second case. But though it is true that in a defeated England there would be no social revolution, as there was none in France, because German fascism would prevent it, it is not less true that a German revolution in the wake of a defeat would also be crushed by the bayonets of the allies. One case can be argued as well as the other.

If Germany, having experienced years of fascism, should be defeated, it is quite possible that the revolution would be carried through in the name and spirit of proletarian socialism since a return to bourgeois democracy is precluded. The existence of social institutions created by monopoly capitalism and fascism hinders such a return. The proletarian element would once more be in the forefront of social change and thus induce the capitalist victors to wage a relentless war against the new and really revolutionary threat, much more feared than Hitler was ever feared. This German revolution will be crushed in blood, unless this is prevented by simultaneous

revolutions in the victorious countries. But revolutions hardly break out in victorious nations; it is difficult for solidarity to arise in the ruins of London and Liverpool. On the other hand, if Germany wins, it will bring fascism to the whole of Europe. It will prepare itself for the waging of the hemispheric war and thus increase a hundredfold all the difficulties already experienced. It will drive forward the change of the world by negative measures and submerge for years to come all possible positive attempts of a proletarian socialism to end the prevailing chaos.

The question as to what the "labor movement" should do in regard to the war and in order to safeguard its own vital interests is an artificial question, for there is no labor movement which could raise it in actuality. The question is only whether there will arise — in the course of the war — a labor movement, or rather a social movement, determined to end war, which is possible only by ending capitalism. Where will it start first, how often will it be defeated, and when, under what conditions, may it succeed? And to these questions there is no satisfying answer. Not being able to answer it is only to share with the rest of the world the fearful inability to do more than the next best thing. But under no circumstances, is it the next best thing to accept once more the great swindles of our time, namely, that the struggles of capitalism, democratic or fascist, could have any values for the proletarian class, that out-worn slogans such as that of national independence could serve more than imperialistic purpose, that the workers could ever improve their lot by simply choosing among their enemies. Rather, the next best thing to do is not to be fooled by current slogans, promises, rationalizations, and often ordinary lies; not to fall victim to the machinations of the present rulers of the world, hidden behind all possible and impossible phrases, uniforms, and programs. It is to keep one's head clear as to what is really going on in the world, and to watch out for the first true signs of a rising opposition to the prevailing barbarism.

Luenika

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BOLSHEVIKS AND THE WORLD WAR. The Origin of the Third International. By Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher. The Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace. Publication No. 15. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California 1940. (856 pp.; \$6.00)

This work makes available in English — and in some cases for the first time — a collection of documents on the origin of the Communist International. It will be followed by another book entitled *The Bolsheviks and World Revolution: The Founding of the Third International.* Together with the already published volume *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918*, by J. Bun-

yan and H. H. Fisher, this series constitutes one of the most important reference works on the Russian Revolution.

The present volume begins with the correspondence between Bebel and Lenin in 1905 dealing with the Bolshevik-Menshevik conflict in the Russian Social Democracy, and ends with the results of the Stockholm Conference of 1917, the last docu-

ment (an appeal of the Zimmerwald Committee to the working masses of all countries) being dated September 1, 1918. It is accompanied by a very careful chronology, bibliography, and by biographical notes of the many personalities involved. The unavoidable gaps between the different documents are filled in with editorial notes which carry on the narrative of events and give the work the character of a comprehensive history.

A review of the relations between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the Second International and of the relations of both fractions to the "Revisionists", "Centrists", and the Left within the International introduces the problems which were discussed in the labor movement shortly before and during the world war. Of special interest here are the relatively unknown but by now far more important differences of opinion between the Russian Left, e. g., the Bolsheviks, and the Left of Western Europe, that is, the groups with which such names as Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Gorter, and Pannekoek were associated. The position which the Second International took during the war could already have been predicted from the proceedings at the conferences before the war, from the character and the speeches of its leading elements. The different national units of the Second International obviously shared the imperialistic ambitions of their countries. For this reason the anti-war policy of the Left was also directed against the organization in which it functioned. Actually only the Bolsheviks, however, split the organization and thus became the nucleus for the re-formation of the International after 1914.

