



WHAT'S
WHAT
ABOUT
THE WAR

Questions and Answers

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

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What's What About The War

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

Q. Who and what is responsible for the present war?

A. This is an imperialist war. It originates in the very structure of the capitalist system. The private ownership of the industries and the land, and the consequent exploitation of the workers and other toilers, leads inevitably to monopoly, industrial crises, mass unemployment and mass pauperization in all capitalist countries and colonies, and also to fierce imperialist struggles among the great capitalist states for control of the world's markets, raw materials, populations, and strategic areas. The enormous sharpening of all these trends, due to the increasing decay of the world capitalist system as a whole, is the foundation cause of the war.

All the great capitalist states, by their very nature, are to blame for the war. It is not merely a case of who fired the first shot or which tiger leaped soonest. The ruling classes of Great Britain and France bear a heavy responsibility. Following the close of the World War, they dominated Europe for almost twenty years and were basically responsible for the immediate conditions leading up to the war, including the enslavement of the German people, the refusal to promote general disarmament, the attempt to corner the markets of the world for their own benefit, their sell-out of Spain, Ethiopia, China and other countries to the rapacious fascists, their constant plottings for a war against the Soviet Union and their rejection of the Soviet Government's proposals of an international peace front to prevent war. These typical reactionary imperialist policies of England and France set the stage for the present war.

The fascist and militarist rulers of Germany, Italy and Japan also contributed plenty to the outbreak of the slaughter. Their big drives of aggression on all fronts were not primarily to undo the injustices of the Versailles Treaty or to find living space for their peoples; they constituted determined imperialist efforts to redivide the world to the advantage of the ruling capitalist cliques of these countries. British, French, German, Japanese and Italian capitalism, all cut from the same imperialist cloth, are all full of war guilt.

American imperialism also bears heavy responsibility for the war. As a great capitalist power it was caught inextricably in all the world economic and political contradictions that finally exploded into war. Together with Great Britain and France, the United States was to blame for the intolerable conditions prevailing in Europe prior to the war; it refused to support proposals for general disarmament made by the Soviet Union; it sold out Spain and helped defeat the Soviet Government's projected international peace front to restrain the fascist policy. The present war is the result of American imperialist policy, as much as it is of the policies of England, Germany, Italy, France and Japan.

No estimate of war guilt is complete, however, without placing fundamental responsibility for the war upon the shoulders of the world Social-Democracy, the Second International. The war could have been prevented had the disarmament and international peace front proposals of the Soviet Government been adopted. The special guilt of this pseudo-Socialist movement lies in the fact that, adopting the imperialist policies of the capitalists in the various countries, it was basically responsible for defeating the Soviet's proposals. It operated to break down the peace resistance of the toiling masses. The reformist Social-Democrats, because of their control of key mass organizations of the working class, enabled the imperialists to develop their war program. Every step that these war-makers have taken, leading inexorably toward the present war, has had the passive or active support of their lieutenants in the ranks of the working class, the Social-Democrats. Without the help of the Social-Democrats the war would have been impossible.

Q. Why do the Communists put such heavy blame upon the Socialists for the present war?

A. Because, were it not for the fundamental and continuous betrayal of the interests of the working class by the world Social-Democracy the war would have been impossible. Except for the treachery of the Social-Democrats, we would not see the people being butchered, nor the present spectacle of France divided up by the fascist sharks—Hitler and Mussolini.

The basic political line of the Social-Democracy in Europe, on the same principle as that of the American Federation of Labor in this country, is one of collaboration (that is, following after) the capitalist class on all questions of decisive importance. Therefore, as in this period of declining capitalism the inevitable trend of the capitalists is towards war, the collaboration policy of the Social-Democrats led them to support their capitalist masters right into this imperialist war. The importance of this Social-Democratic support to the war-makers is due to the fact that, dominating great trade unions and mass political organizations, it has circumvented the people's potentially decisive opposition to the war, something that the capitalists themselves could not have done.

The Spanish civil war offered a disastrous and typical example of how the Social-Democrats assumed heavy war guilt by tailing after their war-making bourgeoisie. The great capitalists of England and France hated and dreaded the Spanish Republican Government, and they wanted the fascist Franco to win. So they proceeded to let Hitler and Mussolini cut the Spanish Republic to pieces under protection of the hypocritical British-French policy of "non-intervention."

The French Social-Democrat, Blum, then Premier of France, was the one who initiated this infamous policy. And to the end, the British Labor Party leaders never stirred to prevent Chamberlain's knifing of Loyalist Spain under this policy's shameful pretenses. Of course, our own American brand of Social-Democrats, the A. F. of L. leadership, in tune with Wall Street's wishes, also did everything possible to defeat the Spanish Republican cause. The general result was, thanks to the Social-Democrats, a tremendous fascist victory, which pushed Europe rapidly towards the present war.

The Social-Democrats also assumed basic guilt for the war when they sabotaged the Soviet Union's proposal for a great international peace front of the democratic peoples to halt the fascist aggressors. A solid backing by the trade unions of Great Britain, France and the United States, and by the Labor and Socialist Parties of the Second International could have forced the adoption of this vital proposal. But the war-minded capitalist classes of these imperialist countries were opposed to the Soviet's peace proposal, which would have halted the war; and, of course, after them as usual trailed the Social-Democrats. In some instances because of the great mass pressure, the Social-Democrats gave the Soviet's proposals lip service, but in reality they aided their governments to reject them. Echoing the capitalists' sentiments, they cast aspersions upon the Soviet Government, they refused to accept the Soviet trade unions into the Amsterdam International, and they hailed the Munich betrayal as a great victory for peace.

In short, although standing at the head of decisive millions of workers, who could have prevented the war by a joint campaign with the U.S.S.R., the Social-Democrats helped their capitalists organize the imperialist war. And now they are calling upon the sons of the people to go out and die in it.

The criminal actions of the Social-Democrats regarding Spain and the international peace front were only among the more recent phases of their war guilt. They have a still deeper and more fundamental responsibility for the war. This is because when, at the close of the World War, the German working class, patterning after their revolutionary brothers in Russia, overthrew the Kaiser and set up Soviets throughout Germany, the Social-Democrats liquidated them and re-established the capitalists in power. This betrayal of the revolution saved German capitalism, and capitalism throughout Central Europe, if not all Europe. This sell-out started the chain of events which led inexorably, considering Social-Democratic policy of tailing after the capitalists, to the growth of German fascism and to the outbreak of the present war.

The imperialist war grows basically out of the insoluble and deepening contradictions within the capitalist system. But the workers and other toilers, if they had not been betrayed by those capitalist hangers-on, the Social-Democratic

leaders, could have exerted enough power to prevent the war. If the world today faces the twin terrors of fascism and war the basic responsibility therefor rests upon the shoulders of the Second International.



Q. In capitalist and Social-Democratic papers the charge is constantly being made that the Soviet Government, by signing its non-aggression pact with Germany, was responsible for the outbreak of the war. What is the answer?

A. This charge is absurd. The Soviet Government signed the non-aggression pact with Germany only after it became obvious that its long fight to preserve world peace through general disarmament and the creation of a great peace front of the democratic peoples had failed and that war was inevitable. Hitler, who had at least temporarily given up his projected invasion of the Ukraine as too difficult, had turned his pressure against the Allies and was about to seize Poland. England and France, under the now discredited Chamberlain and Daladier, after callously betraying and rejecting the Soviet's proposed peace front, were doing everything in their power to provoke a war between Germany and the U.S.S.R.

Actually, however, their policy was bringing them more and more into conflict with the aggressive, westward-headed Nazis. Stalin and other Soviet leaders repeatedly warned them that their refusal to establish a firm peace front with the Soviet Union would boomerang against them and lead to war. When the situation had reached the very breaking point the U.S.S.R., realizing that its peace efforts had been defeated and being determined not to become involved in the war which it could not prevent, in self defense and according to the dictates of common sense, stepped out of the line of fire of the warlike powers and assumed a position of neutrality.

This is the meaning of the celebrated Soviet-German pact. One would think that capitalist and Social-Democratic writers would be ashamed to assert, in substance, that it was only the pressure of the Soviet Union that was keeping the Allies and Germany from war and that when this pressure could no

longer be exerted these imperialist states flew at each other's throats like ravenous wolves.



Q. In the present war, with the Allies fighting for democracy and Germany fighting for fascism, should not the U.S.S.R., as a socialist country, support the Allies?

A. The claim of the Allied governments that they are fighting this war for democracy constitutes only so much propaganda to lure the masses of their peoples and ours into supporting the war. The Allied powers did not fight for democracy during the World War (despite their democratic slogans) and they are not fighting for democracy now. What they are doing, even as they did in the World War, is defending the sordid interests of British and French imperialism against their great enemy, German imperialism. It is not a war of rival ideologies, but of rival imperialisms. Therefore, the Soviet Union is correct in supporting neither camp of the warring imperialists.

