

# August 1st 1931.

By Harry Pollitt (London).

In no country is there more need of a great international campaign against the danger of war and armed intervention against the USSR, than in Britain, where the most pernicious pacifist and disarmament propaganda has been allowed to go on without being effectively challenged. The widespread propaganda of the churches, Quakers, ILP., No More War Movement and such bodies, coupled with the unity of the three capitalist parties in advocating the League of Nations as the instrument through which war can be abolished, has had the effect of deluding wide circles of the population into believing that there is no war danger, and that the revolutionary working class movement in its anti-war meetings and demonstrations is simply trying to frighten the masses.

But to-day, as the economic crisis grows in intensity, the capitalist nations—defeated and victorious countries alike—are again engaged in mad and feverish war preparations; so that it is more necessary than ever to carry on revolutionary propaganda against war on the widest scale, and to focus the attention of the masses of workers on the imminent danger of imperialist war.

In every capitalist country to-day—in none more so than in Britain—fierce attacks are being levelled against the workers' standards; wages are being ruthlessly slashed, a terrific increase in the speeding-up process goes on daily, old-established workshop customs and practices are completely disregarded and a drive is being made against all forms of state expenditure

in social services. This steady driving down of the workers and the lowering of their standards is accompanied by a rapid increase in expenditure on all forms of armaments and war preparations, particularly those concerned with chemical, mechanical and aerial methods of warfare.

It is a striking commentary on the present international

situation, and the clearest exposure of the hypocrisy of the so-called pacifist propaganda of capitalist governments, that the **Soviet Government**, the Government of what is described as "Red Russia", the Government which, according to its enemies, stands for violence and bloodshed, to-day is the only Government in the world which steadily pursues a peace policy, and has, on countless occasions, made its declarations in favour of peace.

It is necessary at this moment, to recall that it was comrade **Litvinov**, the representative of the Soviet Government who, in 1927, caused a flutter in the thieves' kitchen at Geneva by coming forward with a proposal for complete disarmament, and it was the peace-loving labour Prime Minister, Mr. **MacDonald** who, when a delegate at the Birmingham Labour Party Conference in 1928 had the temerity to refer to the Russian disarmament proposals, declared he was sick and tired of hearing about the Soviet proposals.

Such facts need to be burned into the minds of the working class, particularly those members of the I. L. P. and Labour Party who, still believe that the policy of Labour is a policy of peace. Never was there a greater myth. The recent congratulations showered upon the War Minister, Tom Shaw, the increased budget expenditure on armaments, (especially on the air fleet) which now reaches a total of £ 110,000,000 a year, the great air pageants, naval displays, military tattoos, large scale army manoeuvres, the efforts made by Henderson at Geneva to secure a united front of the imperialist powers against the U. S. S. R., these are only a few of the inescapable facts which show the unity of the three parties in preparing for war.

There are still thousands of workers who believe that the present Foreign Secretary, **Arthur Henderson**, is the friend of the working-class, but it is this same unspeakable Henderson who has carried out, since he became Foreign Secretary, the policy for which he became famous in 1917, of leading the drive in the League of Nations for the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc. When in 1917 Henderson was chosen by the coalition government as the stool pigeon to send to Russia to try to persuade the Russian working-class, in the name of the Second International, to reenter the imperialist war, he was chosen because the government knew their man. Just as they know him to-day; and just as to-day they are creating the impression that he is the strongest Foreign Secretary this country has had for years; for Henderson, in alliance with the rest of the Cabinet, is carrying through a policy at Geneva and in regard to the colonies, of a character that Baldwin or Lloyd George would never be able to get away with. And at the very moment that the Labour Government is professing its pacifist aims, it is carrying out the most bloody suppression in the colonies and brutally reducing the workers' standards at home.

The workers of Britain must be roused to a consciousness of how acute the war danger has become, of the need to spread the widest possible propaganda amongst the workers in the factories and in the unions, in order to build up an actual fighting resistance to imperialist war. The wages of the workers are being reduced by millions while the expenditure on war preparations is being steadily increased. In this connection the following figures are worthy of note:

**War expenditure (in million dollars)**

	1914	1923	1928	1930
England	385	520	581	537
U. S. A.	285	580	761	847
France	280	258	350	457
Italy	131	135	253	249
Japan	97	234	221	234

Total for 1914: 1,188

Total for 1930: 2,324

**Spent out of every £ 100: —**

France	£ 70
U. S. A.	£ 80
England	£ 70
Poland	£ 67
U. S. S. R.	£ 9

These figures show in millions of dollars the increased expenditure on armaments since 1914. What it comes to is this, that after the "war to end war" costing countless millions of lives and inflicting terrific burdens upon the working classes in the defeated and victorious countries, the whole world is rapidly heading for a new imperialist war. But the greatest danger is that the capitalists will endeavour to seek a partial solution of some of their immediate difficulties by attacking the U. S. S. R. through one of the Border states, and that this is

no figment of the imagination can easily be seen when consideration is given to the following extract taken from an article in "The Popular Science Monthly" of May 1931 headed "Soviet Slaves Rebuild Red Russia" which says: —

"Some weeks ago, during a session of the Council of the League of Nations at Geneva, Switzerland, delegates from twenty-eight countries met behind closed doors to consider means of averting the dangers that would threaten the rest of Europe and the United States if Russia should become the great red world power the Soviet want it to be."

("Popular Science", May 1931, Vol. 118, No. 5.)

Here we have a so-called impartial scientific journal calmly telling the world that there has been a secret session at which delegates from 28 countries came together in order to consider how they could unite their forces to attack the U. S. S. R.

Miners, engineers, dockers, builders, cotton and woollen textile workers and unemployed, now facing attacks on all their existing standards, must to-day learn that in the degree that they can unify their forces to beat back the capitalist attacks, so are they preparing the working class movement more effectively to fight against the war danger.

To-day we must show the workers that only in the measure that we perfect our organisation in the daily struggle, widen our contacts and build up the revolutionary movement, can we effectively prepare for general strike action in the event of war. And it would be folly to wait until war actually breaks out, or until the crisis takes on a more acute form. Now is the time to prepare the workers to face the alternative with which they will be presented — in the event of war between the capitalist Powers or armed intervention against the USSR. — of once more shooting and being shot by fellow-workers of other countries in the interests of capitalism, or using their arms in the defence of the Socialist Fatherland of the workers of the world and the overthrow of the whole capitalist system. These are questions that inevitably arise when one considers how the fight against war can be conducted, and the Communist International in launching this campaign leads the working class of the whole world in the fight against war.