

*How to Fight*  
**WAR**

**Isolation**  
**Collective Security**  
**Relentless Class Struggle** ? ■

by  
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**3c**  
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**and**  
**YOUNG PEOPLES SOCIALIST LEAGUE**  
**(4th Internationalists)**

# How to Fight War

## INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet was published originally as a series of articles in the *Socialist Appeal*. Since its publication, there has been developing a new pacifist, isolationist combination going under the name of the "Keep America Out of War Committee." This Committee has already held mass meetings in several cities, and is looking forward to a national congress in the near future.

The mushroom growth of such movements is a normal feature of a pre-war period—indeed, they must be understood as an integral part of the war preparations. Their function is to exploit the widespread and genuine anti-war feelings among the masses, and to divert these feelings into channels entirely harmless to the imperialist interests. Through the false and illusory ideas which these movements spread, the masses are ideologically disarmed; and, when the time comes for serious business, are left ripe for plucking by the war-makers.

The "Keep America Out of War Committee," in the Call it issued to its New York meeting, and in the speeches delivered at that meeting, has already shown its true colors. The Call itself constitutes in reality a *program*—a program faithfully reflecting the hodge-podge social composition of the Committee, ranging from the Altman-Thomas Socialists and the Lovestoneites to retired Major Generals and small-time Congressmen.

Any attack against capitalism, any mention even of the relation between capitalism and war, is carefully avoided. No word is spoken of the role of the working class in the struggle against war. The Call is addressed to "citizens," and citizens of

"our" country. Room for New Dealers is made by sidestepping any direct criticism of Roosevelt's war policy, and by failing even to recognize it as a war policy. A place is made even for supporters of collective security through the demand for "American cooperation for international peace—but no alliance with any nation or group of nations for war. . ."

At the New York meeting, the leading orators such as Homer Martin and Maj. Gen. Wm. C. Rivers, after mild complaints against collective security and meddling in other nations' affairs, loudly called for the defense of the United States if "attacked." As everyone knows, all imperialist nations, on all occasions, are "attacked" and must "defend" themselves, when they get ready to go to war. Even Italy explained how it was attacked by Ethiopia; and Japan, by China.

The "Keep America Out of War Committee," it should be clearly noticed, is in no sense whatever a United Front. It is a *political bloc* of various tendencies, based not upon a plan for joint specific actions (as would be the case with a united front), but upon a *political program*. Enough of this program has already come out to characterize it. As indicated sufficiently in the references I have given—and summed up for that matter in the fatally illusion-breeding name of the organization—this program is thoroughly deceptive and reactionary.

Ironically enough there are to be found on this Committee (in some cases perhaps without their having been fully aware of its implications) many individuals in the past noted for their opposition to the Stalinist American League against War and Fascism, recently re-christened the League for Peace and Democracy. The new Committee is distinguished from the American League in its early stages only by being much further to the right.

One must speak the truth plainly on the issue of war. The "Keep America Out of War" movement is in no respect a blow at the war and the war-makers. It is a *blow at the revolutionary struggle against war*. It is a device for the deception and disorientation of the people, above all of the workers. That is the truth.

The struggle against the war is the struggle against capitalism. The way to fight the war is to make the workers' revolution, and that is the only way to fight it. This is the truth; and whoever hides this truth is guilty of crime and treachery against the people.

## I—BROWDER DEFENDS IMPERIALISM

When Marxists state that Stalinism now functions in the world labor movement as a counter-revolutionary force, as the chief obstacle in the struggle for workers' power and for socialism, there are still, of course, many who do not believe them. There are, for example, honest members and sympathizers of the Communist Party itself who think that this altogether sober and scientific analysis of the Marxists is the slander and ravings of "mad dogs." Such persons are compelled by their own conscience to think in this manner.

They differ in their whole moral makeup from the cynical, depraved and shameless bureaucrats who actually run the Communist Parties of the world. In their own hearts, they sincerely want socialism; and they believe that the only road toward socialism lies through support of the Communist Party, which they mistakenly look upon as the heir to—instead of the most bitter enemy of—the October Revolution. If they understood the true role of Stalinism, they would abandon it overnight. That is why we must dissect every concrete manifestation of Stalinism, in order to remove the false outer skin and lay bare the internal decay.

