

# Geneva: Background and Perspectives

By William Z. Foster

THE MID-JULY conference in Geneva, Switzerland, of the Big Four powers—France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union—although taking no decisions specifically solving any of the major international problems that have been plaguing humanity, nevertheless has been accepted throughout the world as a most important gathering. This is primarily because the conference, by easing international tensions and opening the door to realistic negotiations among the great powers over the current acute economic and political questions, has lifted from the world, at least for the time being, the dreadful fear of an atomic world war. This is a real victory for the cause of world peace.

Geneva brought at least a pause in the cold war. It broke the previous bitter diplomatic stalemate and opened up what can become an era of more peaceful international relations. The danger of world war has been minimized. The big job now for the peace-loving peoples of the world is to see to it that these important gains are extended and made permanent. The lessening of the cold war must be developed into a

definite ending of the atomic war danger. The people have the power to do this. To accomplish it would be a progressive victory of the first magnitude, carrying with it far-reaching constructive economic and political consequences, some of which we shall discuss later, in passing.

The Geneva conference may well mark the beginning of the end of the cold war and of the atomic danger inherent in it. But this will require the continued vigilance and activity of the peace forces all over the world. The reactionary elements, who will seek to revive the cold war and all the evils connected with it, are strong and powerful, and they must be defeated. Geneva has facilitated the winning of a still greater victory by the peoples: the firm initiation of an era of peaceful co-existence among the great powers of the world, irrespective of the differing natures of their internal regimes. Geneva was a victory of this general principle; it must be followed up by the definite establishment internationally of this elementary policy, upon which hangs the immediate fate of mankind.

The successful Geneva conference

was brought to pass because of the efforts of the democratic, peace-loving forces all over the world, counting many hundreds of millions of persons. These masses refused to fall victims to the fatalistic theory of the warmongers that war was inevitable. Instead, realistically, they realized the acute war danger, understood that they had the basic power to halt it, and fought it, in general, for the policy of peaceful co-existence. The final result of this fight, to date, was Geneva, with its implications of future peace. All of which constituted a world-historic victory for the democratic masses, and the end of which is not yet.

#### THE HALTING OF WALL STREET'S WAR DRIVE

The basic thing that happened at Geneva was that American imperialism, in its drive for world domination through a third, atomic, world war, ran into an impassable roadblock, erected by the democratic peoples of the world, and it had to recoil before this insurmountable obstacle. Of course, the world monopolists, particularly in the United States, do not accept any such explanation of what took place at the Big Four conference. Their soothsayers and ideologists have already developed the theory that it was the Soviet Union that was brought to bay at Geneva; that the U.S.S.R., strained to the last limit in its internal economy by its efforts in the

cold war, "had to lay aside its policies of war aggression" and was compelled to assume a "more reasonable attitude" towards the United States and the allied capitalist powers.

But this is utter nonsense. The U.S.S.R., and the countries associated with it, never had any such aggressive policies. With their Socialist structure, in which the private profit motive has been abolished and in which there is no place for monopoly capital and imperialism, their policies have always been inevitably those of peace and friendly international collaboration. Innumerable examples of this are at hand. For example, if the U.S.S.R. had had aggressive designs upon Europe and the rest of the world, it, admittedly possessing the greater military power, never would have stood still during the several years following World War II, while the capitalist powers, under American leadership, were feverishly re-arming themselves. The U.S.S.R. never had the slightest intention of sending the Red Army marching across Europe, all the professional liars of world capitalism to the contrary notwithstanding. One of the Wall Street devices for creating illusions that the U.S.S.R. had an aggressive policy, was to attribute to its "intrigues" all the revolutions of the post-World War II period—in China, in Eastern Europe, and in the many colonial countries. This was not only absolute nonsense, but it also culti-

vated political illiteracy.

On the other hand, the reality of the war drive of American imperialism, which has been definitely manifest in all United States policy, foreign and domestic, has been made clear repeatedly by Communist parties, progressive trade unions, peace movements, and various other types of people's organizations in all parts of the world. More and more this central fact also stood out in the speeches of prominent American statesmen and the various other tools and supporters of Wall Street, despite the studied, and tireless efforts that have been made to make American post-war policy appear as democratic and peaceful.

The United States, dominated as never before by militant monopoly capital, emerged from World War II undamaged and greatly increased in strength. The other leading powers, however, were in various stages of severe injury as a result of the war. Japan and Germany, erstwhile great powers, were devastated and crushed. Great Britain was also badly crippled, as likewise, were France, Italy, and many other capitalist countries. And the Soviet Union had 12,000,000 war dead and half of its industry wiped out. In these circumstances, it was inevitable that the United States, far and away the most powerful imperialist country, should set out, under the leadership of monopoly capital, to dominate the rest of the world. To do this was in the very nature of

monopoly capitalism. Already this trend became manifest right after the great Soviet victory at Stalingrad in January, 1943, when the anti-Axis powers first began to develop a general victory perspective.

