

Section IIB - Strategy and Tactics in World Wars I and II

closest to the proletariat, namely the semi-proletariat and the lowest stratum of the peasantry, also constitute part of the main reserve of the proletariat in the struggle for socialism.

We raise this but our grasp of it in actual living terms is limited. We need to do further study of both the objective situation and Marxist-Leninist theory around these questions. We do not sufficiently grasp either the class compositions of the national movements in this country or the relations of other classes to the proletariat, in particular our attitude to the various strata of the petit-bourgeoisie (based on fact and not speculation), which class constitutes a broad and complicated section of the population of the U.S. Who is part of the labor aristocracy and who is actually part of the petit bourgeoisie? We have little knowledge of the relation between town and country, of the changes in agriculture, the relation between agricultural workers and the industrial proletariat, etc. To develop anything more than the kind of superficial strategies of the Revolutionary Communist Party or the Communist Party (M-L) we must address ourselves to answering these and many other questions. And a national organization with a leading center are of great importance to our ability to carry this out.

We can see that the "theory of three worlds" gave us a theoretical basis for deviating from our theoretical tasks. It provided us with a view of strategy and tactics that distorts and revises the Leninist teachings on this subject. It is our responsibility now not only to gain a correct understanding of the international strategy for proletarian revolution but to concretely take up the tasks necessary for the development of a correct strategy for proletarian revolution in the United States of America. The day this bastion of imperialism falls will be a day of revolutionary rejoicing throughout the world.

In the first two sections of this article we have tried to explain some of the fundamental features of imperialism and the general basis of a Marxist-Leninist approach to the strategy and tactics of proletarian revolution. To concretize this analysis we would like now to briefly summarize two of the most catastrophic events of the 20th century, namely World War I and World War II. These two events represent the most acute periods of world-wide crisis in the first half of this century; and the attitude and actions of the communist movement towards these events provide us with profound and vital lessons in the art and science of revolution.

Every war must be regarded as a separate entity, from the standpoint of its fundamental historical character, i.e. as a just or unjust war, a war waged by the oppressed against the oppressor that benefits mankind, or a war waged by or among the oppressors for the continued plunder of the masses. A particular war cannot be examined merely from the standpoint of the atrocities committed - atrocities occur in all wars - or who invaded whom first. All wars represent a form of class struggle and are, as Lenin states in "Socialism and War," (quoting Clausewitz), "...the continuation of politics by other (i.e. violent) 'means'..." (In Lenin On War and Peace, FLP, Peking, pg. 11). The events leading up to a war as well as the particular war itself must be studied in the context of the inherent contradictions of the time; otherwise they become meaningless, isolated phenomena that offer little guidance to the formation and implementation of tactics for the revolutionary forces.

FACTORS LEADING TO WORLD WAR I

In Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism Lenin points out that capitalist countries develop unevenly, particularly during the era of imperialism. In the first third of this century Great Britain was the most highly developed and powerful imperialist country. As the saying went, "the sun never set on the British Empire." By 1914 Great Britain, with a land mass of 0.3 million square kilometers, controlled a colonial empire of 33.5 million kilometers populated by 393.5 million inhabitants. Great Britain and France together controlled 1/4 of the world's population.²² Germany, on the other hand, entered the arena of capitalist contention rather late. It consolidated itself as a state only in the late 19th century. As its industrial capacity grew - by 1914 its output of steel surpassed both England's and France's together²³ - it sought markets outside its borders to export its surplus goods and capital. Yet its colonies by 1914 encompassed only 2.9 million square kilometers of territory with a population of 12.3 million inhabitants, i.e. less than 1% of the world's population.²⁴ As a nation governed by the economic laws of

capital, it had to seek sources of raw materials, markets where it could sell its commodities and areas to export its capital for the highest rate of profit. But the world was already divided among the various imperialist powers. A violent clash to redivide it became inevitable.

This contradiction - between increasing production and limited world markets - played a fundamental role in bringing about World War I. The world by 1914 was split into two major imperialist blocs - one led by Britain, who strove to retain her holdings and power, and the other led by Germany, who strove to capture new areas of control and plunder. The German camp included Germany, the Austrian Empire and the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. France and the Russian Empire had allied in 1894. As Germany emerged as Britain's main contender, Britain temporarily put aside her differences with France and formed an alliance with France and the Russian Empire.