Were the British and French Governments true people's democracies, instead of being financial plutocracies, and were they fighting in defense of the people's liberties, then, without question, the attitude of the Soviet Government toward them would be one of active support, even as in the case of China and Spain. Of course, the drawing of a few Social-Democrats into the Tory Churchill Cabinet (which was done so that the masses might be more effectively mobilized for the war) does not make the British Government lose its imperialist character, nor does the sending of the erstwhile Left-winger, Sir Stafford Cripps, to Moscow as British Ambassador.

It is incorrect to put the issue as follows—if the Allies win there will be a democratic Europe, whereas if Hitler wins Europe will be fascist. So far as Hitler's plans are concerned, we can, of course, be sure that if Germany wins the war the Nazis will do their utmost to make all Europe fascist. But have British and French imperialism any better perspective to offer? We saw what happened after these powers won the World War. Under their twenty years of domination over Europe they forced half the continent to become fascist. They actually built up Hitler, with the plan in mind that he should

destroy the Soviet Union. They also defeated Republican Spain and turned it over to the fascist Franco. Conditions in India are a true measure of British "democracy." The generally reactionary policies of the dominant Allies since Versailles have finally led to the present war.

If the British-French-American imperialists were to win this war their course as the victors would be even more reactionary than it was after the World War. They would head for fascism, adapted to their various countries. This is because the capitalist system, already deeply decayed by its general crisis, will receive such a shattering blow from this war that the only way it can be held together even temporarily in the face of the rebellious masses will be through fascist terrorism.

What will create a democratic Europe and a free world is not a victory of British and French (and American) imperialism, but the victory of the great world democratic masses of the people over all the imperialists. These world democratic forces are the great Soviet Union, the workers and poorer farmers throughout the capitalist countries, the vast colonial masses in Asia, Africa and South America, the oppressed national minorities and small nations. It is through the organization and successful struggle of these great forces, nationally and internationally, against American, British, German, French, Japanese, Italian and other imperialisms that peace and democracy finally will be brought to the world. This is what the Communist movement is striving for. There is no other path to freedom and well being for the masses. Support of the Allied imperialists in this war, even as support of the German imperialists, can only lead to the deepest enslavement of humanity, not to democracy.



Q. Would the entry of the United States into the war give the war a democratic character?

A. It would not. In the present situation the great American bankers and industrialists, who are shaping the policies of the United States Government, have as the basis of their war program thoroughly imperialistic purposes, not the defense of world democracy. They are determined to seize, while the

grabbing is good, as much as they can of the world's markets, raw materials, strategic positions and territories. They aim to set up a complete economic, political and military domination throughout all Latin America. They want to take over the British, French and Dutch possessions in the Caribbean, as well as to develop protectorates in Greenland and the Dutch East Indies. They are also casting greedy eyes upon Canada. They desire to bolster up the British Empire, not neglecting to play the appeasement game with Hitler. The American imperialists are quite ready, furthermore, to cooperate with Nazi Germany or any other power that would fight the Soviet Union. The domestic side of their war program, symbolized by the M-Day Plan, calls for drastic curtailment of the living standards and civil liberties of the American people. It is for these reactionary, imperialistic objectives that the main sections of American big capitalists would have us join the war, not to crusade for human liberty.

The United States entered the World War under glittering slogans of "Make the world safe for democracy" and "The war to end all wars." Nevertheless American influence in the war situation was highly reactionary. Its representatives helped formulate the infamous Versailles Treaty; they took a leading role in enslaving the German people through the Dawes and Young plans; the United States joined England, France, Japan and other powers in military action to destroy the newly born Soviet Republic; American funds and influence were used to smash the Hungarian revolution. In short, the United States did its full bit in checking the spread of European democracy and in laying the basis for the present war.

Should the United States enter this war its influence would be even more reactionary than it was in the World War and post-war period. This is because the capitalist system is in more desperate straits now than it was then, and the tyrannical ruling capitalist classes are confronted with more powerful democratic and socialist forces. Therefore, the United States, under its present Wall Street-controlled government, would support reaction and fight against all efforts of the peoples of the world to rid themselves of the capitalist system and the hardships imposed by the war.

In view of all these facts it is clearly to the interest of the

American people—for the sake of its own sons, its material prosperity, and its democratic liberties—that the United States stay out of the war. It is no less to the interest of the oppressed peoples of the countries involved in the war that they, in their fight for freedom, be not forced to confront the additional reactionary strength of our powerful imperialist government. The 93 per cent of the American people who want to keep this country out of the war are doubly right.



Q. Why do Communists oppose President Roosevelt's program of national defense? Don't Communists believe in defending their country?

A. Communists militantly defend the national independence and democracy of their respective countries. In China the Communist Party was the leader in organizing the magnificent struggle of the Chinese people against the Japanese invaders. In Spain, likewise, the Communists were in the very front ranks of the Loyalist Army and fought heroically to defeat the German and Italian fascist interventionists. In France, during the period of the Popular Front Government, the Communists voted for the national defense budget, and the same policy is also being followed now in democratic Mexico, Cuba and Chile. And, in the Soviet Union the workers and peasants defended successfully their socialist country from the many attacks to which it has been subjected.

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the Communists also rally to the support of all democratic and oppressed countries victimized by military aggressors. An outstanding example of this policy is the support given by the U.S.S.R. and by Communists all over the world to democratic Spain and China. Then there were the Soviet Union's characteristic proposals to the other great powers to restrain Italy in Ethiopia by applying economic sanctions against her, and also its offer—acknowledged publicly by President Benes—to fight alone in support of Czechoslovakia after that country had been betrayed by Chamberlain and Daladier at Munich.

The Communists of this country stand ready to defend with their lives the national independence and democratic achieve-

ments of the American people from attacks by reactionary aggressors. But we refuse to support plans for imperialist adventures disguised as a defense program. This is why we refuse to endorse President Roosevelt's militarization plans and foreign policy. These constitute Wall Street's war policy and are being put over by methods of panic and hysteria.

Roosevelt's so-called defense scheme is designed, not for the protection of American territories and liberties from foreign aggressors, but to arm the United States Government for active participation in the death struggle now going on among the great imperialist powers for the redivision of the earth. It directly menaces American peace and the welfare of our people, and of the Latin American peoples. It threatens the lives of multitudes of American boys; its fulfilment calls for a drastic lowering of American living standards and civil liberties; and it is a danger to the well being of friendly democratic peoples in other countries.



Q. What program of national defense do the Communists advocate, as against the proposals of President Roosevelt?

A. (1) A people's democratic government: For our Government to follow a genuine policy of national defense it must be a government controlled by the workers, farmers, professionals and small urban middle class elements. These strata constitute the overwhelming majority of the American people and they are also the democratic backbone of the nation. A government by these basic masses could safely be voted the arms necessary to protect the country from all possible reactionary aggressors, within and without. With a people's army, the nation could rest secure in the full confidence that these arms would be used truly for the purpose of peace and national defense. The Communists always vote to furnish arms to such democratic governments, as in the cases of the first popular front government in France, and the democratic people's governments of Spain, China, Mexico, Chile and Cuba.

Obviously, the Roosevelt Government does not measure up to these indispensable democratic standards. It is controlled by Wall Street and it is putting into effect the latter's imperialistic war program. To vote arms to such a government,

therefore, is not to establish an effective national defense, but to enable the warmongers to participate effectively in the present violent struggle among the capitalist powers for imperialist domination of the earth. Roosevelt's program is not for national defense, but for imperialist aggression.

(2) *A foreign policy of peace:* A true policy of national defense, put into effect by a people's democratic government, must be based upon principles of non-aggression and peace. The government should preserve an attitude of strict neutrality towards the warring imperialist powers. It should not engage in the munitions trade. It should respect the national independence and right of self-determination of other countries. It should enter into active collaboration for peace and mutual defense with all peoples and forces genuinely desirous of peace, especially with the Soviet Union, and also with the world labor movement, the great colonial and semi-colonial peoples of China, India, Latin America and Africa, and the many oppressed nationalities and invaded peoples.

The imperialist policy of the Roosevelt Government has nothing in common with all this. It definitely supports one side in the war, the Allies, and it is preparing to go to war on this basis. It is up to its neck in the sale of munitions to the Allies and Japan. It is out to grab all the territories, markets, and spheres of influence that it can as its designs upon Latin America, Dutch East Indies, Greenland, etc., make quite clear. It is not at all interested in cooperating with the Soviet Union and the other world peace forces listed above, but is their enemy, like all imperialist states.

(3) *A democratic domestic policy:* A basic condition of a real national defense is a free and prosperous people. Such a people may be depended upon to make the maximum possible defense of their country. Therefore, a genuine American national defense program of a people's democratic government must be founded upon the building up of wage scales, shortening of hours, protection of the youth, the aged, and women workers, along the general lines proposed by the C.I.O. legislative program. With 12,000,000 unemployed there is no good reason why the industries of the country could not equip an adequate armed force, and, at the same time, greatly improve the living standards of the masses. Also, it is imperative

that the democratic liberties of the people be conserved and developed, A militant application of the Bill of Rights is a first condition for a strong national defense. The trade unions and all other democratic mass organizations should be built up.