It will need no argument to prove that today the war question is the decisive question. Since it is the decisive question, the answers given to it provide the surest touchstone to the character of every political movement. To anyone who doubts what the Stalinist answer is and means, the *New Republic* of February 2 offers an easy and spectacular way of clearing up those doubts.

In this issue of the *New Republic* there is published a debate between Earl Browder and Charles A. Beard on the general subject of "Collective Security." I propose to analyze Browder's arguments in this debate, as well as those of Dr. Beard, and in particular to discuss the whole conception of "collective security." I wish, to begin with, to consider the *point of view* from which Browder writes.

Naturally enough, Stalinists pretend to their own followers that they write from the point of view of the international proletariat. Even a brief survey of Browder's article in the *New Republic* can demonstrate beyond any doubt that he is reasoning and writing from *the point of view of the defense of U. S. imperialism.*

In no line does Browder even suggest that his policy is a working class policy, or an independent policy of any kind. He himself speaks openly for Roosevelt's policy. The cover of the magazine correctly reads: "Earl Browder—for the President's Policy." "Clearly, then," Browder writes, "in our country the task is to organize effective support, behind the President's policy, of the 27,000,000 who voted for him in 1936." Replying to Bruce Bliven's objection that his policy is peculiarly "Russian," Browder says: "We will not quarrel with Mr. Bliven as to how the policy could be best 'framed in American terms'; we are willing to leave that to the President. . ."

The President, according to Marxism, is the chief political executive of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, in this country. Browder, by his own words, accepts the war policy of the chief executive of the bourgeoisie, accepts it one hundred per cent, and is willing to leave its fuller formulation altogether to that chief executive.

In Browder's article, the class struggle—according to Marxism the motive force of history, from an understanding of which all Marxian analysis of all social and political problems proceeds—is mentioned only once. There is no word of the class struggle in the discussion either of the causes of, or the cure for, war. On the one occasion where the class struggle appears, it is cited as one of the major *weaknesses* of the United States as against Japan; and, it therefore follows, as a factor which must be overcome if an "effective peace policy" is to be achieved.

Browder's argument thus advocates *the suppression of the class struggle*, as a necessary part of the means for achieving what he calls an effective peace policy. This does not appear so odd when we understand that in reality Browder wants to achieve not a peace but a *war* policy for the United States: suppression of the class struggle is, in fact, necessary for an effective war policy on the part of a capitalist nation. "But America, rich and full of potential booty, is still considered by the world to be in a pacifist funk, is torn by a constitutional crisis and sharp class struggles, and contains powerful forces that would welcome Japanese aggression for their own fascist ends."

Browder's article is filled with the frankest jingo appeals to the interests of U. S. imperialism. "A continuance of isolation policies by the United States will surely convince the arrogant militarists of Tokyo that now is the time for them to take over the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam and Alaska, as guarantees

against the future, when the United States *might dare*. From that it would not be a large step to recall how much more successful are Japanese than Americans in cultivating the beautiful and rich lands of California." This is the crux of Browder's argument.

He continues it by stating that the United States is in more danger from Japan than is the Soviet Union. "A continuance of the same line (pursued up to now by Japan) leads her not to Vladivostock, Habarovsk and Chita, but rather to Manila, Honolulu and Nome." That is to say, Browder's central argument in favor of his own war position is that his policy alone can protect and defend—what? The working class? The struggle for socialism? Not in the least. His policy, he says in his own words, alone can defend the possessions of U.S. imperialism.

There is nothing more revealing in this article than Browder's use of "our" and "we." In every instance these words stand for the United States as a nation—that is, for the imperialist state. For Marx, the workers had no fatherland until they conquered one for themselves. Browder is less lonely. "Our country" appears a dozen times. "If we continue to desert them to their fate, as Mr. Bliven advocates, we will have no one to blame but ourselves when we have to take up the full military burden under more unfavorable conditions." Browder speaks these days with the full rounded phrases of a statesman. But not, he is careful to make clear, of a statesman of the working class. "We," says Browder, we and the other representatives of the imperialist United States, will be ready to assume "the full military burden" even "under more favorable conditions."