During the early post-war years the United States, in driving ahead, by use of financial and political pressures, built up a hegemony over the rest of the capitalist world quite without precedent in the history of capitalism. It also exercised a crude domination over the United Nations, practically dictating its general course of action. Obviously, however, the means that had succeeded in wholly or partially subduing the capitalist countries to American domination, were not working with the Soviet Union, nor could they. If the latter was to be mastered, clearly the only possible hope for doing this was through a war, which necessarily would have to be a world war. Moreover, as further spurs to war, the Wall Street warmongers revelled in the huge profits that were rolling in from the gigantic armaments production; they believed, too, that this production was keeping their industries from collapsing; they looked also to American domination to keep the sickly world capitalist system from going under, and they calculated that a war would enable them to be done once and for all with the U.S.S.R. and the eternal threat of Socialism.

That these were the general conclusions of Wall Street capital in the

early post-war period there can be no real doubt. They were the moving conceptions behind the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, both of which faithfully carried out the dictates of monopoly capital. This is the only rational explanation of their widespread circulation of "inevitability of war" propaganda; their open advocacy of a "preventive war" by prominent military and government personages; their building of the huge military machine in the United States; their setting up of air-bases (950 of them, manned by 1,370,000 American troops\*) all over the world, encircling the U.S.S.R. and People's China with a great military ring; their creation of elaborate capitalist military alliances—NATO in Europe and SEATO in Asia; their re-arming of Germany, and their innumerable other warlike moves. All were accompanied by the most truculent policies by the State Department, with its "atomic diplomacy" and "get-tough-with-Russia" line. To call this aggressive and far-flung military set-up peaceful and democratic was fantastic, but it was done nevertheless.

Not only did the great monopolist rulers of the United States accept, and prepare for, their "inevitable" war with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, but they took great care to see to it that this would be an atomic war. That they would use the barbaric atom bomb had been all too clearly demonstrated by

the savage attack upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki in already defeated Japan. This was intended primarily to introduce the bomb into warfare, and to notify the world of American possession of the bomb, and, it was hoped, to terrify it. Their determination was further evidenced by the frustrated attempts of both Truman and Eisenhower to introduce the atom bomb into the Korean war. And only a short while ago President Eisenhower routinely announced that "in the next war" the United States was resolved upon using atomic weapons. And all the while, the basic purpose of the Baruch plan was to serve to ward off the attempts of the Russians and others to outlaw the A- and H-bombs.

Dovetailing with this whole aggressive war plan of American imperialism was the fascist-like system of intellectual and physical intimidation cultivated by both the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, through a series of "loyalty pledges," thought-control laws, wholesale imprisonment of Communists upon trumped-up charges, and the like. The worst phases of this drive against democracy were the activities of Senator McCarthy and his supporters. The general purpose of this pro-fascist terrorism was to intimidate the peace forces and thus to stamp out all opposition to the war program of Wall Street imperialism. Never in its history had the United States

\* *New York Daily News*, July 15, 1954.

ever experienced such a period of repression.

What happened at Geneva was that this vast and reactionary military drive of Wall Street big capital suffered a very serious setback. How this was brought about constitutes one of the greatest epics in the history of mankind. Geneva can also be made into one of the most important political victories ever won by the peoples, the giving of this categorical NO to the warmakers. It is important, therefore, that the workers and other peace forces understand very clearly just what happened at Geneva and also what are the possibilities flowing from that historic gathering.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEACE STRUGGLE

During the latter phases of World War II the world conquest program of Wall Street began to manifest itself definitely. This was notably the case in the matter of the deliberate postponement of the opening up of the second, or European, front against Hitler, the general effect of which needless delay was to thrust upon the Red Army almost the sole burden of defeating Nazi Germany. After the war, the progressive forces began to signalize the significance of the aggressive policies of the United States. Thus, as early as July, 1945, the Communist Party, U.S.A., in national convention, stated that if the imperialist policies of

American monopoly capital were not checked, there would be "new aggressions and wars and the growth of fascist reaction in the United States."\* Also the meeting of the nine European Communist parties, held in Warsaw, in September, 1947—which took place right after the promulgation of the Truman doctrine and the Marshall Plan, two American moves which precipitated the cold war—clearly warned the peoples of the world of the developing war danger, and called upon them to struggle against it. From this time on, the struggle of the world peace forces continued to grow apace, until upon the eve of the Geneva conference it had come to embrace the overwhelming majority of the world's population. This vast and unprecedented movement grew out of the determination of the peoples never again to become cannon-fodder for the profit of the capitalists.