In this general respect also it is clear that the militarization plans of President Roosevelt are opposed to a true program of national defense. Yielding to the demands of the profiteering capitalists, the present administration is proceeding upon the theory that national defense requires greatly lowered living standards among the masses. It also accepts the theory that the people must be stripped of their democratic rights, as is all too evident from the present widespread attacks upon the Bill of Rights by various official and unofficial agencies. The pattern the government has in mind is the semi-fascist war conditions prevailing in England and Canada.

(4) *A socialist perspective:* The foregoing proposals for a democratic government, carrying out a foreign policy of peace and a democratic domestic policy, are the essentials of a practical national defense program under present day conditions. But the most fundamental national defense of the American people, like that of all other nations, expressed in terms of peace and rising living, cultural and freedom standards, can only be finally guaranteed by the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. This is the end toward which the great toiling masses of the world are tending, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The Roosevelt Government, based as it is upon capitalism and imperialism, and applying a war program, is not only against all the essentials of a present day policy of genuine national defense, as outlined above, but is even more opposed to the only possible final solution of the problem of national defense, through the establishment of socialism.



Q. Would American participation in the war end unemployment and bring prosperity to the workers of this country?

A. Most assuredly it would not. On the contrary, the war holds for the workers in every capitalist country, including our own, not well being and plenty, but hardships and misery of every description. The circulation of the "war-means-

prosperity" propaganda among workers is one of the most insidious methods now being used to circumvent the opposition of the masses to the war. This agitation is especially dangerous because many American workers, with illusions about "boom" times of the World War and post-war period, think that similar conditions will prevail during this war.

Contrary to the warmongers' statements, should the United States become involved in this "total war" we may expect serious slashes in American standards of living, if the Government and the employers have their way. Everything—except employers' profits, of course—would be sacrificed for the insatiable military machine. "Cannons not butter" is the warmongers' real policy in the United States, as well as in other capitalist countries. What has happened in England, Germany, France and Italy, where mass living standards have been cut to pieces, gives the general pattern of what American workers can look forward to, instead of prosperity, should this country get into the war.

Indeed, already, even before we are militarily in the war, we can see the forecast of the dark shadow of these evils. The President has warned us of the great sacrifices that must be made in order to realize his "defense" program. The newspapers and the radio are full of propaganda to the effect that in our "total" defense preparations we cannot tolerate the "luxuries" of the Walsh-Healy Act, the National Labor Relations Act, the Wages and Hours Act, the WPA and other such social legislation. Daily, also, our civil liberties are being whittled away so that the workers' resistance may be weakened. Matters have gone so far that now workers who strike for wage increases are for this temerity dubbed as fifth columnists. And with the national debt approaching forty-five billions, the agitation spreads to "extend the tax base," so that the cost of the present gigantic military preparations and of the eventual war may be shoved onto the shoulders of the workers and farmers. Meanwhile the "dollar-a-year" men start flocking to Washington to reap their harvest of blood profits. These ominous beginnings show the futility and danger of the workers harboring prosperity illusions about this war.

The war not only cannot abolish unemployment, but it will in the long run make it far worse. In the present period

of intense military preparations the expanding war industries will absorb some unemployed, but these will be only a fraction of the 12,000,000 now without jobs. Even if the United States should actually enter the war it is most improbable that this would liquidate the huge army of unemployed. And when the war ends and the capitalist industries drop into the inevitable deep crisis then we can expect unemployment on such a gigantic scale as the world has never before even dreamed of. All of which makes imperative the most stubborn resistance by the workers against every attempt of the warmongers to do away with the present legislative protection of the unemployed, weak though it is.

The first World War economic crisis of 1919-22 was followed by several years of industrial activity in this country, the so-called Coolidge prosperity, which was characterized, however, mostly by the huge profits made by the employers. The main economic basis of this "prosperity" was the rehabilitation of war-torn Europe, financed largely by huge American loans. But there will be no such "prosperity" period after the end of the present war. No settlement by the imperialists of the present war will give the world capitalist system such a long breathing spell of "peace" for rehabilitation as it had after the World War. At best there will be only an uncertain and armed truce. And with the capitalist powers straining all their resources to keep their armaments at maximum strength there will be little or no funds available for reconstruction of the war-devastated territories. The situation will be all the worse because this war will shatter the capitalist system more than the World War did, as the huge damage already done in Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France indicates. Such work of post-war reconstruction as may be undertaken, therefore, if the capitalists remain in power will be carried out on the basis of the deepest exploitation and oppression of the workers in all countries, including the United States.



Q. Would it not be better for the workers to support Roosevelt for President and thus prevent the forces of reaction from securing power?

A. This idea is a dangerous illusion. Actually there is no pro-

gressive choice for the workers between the Democratic and Republican parties. Both are reactionary and for war. Their fundamental domestic policies are basically the same, and whichever of them comes to power will seek to inflict upon the masses the lowered standards of living, restricted civil rights and other hardships that are inseparably tied up with support of this reactionary, imperialist war.

As for President Roosevelt, his progressivism is now a thing of the past. He has joined up with the reactionaries. Responding to the demands of the great Wall Street bankers, Roosevelt has become American imperialism's outstanding war leader. He has cast aside American neutrality and is taking one step after another involving us in this disastrous and reactionary war. He scuttled the New Deal and has the semi-fascist M-Day plan all prepared to clamp down upon the American people immediately this country gets into the war. In view of all this, Roosevelt's continued assurances of peaceful intentions and of a determination to retain existing social legislation and living standards are worth no more than similar demagoguery from Willkie.

Fundamental agreement upon Wall Street's war policy—both in its foreign and domestic phases—explains the rapidly growing political unity between the erstwhile progressive Roosevelt New Dealers and the reactionaries of both parties. Roosevelt has now thoroughly healed the breach with the ultra-reactionary Garner forces in the Democratic Party. More and more also, in spite of election quarrels over lesser questions, he is coming into agreement with the decisive leaders of the Republican Party on the central issues of the war. This political unity can develop only on the basis of the sacrifice of the peace of this country and the welfare of the workers and other toilers to the greed of the war-making imperialists.

What the "progressive" Roosevelt is doing in surrendering the interests of the masses to the demands of the reactionaries should not astound us. We see it duplicated by the Labor Party and trade union officials in England. These misleaders of labor, prostituting the name of socialism, are working hand in glove with the capitalist Tories, for the latter's program, and they are deluding the masses as to the aims of the unjust imperialist war, abandoning the hard-won standards of the work-

ers and carefully protecting the "rights" of the capitalists.

Workers who support Roosevelt or Willkie will not only be throwing away their votes, but what is worse, they will be unwittingly voting for the war. Pro-Roosevelt support can have no other significance. During the national election it is important that the workers roll up a big vote for peace, bread and freedom by voting for the Communist candidates, Browder and Ford. They should utilize the election period, from now on, to expose the machinations of the warmongers, and to develop the broadest mass struggle against American involvement in the war and for the protection of the people's democratic rights and living standards. A great third, peace, party must also be built up. If these things are done promptly and effectively it will still be possible to keep America out of the war and to shield the masses from the war's devastation. Support of Roosevelt, or of Willkie, means the practical abandonment of the struggle for peace, thus also betraying the people's most important economic and political interests into the hands of the rapacious profiteers.



Q. Why is the Communist Party against Sidney Hillman's becoming a member of President Roosevelt's Council of National Defense?

A. The Roosevelt Administration is definitely heading towards participation in the imperialist war. Its increasingly active pro-Ally policy and its gigantic military budget expose clearly its war orientation. The President's Council of National Defense (a resurrection of the corresponding body of World War days) is a major instrument of the Government for mobilizing the industries and man-power of the country in support of its imperialist war program. Therefore, when Sidney Hillman, or any other labor leader, becomes a member of such a board his membership can only tend to make the labor movement an auxiliary of the war machine of the government. It is nonsense to assert that the workers can the better defend themselves by being represented in such bodies. They are posts of working class surrender, not of resistance.

When war-making or war-planning imperialists begin in-

viting trade union and Socialist Party leaders into their government cabinets (as in England and France) and into national war boards (as in the United States) it is not for the sake of giving their war plans a democratic purpose. On the contrary, their aims are to put a mask of democracy on their imperialism and to dissolve insidiously the mass opposition against their unjust war program. Through the mouths of such labor leaders, who have been made part of the warlike government's machinery, the imperialists can poison the masses more effectively with their lying war propaganda, and also by means of these misleaders the exploiters are able to impose upon the workers far more onerous economic and political conditions than they otherwise could. Thus it was under cover of direct proposals of the Social-Democratic members of the imperialist government cabinets of England and France that Churchill and Reynaud were able practically to destroy democracy in these countries and to rob the trade unions of gains won by generations of struggle. It would have been impossible for the warring capitalist governments to do these things without the assistance of Social-Democratic leaders.