The most startling and naked of all the sentences in this remarkable article is, however, the following: "Only the courageous implementing of the policy laid down by President Roosevelt in Chicago can save our country, and all the capitalist world, from unparalleled reaction and catastrophe." Criticism itself becomes tongue-tied when faced with such a remark.

Whom is the working class called upon by Browder to save? He answers: "Our country, and all the capitalist world." And what must this capitalist world be saved from? He answers: "From *catastrophe*." But what is *catastrophe* for the capitalist world? Catastrophe for the capitalist world is, and is only *the socialist revolution*. Browder's entire article is summed up in this clarion call: join with me to save capitalism from the socialist revolution.

## II—WHAT IS COLLECTIVE SECURITY?

The current war program of the Stalinists is summed up in the phrase, "Collective Security." Earl Browder's half of the *New Republic* debate with Charles A. Beard, subsequently reprinted in *The Daily Worker*, is entitled "For Collective Security." The Communist Party has recently issued several pamphlets with the same title. We must enquire further into the true meaning of Collective Security.

At first glance, the program of Collective Security seems reasonable and practical to many people. "Clearly," argues Browder, "in this relation of forces, there does exist the possibility of preventing the spread of war, and of extinguishing the wars going on, *provided* the peace-loving 90 per cent can arrive at a concerted program of action, at least to a degree in some relation to that of the concerted action of the Triple Alliance of the 'anti-Communist' bloc of fascist states. . . Considering the economic resources of the war-makers, it would clearly be sufficient to bring them quickly to a halt if the United States, France, Britain and the Soviet Union should jointly declare an embargo upon all economic transactions with the aggressors. . ."

How can anyone object to such a calm and virtuous proposal? No wonder Browder is indignant at the scoundrels who insist on criticism!

But let us, approaching this as all questions from the point of view of the interests of the working class, ask: First, even assuming that Collective Security might preserve peace, is it a correct program; and, second, whether it can in fact preserve peace—or whether it is even designed to preserve peace. The Collective Security—No. 4

answer to both of these questions requires a brief account of the *origin* of the idea of Collective Security.

The idea of Collective Security is not an invention of Browder, nor of Litvinov nor of Stalin. It arose in the camp of the Allied Powers during the latter part of the War of 1914-18, and was part of the basis for the construction of the "Versailles system." Its chief early advocate was Aristide Briand, the renegade from socialism who became during that time an outstanding spokesman for French imperialism.

The theory of Collective Security was as follows: The Allied Powers had won the war, and taken for themselves the rich spoils of conquest. France and Great Britain, particularly,

being satisfied with the results, glutted with colonies and other booty, wanted a method of protecting the spoils against any rival who might try to make a bid for them, either from among the defeated Central Powers, or from their own less satisfied allies. Briand wanted to solidify the imperialist division of the world as it existed at the time of the Versailles Treaty.

Collective Security was the plan for accomplishing just this solidification. All of the nations (united in the League) were to take joint steps against any nation which might attempt to break through the existing imperialist division. In addition, it was, of course, understood that collective action would above all be exercised against a bid for power by the working class of any nation—which would naturally be the greatest of all threats against the existing imperialist division.

It was as if two coalitions of gangs had been fighting for control of a racket, in, let us say, Brooklyn. The winning gang, having consolidated its victory, decreed that henceforth "peace and order" were to reign over Brooklyn. All the gangsters together would take collective action against any rival gang which attempted to muscle in. And, of course, similar collective action would likewise be taken against any group of honest citizens who tried to break up the rackets themselves.

In the case of the gang, it is clear enough that Collective Action is hardly the answer to the problems of good citizens. Their interest is to smash *all* of the gangs, and to get rid altogether of the rackets.

The case of the imperialist powers is exactly the same. *Even if* Collective Security could preserve "peace," that would mean simply protecting the dominant imperialist positions of the Anglo-French bloc; protecting their right to exploit the major part of the world; safeguarding their rule of starvation and terror in India, the Near East, Indo-China, Africa; guaranteeing for eternity their right to the exploitation and oppression of the workers in the home countries.

The workers have absolutely no interest in the preservation of any imperialist division whatever, no matter what nation or group of nations a given division favors. Their interest is to overthrow the whole imperialist system; and, if mankind is not to revert to barbarism, to do so in the shortest possible time. The program of Collective Security, which is the program for the preservation of an Anglo-French dominated imperialist system, is thus crassly and directly counter-revolutionary.