The world peace movement developed along three major channels. First, there was the broad international campaign for peace, conducted under the general leadership of the World Council of Peace. This immense organization, founded in April, 1949, jointly in Paris and Prague, counts some 700,000,000 adherents and active supporters. Among its innumerable co-operating organizations are the World Federation of Trade Unions (88,000,000 affli-

\* William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 469.

ates), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (85,000,000 members), and the Women's International Democratic Federation (about 100,000,000 members). Among its many anti-war activities were: the Stockholm petition of March, 1950, which amassed 500,000,000 signatures, demanding the prohibition of atomic weapons; the February, 1951, appeal of the Council for a Five-Power pact, which was signed by over 600,000,000 people; and the recent petition, still more numerous signed, calling for the banning and destruction of atomic bombs.

The mass peace movement also spread beyond the formal boundaries of the World Peace Council. This included the development far and wide in the capitalist and colonial countries of the so-called neutralist movement, which, although distinctly for peace, was not prepared to accept the full program of the Peace Council. Such "neutralism" was especially strong in Japan, Austria, Indonesia and many other countries. American imperialism, logically enough, looked upon and combatted the "neutralist" movement as a hostile force. It tended definitely to undermine the U.S.-controlled military alliances in Europe and Asia, and it weakened the support of the Right-led trade unions everywhere. Among others, India and Yugoslavia were particularly active in cultivating the neutralist movement.

The second broad channel of the

world peace movement developed around the diplomatic fight made by the countries of Socialism and people's democracy. This was especially manifest in the hard struggle conducted by the Soviet Union in the American-dominated United Nations. Thus, in the U.N. penetrating criticisms of the war line of Wall Street were made constantly, and practical peace issues were kept clearly before the world—for the control and abolition of the A-bomb, for systematic world disarmament, for the easing of the recurring war crises, etc. This fight by the U.S.S.R. and supporting powers kept the United Nations from being torn to pieces and transformed into part of the Wall Street war machine. It also contributed enormously to the intelligent development of anti-war sentiment throughout the world.

The third general channel of the campaign for world peace took the form of a strong defense military build-up by the threatened countries—the U.S.S.R., People's China, and the several people's democracies of Asia and Eastern Europe. One of the most disconcerting facts of recent years for the imperialist warmongers has been the extraordinary military fighting capacity shown by Socialist peoples when under capitalist attack upon their countries and freedoms. This was especially demonstrated by the Soviet Union in World War II, when that country, to the amazement of all the bourgeois military experts, broke the back

of Hitler's "invincible" army, although the latter had behind it the combined economic strength and manpower of all Europe, which the Nazis had subjugated. Another terrific surprise for the capitalist army experts came during the revolutionary war of the Chinese people, ending in 1950, wherein the outnumbered and ill-equipped forces of the People's Liberation Army (it had almost no air force) smashed the huge armies of Chiang Kai-shek, which were lavishly equipped with the latest American armaments. The same great lesson was taught again in the Korean war, when the poorly-armed North Koreans and Chinese volunteers fought to a standstill the highly trained and elaborately-armed troops of the United States and its "allies"; and the vital lesson was repeated in the long and bloody war in Indo-China, during which the sketchily-armed people's revolutionary army defeated the best troops that imperialist France could send against it. Consequent upon all this, the bourgeois military experts could not but look with great misgiving upon the strong post-war armed forces of these democratic and Socialist countries, which were standing athwart their path of imperialist conquest.

The warmongers' growing concern became almost a panic, when it became known, through a statement by President Truman on September 23, 1949, that the U.S.S.R. had produced the A-bomb, and thus

had broken the American monopoly, upon which the Wall Street war-organizers were basing their whole strategy. Their discomfiture became all the greater when it was also officially announced in Washington that on August 20, 1953, a hydrogen bomb had been set off in the Soviet Union. All this constituted a disastrous defeat for Wall Street.

The production of the A-bomb by the U.S.S.R. raised the world peace struggle to a much higher and more effective level. It placed the devastating character of the atomic war danger clearly before the world. Previously cherishing the illusion that they had an unbreakable monopoly of frightful atomic weapons, the Wall Street warmongers had been cultivating the general idea that the "inevitable," "preventive" war that they had in mind would be a very one-sided affair, with the issue being settled by a shower of A-bombs upon Soviet industrial centers. But the knowledge that the U.S.S.R. also had the bomb, put a sudden end to this dreadful nonsense. Like a flash, it became clear to the world that if an atomic war occurred it would be a two-sided conflict, with horrifying destruction. As a result, the world demand for peace grew with great speed and it became more militantly insistent. The breaking of the Wall Street atom bomb monopoly by the U.S.S.R. was one of the most decisive peace victories of the world democratic forces during the whole critical cold-war period.

It placed on the agenda the necessity for the complete elimination of atomic weapons, both tactical and strategical. It went far to set the stage for Geneva.

