

## XI. THE NEW MOMENT IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR

THE dominant issue of the day before the American people is how to keep out of the imperialist war, and how to protect themselves against the attacks upon their rights and living standards being conducted by the pro-war reactionary imperialist interests in control of both Republican and Democratic Parties. The fight of the people is a fight for a decent life, for civil rights, and for peace.

Great events have occurred in the past weeks, events which have shaken up the old world, dispelled many illusions, revealed international relationships more clearly, and started deep-going changes in these relationships. It is toward these events, and their effects upon the American people, that I would first of all direct your attention.

On March 12 a peace treaty was signed between the Soviet Union and Finland, which ended fourteen weeks' hostilities. This event may be taken as the center and symbol of the historical turning point through which we are now living. It is therefore worthy of the closest study, especially since American newspapers have unanimously surrounded the Finnish question with a fog of unprecedented lies. A few most important conclusions are clear, however, to every open mind which is willing to face facts. Allow me to enumerate some of them, and then elaborate briefly on each one.

1. The British-French imperialists, with the support of the Roosevelt Administration, had planned to drag Scandinavia into the war, and to establish there and in Finland a "Northern Front"—directed against Germany and the Soviet Union. They failed in this first effort,

and lost their chief strategical base for this scheme, the Mannerheim Line.

2. This has weakened the whole "grand strategy" of Allied and American imperialism, which, through the projected "Northern front" and a "Southeastern front" in the Balkans and Near East, aimed to spread the war to the whole world, and to redirect it mainly against the Soviet Union.

3. This breakdown in Allied strategy, which emphasizes the stalemate now obtaining, has created better conditions for peace in the whole of Europe, and has once again raised the question of peace as an immediate practical question.

4. Consequently, a great stimulus and encouragement has been given to the peace movement, especially among the workers, in every country; in the United States it has improved the conditions for defeating the campaign, led by Hoover and Roosevelt, to involve this country more deeply in the war, looking toward entry as a belligerent.

5. The peace in Finland has perfected the defenses of the Soviet Union against the scheme for a "crusade" against it by the world bourgeoisie. At the same time it established the military superiority of the new socialist society over the decaying system of capitalism.

6. The Soviet-Finnish peace treaty demonstrated the deep gulf that separates the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which always serves peace and good relations between nations, from the foreign policy of the imperialist states, which is always directed to conquest and subjugation.

Now, let us enlarge upon each of these points for a few moments. Can there any longer be the slightest doubt that Finland occupied the attention of the world because it was the key to Allied plans to violate Scandinavian neutrality, to transform the Scandinavian peninsula and Finland into a main battleground of war? There can be not the slightest doubt, for the imperialist spokesmen have blabbed it out loud and published it all over the world in their panic at collapse of their plans. They openly reproach one another for failure to decide in time upon crushing Scandinavian resistance with military force. They openly speculate on the possibility of still carrying through

the plan, even after the loss of the Mannerheim Line. But the fall of the Mannerheim Line carried with it the collapse of a whole strategy; it had been firmly believed to be impregnable, the last word in military science, built under the direct supervision of the British General Staff. It was the mailed fist of Allied imperialism around the neck of Scandinavia; its iron boot thrust into the front door of the land of socialism. It represented world dominion to British-French-American imperialism.

It is only against this background that it is possible to understand the hysterical agitation of the American newspapers and upper classes on behalf of Mannerheim, and their panic when the Finnish Government of adventurers sued for peace. What had happened was not merely another small country snatched from their war-combination; it was the collapse of a key position in the world strategy of the combined greatest imperial powers. In the Balkans and the Near East, the British-French difficulties are at once multiplied. Imagine how the Turkish politicians must feel the ground shaking under their feet, as they re-examine the paper guarantees given them by Mr. Chamberlain, and recall that such guarantees were previously given to Ethiopia, to China, to Austria, to Albania, to Czechoslovakia, to Poland, and now to Mannerheim Finland. There seems to be a fatality connected with the possession of guarantees of Mr. Chamberlain, which must make all their possessors sleep uneasily! King Carol must surely be balancing his political books again in the last weeks! The market-price for the service of adventurers on behalf of No. 10 Downing Street, if based upon occupational hazards, must be booming as never before in history! The rival imperialists once more must glare at one another over the West Wall and Maginot Line, where so far the hazards to life and limb have been much less than those of American highways.