However, in any case the assumption that the program of Collective Security might preserve peace is directly contrary to fact. Italy, Germany, Japan do not begin military operations, do not try to upset the existing division of the world because Mussolini, Hitler and the Mikado are madmen or "war-lovers." They are driven to military adventure by iron necessity. Their only alternative is economic and social death for their own national capitalism, and they are fighting desperately against that death. No conceivable system of treaties or Leagues or "peaceful economic sanctions" can stop them. A man faced with certain death in one direction will fight against any odds in the other.

The originators of Collective Security know all this. And that is why they have never pretended to themselves that Collective Security is in reality a "peace program." It is a program to preserve peace (i.e., the status quo) as long as possible and convenient to the dominant powers; and in doing so to *prepare for war they know to be inevitable* on the most favorable physical and moral terms.

Collective Security is a way of cementing military alliances in one of the imperialist coalitions. It has the great advantage of making the members of the opposing coalition appear to be the "breakers of the peace," thereby permitting the mobilization of popular sentiment against them.

This last feature explains why Browder has now so ardently taken up the slogan of Collective Security. He knows, as well as Briand knew and Auriol and Chautemps and Daladier know today, that Collective Security is in the last analysis not a program for peace but a program for war. And he is using Collective Security in his attempt to make the war which he believes will aid his master popular among the people of the United States. Collective Security is his banner for enlisting the masses in this country in the next war of American imperialism.

### III—THE DREAM OF ISOLATION

The idea of "collective security" has never been popular with the majority of the people of this country. This has been proved on a number of occasions, most conspicuously during the period following the last war. In spite of the fact that the war itself showed that neutrality for the United States in a major European conflict was impossible, as soon as the War was over

Americans wanted to steer clear of Europe.

This sentiment was reflected in the Senate. Wilson came back from Versailles with his head full of the new Treaty, Briand's plans for collective security, and the grandiose scheme for the League of Nations. The Senate blocked adherence to the League, and in doing so undoubtedly represented majority opinion.

Even now, with the entire Administration, especially Roosevelt and Hull, driving for collective security, and with the outstanding bourgeois press holding the same perspective, the anti-collective security Ludlow Amendment came close to a majority in the House of Representatives.

The majority of the people has been traditionally in favor of "isolation"; or, as it is often called, "neutrality." There are historical reasons for this feeling, so different from opinion in Europe, even among the masses. For one thing, there is the important geographical fact that the United States is far away from any other great power, whereas the European nations are situated right next to each other. Again, there is the carry-over from the hopes of the American Revolution, which was to build a new civilization freed from the conflicts of the Old World. And, in addition, there were the unparalleled resources and opportunities for expansion on the North American Continent.

There was always, of course, hypocrisy and unreality in the idea of "isolation." Isolation from Europe was found to be perfectly consistent with the ruthless extermination of the native inhabitants of North America. The Monroe Doctrine, dating from the early years of United States history, was hardly an "isolationist" conception. In actuality, from the point of view of United States capitalism, isolation and neutrality mean only that up to a certain point in its history the United States had a sufficient sphere for exploitation and advance in the Americas, and did not need to develop a "world outlook."

As the United States entered the imperialist stage of its development, the economic basis for the policy of isolation was destroyed. The idea of isolation lingered on in a vacuum. This was already clear in the Spanish War. It was fully shown by the War of 1914-18. The ramifications of American capitalism had become world-wide, and it was drawn irresistibly into the vortex of world affairs.

With the last War, the United States became a creditor nation, and has since become the first and most powerful of the

imperialist powers. Its whole internal economy now depends upon its stake in the world market. Without its foreign trade and foreign capital investments, it would be bankrupt within six months. Far from decreasing in importance, the foreign trade and investments must necessarily play an ever more crucial role.

In the *New Republic* debate over collective security between Earl Browder and Charles A. Beard, there is no doubt at all that Dr. Beard has much the best of the argument. He understands what Browder's argument means, that it means advocacy of and preparation for war; and with his mature and rather tired irony he exposes Browder's meaning. He knows what Roosevelt is up to: "The Roosevelt Administration, bewildered and baffled by the economic impasse at home, is employing sentimental coverages for excursions abroad."

