

# War Fatalism and the Peace Fight

By JAMES S. ALLEN

**THE 20TH CONGRESS** of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union discussed fully the two central trends in world affairs—the trend making for war and the trend making for peace. But the matter was not left at merely differentiating the two trends. Unmistakably, with great emphasis and clarity, the Congress took the view that the forces fighting for peace and capable of imposing it were on the upgrade, already so powerful on a world scale that the possibility exists of preventing war in the present era.

These conclusions have worldwide import because they set a course and a perspective for an entire period, and provide the basis for the operating policy not only of the Soviet government but of the entire Socialist world. They will also influence the policies of the governments in the extended Zone of Peace, including the non-Socialist countries in Asia and Europe which have refused to participate in military blocs. This zone now includes over half the population of the world, and it is growing.

Fighters for peace throughout the capitalist world, including many elements which for one reason or another are opposed to the cold war policies of Cadillac Washington, will now pursue their course with greater hope and with confidence that the objective of a lasting peace can be realized.

Thus, what the 20th Congress had to say on peace in itself becomes a force making for a further relaxation of international tension and for the continued strengthening of the peace forces the world over.

**FOR AMERICAN** progressives it is especially worthwhile to give close study to what was said on the subject at the Congress. In this country, the sickness of war fatalism has weakened the effectiveness of the progressive movement on many domestic and foreign issues. And this is not surprising, since the U.S. is the home base of world capitalism, the most powerful center of monopoly, the source of the cold war program, accompanied by reactionary domestic measures to fit this world policy.

If the war danger is viewed in a one-sided fashion, without fully assessing the powerful opposing forces which make possible the prospect of victory in the fight for peace, that is hampered, narrowed down, shunted off into blind alleys, away from the main currents of the people's struggle. If war is considered more or less inevitable no matter what is done by the people, if the war danger is endowed with a sort of iron law of invincibility, this is bound to hinder the upsurge of the forces fighting for democracy and peace.

**TO BE SURE**, in emphasizing the power of the world peace forces, the Congress did not overlook the war danger, and the necessity for a constant struggle against it. Speaking for the Central Committee, Khrushchev gave a substantial critique of the entire course of the cold war policy, showing how it endangers world peace, how it serves as a cloak for the program of world domination and for suppressing the colonial liberation movements. However, with a full sense of the new world reality, he pointed out also how these policies were being rebuffed in many parts of the world, how inner difficulties were growing sharper as a result of the arms drive, the inter-imperialist conflicts, the breaking up of colonialism, the prospects of economic decline. He pointed to "symptoms of a certain sobering up among influential Western circles" and to "more far-sighted representatives" who are beginning to admit the failure of the "positions of strength policy."

But the emphasis throughout the Congress was upon the abatement of the war danger, that has taken place, as a result of the successes of the peace forces—based upon the the strength of the Socialist world, the break up of the colonial system, the extending Zone of Peace, and the mass peace pressure in the capitalist world. "For the scale and organization of the struggle against the war danger waged by the masses," said Khrushchev, "the present period has no comparison in history."

**THE POSITION** of the So-

viet Communists was most clearly expressed in the discussion of the possibility of preventing war in the entire era in which imperialism still exists. The Marxist-Leninist idea that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists was rejected in its old form as no longer correct for the present period. Since World War II, as a result of a radical change in world relations, the forces of socialism and of peace are sufficiently strong and organized to "compel the imperialists to renounce war," in the judgment of the Soviet Communists.

True, the economic basis for war still exists in imperialism, and thus reactionary forces representing the interests of monopoly will continue to act in the direction of war. Thus, the danger of war is present as long as imperialism exists. But, Khrushchev adds, war itself "is not fatalistically inevitable," because powerful social and political forces now operate that can prevent the launching of war and, in the event that war should be attempted, of stopping the aggressors.

**NO ONE** should get the mistaken idea that anything like an automatic guarantee of peace was argued at the Congress. The concept throughout was that of active struggle for peace, of forging the united front of the peace forces, of maintaining constant vigilance and alertness to war danger. "The more actively the peoples defend peace, the greater the guarantees that there will be no war." It is in this sense only, in the sense of constantly building up the forces of peace, democracy and socialism, that the perspective of preventing war in the present era can be realized. The constant activity and unity of the peace forces are necessary to rebuff the war forces, which still have a powerful imperialist base.

At the same time, the Congress stressed what was new in the world picture—the appearance in combination of those factors and forces which make it possible for the first time to consider realistically the prospect of averting war for the entire era in which imperialism

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still exists. In other words, the Soviet Communists are saying that the forces of socialism together with the forces of peace the world over are strong enough, and are in the process of becoming ever stronger, to warrant as a realizable objective compelling the imperialists, themselves in a weakening position, to renounce war.

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THIS ESTIMATE, and the approach and policies arising from it, are a resounding call to the struggle for peace, precisely because they confidently hold forth the hope of preventing war entirely. The rigid and deadening idea that war must inevitably come no matter what is done by the people is laid low. The economics of imperialism, which engenders the war danger, is not the only force that determine the question of war or peace. Because of the great social changes

in the world, the will of the people for peace, expressed in common action and endeavor, can rebuff and defeat the drives toward war of the interests based on monopoly.

In place of the idea, based on past world relations, that imperialism inevitably gives birth to war, we have the new idea, arising from the changed and changing world, that the war drives of imperialism can be hemmed in and choked, that world peace can be imposed for the entire era in which imperialism still prevails in a part of the globe.

This is an active, a dynamic concept, based on the new world realities, opening the door wide to the most energetic and the most varied development of forces the world over making for peace, democracy and socialism. It should encourage and enliven the forces for peace everywhere, helping to cure the remnants and relapses of the sickness of war fatalism, which has hampered the growth of an all-sided struggle for peace, and social progress.