The Allied and American high statesmen have by no means given up their cherished project of "switching the war," as the Britishers put it, to a war against the Soviet Union. But their hearts bleed and their voices sound in anguish, as they face the mounting difficulties in their path. That brilliant exemplar of American bourgeois journal-

ism, that potential president of our country, Dorothy Thompson, wailed the other day that she had been "ill-informed" about the strength of the Red Army, and that now it is impossible to make war against the Soviet Union without first making peace with Germany, but that once peace is declared the masses will refuse to go to war again! Not even the active intervention of Roosevelt, through his noted emissary who ostentatiously omitted Moscow from his itinerary, can turn the scales in favor of a bankrupt policy.

In passing, it may be remarked of Sumner Welles' mission, that there is a certain surface plausibility to the oft-repeated claim that he is only on a fact-finding mission. Facts cannot be found with much degree of certitude from official and public declarations and news from Rome, Berlin, Paris and London, and prognostications, especially from the last two named, have acquired an uncanny record of being realized in their contrary forms. On the other hand, official pronouncements from Moscow have been proved uniformly to be the most reliable guide to facts; perhaps Mr. Roosevelt was merely registering recognition of the reliability of Moscow dispatches when he considered it unnecessary to send Mr. Welles there also on his mission. Perhaps. Perhaps. But who will believe it?

The President and his close advisers profess to be very pessimistic about the chances for peace in Europe. For such a peace, so-called, as would mean merely to "switch the war" against the Soviet Union, truly the prospects are sadly dimmed. But for a peace which would mean the general halting of military operations, the prospects are much brighter. The war plans have stalled; the imperialist military relations are in a stalemate. The illusions which had been held out to the British and French masses, that the war would not come home to them in its full fury, but would be fought out in Scandinavia, the Balkans, and the Near East, at the expense of weaker nations and peoples, have been dispelled, and they now face the grim reality that to continue the war to a conclusion they must pour out the blood of millions of their own sons. Stalemate at the fronts, collapse of perspectives and plans, brings forward inevitably as the immediate and practical issue—*peace*.

Already this historical moment, which cries for peace, finds voice in a rising demand from the masses of all countries. It forces itself into the headlines of even the most rabid of our war-mongering newspapers. The cry for peace comes from one British trade union after another, from the co-operative movement, from the foremost intellectuals. Mr. H. G. Wells cries out: "End the war before the war ends us." From Australia the call for peace from the trade unions forces its way past the censors of the war-makers. In France, the Cabinet that outlawed the third largest party of the country, and placed its parliamentary Deputies on trial before a secret military tribunal—all in the name of democracy, of course—is itself overthrown, in the midst of the trial, and its successor holds power by one vote majority in the Chamber from which 72 elected members have been illegally, unconstitutionally and violently expelled. The political shakings in France can be understood only as we hear the rumblings of the demands for peace that rise from the French workers, peasants and soldiers, whose voices have been shut out of Parliament, are muffled in secret military courts and concentration camps. Peace is the demand that rises from the masses of all the belligerent and neutral countries.

This is the case also in the United States. Already the rising mass demand for peace, for keeping America out of this war, especially since the peace-treaty was signed in Moscow on March 12, is frightening the war-mongers who were so militant a few months ago. Herbert Hoover, who pranced over the country and the newspaper front pages breathing fire on behalf of Mannerheim, has suddenly gone into seclusion, more than willing to allow Mr. Roosevelt to gather all the laurels of their rival, though co-ordinate, war-mongering campaigns. The various camps of Republican and Democratic Party politicians, who had called a truce on foreign affairs for the 1940 elections in order jointly to whip up war sentiment against the Soviet Union and on behalf of Mannerheim, are beginning to break that truce once more, to retreat before the peace sentiments of the masses, and to speculate demagogically on the peace issue. Peace organizations are arising among the workers and middle classes, activities and demon-

strations are growing for peace, more and more voices are raised against the war hysteria of the newspapers and the secret diplomatic maneuvers emanating from Washington. Yes, a mass movement is maturing in America to resist and halt all moves to throw the United States into the imperialist war.