He knows how "peace-loving" France and Great Britain are: "Having all the European territory required by their traditional ambitions and loaded with the spoils of empire, Great Britain and France do want peace—at their price. . . The great democratic powers want peace and the possession of all they have. . ." He knows that Italy and Germany and Japan are driven by conflicts too great to be stopped by any peaceful "quarantines": "I find in history no justification whatever for assuming as truth that Italy, Germany and Japan would surrender unconditionally to a grand quarantine."

He knows also just what "democracy" is worth to imperialism, and just how democracy is served by imperialist war: "Does any one conversant with British history really believe that the operations of the British government since 1914, let us say, have been controlled by some conception of democracy, as distinguished from British interests in the Mediterranean, Africa and elsewhere? Or the operations of the French government? What did these governments do for democracy in Germany between 1919 and 1933? . . . And if it comes to another war for democracy against the three offenders, have we any ground for expecting beneficent results in the way of a universal democratic advance? All I ask any one to consider on this point is the record. . ."

Lastly, Beard knows the real direction of Roosevelt's program, which Browder so ardently defends: "That Roosevelt would take them in (to the next world war) swiftly if it comes is highly probable. . ."

Beard knows all these things about the Roosevelt-Browder program, about collective security. But what does he propose in its place? In the debate he makes no explicit proposals. His views, developed elsewhere in his writings, are left implicit. They are the views of isolationism; he wants the United States to stay home and mind its own business.

But, in truth, this alternative is no alternative at all; and Beard's program is no program. The truth is that the business of U. S. imperialism is everybody's business. The truth is that foreign trade and capital markets are necessary to U. S. capitalism if it is not to collapse. There are not enough markets to go around among the powers. The competition for them is a life and death question for each power. Therefore, in the end, they—including the United States—fight each other for them.

To assume that the U. S. capitalists, controlling the U. S. government, will not fight under such circumstances, is to assume that they will voluntarily abdicate, will stand by while the social system which supports them goes bankrupt. Does Dr. Beard, with all his historical knowledge and his irony, make such an assumption?

The idea that isolation is possible for imperialist United States is thus an empty illusion, utterly unrelated to historical and economic reality. If it and those who advocate it are less treacherous than collective security, the illusion of isolation is also a most powerful danger. For it is an illusion which leads the masses away from the genuine fight against war, dissipates their energies in empty air, and leaves them helpless when the war breaks out in spite of—in part because of—the illusion.

#### IV—MARXISM AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY

In their editorial notice preceding the debate between Earl Browder and Charles A. Beard, the editors of the *New Republic* write: "No more important subject is before the American people today than the question of foreign policy usually described by the alternatives of 'collective security' and 'isolation.' "

The hearings on the naval appropriation measure before the House of Representatives Naval Affairs Committee were similarly conducted in the light of this same alternative: "collective security" or "isolation." Every speaker who appeared before the Committee supported, with whatever personal modi-

fications, one or another of these two policies.

Beard and Browder, also, throughout the course of their debate, assume that the choice is limited to these two policies. Neither of them makes any mention of any third possibility. Each of them takes for granted that if he can refute the position of his opponent, then his own view is thereby proved.

This should serve to indicate that the two positions of "collective security" and of "isolation," in spite of the seeming contradiction between them, do in point of fact share important features in common. However great the gap between them may appear, they are in fundamental respects alike.

The two positions are alike, in the first place, in that neither analyzes the actual cause of modern war. Both argue merely on the surface, as if war were due to the wickedness of individual men, the effect of this or that law, or the success of some clever bit of diplomacy.

They are alike, secondly, in proposing a solution for "the problem of war" within the framework of capitalism. Collective security and isolation equally pre-suppose the continuing existence of capitalism.

Thirdly, they are alike in that each offers as its solution a program for adoption by the government of the United States: that is, each proposes as its answer to the war crisis a set of actions to be performed by an imperialist state.

As a consequence, both of these policies, both collective security and isolation, are in the last analysis not programs against war at all, but are *part of the preparation for war*.

They act as part of the preparation for war in a number of decisive ways. For example, since both of them, and their advocates presuppose support of the imperialist government of the United States, they aid in building up attitudes of loyalty toward that government; and thus, when the government goes to war, as it will, the same attitudes of loyalty will keep support behind it for the war.