### THE MOUNTING DEFEATS OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

The swift growth of peace sentiment throughout the world, from 1947 on, administered a whole series of checks and defeats to aggressive American imperialism, only the more important of which can be indicated here. One of these defeats of great significance grew out of the advent of General Eisenhower to the U.S. Presidency in January, 1953. President Truman, under the slogan of "contain Communism," had previously launched the cold war and he had created an anti-"Red" hysteria by attributing the many people's revolutions in Asia and Europe to Soviet plottings and aggressions. That this synthetic war danger did not sit well with the American people, however, was demonstrated in the general elections of November, 1952, when the warlike Democrats were defeated and, on the basis of his peace promises, Mr. Eisenhower was elected.

No sooner was he in office, however, than President Eisenhower, with the sinister John Foster Dulles at his elbow, came out in strong denunciation of the "containment" program of the Democrats and declared for an even more aggressive

policy of general "liberation" of the countries of Socialism and people's democracy. This meant cultivating civil war in all these countries and the stepping up of aggressive imperialist policy in general. The grave danger in this policy was evidenced in the American-organized June 17, 1953, insurrection in East Germany, which threatened all Germany with a catastrophic civil war. Later the "liberation" line was elaborated by threats of "instant massive retaliation," of "unleashing Chiang Kai-shek," by conducting spectacular and frightening hydrogen bomb tests, and the like. All of which greatly scared the peoples of the world, demoralized Britain, France, and other expensively cultivated allies of the United States, and vastly stimulated the world demand for peace. The general result of this was that the Eisenhower government was compelled to beat a hasty retreat by ostensibly throwing the whole "liberation" policy quietly into the waste basket, and by disguising its aggressive policies henceforth under less revealing talk about peace.

The Korean war of 1950-53 was also the source of several serious reverses for the Wall Street warmongers. While they were able to intimidate the United Nations into endorsing this war of imperialist aggression, they were quite unable either to induce or compel the affiliated nations to send more than token armed detachments to the fighting front. They were also unable, be-

cause of world protest, to introduce the A-bomb into that conflict, although they tried to do so. Also, mounting peace pressure, both at home and abroad, compelled them, at long last, to sign the Korean armistice, although clearly their line was one of extending that conflict into a general Asian struggle, with People's China as the main target. The Korean war was a major disaster for American imperialism.

The long drawn-out war in Indo-China, which was finally ended by an armistice in July, 1954, also dealt a hard blow to Wall Street's war plans. By the early 1950's, the French imperialists were defeated; so the U.S. State Department, in its reactionary role as the suppressor of colonial liberation revolutions, practically took over the conduct of the war, financing it and, with its "military advisers," directing field operations. Meanwhile, as a world clamor developed for a cease-fire, the Eisenhower Administration developed plans to extend and expand the war upon an atomic weapons basis. As the bourgeois press freely admitted at the time, the American navy and air force were mobilized to this end. But France, Great Britain, and other "allies" refused to sanction the dangerous adventure, and it fell through, with a great loss in American prestige. Dulles boycotted the peace conference (also held in Geneva); but the cease-fire went through nevertheless, and the world gave a sigh of relief as the

war crisis was overcome.

During 1954, the Formosa Straits area produced another serious military crisis because of U.S. aggressiveness. Arrogantly occupying the Chinese island of Formosa, the Eisenhower Administration prepared to defend the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. This action also distinctly bore the danger of a great Asian conflict, and a vigorous world protest by the peace forces took place. Consequently, Britain and other imperialist allies opposed the projected war, and insisted instead that People's China be seated in the United Nations and that the question of Formosa be left to future handling. The establishment of a virtual cease-fire by the leaders of People's China prevented a catastrophic conflict. The general result of the incident was another serious setback to the imperialist policies and diplomatic prestige of the State Department. The extremely aggressive line of Wall Street imperialism in Asia provoked the gravest fears throughout that vast continent of an impending atomic war. One of the basic results of this fear was the holding of the famous Bandung (Indonesia) conference in April, 1955, of 29 Asian and African nations, including India and People's China. This historic gathering, which the State Department opposed and sabotaged as a hostile force, adopted a general program definitely supporting the broad principles of the peaceful co-existence of all nations. This

was another major defeat for the imperialist program of Wall Street finance capital and of American diplomacy.

#### ROLE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE PEACE STRUGGLE

The super-aggressive foreign policies followed by the Truman and Eisenhower governments during the cold war years have had nothing in common with the peaceful and democratic aspirations of the working class and the great bulk of the American people. These Administrations spoke for imperialist finance capital, not for the toiling masses of America. The people's peace sentiments, despite the oceans of slick pro-war propaganda with which they were constantly deluged, were demonstrated upon many occasions, if not always so militantly and clearly as was to be found in some other countries.