These two camps drew into the struggle areas and peoples throughout the world. Aware of the awakening national sentiments of the peoples of the colonies, each camp tried to divert these struggles for their own interests. For example, as a prelude to World War I, in 1905 Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany landed in Morocco, then a France colony, on a German submarine pledging support for the "independence" of Morocco. In reality this act was a symbolic challenge to French colonialism. Germany, seeking inroads into East Africa, chose the weakest link in the colonial chain, a country with a developing national movement and under the rule of the number two power, France, and tried to use the situation to further its own expansionist aims. (In much the same way, we might add, that the Soviet Union today challenges U.S. imperialism through alleged support of some of the national liberation movements.) Britain, not to be outdone in imperialist hypocrisy, promised the Arab sheiks aid in their struggle for independence from the Turkish empire, which was allied with Germany. After the War the victorious powers turned these newly formed states into colonies of British and French imperialism.

The two camps vied with each other for the oppression of the economically backward nations of Europe as well as for control over the colonies. Prior to World War I the national boundaries of much of Europe as we know it today had not been drawn. The Hapsburg (Austrian) Empire, a remnant of feudal times, included Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and parts of what are now Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland. The Ottoman Empire covered Turkey and much of the Middle East, including Palestine, Syria and Iraq. The Russian Empire, as described by Lenin, was a virtual "prison of nations." 100 million of its 170 million inhabitants lived as aliens on their own land, denied basic rights under the brutal rule of the Tsar.²⁵ They included the Ukrainians, Georgians and Uzbeks, to name but a few. Economically these Empires were primarily feudal, backward and agricultural, but with vast potential for whoever could develop them. Within them, national movements were developing, and in Russia in particular a strong proletarian movement as well. The only way these empires could maintain their rule was, as Lenin said about tsarist Russia, by engaging in war as a means of "diverting attention from the growth of discontent within the country and of suppressing the growing revolutionary movement." ("Socialism and War", in Lenin On War and Peace, p. 13). The empires sought to maintain their rule while the big imperialist

powers sought to turn these empires into their own reserves, generally by breaking them up into smaller, more easily dominated nations and states.

The incident that escalated into World War I showed how the imperialists used the national movements for their own interests. A member of the Black Hand, a terrorist organization of Serbian nationals, assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne. Austria, backed by Germany declared war on the Serbian national movement. The Serbs were backed by Russia which, because of its alliances, was backed by France and Great Britain. The incident rapidly escalated, as the contradictions between the two camps had intensified to the point where nothing short of war could resolve them, and World War I was declared.

World War I was an inter-imperialist war,

"...in a treble sense a war between slave-owners to fortify slavery. This is a war firstly, to fortify the enslavement of the colonies by means of a 'fairer' distribution and subsequent more 'concerted' exploitation of them; secondly to fortify the oppression of other nations with the 'great' powers, for both= Austria and Russia (Russia more and much worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to fortify and prolong wage slavery, for the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists gain, making fortunes out of the war, aggravating national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries, even in the freest and most republican." ("Communist Tactics in World War I, Ibid, p. 10-11)

The tactics advocated by the genuine internationalists in the Social Democratic parties (led by Lenin) were set forth in the Basle Manifesto prior to the outbreak of the war in 1912. The essence of this manifesto is that the war that was then about to break out was a war among imperialist slaveowners. No matter which country started it, no matter who invaded whom, it was in essence a war of plunder and exploitation. The only correct stance for communists and the proletariat was to declare war on the war mongers, i.e. to "turn the imperialist war into civil war." Defence of the Fatherland in the inter-imperialist war, or even refusal to break with the social-chauvinists, as advocated by Kautsky and his followers in the Second International, was unjustifiable opportunism.

The genuine internationalists called for civil war and sought to implement the principles of proletarian internationalism by calling for fraternization of soldiers of opposing sides in the trenches. They called for condemnation of and complete rupture with the social chauvinists of the Second International. They opposed all annexations by the oppressing nations and upheld the right to self-determination, up to and including secession. They bravely condemned their own bourgeoisies, calling for and fighting for their defeat.

In the U.S., for example, the IWW had a slogan: "...Don't be a soldier, be a man. Join the IWW and fight on the job for yourself and your class..." Though this slogan exemplified the

the IWW as well as from the Socialist Party, including Eugene Debs, were arrested in the U.S. under various espionage and sedition acts.