During the World War the top leadership of the American Federation of Labor and the Railroad Brotherhoods, through the various war boards of the time, similarly became part of the capitalist war apparatus in this country. They drummed up recruits for the useless slaughter and they tied the workers with no-strike, no-wage-increase, no-organize agreements, while the war profiteers reaped billions of dollars in blood profits. We want no repetition of this surrender of working class interests. Yet this is precisely where Hillman's acceptance of membership in the National Defense Council would lead to. Of course, negotiations with employers and with government labor law enforcement boards in furtherance of the workers' demands are necessary in these war times, but this is something quite different from actual participation in war councils.

The correct position for the workers in the present situation is: (a) to condemn the war as an unjust, imperialist war which the masses must not support; (b) to reject President Roosevelt's unneutral policies and gigantic so-called national defense budget as steps leading the United States towards entry into the war; (c) to forbid the participation of union

leaders in the Council of National Defense and similar boards for organizing the war; (d) to carry on an active struggle to organize the unorganized and to protect the workers' living standards, social legislation and civil rights, and (e) to fight for a just people's peace in collaboration with the democratic forces of this country and of the world.



Q. Is the Republican Party the party of peace, as its supporters assert?

A. The Republican Party is no less a war party than the Democratic Party. Both are parties of Wall Street, of warlike American imperialism. Although Republican candidates and leaders talk much of peace this is solely for demagogic purposes, to catch the election votes of the peace-minded masses. The Republican Party must be judged by its deeds, not by its words. The Republicans have supported all along Roosevelt's developing war program, misnamed a policy of neutrality. They, like the Democrats, have voted for every aid to the Allies. Willkie is no less warlike than Roosevelt.

The Republicans gave Roosevelt enough votes to assure the lifting of the arms embargo. They supported his shipment of Army planes and "obsolete" Navy ships to the Allies. They outshouted him in warlike threats against the Soviet Union in Finland. They distinguished themselves by insistent demands that the United States take over forthwith the whole Western Hemisphere (vociferous Republican spokesmen on this point are Hamilton Fish and Colonel Lindbergh). The Republicans applauded the plan for an American protectorate over Greenland and the Dutch East Indies. They are most eager to put into effect the domestic side of American imperialism's war policy, by reducing the masses' living standards, undermining the trade unions, and slashing away the people's democratic liberties. They are partisans of the infamous M-Day plan. They have voted for every phase of Roosevelt's gigantic program of national "defense" which in reality is meant to put teeth in Wall Street's war policy.

The Republican Party is also tending to become the party of the appeasers of Hitler (although Roosevelt himself did a

pretty thorough job of appeasement in the case of the arms embargo against Spain and the shipment of munitions to Japan to use against China). For proof that the appeasement policy is a war policy all we have to do is to look at the Frankenstein Nazi monster that it has built up and the whole row of war-ravished countries—China, Spain, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France—that it is responsible for.

To call the Republican Party a peace party, in view of its war record, constitutes the most unscrupulous demagoguery.



Q. Is there any validity in the promises of the British and American political and industrial leaders to the effect that sacrifices of union conditions made now by the workers will be fully restored after the war?

A. There is not. The only way the workers in England and the United States will be able to get back union and living conditions surrendered up during this war by their reformist leaders will be by resolute struggle. The reason for this is that, regardless of which side wins the war or whether it ends in a stalemate, the capitalist system will find itself in a deep crisis at the conclusion of the war. The capitalists will hang onto every advantage they have, and will use the most drastic political and economic repression in order to do so. Post-war relationships between capital and labor will be settled upon the basis of fierce class struggles, not by employers good-naturedly keeping war-time pledges. The efforts of Green, Hillman and other union leaders to have the workers accept so-called temporary worsening of hard-won union conditions is a betrayal of their basic interests.



Q. What is the meaning of the Government's prosecutions of the trade unions under the Sherman anti-trust law; also what of Westbrook Pegler's attacks?

A. The Federal prosecutions of the trade unions under the Sherman-Clayton Acts; the anti-union filth-slinging campaign of Pegler, dean of the sewer-rat school of journalism; the

red-baiting attacks of the Dies Committee upon the C.I.O.; the whittling away of civil liberties in various fields; the denunciation in the press and radio of everything progressive as fifth columnist; the efforts in Congress to reduce the whole body of aliens to the status of a suspect group; the attempts of the reactionaries to outlaw the Communist Party—are all cut from the same cloth. The form of the attacks vary in the different circumstances, but they all come to the same thing in the end. They are just so many phases of the general plan to break the resistance of the masses against the war and to force them to accept lower living standards, weakened trade unions and crippled civil liberties.

To repel this militant offensive of big capital requires intelligence and determination on the part of the workers. They need to know how to defeat the Government's attacks upon the closed shop, without protecting reactionary job trust tendencies in the craft unions; they have to fight against Pegler's slanders, while at the same time ridding the labor movement of grafters and racketeers; they must be able to penetrate the insidious anti-alien, anti-Negro, red-baiting, fifth column, warmongering hypocrisies of the reactionaries and to discern their anti-labor core. To show the workers the inter-connection between the various phases of the employers' offensive, and to help develop the specific and general means necessary for fighting them, is the central task of the Communist Party in its struggle to prevent this country from being dragged into the imperialist war.



Q. Doesn't Roosevelt's pro-war policy show that the Communist Party was wrong in giving support to the New Deal?

A. It does not. The Communist Party was quite correct in supporting all the progressive features of the New Deal. When Roosevelt, under heavy pressure from the great masses of poverty-stricken workers, farmers and lower city middle classes, was furthering legislation providing the masses with some measure of aid, in the shape of the right to organize, unemployment and farm relief, the beginnings of a system of social insurance, and other progressive measures, the Communist

Party, as the defender of the immediate as well as ultimate interests of the workers, could take no other course than to support this legislation, which it did. Also, our Party had to back up such tendencies as the Roosevelt Government was then showing towards a policy of collective security and more democratic relations with the countries of Latin America. Roosevelt was then and is now a defender of capitalism. What our Party supported was not Roosevelt's capitalism, but the progressive measures and concessions in his program.

At the time our Party was supporting the progressive measures of the New Deal it continued to point out the inadequacies and limitations of this program of bourgeois reformism. Our Party proposed additional progressive legislation and insisted upon the need for socialism. It also condemned such reactionary policies of Roosevelt as the arms embargo against Spain, the shipment of munitions to Japan, etc. And now that Roosevelt has dropped his reform program and has launched out on the road to imperialist war, our Party sharpens its opposition accordingly. The Party's general line during the New Deal period was a correct Marxist-Leninist policy under the given circumstances. In the May number of *The Communist*, in my article, entitled "Seven Years of Roosevelt," I have analyzed in detail the play of class forces during the New Deal period, as well as the role of our Party.



Q. What is the Government's attitude towards the question of trade union unity?

In the development of its war policy the Roosevelt Administration is seeking to control the trade unions, in order to compel the workers to accept worsened conditions to fatten the employers' war profits, and also to help break the masses' opposition to the war. But with the labor movement split and with the C.I.O. showing considerable of an anti-war, anti-Administration position, the desired union control by the Government is not easy to attain. Roosevelt is convinced that his task would be much simpler if all the unions were under one head, with a leadership approximating that of the A. F. of L. Executive Council. The formation of the new Labor Ad-

visory Council, under the chairmanship of Hillman, is a long step in this direction.

The A. F. of L. leaders are, of course, ready for a Roosevelt "trade union unity" that would constitute a surrender of the C.I.O. unions to their tender mercies. Dubinsky, a Roosevelt man, showed just about what the present Administration has in mind regarding trade union unity when he reaffiliated the International Ladies Garment Workers Union to the A. F. of L. without demanding guarantees for the new industrial unions. That the Hillman wing of the C.I.O. leaders is developing pretty much the same idea was demonstrated at the recent convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers when Hillman blamed John L. Lewis for the split.

Trade union unity is necessary for the further progress of the American labor movement. But the workers need to see to it that no steps backward are taken under pseudo slogans of healing the trade union split. There must be no surrender to the reactionary A. F. of L. Executive Council, such as Dubinsky has made and as Hillman evidently is contemplating. The kind of trade union unity imperatively needed is one that will protect the integrity of the new industrial unions, maintain and strengthen their progressive leadership, and leave the door open for the exercise of an anti-war policy, including an active defense of the workers' living standards. This is the trade union unity wanted by the great masses of the membership in the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods. And it can be achieved if the progressive forces in the unions fight against the maneuvers of Green, Dubinsky, Hillman and the Roosevelt Administration.



Q. Why do the Roosevelt Administration and the big capitalists of this country give support to America's imperialist rival, Great Britain?

A. It is a fact that the present Administration, backed by the most powerful groups of bankers and industrialists, is supporting Great Britain against Germany "with all measures short of war," and it wants actually to get into the hostilities, in spite of the peace will of the overwhelming masses of the

American people. It is also true that many important capitalist forces, characteristic spokesmen for whom are the semi-fascists Henry Ford, Hamilton Fish and Charles Lindbergh, are opposed to thus aiding Great Britain. They would appease Hitler and turn still more sharply the aggressive attention of American imperialism to what they consider more fruitful fields, notably Latin America.