Indicating the masses' will for peace were: their tremendous "bring-the-boys-home" movement at the end of the war; their stubborn opposition to the passage of legislation for universal military training; their resistance to the sending of large bodies of troops to post-war Europe; their open hatred of the Korean war; their active opposition to American war intervention in the Indo-China and Formosa areas; their protests against the use of atomic bombs in the Korean war, etc. One of the most active elements in these anti-

war tendencies were the Negro people, whose sympathies for the rebelling colonial peoples were especially vigorous.

These mass anti-war sentiments and activities were all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that, with few exceptions, the leaders of the major mass organizations of the people have been definitely under imperialist influence. This is particularly true in the case of the conservative leaders of the main trade-union federations, the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. Many of these elements, especially the Meany A. F. of L. group, blatant defenders of the capitalist system, have competed with the most extreme Right-wing of the bourgeoisie, with the McCarthyites, in their open warmongering. They have clamored for more armaments, endorsed the notorious Dulles "liberation" policy, soft-pedalled the workers' insistent demands for higher wages, denounced as "appeasement" all negotiations with the U.S.S.R., compromised with the infamous congressional thought-control committees, reiterated all the pro-war slogans among the workers, and generally comported themselves as the labor agents of militant American imperialism. Only occasional voices in the top leadership, especially in the C.I.O., were raised against this shameful sellout of the most basic interests of the working class and the whole American people to the Wall Street warmongers.

Worst of all, beginning in 1947,

the top leaders of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O., working hand-in-hand and under direction of the State Department, proceeded to split the labor movement internationally. The aim was to destroy it as a peace force. They split the actively pro-peace World Federation of Trade Unions and set up the pro-war International Confederation of Free Trade Unions; they split the progressive Latin American Confederation of Labor (C.T.A.L.) and established rival, boss-controlled unions; they split the pro-peace trade-union movements of Germany, France, Italy, and many other countries. In the United States they expelled the progressive wing of the C.I.O., almost 1,000,000 strong, in eleven unions. This was the difficult situation with which the American workers have had to contend in order to give expression to their basic opposition against war. So actively pro-war have the American top trade-union leadership been that at the recent congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, held in Vienna in May, 1955, even Right-wing European labor leaders, themselves in the war camp, but at the time feeling the powerful peace pressure from their rank and file, sharply criticized the American delegates (A. F. of L. and C.I.O.) as "warmongers."

#### THE BIG FOUR CONFERENCE AT GENEVA

On the eve of the July, 1955, con-

ference of the Big Four powers in Geneva, which was then being actively called for by the peace forces all over the world, militant Wall Street imperialism, with its program of aggressive world conquest, found itself in a very bad way. Its foreign policies were manifestly bankrupt, and its situation in this general respect was rapidly growing worse.

First, Wall Street faced a vast majority world opinion which was increasingly protesting against the costly armaments race and demonstrating against war, which obviously had accepted the slogan of peaceful co-existence (anathema in American pro-war circles), and which was more and more pointing the finger of accusation at the United States as the basic source of the threatening world war danger. The circulation, on the eve of the conference, of the statement of Einstein and other scientists, condemning the atom bomb, served to emphasize the acute world fear of atomic war.

Second, Wall Street confronted also a powerful military force in the U.S.S.R., People's China, and the people's democracies of Europe and Asia. This force, equipped with the A-and H-bombs and other atomic weapons, was obviously strong enough to rule out any chance of victory for the U.S. imperialists, in case they should venture upon their long-planned "preventive" war. Indeed, this war would sentence to destruction what was still left of the

world capitalist system. Capitalism, weakened by the loss of the countries of Socialism and people's democracy and by the big colonial revolutions, could not survive such a test.

Third, Wall Street had upon its hands a flock of so-called allies whose enthusiasm for the projected war against the "reds" was visibly waning by the day. This was true of Great Britain, France, Italy and other capitalist powers, as potential helpers in such a war. Their populations were overwhelmingly against war, and the imperialist contradictions and rivalries among themselves and against American imperialism, which were a big factor in overcoming the crises in Korea, Indo-China, and Formosa, were daily becoming sharper. And the Bandung Conference had made it very clear that the Wall Street warmongers could expect very little help indeed (and a vast amount of opposition) from Asia.

Fourth, Wall Street also had to deal with a serious weakening of its own forces in the United States. It had become commonplace for European big business statesmen (for example, Churchill) to take a very dubious position regarding the world conquest ambitions of Wall Street; but now such dissenters were beginning to appear also in the ranks of hitherto pretty solid monopoly capital at home. Expressions of this were, as instances, the Los Angeles pacifist speech of General MacArthur, the no-war views of Hearst after his visit to the U.S.S.R., and the

cropping up in both major parties and in various prominent newspapers, of statements casting doubt upon the general line of the Administration's foreign policy. A basic sign of these inner divisions also was the Senate censure of McCarthy last year. This signified that monopoly capital had rejected the "war now" line of the pro-fascists and that it was generally being checked in its war drive. Not the least of monopoly capital's growing weaknesses in its home-base was the fact that many of its most trusted labor agents, especially in top C.I.O. circles, were wavering in their pro-war attitudes and were beginning to talk about negotiations with the Soviet Union and to express other hitherto absolutely banned peace heresies.