These tactics were, of course, most successfully implemented by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in Russia. In March, 1917, at the height of World War I, the masses of citizens of St. Petersburg revolted against the Tsar. The soldiers refused to fire on their brothers and sisters. The insurrection spread under the slogan "Down with the Tsar." The Tsar abdicated his throne and shortly afterwards the Provisional Government of the bourgeois liberal Kerensky came to power. Alongside of the Provisional government the Soviets, revolutionary organizations of the proletariat, grew in political power and number. By October 1917, the masses of soldiers, proletarians and peasants, thoroughly disgusted with the continuation of the War, with the ineptness of the Kerensky Government, with the food shortages and destruction of their land and country, and under the leadership of the Bolshevik party, revolted once again. "All Power to the Soviets" became a directive and a reality. The Provisional Government was overthrown and the Bolsheviks took power. Their first act was to proclaim peace without annexations and withdraw from the War.

RESULTS OF WORLD WAR I

The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union fundamentally changed the face of the world, intensifying the general crisis of capitalism from which the bourgeoisie can never escape. A new radical social system was born in practice as well as in theory. The antithesis of capitalism, the world's first socialist state, proved that a society run by the proletariat and built on the liberation of the forces of production was not only possible but beneficial and supported by the majority of the people. Exploitation of man by man could be eliminated. The interminable crises of capitalism were not inevitable, as was proved in 1929 when the rest of the world was besieged by an economic crisis and the Soviet Union flourished.

The establishment of socialism in the Soviet Union, as well as the crisis brought about by the War, led to an upsurge in the revolutionary movement throughout the world. After the War ended the Spartacist movement led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg led an unsuccessful revolt in Germany in January, 1919. The Hungarian Communist Party under the leadership of Bela Kun was able to seize and hold power in Hungary for several months in 1919. In the U.S., the upsurge led to the Palmer raids in 1920 in which thousands of immigrant workers were brutally rounded up, jailed and deported on the grounds of being part of the "red menace," as well as the frame-up of Sacco and Vanzetti that began in the same year.

Throughout the capitalist world the proletariat and other progressive peoples demonstrated their support for the land of the Soviets. In 1919 the Third International, known as the Comintern, was formed, centralizing the international communist movement under the experienced leadership of the Bolsheviks. Through the Comintern the international communist movement was able to adopt one line, one cohesive program, one overall program of action.

The war had brought soldiers from the colonies together and had heightened the consciousness of the colonized peoples throughout the world. Mutinies occurred in many of the colonial armies

towards the end of the war. Inspired by the Soviet union, armed by the imperialist powers themselves, national uprisings surged forward after the war. The Turkish Republic was created in 1923 as an independent nonsectarian state. Gandhi led the movement in India for independence from Great Britain starting in 1919. Although these movements were basically reformist in nature, they were indicative of the fact that the period between the two world wars was one of intensive struggle. Most importantly, there was a growing number of revolutionary armed liberation struggles directed by the newly formed communist parties of the colonial countries. The outstanding example of this is, of course, the struggle of the Communist Party of China against feudalism, comprador capitalism and Western and Japanese imperialism, which opened the way for the establishment of socialism in China.

The Versailles Treaty signed in 1919 by the four great powers, Great Britain, the United States, France and Italy, at the end of the war, was hailed by some as the start of a new era, an era of peace. In reality the Versailles Treaty set the stage for a new war. Its essential characteristic was to redivide the world principally between the three major victorious powers - the U.S., Great Britain and France. The Washington Treaty left control over the Pacific to the U.S. Germany was stripped of all its colonies, which were divided between France and Great Britain. An attempt was made to destroy the internal economy of Germany through the demand for enormous sums of money as war reparations. The infamous war guilt clause placed the entire blame for the war on Germany and subjected the German people to an additional humiliation of defeat.

The old Hapsburg empire was broken up and the tsarist empire was destroyed. Although the Western powers professed respect for "self-determination," the breakup of the Hapsburg empire into the "independent" states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia were made with more regard for the control it gave Great Britain and France over these areas than for the national demands of the people. These newly founded nations were established by the great powers as a buffer zone ("cordon sanitaire") against the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union. The Ottoman empire was divided into Syria and Lebanon - which became colonies of France - and Palestine and Iraq which were made mandates of Great Britain.

The League of Nations, Wilson's ideal of a world international body which could resolve disputes among nations diplomatically, was in reality a political body meant to maintain the status quo of the Versailles system and to peacefully settle disputes among the imperialists.

As Ercooli sums it up:

"The fundamental points underlying the Versailles Treaty were:

1. To keep the defeated countries, especially Germany in a state of political inferiority and an object of spoilation by the victor states.
2. To reach an agreement between the victor states on the division of the spoils of war, the fixing of frontiers of Europe and the distribution of colonies and colonial mandates for the purpose of securing the hegemony of the victor states throughout the world.