Much space is given to the proceedings, resolutions, speeches and articles related to the socialist conferences in Stuttgart, 1907, Copenhagen 1910, and Basel 1912; especially in regard to the conflict within the Russian Social Democracy, to attempts at unification, and the role

of the Bolsheviks in the formulation of policy. In these discussions there was often foreshadowed what, after the Bolshevik Revolution, became an actuality, that is, the attempt on the part of the Bolsheviks to make the specific revolutionary conditions of Russia the criterion of the methods of struggle for the entire European proletariat.

The activities of the Bolsheviks abroad from 1914 to 1917 are best revealed in Lenin's work during this period. His theses on war, the discussions around them, and the preparation of anti-war conferences resulting in the Zimmerwald movement fill up an important section of the work. The conference in Berne, that of the Socialist Women and the Youth Internationale in the same city, the conferences in Zimmerwald, Kienthal, and the last conference in Stockholm which terminated the Zimmerwald movement lead into the first Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in March 1919.

The content of the whole movement, a movement in which frictions and dissensions continued to exist, may best be summed up in the Bolshevik proclamation that "It is the task of the proletariat in Russia to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia in order to kindle the social revolution in Europe". But the emphasis on the Russian Revolution, determining Lenin's position on the question of the "self-determination of nations", led to differences among the Bolsheviks themselves, as well as to dissensions between the Bolsheviks and the Left of Western Europe. The Bukharin-Piatakov group allied itself on this point with Luxemburg, Gorter, Pannekoek rather than with Lenin. The arguments offered by Lenin in defense of the "self-determination of nations" as well as his controversial view on the role of the state in the proletarian revolution are, in connection with the views of the Left of Western Europe, given at length in this important reference work, which cannot be too highly recommended.

THE DEFENDERS. By Franz Hoellering. Little, Brown and Company, Boston 1940. 484 pp.; \$2.75)

Franz Hoellering's novel of the Austria of 1934 is of considerable political significance. He accomplishes the difficult task of successfully merging fictionalized individual experience with an important historical situation. Not only are history and social life revealed as one, but the relationship between the individual and society is shown as an inescapable and inseparable unity, which — by reason of its existence — allows for both hope and despair, defeatism and the assurance of victory.

It is very fortunate that Hoellering did not attempt to write what has come to be known as the "proletarian" or "revolutionary" novel. He might have failed, as may be guessed from his treatment of the proletarian characters appearing in the book. They are less real than those who seem to be nearer the author's own way of life — the intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie. Not that his proletarian characters are false, far from it; it is rather astonishing how close Hoellering comes to their true characterization. But aside from a few deeply moving scenes revealing the qualities of the "unspoiled" working people (unspoiled by the prevailing ideology because of the great cleavage between this ideology and their real life, and because of an intelligence already too advanced through their industrial and urban existence), his workers are still only like the supernumeraries of a great drama in which the main roles are played by those who have names and positions that give them at least the appearance of being personalities in the old bourgeois sense.

Because of the lack of self-initiative on the part of the workers it seems closer to reality to describe the Heimwehr Putsch through the eyes of non-working-class elements. This is also quite useful, as it brings to life the fact that the destiny of the petty-bourgeoisie is not to educate and to rule but to despair and decay. The critical and somehow "revolutionary" situation is experienced by café literati, socialist parliamentarians, bureaucrats, students, advanced workers, priests,

politicians, officers, scientists and the aristocracy.