The settlement in Finland has completed the necessary lines of military defense of the Soviet Union. It is now secure against military adventures from whatever source. The last remaining base for a *blitzkrieg* against Leningrad, which contains one-fourth of Soviet industry, has been eliminated. Henceforth those General Staffs which are so imprudent as to dream of war against the Soviet Union, must base their calculations on a long-drawn-out and gruelling contest, which will put to the final test their every resource, material and moral, in the whole world of capitalism. That alone is a great contribution to world peace; a serious temptation, which had operated powerfully in all imperialist foreign offices, has been removed.

American newspapers have been unanimously informing us that the hostilities in Finland had disclosed the military weakness, even worthlessness, of the Red Army. In a serious war, they agreed, the Soviet Union would be a "pushover." That valiant warrior-of-the-pen, General Hugh Johnson, wrote that the Red Army was "mush." But as the smoke-screen of lies lifts from the battlefields, the fact is disclosed for all who want facts, or who are capable of facing facts, that the Red Army of the land of socialism proved its military superiority over the military forces of capitalism. This is a great shock to the whole bourgeois world, and to all its servants and lickspittles—a shock which unnerves them, throws them into panic, threatens to unhinge their minds. They even refuse to admit the fact, and continue to repeat in sepulchral tones, and without conviction, the old propaganda slogans that are already as dead as the Dodo. During the whole twenty-two years and more of the rise of the socialist Soviet Union, they had always consoled themselves with the thought that, if all other means failed, they could always wipe out that menace with their combined military might. The revelation that this idea has become a pure illusion leaves them incoherent, gibbering and shriek-

ing in confusion. It is not an edifying spectacle, but it is a comforting one for all who are concerned for the future progress of humanity.

Yes, the Red Army in Finland not only won a brilliant military victory, but it made a revolution in military science. It accomplished tasks which the military experts of the capitalist world declared impossible. Military science of the bourgeois world operates on the axiom that a large-scale offensive is impossible in the dead of winter; the Red Army disregarded the axiom, and made a successful offensive in the North, even in the Arctic. Since the World War, all bourgeois military policy assumed that modern fortifications cannot be stormed successfully, except possibly with the most enormous sacrifice of men and with prolonged effort; but the Red Army broke the Mannerheim Line decisively, with a minimum of losses, in three weeks of effort. This is nothing short of a revolution in military science. It renders all the military textbooks obsolete. It destroys the validity of every military calculation and plan at G.H.Q. in all the imperialist capitals, and they will all have to be fundamentally revised. Long ago, Frederick Engels revealed the close connection between military prowess and its economic base, and predicted that socialism would have to prove its superiority over capitalism in a test at arms, would have to prove that socialism produced a higher and stronger economy and abler and superior men; the Red Army in Finland, by smashing the Mannerheim Line, realized and proved the thesis of Engels. Socialism proved its fitness to survive in a world of enemies, armed to the teeth with the most deadly weapons. Let us hope that the lesson is not lost on those who would still dream of a "holy war" against the Soviet Union.

Another revolutionary phase of the Soviet-Finnish hostilities is revealed in the peace terms themselves. Military victory by capitalist, especially by imperialist, powers always results in a peace of conquest and subjugation in which the seeds are sown for new and more destructive wars. Typical of this are the peace treaties of Versailles, the Brest-Litovsk, of Trianon, during and at the close of the World War. But the Soviet Union, in sharpest contrast, after a complete and brilliant military victory, made peace at the earliest possible moment

on terms which secured for it only the minimum required for its military security. So far from placing any burdens upon the Finnish people, in the time-honored manner of Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando at Versailles, the peace treaty, relieving the Finnish people from military vassalage to Chamberlain which would have shattered their life for generations if the schemes of London, Paris and Washington had succeeded, has opened up the possibility of an unexampled security and prosperity for Finland.