"3. To prepare an economic blockade and counter-revolutionary military intervention against the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Ercoli, "On the Danger of Imperialist War and the Tasks of Communists," VII Congress of the Communist International, 1935, reprinted by "Serve the People Press", p. 4)

The U.S. emerged relatively unscathed by the war. The war was never fought on U.S. soil. It had provided an incentive for the expansion of the U.S. economy through the manufacture and sale both of war materials and food, and through the export of capital to Europe. It had transformed the U.S. from a debtor to a creditor nation. Although the U.S. Senate never ratified either the Versailles Treaty or joined the League of Nations, by the end of World War I the U.S. was well on its way to becoming a major world power.

THE SITUATION PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

The capitalist world, prior to World War II, was beset by crises and contradictions. The general crisis of capitalism loomed over the bourgeoisie of all the capitalist countries as a threat to their very existence as a class. The Bolshevik menace was everywhere (as indeed it was) and had to be smashed. The economic crisis, starting with the crash in 1929, intensified the threat of Bolshevism, as the working class, bearing the brunt of the crisis, became increasingly aware of itself as a class and of its potential power as a class. Mass nationwide protests against unemployment called by the CP-USA and the Trade Union Unity League took place, for example, across the U.S. in 1930. The Bonus March of World War I Veterans and the general strike in support of the long-shoremen's right to organize in San Francisco in May of 1934 were violent class struggles in which the working class resisted the armed attacks of the bourgeoisie.²⁶ At the same time the peoples of the colonies were bravely fighting to throw off the yoke of imperialism, as evidence by the Ponce Massacre in Puerto Rico in 1937. Never again would it be so easy for the bourgeoisie to overtly enslave the peoples of the world.

Furthermore, the Versailles system could not halt the development of capitalism or permanently maintain the status quo. Competition among the capitalist powers for spheres of influence, markets and new areas for the export of capital inevitably had to intensify. Britain and France, for example, vied with each other for control over Syria. The U.S. and Japan both wanted China. Germany was seeking whatever it could get its hands on.

"The peaceful road to the solution of the problem of markets is closed to capitalism. There remains only one 'way out' for capitalism; a new division of colonies and spheres of influence by force, by armed conflict, by means of new imperialist wars." (Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU(B)," FLPH Moscow, 1950, p. 13; also in Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 282, emphasis in original)

The bourgeois democratic governments in the capitalist countries, weakened by World War I, were unable to withstand the pressures of these crises. As early as 1922 the Blackshirts marched

into Rome and installed Mussolini in power in Italy. Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of the German Republic in 1933. A week later the Nazis burned down the Reichstag, blaming the fire on the Bolsheviks. Hitler declared the advent of the Third Reich; all political rights were abolished; fascism was entrenched on German soil. The Spanish Civil War - between the Communists and other democratic forces and the Fascists - started in 1936, and raged on until 1939 (the advent of World War II) when Franco defeated the democratic forces. By 1939 sixteen out of twenty-seven European nations were in the hands of the fascists.

Fascism was able to come to power in these countries in part because the bourgeoisie was unable to rule by any other means. On the other hand the social democratic forces, particularly in Germany, paved the way for fascism by their conciliation and compromises with the fascists. The fact that they were more afraid of the Communists and revolution helped to bring about the terrible oppression that followed. In France fascist groups rioted in Paris in February, 1934, hoping to bring down the government. The Popular Front, with the Communists playing a leading role, led the masses in the street fighting and strikes that followed and prevented the fascists from coming to power. With a strong forceful revolutionary mass movement fascism's advent could be prevented or at least delayed.

The fascists were not representatives of a new class. They represented the most reactionary section of finance capital, although they found their mass base in the vacillating and frustrated lower petty bourgeoisie. Fascism, as defined by Dimitroff, is "...the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital..." (Dimitroff, Georgi, "The United Front Against War and Fascism", Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, 1935, Gamma Publ, p.7). The fascists, when they first came to power, wildly attacked the proletarian masses within their own countries. They smashed all democratic rights, including the right to have trade unions, to speak, to assemble. Built on an openly fascist ideology, Hitler's fascism avowed the supremacy of the blond blue-eyed "Aryan race." Hitler proceeded to commit genocide against the Jews as well as the gypsies, and treated those who did not fit his picture of the new man, such as the Slavs, as inferior beings. However, the fact that Nazi racial theories were subordinated to German imperialism's political needs can be seen in their alliance with the decidedly non-"Aryan" Japanese.