There are numerous reasons why Wall Street and its Government are backing Great Britain in this war, notwithstanding the long, intense, and deep-seated rivalry between British and American imperialism in all corners of the earth. These reasons have nothing in common with the usually alleged desires to defend world democracy and to preserve Anglo-American culture; they are based simply on sordid, cold-blooded capitalist interests.

First among the reasons for American support of England is the fear among American capitalists that a decisive victory by Germany would confront them with an imperialist rival more powerful than decadent Britain. German imperialism, dominating Europe and in alliance with Japan and Italy, would be a menacing danger to the imperialist interests of American capitalists in Europe, in the Far East, in Latin America, and everywhere else. Therefore, American capitalists are eager to help and stimulate Great Britain to defeat, or at least to weaken, this new imperialist monster; even as England urged Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France to resist Nazi Germany. American capitalists are afraid also, as recently indicated by James Cromwell, former Minister to Canada, that if they do not help Great Britain against Germany that government will make some sort of capitulatory agreement with Hitler at the expense of American imperialist interests.

The second basic reason for American support to Great Britain is the fear on the part of American capitalists that if the British Empire is overthrown it may provoke revolutionary convulsions that will shake the capitalist system. England, long the central point of a whole network of empires—French, Dutch, Belgium, Portuguese—is a very cornerstone of world capitalism, and its sudden destruction might have disastrous consequences to capitalism generally. Such an upset, wealthy

and reactionary American capitalism wants very much to avoid.

The third major cause for American war help to Great Britain is the capitalist belief that this is the best way for American imperialism to protect its huge investments in the various countries making up the British Empire. Together with this is the calculation that inasmuch as the British Empire is obviously being seriously weakened, if not actually destroyed, in the present war with Germany, the best way for the United States to set up an economic and political hegemony over the disintegrating empire, or to grab what it can of the pieces, is on the basis of a policy of cooperation with the British Government in this war.



Q. Please explain the policy of the United States toward Japan?

A. It is essentially a policy of appeasement and it is producing the disastrous results inseparable from such a policy. Although the American Government repeatedly complained about the many aggressions of Japan against China it has nevertheless kept on supplying Japan with the war materials without which its policy of aggression would have been impossible. In consequence Japanese imperialism is running amuck throughout the Far East and is seeking to grab not only China, but also the Dutch East Indies, Indo-China and the Philippines. Chamberlain built up Nazi Germany through appeasement, and Roosevelt has vastly strengthened imperialist Japan by the same process. Now the imperialists are plotting to strengthen still further Japanese imperialism by organizing a Far East Munich.

Chamberlain appeased Hitler in order to get him to fight the U.S.S.R. and to strangle democracy throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Roosevelt is appeasing Japan because he fears a strong democratic China, and he would like to use Japan against the socialist Soviet Union, in order to further American imperialist interests. The basic result of Roosevelt's appeasement has been to build up the Japanese militarist monster, a malignant enemy to world peace and democracy.

Had the United States Government been truly interested in peace and democracy it could have pulled the teeth of

Japanese imperialism. What it should have done was, on the one hand, to embargo the shipment of war materials to Japan, and, on the other, to enter into cooperative relations with the Soviet Union and the Chinese Nationalist Government. This would have stopped Japan. But Roosevelt preferred to help Japan against both China and the U.S.S.R. The outcome of this reactionary policy is the present world menace of rampant Japanese imperialism.



Q. What is the significance of Raymond Clapper's slogan of a "Greater America"?

A. This slogan is an ideological justification of the present intense drive of American imperialism to subjugate Latin America militarily, economically and politically. Clapper's theory of the third American revolution, one that will "weld the Hemisphere into a unit as the thirteen North American colonies did in the first revolution" is only a screen to hide the predatory plans of American imperialism. In fact, Clapper himself exposes the iron fist of our Government when he speaks of its need of air and naval bases throughout Latin America, of its determination to check "subversive" forces in the various countries, and when he declares that "the good neighbor policy must become the strong neighbor policy."

American imperialism has no intention whatever of building up any such United States of the Western Hemisphere as Clapper chatters about. Nor has it the least desire to put into effect the obsolete Good Neighbor Policy of a loose Pan-American federation of politically equal and independent states. Both of these conceptions conflict basically with American imperialist plans. On the contrary, the Roosevelt Administration's imperialist policy, produced by the war situation and akin to the aims of Japan, Germany and Great Britain on a world basis, is to seize control over the Latin American countries, to reduce them virtually to the status of colonies and to use them as a great war bloc against its imperialist rivals in the developing world war. The threat to Latin America from Nazi Germany is seized upon as the excuse for this bold plan of American imperialism.

Economically the present great drive of American imperial-

ism in Latin America is directed towards monopolizing the markets of these countries, grabbing control of their vast riches of raw materials, and preventing the growth of industries that will compete with the stagnant industries of the United States. This policy would strangle the industrial life of Latin America and degenerate its whole economic system down to a colonial basis dependent upon the United States. Politically also, American policy fits in with this plan of economic enslavement. The present menacing threats of United States repression of "fifth column" activities in Latin America are the prelude to American intervention in various forms in these countries for the purpose of setting up American-controlled puppet governments. In Mexico we now see the significance of this, as American agents are mobilizing every reactionary force in the country to overthrow the present government.

The American military domination of the Hemisphere, which Roosevelt proposes to establish with his 50,000 airplanes, super navy and armed bases at strategic points throughout Latin America, is designed to enforce the reactionary and oppressive economic and political policies of American imperialism upon the Latin American peoples. Its aim is to turn Latin America into a great colonial hinterland and an instrument of the United States in its policy of imperialist conquest.

This grandiose scheme of aggression threatens the well being and political independence of our Latin American neighbor peoples. It is a menace to everything democratic and progressive in their countries, and also in our own land. The effective political answer to it is the development of a great national liberation movement throughout Latin America, uniting the many peoples against this new and most dangerous menace of Yankee imperialism, which is allied with every form of local reaction. The more than 100,000,000 people in the Latin American countries are potentially very powerful and are filled with a strong spirit of national independence. United, they can defeat these new schemes of American imperialism. Nor will they be slow in showing active opposition to enslavement by the United States. It is the basic duty of the labor movement and all other progressive forces in the United States to help the Latin American peoples in their struggle for national independence against this offensive of Yankee imperialism.

Q. *In the midst of a capitalist world gone war-mad how can the peoples of Latin America defend themselves from imperialist aggression?*

A. Central and South America constitute one of the naturally richest sections of the earth's surface, and they have long been the object and victim of covetous imperialist states. Now, however, with the great imperialist powers locked in a death struggle among themselves over the redivision of the world the peril of the Latin American countries has grown suddenly acute. Their most immediate danger is from Yankee imperialism, which wants to establish a firm economic, political and military domination over them and, under the guise of protecting them, involve them in the imperialist war. In the close background also looms the menacing threat of Hitler and Mussolini.

Therefore, the question of working out a program of defense, armed and otherwise, has become a burning issue for the Latin American peoples. Upon their realization of such a defense program depends the preservation of their national independence and their possibilities for economic and social development. Clearly these peoples cannot defend themselves, retain their peace, and prevent their countries from becoming the battlefields of rival imperialisms, by relying upon the eagerly offered "protection" of the United States. Under its new version of the Monroe Doctrine, this course could only lead to their complete subjugation, considering the new aggressiveness of Yankee imperialism in Latin America.

Nor can the nations to the South of us defend themselves by permitting themselves to be dragged into this present imperialist war, or by tailing after British, German, Japanese or Italian imperialism, all of which are eager to "protect" them. This, too, would be the road to their being reduced to colonies. And by the same token, the Latin American peoples cannot expect to effect their national defense by militarily strengthening the many reactionary dictators like Vargas of Brazil, for these are agents of the several groups of foreign imperialists.

The real solution of the problem of national defense and maintaining the peace of the Latin American republics is

basically one of democratizing the score of countries of Central and South America and of uniting their combined power. In developing their own strength through democracy lies the safety of these peoples. This means unfolding the national liberation movement to the full. Great popular fronts on the Mexican, Chilean and Cuban models, based upon the trade unions, farmers' organizations, student bodies and other popular mass organizations, are the necessary foundations for democratic governments really capable of defending Central and South America. Such democratic governments in all or most of the Latin American republics should be linked together in a solid bloc. Acting as a unit, and cultivating the economic welfare of the many peoples, they would be powerful enough to repel all imperialist aggressors and their multitudinous fifth column agents. This bloc of democratic Latin American peoples, developing its contacts with the Soviet Union, the great colonial countries of India and China, the many defeated and overrun nations, and the international labor movement would be a tremendous force for the establishment of a true people's peace throughout this war-torn world. The American working class should support the Latin Americans in all these developments. Only on this path of democracy and solidarity can the Latin American peoples defend themselves against the imperialist sharks eager to devour them.