The Finnish events brought out all the reserves which the war-mongers command among the masses. Outstanding in this respect were the services rendered to the imperialists by the Citrines and Attlees of the British Labor Party; by the Leon Blums of the Socialist Party of France; and by the Norman Thomases, Louis Waldmans, Alex Roses, David Dubinskys, and Matthew Wolls, in the United States. These self-styled leaders of socialism and labor outdid all others in the fierceness and malevolence of their incitements to war against the Soviet Union, and were the shock-troops of the imperialist bourgeoisie of all lands in the campaign to win the masses for such a war. It is one of the important facts to note, that the influence of such leaders has visibly diminished among the workers during the past months, as a result of this cynical revelation of their true political faces.

The setback received by the imperialist plans to spread the war and switch it to a war against the Soviet Union will not, of course, cause these plans to be dropped by them. Indeed, the panic and desperation displayed by the discussion emanating from high diplomatic circles, the high degree of nervous instability displayed by official ranks, should cause the people to be on the alert for even more desperate and fantastic adventures, which may be launched without notice. More vigilance than ever is required from the anti-war forces in this and every other country. Conditions for the peace struggle have greatly improved for the worker and toiling masses, but the desperation of the die-hard war-mongers is correspondingly increased.

Documents revealed in Berlin, taken from the archives of the Polish Foreign Office, just published, will be examined with the deepest

interest by all Americans. Newspaper editors are indignantly exclaiming that Berlin thus reveals itself as a safe-cracker and robber, a rifler of secret archives, and so on. Admitting that the moral standards of Berlin are equally low, in such questions, with those of London and Paris, it still seems to be true that every time the files of secret diplomatic papers are opened up for the world, the cause of peace is the gainer, the peoples become stronger in relation to their rulers. It would have been a great boon to America, for example, if the people could have been in possession of the secret correspondence, in 1917, of Colonel House and Ambassador Page, which was disclosed only many years after our disastrous adventure into the last World War. In any event, the significance and validity of the exposed papers will not be judged by the character of the Berlin exposers, but according to their degree of correspondence with the public record of established facts and known trends of policy. In this respect the documents confirm and elaborate, without adding anything essentially new, what had already been established beyond doubt.

The report just delivered by Molotov to the Soviet Congress in Moscow, further clarifies the whole international situation. The reiteration of Soviet neutrality toward the imperialist war, which "it has unswervingly adhered to . . . all through this period," that the Soviet Union has no intention to "become a tool of British and French imperialists in their struggle for world hegemony against Germany," together with the revelation of Soviet intention and ability to defend itself against any further attacks, place squarely before London, Paris, and Washington the issue of whether they are prepared to take responsibility for further worsening of relations with the Soviet Union. That is a very heavy responsibility indeed! It is a question which the working masses of American, British and French people cannot well afford to leave entirely to the decision of their present ruling circles.

The consequences of the war in the field of domestic policy and internal political alignments, in the United States, have been working out in a way far removed from the expectations of the ruling circles. The Roosevelt Administration had made peace with its opponents of

the Wall Street camp, coming together with them on the program of armaments, war-trade and spreading the war, eventual entry into the war as a belligerent in the process of switching the war against the Soviet Union, the scrapping of New Deal social legislation, curbing and weakening the labor movement and suppressing the Communist Party. Two great dangers were thereby raised up for the bourgeoisie, namely, of a renewed economic crisis and a mass break-away from the two old parties. These dangers were to be met and overcome by the stimulus to economy from armaments and war-trade (including the capture of markets from rivals, especially in Latin America), and by holding the masses behind Roosevelt with the threat that however bad his policies the only alternative, the Republicans, would be worse.

But life itself is a stubborn enemy of such schemes, considerations and calculations, and brings them to unforeseen results. The war-and-armaments boom has flopped miserably, and the economic index has been plunging downward for months; the conditions of the unemployed whose numbers are swelling by millions are becoming desperate and relief crises break out in state after state. The labor movement and the masses generally, show increasing signs of escaping from the old dilemma of choosing the lesser of two evils by rebelling against both of them. The newly-regained unity of the bourgeoisie is exacerbated and embittered by new differences and rivalries, which occasionally reveal glimpses of sharp crevices and breaks in ruling-class unity. And, above all, the unity of aims with the Allied imperialists does not overcome, but even sharpens, the conflicts and antagonisms with the British friend and rival, while relations with Japan and the whole Far Eastern question become more tangled and strained. The world crisis of imperialism is revealing itself within America in new and sharper forms, in economy, in domestic policy and in foreign policy.