Despite all these mounting difficulties and the generally unfavorable outlook for Wall Street's war program, President Eisenhower continued to oppose any serious negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and People's China. He took a definite stand against the proposed Geneva conference, which was a product of the rising people's demand for top level diplomatic negotiations. Eisenhower first objected altogether to the holding of the conference; then he tried to delay it and said it would have to be preceded by a foreign ministers' meeting; and finally he declared that he could not be spared from his presidential duties long enough to attend such a gathering. But all

this resistance proved fruitless. The world demand for the conference was not to be denied; hence Mr. Eisenhower, willy-nilly, had to go to it.

The Geneva conference historically was an imperative demand on the part of the world's peoples that the cold war be ended, that the threat of an atomic world war be liquidated, and that international differences be settled through negotiations. Both the long-range and the immediate peace policies of the countries of people's democracy and Socialism had contributed basically to this situation. These countries all strongly supported the holding of the conference; on the eve of its taking place the U.S.S.R. characteristically settled dramatically its erstwhile bitter quarrel with Yugoslavia, concluded almost overnight the long-drawn-out treaty negotiations with Austria, initiated new diplomatic approaches to West Germany and Japan, abolished visa restrictions for newspapermen and others, and quickly accepted the local Iowa proposal for an exchange of farm delegations. In the same conciliatory spirit, People's China halted the fighting on its side in the Formosa straits area, proposed direct negotiations with the United States on this difficult question, made preliminary releases of American flyers, and, together with India, was the backbone of the vital Ban-

dung Conference. Of great significance too, prior to Geneva, were the conferences between Prime Minister Nehru of India and the leaders of the U.S.S.R. and People's China.

In the face of the powerful world set-up of peace forces, come to a head in Geneva, there was no alternative for Wall Street imperialism other than to shelve its cold war program and atomic diplomacy, and to reorient itself upon a policy of cultivating international negotiations upon a rational basis. This is precisely what it did at Geneva, lifting the immediate war danger and softening up the cold war, at least for the time being. In the conference, the American delegation participated fully in the spirit of affability, which presented such a drastic contrast to the sharp recriminations at international conferences in recent years. No less conciliatory were the delegates from Great Britain and France. It was a sign of something new in the world when Eisenhower and Bulganin could meet and rationally talk over the mutual problems and policies of their respective peoples.

With shrewd generalship, President Eisenhower made the best of a situation which was very bad for Wall Street, but very good for the rest of the world. With dramatic eloquence, he pressed upon the conference that the United States had only peaceful intentions and wanted nothing more than a live-and-let-live

relationship with other nations. His remarks were clearly directed towards redressing the heavy prestige losses suffered throughout the world by the United States during the past few years as a result of its ultra-aggressive and warlike foreign policies. Incidentally, with his peace pronouncements, Mr. Eisenhower may also have written himself a ticket to a second term in the White House; for in 1956, as in 1952, the American people will be very much disposed to back candidates whom it considers devoted to world peace.

At Geneva the basic thing Mr. Eisenhower did, and this was of great importance, was to commit the United States firmly to a policy of international negotiations. In this respect his expressions of belief in the peace sincerity of the Soviet delegates were of prime significance. As for the rest, the President made no concessions regarding concrete problems. The one definite project which he put forth—of mutual American-Soviet military air inspection—was essentially impractical and of a propaganda nature. This characterization coincides pretty much with the general estimates of informed writers and statesmen in the capitalist world.

As remarked at the outset of this article, the important thing done at Geneva was not to solve a lot of concrete problems, but rather to open the door to their ultimate solution. Its adopted program of negotiations—on which it outlined preliminary

conferences, dealing with both Europe and the Far East—worked directly against the continuance of the cold war and the danger of an outbreak of a terrible atomic war. This is why the peoples of the world hailed Geneva and also why it will go down in history as a most important conference.

#### THE GENERAL INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The enthusiasm with which the results of the Geneva Conference are being greeted by the masses of the peoples throughout the world indicates, in the first place, the tremendous strength of the world demand for peace. The almost universal endorsement of Geneva by the main capitalist governments and by the international bourgeois press, although in a more cautious tone than that of the masses, shows that big capital, including that in the United States, had come to realize that their threat of war had to be laid aside at Geneva, in the face of the irresistible world peace demands.

One would do well, however, not to read too much into this capitalist unanimity. There are strong reactionary forces in the capitalist world, especially in the United States, that are beginning to do their utmost to stymie the planned negotiations, to rekindle the cold war, and to reawaken the threat of a great atomic world war. These are the Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai-sheks, Joseph

McCarthys, George Meanys, and other extreme Right elements. They are busy throwing cold water on Geneva and opposing it outright, and their numbers will increase, once such people recover from the first great peace blows of Geneva. The radio is already reeking with attacks upon that conference. Therefore, it is quite clear that the main task of the peace forces everywhere is to defeat such warmongers on their home grounds and to make it forever impossible for them to recreate the crippling fear of atomic war, such as has plagued the world for the past several years.