Q. What is the Communist answer to the assertion that the Soviet Union is an ally of Hitler?

A. It is an anti-Soviet lie which life itself is constantly exposing. The U.S.S.R. is pursuing its own course of peace, democracy and socialism, policies which have nothing in common with Hitler's line. Basic aspects of Soviet policy are:

(a) While the imperialist powers are trying to destroy each other the Soviet Union goes ahead rapidly expanding its own socialist industries and agriculture, raising the living and cultural standards of its toiling masses, improving its military defense organizations, strengthening its border defense positions, and increasing its world influence among the nations.

(b) The U.S.S.R. is supporting neither camp of the imperialists. It contends that this is an unjust war in which the

democratic masses have no interest. It makes trade agreements and non-aggression pacts with nations on both sides of the war, as well as with neutrals. It allows neither Germany, England, nor any other capitalist power to dictate the character of its agreement with other states.

(c) The U.S.S.R. extends its powerful assistance to smaller and weaker peoples attacked by aggressors. Notable examples of this were its support of Spain, China, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia and the peoples of Eastern Poland. The U.S.S.R. is the sole power to which the international working class, the oppressed national minorities, the militarily crushed peoples and weaker states can safely turn for cooperation and help.

(d) True to its socialist character, the U.S.S.R. is firmly committed to a policy of peace. For years it struggled to prevent the outbreak of the present war by proposing general disarmament of all governments and, when this was rejected by England, France and the United States, the U.S.S.R. urged the formation of a great international peace front of the democratic peoples, which was also rejected. Now that the war is under way, the U.S.S.R. is not only seeking to limit its spread, but it has also repeatedly called for the reestablishment of international peace. In such a peace settlement the Soviet Union would stand forth as the champion and defender of the earth's oppressed millions.

All of which socialist policies of peace and non-aggression are fundamentally at variance with the policies of both the Allies and Nazi Germany, capitalist powers which are relentlessly struggling against each other for the imperialist re-division of the earth.



Q. When the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed Communists said that this broke the fascist axis, but now it is as strong as ever. Please explain this.

A. Communist spokesmen were correct in stating that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact split the Berlin-Tokyo-Rome axis. Japanese statesmen promptly condemned the treaty and declared that their government would continue on with its anti-Communist crusade. Mussolini took a similar

attitude of opposition, and during several months he openly negotiated for a bargain with Great Britain and France.

If the shattered fascist axis has been able to reestablish itself, the responsibility therefor rests with the Allies. It will be recalled that when Premier Molotov of the U.S.S.R. explained the meaning of the Non-Aggression Pact he stated that it did not prevent the formation of the great international peace front for which the Soviet Union had worked so long, in the face of British and French sabotage. There was still time for Great Britain and France (and the United States), had they been so minded, to become part of a peace front strong enough to maintain world peace in the face of Hitler's ruthless drive to conquest.

But the Allies were operating on quite a different plan. Clinging to their idea of developing an anti-Soviet war and also greatly overestimating their military strength, they declared war against Germany when she later invaded Poland. This criminal folly was the first long step towards bringing the fascist marauders, Hitler and Mussolini, together again. Then, let it also not be forgotten that shortly after the war started the U.S.S.R. proposed that steps be taken to reestablish world peace. But this plea was ignored by Great Britain and France and their collaborator, the United States. Being very sure that they could win the war or turn its blast against the U.S.S.R., the Allies let the hostilities go on. Stupidly they went "looking for battlefields" and challenged Hitler to come out and fight. The general result was that Hitler and Mussolini recemented their alliance and resumed their victorious advance. But whereas formerly this alliance had been directed against the U.S.S.R., now it was turned against the Allies.

Great Britain and France originally built up Hitler with their appeasement policy in the hope that he would attack the Soviet Union. They also fattened Italy and Japan with the appeasement policy and for the same anti-Soviet purpose. Thus, at base, they were responsible for the formation, in the first place, of the notorious Berlin-Tokyo-Rome axis. And it was these same great imperialist powers, grown arrogant from long years of world rulership, who, by their war-like, stupid and reactionary policies, reconstituted the fascist axis after it had been broken by Soviet diplomacy.

Q. Is the recent increase in work time in the Soviet Union from the six and seven-hour day to the seven and eight-hour day and from the five-day week to the six-day week a justification for lengthening working time in American industry?

A. Most emphatically it is not. The Soviet Union is flanked by powerful and hostile states—Germany, Italy, Japan—which are eager to destroy its socialist system. Its need to strengthen its defenses is urgent. As there is no unemployment in the U.S.S.R. the only way it can secure the added needed munitions production immediately is by increasing the work period. This increase—to a maximum of seven and eight hours per day and six days per week—is small compared to the ten and twelve-hour day and seven-day week in effect in Germany and England. In the United States, with its 12,000,000 unemployed, there is no reason for increasing the work day or work week, no matter how great an output of munitions may be called for. On the contrary, American workers have every reason for demanding the six-hour day and better wages.

And most important, the Soviet workers are justified in the recent lengthening of their working hours because it is done in true defense of their country, of its policy of peace and of its socialist system. There are no munitioneers or profiteers to gain from this action. Whereas the wages and hours sacrifices demanded from American workers by the so-called defense program of the present Wall Street-controlled Government are not for the purpose of defending the country and the people's true interests, but to swell the profits of the war-making imperialists and to enable them to carry out their imperialist designs.



Q. Is it true that the social reforms achieved under the Popular Front Government weakened France and thus were responsible for its defeat by Hitler?

A. This is a dastardly lie. Its present wide circulation in the American press is designed to prepare the ground for undermining the trade unions, reducing the living standards of the American workers and wiping off the books the social legislation won in recent years. In the great armaments pro-

gram now under way the idea is that the workers shall be made to surrender most basic rights and achievements, while the profits of the employers are to be conserved and increased.

The explanation of the weak struggle made by France was not that the workers had too good conditions as a result of the former Popular Front Government. The real reason was that the country was betrayed by its fascist-minded rulers. The Daladier and Reynaud governments, in line with previous administrations, were saturated with fascist-minded traitors who destroyed the French-Soviet Pact and helped Chamberlain to organize the Munich sell-out. They sabotaged the national defense and finally made the shameful surrender of the country. The military, naval and air force officer corps was rotten with such elements who held the criminally stupid theory of simply sitting on the defensive behind their fortifications, neglected or refused to develop modern arms and methods of warfare. This destroyed the power of the French army. The great employers, tied up in economic alliances with the German fascists, joined in the general capitalist sabotage. They shipped huge sums of their capital to the United States and allowed the defense industries to fall into decay. By this sabotage and treason, by this sell-out of their country to the Nazi invaders, the strategically placed fascist-minded French capitalists, industrialists, politicians and officer corps hoped to avert advancing socialism by taking refuge under the iron regime of Hitler.

The criticism that can be directed against the Popular Front Government, from a national defense standpoint, is not that it adopted too many reforms but that it did not go far enough with its progressive policies. This failure was because of the vicious opposition of the Social-Democratic and Radical Party leaders—the Blums and Daladiers—who finally wrecked the Popular Front. What was necessary for France, as the Communist Party urged continuously, was for the Popular Front to push forward a fundamental program of social reform that would have united the people solidly against the internal and external fascist foe. Then, too, as our Party insisted, the fascists and semi-fascists had to be thoroughly cleared out of the government apparatus and the armed forces. Also close ties had to be cultivated with the Soviet Union;

and active assistance had to be given to heroic Republican Spain, then battling for life against Hitler and Mussolini. Had these things been done the French people would never have been conquered by Hitler's legions. Loyalist Spain showed how a democratic people's regime can fight, how a truly democratic France would have fought. A Popular Front France, supported by the democratic masses of the nation, possessing good industrial resources, honest political leaders and loyal officers in charge of its armed forces, with a strong and victorious People's Front Spain at its side, and with the great Soviet Union backing it up, would have been invincible. Hitler would never have dared attack such a France.



Q. Why did the big capitalists of France betray their country into the hands of Hitler, and why are similar treacherous tendencies in evidence among other capitalists?

A. This whole development is one of the most dramatic indications of the decay of the world capitalist system. In the early, progressive stages of capitalism, with industry and the world market constantly expanding, the capitalists set up strong and independent national states and resolutely maintained them. They also found it practicable to concede to the masses of the people a certain measure of democracy, under heavy pressure. Despite all its miseries for the workers, capitalism in that period, which lasted up until about the World War, was a growing, flourishing concern, and the capitalist classes of the respective industrialized capitalist countries were imbued with a powerful spirit of national independence.

Now, however, the situation is basically altered. The capitalist system of the world is plunging deeper and swifter into its incurable general crisis. The productive power of the workers has been enormously increased, but national and international markets are shrinking. Mass unemployment and impoverishment have developed on an unheard of scale and become chronic. Industrial crises have grown deeper, broader, more prolonged and more devastating. Industry and agriculture can be kept limping along only with the aid of government subsidies, armaments programs and other artificial

stimulants. The wild struggle between the great capitalist states for control of world markets, raw materials and colonies has climaxed in the present imperialist war. The capitalist system of the world is hopelessly stricken.