The resulting confusions within our ruling class, its sharpening inner conflicts and relations to other imperialisms, produce a chaotic picture-puzzle indeed on the surface. It is no wonder if many minds grow dizzy and confused in trying to dig down to the underlying

realities and determining factors, to make some sensible analysis of the situation. But if we stick close to the fundamental factors of the class-relationships and class structure of capitalist society, we will protect ourselves against superficial and shallow judgments on current problems, and will keep the decisive things firmly in the foreground of our thought.

Fear of the socialist revolution is haunting the bourgeoisie of all lands. This is the chief factor making for their class unity, national and international, but they can never solve their rivalries and contradictions, and this is why such unity is always breaking down. The imperialist war is itself a "family quarrel" within the bourgeoisie; the working class of Britain, France and Germany have no serious quarrels with one another. The great ambition of the most class-conscious bourgeois statesmen, with Roosevelt, Hoover, and the Pope at their head, is eventually to restore "peace" to the capitalist family by jointly making war against the Soviet Union. But for this they must first extend the war and prolong it, not alone for immediate war profit—that would be itself important enough—but to guarantee that the "peace" would really be a militant union against the revolution, against socialism, against the Soviet Union.

The American bourgeoisie is united in its determination to head off or crush the rising socialist revolution in Europe. They want to save their European class brothers. At the same time, their contradictions with these class brothers grow sharper. Concretely, they want to save the British Empire from its impending destruction; but at the same time their conflicts with the British as rivals become ever more intense. They are convinced that the only way to save the British Empire is by American leadership, with all the prerequisites of leadership, which would amount to putting it into receivership in bankruptcy by Washington and Wall Street. So the quarrels about *how* to save capitalism from the impending revolution break up bourgeois unity on the aim. They fully agree only to hit hard against labor and the Communists at home, and against the Soviet Union abroad. On everything else, they fight among themselves like cats and dogs.

We must study closely all these conflicts and contradictions between

the bourgeois state and among the bourgeoisie within the nation—for these conflicts must all be fully exploited by the working class and the people, to strengthen the fight against hunger and war, and finally for socialism.

Let us always remember that it is the bourgeoisie itself and its most reactionary section which does much of the most necessary work of preparing the conditions for the socialist revolution. The more fiercely and hysterically they fight against the labor and communist movement, the more quickly and surely do they undermine their own capitalist social order. Thus did Hitler, the darling of all reactionaries for years, become the instrument for plunging the capitalist world into its deepest crisis. Thus in America today does Martin Dies make his similar contribution to undermining and destroying the old, decaying social order by the very violence with which he seeks to defend it. Let the American bourgeoisie ponder over this very carefully in the midst of their cheers for Martin Dies.

Facing the 1940 elections, we find the old party dominant leadership, both Democratic and Republican, agreeing on basic policies of hunger and war, which labor and the people must fight against. They disagree on almost everything except this basic line of policy, but it is exactly this that the workers are interested in defeating, and most of the people are interested in defeating, and on which they must fight.

We find no adequate preparations yet to unite the mass movements and organizations of the people on a national scale in a third party movement as was done in 1856, for example, in preparation for the election of Lincoln in 1860, but this is what we need and it is the greatest task before the American people today.

The Communist Party prepares its own independent candidates and platforms for state and national elections. We are prepared to discuss united action with other groups and organizations in support of candidates who really fight against the war, who really fight for peace, who really fight for civil rights and progressive legislation, who really fight against the dominant leadership of the old parties. We are ready to unite with all organizations in America who agree on these few

basic points. We want to struggle for the broadest possible unity of the American people against their exploiters and misleaders. In 1940, that means that on the national candidates and on many of the most important state candidates we ask you to cast your vote for the Communist Party.

*Speech delivered at a mass meeting in Boston, April 6, 1939.*