We must understand that, in general, American imperialism will continue its futile efforts to master the world, using such means as it may be able to command. To drive for international conquest is inherent in monopoly capital, and the United States is by far the most powerful and aggressive country of monopoly capital in the world. This imperialist trend will continue until the workers and the democratic masses of the American people have acquired the political power to direct the nation's government, which is very much not the case today. In the interim, the big job is to see to it that Wall Street is never again able to make the threats of terrifying atomic warfare that have been its main stock in trade ever since the cold war began in 1947. This is by no means an impossible task. The world peace forces that brought

about Geneva can also put a final end to the cold war and also to the atomic war threat at the heart of it. They can free the world from the dread of war for the first time in its history. With their vast new democratic strength, the peoples of the world are now strong enough to do this. But to accomplish it, will require eternal vigilance and unremitting struggle against capitalist reaction.

The main thing in the coming period is to realize that, with sufficient mass pressure, all the many big international problems can be solved by negotiations. They must be tackled in this confident spirit. This includes such knotty problems as the re-unification of Germany, the restoration of Formosa to People's China, the seating of China in the United Nations, the cutting down of world armaments, the opening up of East-West trade, etc. None of these is necessarily a war question. The peoples, by insistence upon peace, overcame the severe military crises in Korea, Indo-China, and the Formosa Straits, and by the same general means they can also solve the other difficult international problems. In this respect, however, there must be no reliance upon bourgeois governments, especially that in the United States, to solve such problems voluntarily.

As for the fundamental antagonisms between the capitalist and Socialist systems, these also are not basically war questions. There is no

valid reason whatever why the various peoples cannot live in peace together, whether their social systems are Socialist or capitalist. The advance of Socialism, which is inevitable, in no sense necessitates war. On the contrary, the Socialist movement makes its greatest progress in the struggle against war and war-makers.

If the peoples of the world realize the possibilities and implications of Geneva by halting the cold war and eventually ending the threat of military war, the way will be opened for the more effective struggle in behalf of their own class interests. It will mean more bread and freedom for the masses. With the reduction in armament expenditures, they can the more readily increase their wages and fight for their other social demands. With the end of the present hectic and unhealthy industrial boom in the capitalist countries, which is bound to come, the various labor movements will adopt more vigorous policies generally. With the decline of the war scare, the opportunities for world trade-union unity will improve—for it was over the question of the cold war that the movement was split by the helpers of American imperialism. By the same token, the door will again be opened to broad people's front movements. With the policy of international negotiations firmly established, the arrogant bid of Wall Street imperialism for world mastery, with its military alliances, its net-

work of air bases all around the world, its infringement upon the national independence of many countries, and its attempts to deny the right of revolution to peoples seeking to free themselves from intolerable oppression, can be defeated.

All these things, however, are possibilities, not guaranteed consequences, of the new international situation opened up by Geneva. What made Geneva a reality was that the peoples of the world, while fighting against all the specific evils of the cold war, also clearly realized the danger of a general world war, and directly combatted it. Only a comparable vigilance and activity in the future can make real the people's hopes for a world situation based upon the principles of the peaceful co-existence of all nations. The capitalist governments must be held strictly to the commitments that they made at Geneva.

#### GENEVA AND THE AMERICAN SITUATION

The Statement of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A., contained in this issue of *Political Affairs*, reviews thoroughly the chief American consequences and Communist Party tasks flowing out of the Geneva conference. Here, therefore, it is in order only to stress a few of these points:

For one thing, the easing or the ending of the cold war will produce important effects upon the Ameri-

can workers' economic situation and upon the activities of the trade-union movement. The unions, less dominated by stifling class collaboration, which has been so much emphasized by the cold war, will be in a much better position to struggle for their wage and other demands. They especially will be required to adopt more comprehensive economic programs to replace the lessened government arms expenditures. This need will become all the greater with the end of the present artificial and unhealthy post-war industrial boom—an end which will come, Geneva or no Geneva. The new situation will also facilitate a more successful struggle for trade-union democracy. This is of enormous importance; for never in its entire history has the labor movement been so dominated by a clique of entrenched and dictatorial top bureaucrats, as it is at the present time. These are especially the Meany group, and the plan is to still further strengthen their rigid controls by the reactionary constitution which is to be fastened upon the merged A. F. of L. and C.I.O. It is a tragic fact that in our country the top trade-union leaders are far less subject to democratic elections and removals than are the members of the United States Senate and House—an intolerable situation. But the challenge to these misleaders of labor will grow with the unfolding of a period of sharpened class struggle.