Hitler loudly declared that he was going to take over the world, first by smashing the Bolsheviks in power in the Soviet Union. The other capitalist countries, Great Britain in particular, hoping for a war between German fascism and Soviet socialism, encouraged Hitler. Japan, aiming to attack the Soviet Union from the East, invaded Manchuria in China in 1931. In an attempt to forestall a German-Japanese invasion and gain time to continue socialist construction and further prepare the Red Army for war, Stalin signed mutual assistance pacts with Czechoslovakia and France in 1935. The Soviet Union proposed similar pacts with the other bourgeois-democratic countries. Britain as well as the other Western powers refused. When Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938, none of the Western powers raised a hand of protest. It was in the context of the refusal of the Western powers to join in collective defense against fascism that Stalin, well aware that

it was solely a tactical attempt to temporarily buy time, signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939. Italy, meanwhile, had invaded Ethiopia (unsuccessfully, we might add) in 1935. As Italy continued her acts of aggression against Albania in 1939, Germany seized Poland. Though Britain officially declared war then, it was only after Hitler invaded France in the spring of 1940 that Great Britain had to recognize the fact that Hitler meant not only to smash the U.S.S.R. but to acquire hegemony throughout Europe and the world.

COMMUNIST TACTICS IN WORLD WAR II

In reality, World War II was several wars. In Korea, China, Vietnam, Ethiopia and other countries, the people fought wars of national liberation against Japanese, Italian and German imperialism. The Spanish fought their own fascists along with German and Italian fascism. The Albanians, Yugoslavs, French, Dutch and others fought German and Italian invasions and occupations of their countries. The Soviet peoples fought to preserve socialism as well as to save their homeland from the German invaders. U.S. and British imperialism fought the German, Japanese and Italian imperialists over the redivision of the world, particularly in North Africa, Burma and the Pacific islands. Finally all the people of the world had to fight against fascism because it was the most dangerous and viscous form of bourgeois rule world-wide. These wars were all very different in character but all involved the German-Italian-Japanese axis on one side. Even before the German attack on the Soviet Union, proletarian internationalism demanded opposition to this axis in all these wars except the inter-imperialist war, which had to be opposed. The Soviet working class, as the proletariat in power, was able to make an alliance with British and U.S. imperialism to fight this axis. This alliance meant that the struggle of the people of the world against the axis powers coincided with the British-U.S. imperialist war against the axis powers.

The main tactic of the Comintern in this period was the formation of the United Front against Fascism on a world-wide scale. The United Front took on different characteristics in different countries. On the one hand it was an alliance of mutual support between the forces in the colonies fighting the fascist invaders and the forces within the capitalist countries fighting the fascists. The united fronts formed within each country were to be built from above and below; based on the strength of the masses - the unity of the proletariat and other oppressed peoples - alliances could be made with all democratic forces, including the democratic section of the bourgeoisie. One of the most successful resistance movements was the movement in Albania in which the communists, under the pressure of the Italian invasion, were able to unite among themselves, organize the Albanian Workers Party and united the progressive forces in their country first to defeat the Italian and later the German invaders as well as their own conciliatory bourgeoisie.

The United Front against Fascism was also a military alliance, an alliance among the USSR, Great Britain and the U.S. as well as the French, Belgium and other resistance movements. The mistake that some of the communist parties made in relation to this alliance was to overestimate the unity between the imperialists and the Soviet Union. It was a tactical, temporary alliance, based

on a common enemy, and not a strategic, long-range alliance. Particularly in the U.S., the CP-USA liquidated its independent communist role. By supporting the no-strike pledge for the duration of the war, for example, the CP-USA capitulated to the bourgeoisie and harmed the interests of the proletariat.²⁷ It also opposed the activities of the March on Washington group, a mass movement to fight against discrimination in defense production and the armed forces. Although this group was led by the opportunists A. Philip Randolph and Adam Clayton Powell Jr., in opposing it the CP-USA aligned itself with white chauvinism and renounced all forms of class struggle.²⁸ Communist tactics did not mean cessation of revolutionary activity. Rather revolutionary activity was to be conducted through the militant struggle against fascism, which in essence was a struggle against capital.

The Red Army took Berlin in May, 1945. On May 8, 1945 the German Army surrendered to the Allied forces. On August 6, 1945 the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, killing over 70,000 people in one fell swoop. The Red Army invaded Manchuria, and the U.S. dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. On September 2, 1945 the Japanese surrendered. World War II, at a cost of over 30 million lives, was over. Fascism, at least temporarily, was defeated.