The book is not impartial, but it is not limited by the narrowness of a party point of view. Hoellering deals with the social needs of today. But he knows that these needs can be solved neither by those who claimed only yesterday to be in possession of a solution, nor by a new resolute elite, a new group of leaders and exploiters. He knows that the wider view-point of the industrial proletariat is no longer sufficient to formulate the concepts needed today, because what so far has been only a propaganda slogan, is now obvious, namely, that social needs and the needs of the workers are truly identical. He knows, too, that this "party of humanity", this contradiction in terms, expresses a real contradiction which can be solved only by way of further struggles. He does not hail or bewail this situation but only recognizes it in order to do away with it.

The book propagandizes nothing. It does not need to. It explains why the cause was lost in 1934, and why it will not always be lost. It does so merely by recognizing facts. Though it does not moralize, it is moving, pleading, encouraging, exciting and very much alive, simply because it sticks to the factual truth. There are no great ideas behind the working people in this book. There is a way of life, a world of facts which moves them, and which moves the oppressed in the right direction whenever they act in accordance with the needs of their existence.

Nothing is left out of this book. Not only that which was wonderful and undying in the uprising of the Austrian workers, but also the negative side is shown with all its ugliness, its insufficiency, its betrayals, hypocrisy and cowardness which played their part — and probably the greater part. It becomes clear also that the defenders of the rights guaranteed by the Republic were fighting against much more than the Heimwehr and the police. The individual cannot isolate himself; neither could the City of Vienna, nor the State of Austria go their own

way. Austria's politics were not determined in Vienna. "The Germans and Italians were in open revolt against the Anglo-French majority bondholders. The small states were carried along on one side or the other, they had no choice." The connection between internal class struggles and external politics is revealed as being complementary.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE. By T. H. Reynolds. George Peabody College. Nashville, Tennessee. (194 pp.) *AS OUR NEIGHBORS SEE US.* Readings in the Relations of the United States and Latin America 1820-1940. (314 pp.)

The second world war and the vast changes accompanying it find the United States once more defending her policies in the name of the Monroe Doctrine. But as always before discussions about the Doctrine are vague and misleading. Dr. Reynolds' book is of great help in understanding the present situation. It offers a sober interpretation of the economic aspect of the Doctrine, almost exclusively neglected in previous literature, and approaches the problem from the Spanish-American point of view, which is also presented in selection from a wide variety of South American sources in the companion volume "As Our Neighbors See Us".

Dr. Reynolds goes back to the earliest interests of the United States and Great Britain in Hispanic America, the relations of Spain and France to Latin America, and the American and English reactions to the aspirations of these countries. He deals with the expansionist policies of North America before and after the Civil War and ends with the present-day relations between South and North America.

England and the United States needed an independent South America to foster their own trade which was hampered by the Spanish colonial monopoly. The Monroe Doctrine, supported by Britain, at first found the approval of South American nations because it helped them in their struggle for independence and gave them some sort of security against new European imperialistic adventures. The Doctrine was from the

Much more should be said about this excellent book, but nothing could replace reading it. It is more than just a book. It is a monument to the Austrian fighters of 1934 which reaches up to their level and thus gives not only understanding and a positive attitude towards the future, but also a recognition of the worth of death if its cause is life.

very beginning, however, promulgated to serve specifically the particular interest of the United States, and to serve those of Hispanic America only in case the latter did not contradict the peculiar inclinations of North America.

The Monroe Doctrine has no general principle; it never corresponded to a definite plan; interpretations of it vary according to time-conditioned, political and economic needs and desires. There are however three major ideas behind the Doctrine: defense, non-colonization in South America, and two separate hemispheres. This idea of two hemispheres, though fostered by the United States, did not prevent the U. S. from interfering in European affairs. The Doctrine, however, was invented to insure the supremacy of the United States on the American continent. It is essentially anti-European and aggressive in character, though always interpreted as a mere defense measure.

The Monroe Doctrine began with economic interests and developed with them. It became an instrument for imperialistic purposes, and has been regarded as such by South America. Up to now, American imperialism has aroused antagonism in South America, and an entirely different interpretation of the Doctrine — one favoring South American interest rather than those of the United States — will be necessary in order to change this situation.

The book contains an excellent bibliography.