The Geneva Conference has al-

ready deeply affected the developing 1956 national election struggle. Eisenhower, by seizing the stage as an ardent advocate of world peace, has vastly bettered his chances for re-election, and at the same time he has thrown confusion into the ranks of the Democrats. Many Democratic leaders "asked" for this serious predicament, by their continual clamor for more arms production and for more aggressive foreign policies. Time and again the Communist Party warned against this political idiocy and urged that organized labor, the Negro people, and other progressive forces within that party should join forces and insist upon a policy of active struggle for peace. As things appear now, the only thing that can give the Democrats a chance in the coming elections is, along with a strong democratic economic and civil rights program, to come forward with a real policy of fruitful international negotiations, on the basis of mutual concessions, as against the hard-boiled, one-sided Eisenhower line on the question. Governor Harriman's anti-Geneva stand would hand the election to the Republicans. The added danger of giving Eisenhower an unchallenged peace leadership, as has been done, is that, in addition to being elected himself, he may carry with him a majority of Republican reactionaries and also commit the government to a basically anti-labor, anti-Negro, and anti-peace program. Reaction won the recent national

elections in Great Britain largely because the Right-wing Social Democratic leaders of the Labor Party practically surrendered the peace initiative to the Tories—which could also happen in the United States.

Another of the sinister dangers, growing out of the Geneva situation and connected with the coming national elections, is the attempt by Senator McCarthy, with his prompt and violent denunciation of Geneva, to place himself at the head of the potentially powerful forces that will strive to rekindle the cold war. This danger must not be minimized. McCarthy especially represents the danger of extreme reaction and fascism in this country, and he must not be glibly written off. The peace forces must be very alert in combatting every effort by him and his likes to sabotage the developing international conferences by fighting against every needed American concession as "appeasing the Russians."

The Geneva Conference, by easing the cold war and promising to end it, has already done much to liquidate the thick miasma of war hysteria and red-baiting that has plagued the American people for the past several years. With this trend continued, it will make it very much more difficult for the warmongers and pro-fascists, under the fantastic pretext that the country is just about to be overrun by the "reds," to wangle from the government their enormous armament appropriations and to whittle away

systematically the people's freedoms, supposedly guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. The development of the policy of realistic international negotiations will, at the same time, increase the opportunities in the United States to cut down and abolish the whole network of thought-control laws and other fascist-like legislation, which has been a product of the cold war. The cold war must be ended in the United States, as well as upon a world scale.

If the masses, here and elsewhere, can make a reality of the promises of Geneva, this will tend strongly to relieve much of the outrageous persecution under which our Party has been living ever since 1948. These years constitute an heroic period in the life of the Communist Party, with Gene Dennis, Ben Davis, John Gates, Gus Hall, Bob Thompson, Elizabeth Flynn, and scores of other Party leaders serving long jail terms. We may be sure, however, that our Party's gallant fight in defense of peace and civil rights has not been lost upon the broad working class. They are bound to honor a Party capable of such heroism and sound leadership.

The big thing that we should realize now is that, with a substantial easing of world tensions, our Party will be fighting in an improved and improving domestic situation. However, with indictments under the Smith Act still going on and with the dangerous McCarran Act still ahead of us, it is problematical

whether or not our Party has passed through the worst of the persecution. But certainly the improving national and international situations, so far as war tensions are concerned, should encourage us to redouble our winning fight for our Party's legality and for the defense of the Bill of Rights, all of which is organically tied in with the general struggle of the workers and their allies for peace and the other vital economic and political needs of the toiling masses.

In order for our Party to play its maximum role in translating the promises of Geneva into concrete realities by ending the cold war, we must be alert to fight two dangers. On the one hand, there is the "Left"-sectarian danger expressed by those elements who, with their mechanical and dogmatic methods of thinking, see nothing new in the situation after Geneva. They would pooh-pooh the conference, saying that it has left things just as they were. They cannot conceive of Socialist and capitalist states living in the same world, except upon the basis of acute and dangerous antagonisms. The general effects of such

pessimism and defeatism are to ignore the many avenues and opportunities for effective mass struggle in consequence of Geneva. This is the path of isolation, stagnation, and defeat.

On the other hand, there is the perhaps even more pressing Right danger. This is the trend which has illusions that at Geneva there was a liquidation of the basic antagonisms between the forces of democratic progress and those of reactionary monopoly capital. All this is akin to the poisonous class collaborationist ideas cultivated by Browder following the Big Three agreement at the wartime conference (November, 1943) at Teheran. The Right and "Left" deviations feed each other, and they both work out to weaken the position of our Party among the masses. They both must be combatted, consciously and actively. This can be done only if the Party, weighing the situation realistically, fights vigorously to help consolidate the victory won at Geneva by bringing the cold war to a conclusion and by ending forever the threat of an atomic world war.