RESULTS OF WORLD WAR II

The survival of the Soviet Union, the world's first proletarian state, through the destruction and havoc of World War II, proved that it would take more than guns to defeat the proletariat. After World War II people's democracies were established throughout Eastern Europe - in Albania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania, East Germany and Bulgaria.

The end of World War II unleashed a virtual flood of anti-colonial struggles. By 1949 the world's most populous state, China, was fully controlled (except, of course, for Taiwan province) by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. India and Pakistan won their independence from Great Britain in 1947. The French colonialists were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam by Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh in 1954. In July 1962, after a bitter anti-colonial struggle, Algeria won its independence from France. By 1965 there were over thirty-five independent sovereign states in Africa.

The Western European powers and Japan were considerably weakened after the war. The fighting had destroyed their land, industry as well as countless numbers of people. The United States, on the other hand, again emerged relatively unscathed after the war. Comparatively few American lives had been lost; no fighting had been done on U.S. soil (except in the U.S. colony of Hawaii). The U.S. capitalist had acquired vast super-profits from the war and used this capital to invest in the rebuilding of Europe and Japan through the Marshall Plan, thus tying these countries to itself. The U.S. took control from its allies of large amounts of territories throughout the world - albeit indirect, neocolonialist control, and came out of the war a superpower.

History, as can be seen from this cursory overview of the period from World War I through World War II, has many twists and turns. The proletariat and progressive forces have experienced

victories as well as defeats. We have tried to concentrate on this period first because without an understanding of what took place in the past, we cannot understand either the present or the future. Second, we feel it crucial to grasp the basic tactics adopted by the communist forces during the two wars. Much has been made of these tactics. We hear some forces in our movement today calling for the tactics of World War I - turn the imperialist war into a civil war - and other forces, particularly the Communist Party of China, comparing the Soviet Union of today to Germany before World War II and calling for a united front against Soviet social-imperialism.

Although we feel that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are pushing towards an inter-imperialist war, and although the essential contradictions that were manifest during World War I and World War II continue to exist today, the objective situation of this period is as different from 1914 as 1914 was from 1939. One of the most important lessons we can draw from the tactics of the communists during the two world wars is that we must, as Lenin says, "study each war separately." Our tactics must be based on a precise estimation of the objective forces at play. To dogmatically apply the tactics of yesterday to the changing situation of today will hinder the emerging revolutionary tide of the masses from achieving its revolutionary aims.

Section III - The Theory of Three Worlds

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE THREE WORLDS' THEORY

For a couple of years already, the focus of the debate on the international situation has been the "theory of the three worlds." Its first real appearance in the international communist movement was Deng Xiaoping's speech at the U.N. in the fall of 1974. In the U.S. it was adopted immediately by most sections of the Marxist-Leninist movement, as if it were a familiar thesis like the theory of surplus value, long proven by the working class movement.*

Of course, the "three worlds theory" was familiar to all of us - but not from Marxist-Leninist literature. While it had never gotten a comprehensive statement before, its elements had been around for many years. Franz Fanon is generally agreed to have been the first to talk about "three worlds." Fanon was a West Indian psychiatrist, an anti-imperialist nationalist who worked in Algeria during the struggle against French colonialism, and he developed the idea in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*. He saw the alignment of forces in the world differently from the view put forth by the "three worldists;" for Fanon the "first world" was the imperialists or "free world" as they preferred to call themselves; the "second world" consisted of all those countries that called themselves socialists - the U.S.S.R., China, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, Albania and the other people's democracies of Eastern Europe; and the "third world," the colonies and former colonies. For Fanon this "third world" had its own special goals and purposes. While he spoke often of socialism, he upheld this separateness, and wouldn't completely take the side of the socialist camp. He wrote:

"It might have been generally thought that the time had come for the world, and particularly for the Third World, to choose between the capitalist and socialist systems. The underdeveloped countries, which have used the fierce competition which exists between the two systems in order to assure the triumph of their struggle for national liberation, should however refuse to become a factor in that competition. The Third World ought not to be content to define itself in the terms of values which have preceded it. On the contrary, the underdeveloped countries ought to do their utmost to find their own particular values and methods and a

*The major exception is the Communist League, which opposed it because of their view that the Soviet Union is a socialist country and that there is still a socialist camp including all the revisionist countries. Others, like the "anti-dogmatic trend" share these views with the Communist League but still uphold the existence of the "third world."