In this crucial situation the biggest bankers and industrialists of all capitalist countries, the United States included, are moving towards fascism, with varying tempos of speed. Fearful that the impoverished and downtrodden workers, farmers, oppressed minorities and colonial peoples will put an end to the capitalist system, the great monopolists and exploiters hope by means of fascist demagogy, terrorism and war to prolong the life of the outworn and historically doomed capitalist system. They are striving to abolish democracy and to introduce fascism into their own countries. They are especially plotting to overthrow the Soviet Union, vanguard of the world socialism which they dread so much.

To fight back the proletarian revolution and to preserve their decaying system of exploitation, whole sections of treacherous, fascist-minded big capitalists of all capitalist countries are conspiring and maneuvering with the German, Italian and Japanese fascist dictators. These elements, the real fifth columnists, cynically sacrifice their countries' national interests and even their independence with the objective of protecting their own parasitic class interests. They look upon Hitler as their savior, and they welcome the fascist invaders. They would sink their countries into a great European slave empire dominated by Hitler, and in which their role as exploiters would be continued. In the war crisis the Munich appeasers of Hitler thus become open traitors. This is what happened in France, Poland, Belgium, and is now developing in England. Similar treasonable tendencies are already powerfully in evidence among the great capitalists of the United States.

This should teach us that the democratic liberties of the peoples and even the national independence of the various countries can be saved only if the great democratic masses of the people all over the world—the workers, poorer farmers, and lower city middle classes—stand solidly together with the colonial peoples and the Soviet Union against the big capitalist traitors; against the menace of fascism from within and without. The fight for peace, for the maintenance of the peo-

ple's democratic rights and living standards, for national independence, are all parts of the same general struggle against the capitalist system and for socialism.



Q. *"I am of Polish descent. I want the Allies to win the war so that Poland can regain its national independence."*

A. It is futile for Poland and other small, weak or vanquished nations to pin their hopes upon an Allied victory. While the Allies at the end of the World War conceded Poland a separate national existence, it was only in order that the new state should serve as a jumping off place for armed intervention against the U.S.S.R., and as a link in the Allies' steel ring around Germany. Poland, thus created, never enjoyed real independence, prosperity or democracy. It was dominated by ruthless capitalists and a French-controlled military clique; its workers had few rights and suffered under almost the lowest living standard in Europe; its peasants were brutally exploited and impoverished by semi-feudal landlords; its huge national minorities, especially the Jews, languished under barbarous oppression. This was Poland under British-French domination. And even this miserable government was thrown to the Nazi invaders by Great Britain when it served the latter's interests.

Poland and similar weak states and peoples and oppressed national minorities may expect even less consideration at the conclusion of this war than they got at the end of the World War, should they depend upon either camp of imperialists. This is because, as the crisis of the world capitalist system swiftly deepens, the great empires are plunging more ruthlessly than ever into a policy of swallowing up the weaker peoples—Germany in Europe, Italy in Africa and the Balkans, Japan in the Far East, and the United States in Latin America. England and France have also long been experts at this game. Should the Allies emerge victoriously from this war, which is having the effect of still further shattering capitalism, the imperialist powers would surely reduce as many as possible of the smaller states to their dictatorial sway.

This situation makes it absolutely necessary that the Polish

and similar weak or subjugated peoples seeking national independence and democracy should join together and act with the organized workers of the world, with the colonial peoples, and especially with the Soviet Union, in self-defense against the shark-like attacks of all the great capitalist empires, the British included. Only to the extent that the weaker peoples and oppressed national minorities become part of this great, developing constellation of world democratic forces will they be safe from the rapacity of the capitalist empires. Reliance upon Great Britain or upon any other imperialist power is the way to enslavement for smaller and weaker peoples.



Q. If fascism were victorious in the war would it be able to heal the economic and political antagonisms that are tearing the world capitalist system to pieces?

A. Most decidedly not. Fascism, the rule of the most reactionary sections of finance capital, is in its very structure the expression of an advanced stage of the general crisis of capitalism. Its whole course of policy tends not to cure the mortally sick capitalist system, but still further to break it down and to force it along the path to its inevitable doom. Fascism intensifies enormously all the inner contradictions and conflicts of capitalism.

Should the German Nazis (or the Allies, for that matter) be decisively victorious in this war, they would confront a world with a badly shattered economic system, and plagued by an unparalleled crisis, with scores of millions of starving and rebellious workers, with many outraged and desperate national minorities and conquered nations, with great colonial people in revolt, and with rival imperialist powers ready to spring at each other's throats.

The Nazis (or the British imperialists, if victorious) would try to master this appalling situation in line with the elementary principles of their decaying capitalist system, by further terrorizing the toiling masses and increasing their exploitation, by still more savagely oppressing the national minorities and colonial peoples, by militarily occupying the conquered states, by making alliances with fifth column fascist elements in the

various countries, by using the decadent Second International against the people, and by waging relentless war against the remaining undefeated powers. But by such measures—and it has basically none others to offer—fascism could neither cure the moribund capitalist system nor mitigate the social explosion that is being generated by its decay. Although fascism would attempt to set up a great slave empire and rule by brutal force, it would not be long before the impossibly situated masses rose and put an end to fascism and with it the capitalist system. Fascism does not open up new frontiers for capitalist growth and development. It is the very systematization of everything rotten, decaying and retrogressive in capitalist society.

The only way to eliminate the destructive forces that are tearing the present-day social system to pieces, and which are being made far more destructive by the present war, is through the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. The socialization of the land and the great industries, and the organization of a planned economy, will destroy at the root the human exploitation, economic crises, mass unemployment, mass pauperization, national and colonial oppression, and international war which are corroding and undoing the existing system of society. Socialism is the sole means to present vast new frontiers of progress for humanity.



Q. What is the difference between the social systems of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union?

A. The fascism of Nazi Germany and the socialism of the Soviet Union constitute two fundamentally different orders of society. Fascism is capitalism in its most hideous and brutal form. It is the rule of the most reactionary sections of finance capital and it represents monopoly and imperialism, the last stage of the historically obsolete capitalist system. Whereas socialism, the rule of the workers, farmers and working professionals, is the first stage of the new world order of communism.

Fascism is based upon private ownership of the industries and the land. It carries on a ruthless exploitation of the work-

ers and farmers for the benefit of the small reactionary owning classes and it enforces this robbery by means of the most extreme demagoguery, terrorism and suppression of democracy. In fundamental contrast to this, socialism is based upon the collective ownership of the land and the industries. Exploitation for private profit is completely abolished and production for social use is in effect. The trade unions and all forms of popular mass organizations are encouraged and the most advanced democratic system in the world has been established.

Fascism results in a deepening of the capitalist crisis. It shrinks industry, intensifies industrial breakdowns, deepens mass pauperization, produces cultural decay, gives birth to monstrous anti-Semitism, sharpens the struggles among the capitalist powers and against the colonial peoples, and leads inevitably to war in its most devastating forms. Socialism, on the other hand, solves the economic crisis and produces an enormous and continuous growth and development of industry and agriculture, it abolishes unemployment, produces rapidly rising living and cultural standards among the masses, liquidates the capitalist-cultivated antagonisms among the various peoples and is the great world force making for peace.

Nazi fascism means social retrogression; the deepest enslavement of the people. Soviet socialism signifies social advance; the freeing of all humanity. The one represents a dying system of society, the other the new order that is being born. The attempt of capitalist writers and their reactionary Social-Democratic henchmen to lump together Nazi fascism and Soviet socialism constitutes an insidious effort to discredit socialism by smearing it with the taint of fascism.



Q. Will you elaborate upon Georgi Dimitroff's recent statement that this "is not only an imperialist war but also bears within itself the tendency of turning into a war against the Land of Socialism?"

A. In the present world situation, with the general crisis of capitalism rapidly deepening and with the world anti-capitalist forces (Soviet Union, colonial liberation movements, oppressed national minorities, and revolutionary workers) becoming stronger, imperialist world policy is based on two

major elements: first, the struggle among the great capitalist powers for the redivision of the earth; and, second, the struggle of world imperialism against the world anti-capitalist forces, especially the Soviet Union. These two elements of world imperialist policy are inextricably interwoven and operate simultaneously; with the tendency for the struggle against the Soviet Union to become the decisive force in determining the policies of all imperialism.

During the several years prior to the outbreak of the present war all the great imperialist states, acutely alarmed at the spectacular progress of the U.S.S.R., were busily plotting the destruction of this first socialist government. Germany and its axis partners, Italy and Japan, were openly organizing for an anti-Soviet war. Great Britain and France (with the acquiescence of the United States) were systematically strengthening Hitler and encouraging him to attack the U.S.S.R. In this pre-war period, therefore, the anti-Soviet orientation was central in world imperialist policy. But the other element—the antagonisms between the imperialist powers themselves—was also active and it finally resulted in the outbreak of the war, after skillful Soviet diplomacy had defeated the erstwhile capitalist plans for an anti-Soviet war and had for the time being, at least, blocked Hitler's "*Drang nach Osten*."