Both policies, moreover, by hiding the true nature of war, of the U. S. government, and of imperialism in general, spread disastrous illusions among the people, and divert any genuine struggle against imperialist war into a chase after impossible dreams.

Even more fatal is the fact that both of these policies, each in its own way, impotent to fight against war, serves to give moral justification to the war when it comes. This happens

partly because, as the last war showed, the leading spokesmen, known publicly as "the leaders of the peace movement," go over to open support of the war as soon as it starts. The masses reason: If these men, who lead the fight for peace, support the war, then it must be a good war; and, even if it is not, we cannot oppose it effectively without their help. But these policies themselves provide moral justification apart from the men who advocate them. The war will be propagandized as a lawless breaking of collective security, or a violation of neutrality and isolation; and thus the very fight for peace will seem to the masses to demand a war to enforce the "peace policy."

Marxism, therefore, does not answer collective security by an appeal for isolation. Marxism, bases its answer to the problem of war squarely and bluntly upon a truthful analysis of the nature of war and of capitalism. Any other basis must lead to lies, illusions, or demagoguery.

Marxism points out that so long as capitalism endures, wars *will come*, that war under capitalism is not an "accident" or an "exceptional event" but an integral part of the very mechanism of capitalism. War is just as much a part of capitalism as are economic crises. You cannot have capitalism without having periodic crises and you cannot have capitalism without periodically having wars. The causes which bring about wars, the inescapable need for every advanced capitalist nation to attempt to expand its markets, gain cheaper sources of raw materials, find new outlets beyond the internal market for capital investment, can none of them be eliminated without eliminating capitalism itself.

Every capitalist government, above all every imperialist government—including outstandingly the U. S. government—is therefore committed to war "as an instrument of national policy" by the very fact that it is a capitalist government. To ask it to renounce war is like asking a living man to renounce oxygen.

From these considerations, it follows that the struggle against war, the genuine struggle, is simply an aspect of the struggle against capitalism and for socialism. This is the truth of the matter, however unpleasant a truth it may seem. If capitalism necessarily brings about war, you obviously cannot get rid of war without getting rid of capitalism. To divorce the struggle against war from the struggle against capitalism is in reality to give up the struggle against war, so far as any possible effectiveness is concerned.

This simple truth is systematically obscured by both the ignorant and the conscious liars. So many persons wish to satisfy their consciences by feeling that they are "working for peace"; but at the same time they do not wish to take the risk of working against capitalism. To these persons we must say: Deliberately or unconsciously you are fooling yourselves. Which do you really want—peace or capitalism? You cannot have both. If you are unwilling to give up capitalism, then your pretended fight for peace is a fraud, and a fraud which aids no one but the war-makers.

The day-by-day class struggle of the workers, which by strengthening the working class is implicitly directed against capitalism, is thus a far more realistic means of checking the war preparations than all of the pacifism, isolation and collective security ever imagined. Fear of what the workers may do is the only real hindrance to the war-makers. They laugh at, and exploit to their own ends, the propaganda of isolation and collective security.

In the end, however, the overthrow of capitalism itself is the only conceivable means for stopping war. Socialism, and it alone, will end war because socialism, and it alone, will root out the causes of war. The program of the socialist revolution, when the question is finally and fully understood, is the only anti-war program.

This does not mean that it is impossible for revolutionary socialists to unite with others not yet accepting their perspective to further certain specific objectives. Both concrete actions, such as boycotts and demonstrations, and even primarily agitational measures directed against specific moves of the war-makers ("Withdraw all U. S. Armed Forces from the Far East," "Against the Naval Appropriations," "All War Funds to the Unemployed") can legitimately serve a limited purpose. But for the revolutionary socialists these must always be subordinated to the general perspective of the class struggle.

To Browder and to Beard, then, as to Roosevelt, the Marxists in the end give one short reply: The answer to war, the only answer, is the socialist revolution.

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# ENLIST NOW IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WAR

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IF you are against the wholesale slaughter  
of the workers of the world;

IF you are against the world-wide tyranny  
of fascism;

IF you are against the criminal destruction  
of the results of centuries of labor in cre-  
ating the wealth and culture of the world;

THEN YOU ARE AGAINST  
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