

# The Next War

By Bertram D. Wolfe

## 5. Anglo-American Conflict

The world today is a powder magazine crammed with far more explosive materials than in 1913. With every imperialist power armed to the teeth, with expenditures for war preparations mounting from year to year and already far in excess of 1913, with all the powers maneuvering for position in the conflicts ahead, with multiplying antagonisms, secret treaties and alliances, plots and counterplots, clearly visible thru the thin-blown clouds of peace-talk—it needs but a spark to blow up the whole works.

A war cannot start anywhere in the world today without becoming a world war. Even two minor nations getting into a war with each other will promptly reveal the imperialist giants standing behind them and pulling the strings. Then the ultimatums will begin to fly and the "fat will be in the fire."

In all the welter of major and minor antagonisms and contradictions that characterize the present world situation, two stand out overshadowing and intersecting all the rest—the titanic struggle between Britain and America for world hegemony and the war-plot against the Soviet Union.

### London and Washington Prepare For

#### Death Struggle

"We are fighting for our lives in world markets," Lord Riddell warned the convention of the British Advertising Association in 1929. And he might have added: "Great Britain is fighting for her 'life' in dominions and colonies, in oil fields and rubber jungles, in coal mines and copper mines, in steel and nickel and tin and zinc and chemical industries, on land and on sea and in the air and under the ocean, in railroad routes and canals and cables and radio lines, in stock exchanges and clearing houses, in foreign offices and embassies and 'back-stairs', with maneuvers and notes and threats and 'good-will' expeditions—fighting everywhere for her 'life'."

At the very dawn of the capitalist system, Britain gained a commanding position. After defeating Spain, Holland and France in a series of commercial wars, Great Britain further assured her lead by a big head start in the industrial revolution. Thruout the nineteenth century she was the world's leading merchant and shipper, the world's manufacturer, banker and clearing house, the leading colonial power and the mistress of the seas.

But towards the close of the last century, with the birth of modern imperialism, various world powers arose to dispute with Great Britain her world hegemony. Germany, the United States, Czarist Russia, France and Japan—these were the challengers. The leading rivals were Germany and the United States.

Great Britain could not settle with so many powers at once, and when Germany began winning her markets, demanding naval parity, fighting for a "place in the sun" in Asia, Africa and South America, and the port of Hamburg began to boast more shipping than that of Liverpool, England compromised her differences with France, which had nearly led to war in the Fashoda affair; with Russia, which had led to the brink of war in Persia, China and the Balkans; with Japan in the Orient; and with the United States, which had come to their sharpest expression in Mexico and the Caribbean.

### A Quarrel on Their Honeymoon

The world war, temporarily at least, "settled" with Anglo-German contest for world hegemony. But even before the war, the United States, youngest and most vigorous of the imperialist powers, was developing at such a pace as to promise in the long run an even more serious challenge than Germany's to England's dominant position. The war and its attendant conditions greatly speeded up this development. As early as 1919 when England and America were just returning from their war-time honeymoon, no less a personage than Colonel House, confidential adviser to President Wilson, wrote to him from London:

"Almost as soon as I arrived in England I felt antagonism to the the United States . . . Relations of the two countries are beginning to assume the same character as those of England and Germany before the war."

This statement can be matched by innumerable similar utterances of leading statesmen and business men of both countries. Thus we hear the Shell Oil director and

member of Parliament, Mr. Samuel Samuel, telling a London audience on October 17, 1928: "We cannot trust the United States. She is trying to dominate Great Britain." And we find the famous churchmen Dean Inge of St. Paul's writing in his book *England*:

"... it is more than possible that the nations of Europe, enraged by the bloated prosperity and airs of superiority of 'the man who won the war', would combine to draw Shylock's teeth. . ."

And the British laborite leader J. A. Brown, a leading official of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, declaring in his opening speech to the International War Danger Conference in London in 1927:

"America is undoubtedly the most ruthless and aggressively imperialist nation at present. It is in the imperialistic policy of the United States that great danger exists for future war."

There is the "labor" military man, Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy, M. P., declaring:

"The danger of Anglo-American conflict is as real as was the danger of war between Britain and Germany in 1905."

And the Liberal leader Lloyd George: "I am frankly alarmed at our relations with America."

Or we can find the cautious "labor" leader MacDonald in an incautious burst of frank (of course, before he became his Majesty's Prime Minister), writing:

"The relations between the United States and Great Britain grow increasingly unhappy. The usual committees of friendship are being formed—always an ominous sign, and the usual signals of a faith in doubt are being flown, such as: 'War between the United States and Great Britain is unthinkable.'"

As to the Conservative Party (to make the list of His Majesty's loyal parties complete), it very nearly led Great Britain into a war with the United States in 1928 because of the Conservative Government's resistance to the American demand for naval parity at Geneva and the secret Anglo-French treaty against American aims.

Every one of these utterances could be matched or improved upon by utterances of Hoover (during the "rubber war"), and of American diplomats, business men, journalists and military and naval men, and even by declarations from proverbially cautious Cal Coolidge, whose blustering, threatening Armistice Day speech of 1928 was greeted in Europe as a sword-rattling challenge to Great Britain. The *New York Times* reported of this speech on November 14, 1928:

"... almost all the newspapers consider it foreshadows a gigantic struggle between America and England for world leadership."

### The Scramble for Markets

At the present time, when post-war capitalism has reached a point where it exceeds the productivity of pre-war capitalism, but finds itself faced with a contracted market, the fight for markets is keener than ever. As glorified salesmen and ballyhoo agent, Hoover makes "good-will" trips to Latin America, Lord D'Abernon steals the bacon from under Hoover's nose in Argentina, and the Prince of Wales goes trotting round and round the globe as England's royal "drummer."

### Dollar Versus Pound

In the battle of the dollar and the pound, the United States presses its advantages of expanding wealth, of more than half of the world's gold supply and two-thirds of the total banking resources of the earth, its commanding position in war debts, and its rising investments. But Britain holds on grimly on the basis of her great financial reserve strength built up in the course of a century of dominance.

England is America's principal debtor in war debts and no other country has received such hard terms from "Uncle Shylock." For Mussolini the U. S. cancelled 80% of the war debt, for France 60%, for Great Britain only 30%. Out of one billion dollars collected from her war debtors between 1926 and 1930, four out of every five were collected from Great Britain. England countered with the Balfour note, proposing to cancel all debts of European countries to her, provided America would cancel England's debt to the U. S.

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