The present war is the expression of the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. But even as these states war ruthlessly against each other they retain a keen consciousness of the potential danger of the socialist success of the Soviet Union to their world system of exploitation. No matter how deeply these imperialist powers are embroiled with one another they are always seeking ways and means of ganging up against the U.S.S.R. and trying to solve their problems at the latter's expense. Which is only to say that the hostility of the world of capitalism against the Land of Socialism overshadows all the antagonisms within the capitalist system itself.



Q. Can there be an enduring peace under the capitalist system?

A. It is an illusion to believe that the great imperialist powers

can get together and draft a general treaty that will establish a lasting world peace. The antagonisms and rivalries between the various capitalist states have grown so acute that it has become extremely difficult to adjust them, even temporarily. Treaties and international law have now come to have little or no restraining effect upon the great capitalist powers in the face of their intense and increasing strivings for international markets, sources of raw materials, strategic positions and territories. Permanent, ruthless and increasing struggle, culminating in armed conflict, expresses the relationship between the capitalist governments.

The Versailles Treaty did not actually establish peace at the end of the World War. It merely changed the character of the warfare between the various robber capitalist states. Instead of the struggle remaining military, it became economic and political. And even the military type of struggle could not be long repressed. For the past nine years—ever since the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931—war has been raging in various countries, until now the conflict embraces more than half the population of the earth and it is rapidly growing into a world war.

Should the imperialists write the peace at the end of the present conflict between the Allies and Germany (that is, if the workers do not take the job out of their hands), the "settlement" will undoubtedly be followed by even stormier economic and political struggles among the capitalist powers and also by an earlier outbreak of actual war than was the case after the Versailles Treaty. At best, such a peace could hardly be more than an armed truce. The fundamental reason for this is that the general crisis of the capitalist system is rapidly deepening and the rivalries and conflicts between the capitalist states are becoming ever more sharp and irreconcilable. In either event—whether the war's end comes through an "agreement" among the imperialist powers or as a result of a crushing victory of one side—it will not and cannot bring enduring peace to the world.

The only way a just and lasting peace can be established is for the toiling masses of the world—through people's front, socialist, and other types of genuinely democratic government—to write it themselves. The grip of monopoly capital inter-

nationally must be broken. Only then, on the basis of socialism and the broadest people's democracy in the various countries, will the fundamental causes of modern war—the imperialist struggle for markets, raw materials, strategic positions, and colonies—be destroyed and peaceful, cooperative relations be developed among the nations. War and more war is the prospect held out to humanity by capitalism. Only the victory of the democratic and revolutionary workers and other toiling masses can abolish the monster war and give the world the perspective of an equitable and permanent peace.



Q. What is the matter with the Second International that it is being wiped out in one capitalist country after another?

A. The extensive bureaucracy of officials who everywhere dominate the political parties, trade unions, and cooperatives of world Social-Democracy and dictate their policies is fundamentally a part of bourgeois democracy and is declining with that democracy. While capitalism was strong and the capitalists were willing, under relatively mild working class pressure, to concede some measure of democracy to pacify the workers, the Social-Democratic bureaucracy and the broad movements it controlled, as the instruments of these capitalist concessions, grew and flourished. But, beginning about the World War period, capitalism began to sink into its general crisis and bourgeois democracy became increasingly dangerous to it, offering as it did to the rebellious workers a means wherewith to attack the capitalists and their system. Therefore, finance capitalism, turning more and more to a policy of fascism and war, set out to destroy bourgeois democracy, and with it Social-Democracy as an organized mass movement.

In this dangerous situation the sole hope for these mass movements of the working class—political parties, trade unions and cooperatives—was to adopt a policy of militant class struggle, for the people's front and for socialism, as the Communist International constantly pointed out. But the Social-Democratic bureaucracy, wedded to capitalism, would hear nothing of this policy. Instead, the Social-Democracy continued to follow the will-o'-the-wisp of bourgeois democracy. As bour-

geois democracy declined in the European countries, Social-Democracy went down with it. The Social-Democratic bureaucrats faithfully followed the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie into historical oblivion. While this process was going on the Social-Democracy fought all the Communists' efforts to turn the masses towards a policy of class struggle, and thereby it prepared the way for fascism. After the victory of fascism in a number of countries and the smashup of the Social-Democratic mass organizations, which the dominant fascist capitalists had no further use for, the Social-Democratic leaders gave assistance to the new fascist rulers against all revolutionary struggles of the workers. This is the story of Social-Democracy in Germany, Austria, Italy, Poland, Scandinavia, etc., and it is now being repeated in England and France.

The tragedy of this is that it has caused crushing defeats to the great mass organizations—political, economic, cooperative—which the Social-Democratic workers so laboriously built up through two generations of hard work. It has also enabled the capitalists to establish their naked and brutal fascist dictatorships. But the defeat of Social-Democracy does not mean the defeat of socialism, as Norman Thomas and others of his type declare. It signifies the world bankruptcy of social reformism. The real forces making against imperialism and fascism and for democracy and socialism are not the remnants of the Second International; they are the Soviet Union; the workers all over the world, who are more and more getting rid of bourgeois ideological influences and are increasingly following the lead of the Communists; the great colonial liberation movements of China and India, and the many oppressed and invaded nations. These powerful anti-capitalist forces are growing stronger, more unified, and more clear-sighted, as the capitalist system sinks deeper and deeper into its general crisis and becomes ever weaker. It is these vast democratic masses, traveling along the path of revolutionary struggle indicated by Lenin, that are going to put an end to capitalism and all its horrors, and start humanity on the socialist road to peace, freedom and prosperity.

Q. What are the prospects now for world socialism?

A. At the outbreak of the present imperialist war the capitalist system was weaker and the revolutionary forces were far stronger than at the beginning of the World War. On the one hand, the general crisis had been eating away at the foundations of the capitalist system all these years, until it became deeply corroded economically, politically and socially. This was evidenced by a host of symptoms: the prolonged and devastating economic crises, the growth of permanent mass unemployment, the breakdown of the gold standard and world trade, the necessity for make-work programs in the great capitalist lands, the collapse of international law and treaties, the breakdown of democracy and the development of fascism, the decline of science, art and literature in many countries, the outbreak of many little wars, culminating in the present great imperialist war. These were sure signs of a deeply decayed capitalist system.

On the other hand, paralleling the deeper decay of capitalism, the anti-capitalist and revolutionary forces were much more powerful than they were at the beginning of the World War. First, the great and powerful Soviet Union, world fortress of socialism, did not even exist in 1914. Second, the world's workers had far fewer capitalist illusions than had their brothers of a generation ago, and in the Communist International they had a truly revolutionary organization, which the Second International was not. Third, the great national liberation movements in China, India, Latin America, etc., were much more powerful and dangerous to world imperialism than twenty-five years ago. Fourth, the oppressed national minorities in the early stages of this war were more numerous and more explosive than at the beginning of the World War.

As the tempo of this war is far swifter in general than that of the World War, so, specifically, the rates of the breakdown of capitalism in the war and of the growth of the anti-capitalist forces are also faster. The capitalist system has already been enormously weakened by the war. Many countries have had their economies deeply shattered, and the speed and sweep of the destruction increases. The world capitalist system has

never recovered from the effects of the World War, and this time it is receiving a still more deadly blow.

By the same token, the revolutionary forces have also grown since the beginning of the war. The Soviet Union has enormously strengthened itself in the Baltic, the Balkans, the Far East, and in world prestige. The workers in many countries, especially those overrun by war, are developing even more pronounced anti-capitalist moods than before. The national liberation movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries also have taken on a new vitality. And the oppressed minorities and vanquished nations have multiplied and are deeply embittered against the imperialists.

Undoubtedly these two rapidly developing trends—the weakening of the capitalist system and the strengthening of the anti-capitalist forces in the war—are leading towards an eventual crisis. This may come suddenly. It would put the question of democracy and socialism on the world's agenda in the most decisive way. It is the fear of this that makes the reactionaries of all countries turn to fascism, even when, as in France, this involves the surrendering up of the national independence of their countries to their fascist imperialist rivals.

The great question is: which of the two opposing and growing camps, that of reaction or that of progress, will be able soonest and most powerfully to consolidate its forces. A decisive victory by either German fascism or British imperialism would confront the world democratic and socialist movement with very grave danger. Although the imperialist victors could not permanently reorganize the capitalist system upon a sound working basis, nevertheless, they would, with the help of terrorist fascist regimes in the vanquished countries, make a deadly drive against the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist movement in all its forms throughout the world. There can be no doubt that this victorious combination would try to destroy the Soviet Union, the colonial liberation movements, the trade unions, and seek to extinguish popular liberties everywhere.

Therefore, the fate of humanity for the next period depends upon the success of the world anti-capitalist forces, in first line the Soviet Union, in preventing such a dangerous reactionary crystallization from taking place, and in making their own position impregnable. From its inception the Soviet Union

has had to prevent the capitalist world from uniting against it. The expanding struggle between the consolidating forces of fascist-minded reaction and the growing forces of democracy and socialism, as the capitalist system rapidly breaks down, is the most basic development of the war. The whole course of social development hangs upon its outcome, and, in all probability, the not too distant future will bring the momentous decision.



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