

World Socialism

WILL SANCTIONS MEAN WAR?

By HERBERT ZAM

As the war crisis grows graver, the necessity for a clear line by the working class becomes imperative, lest the labor movement find itself engulfed in an imperialist trap as in 1914. Some alarming signs are already visible, especially in the British labor movement, which has officially endorsed the policy of sanctions, the policy of British imperialism. That the rank and file will still have something to say about this is evident from the anti-war conference some two weeks ago in London, which in spite of a united front between the Labor Party and the Communist Party, defeated the sanctions policy and approved the revolutionary position of the Socialist League and the Independent Party by a substantial majority.

Sanctions Mean War

In the United States we find the Daily Worker and the New Leader in agreement at long last. They are both heartily in favor of the sanctions policy and both vehemently deny that sanctions mean war. Well, comrades, if you are squeamish, better get out of the game. Let men with strong stomachs, like Stanley Baldwin and Walter Citrine play it. Let's call in an expert for testimony on the subjects of sanctions and war—none other than Citrine, who can claim partial parentage, at least. That is what he said on the subject in his speech:

"Military sanctions in finality means this: if somebody breaks the treaty of peace, if somebody dishonors his agreement, then the other nations are ready not merely to establish economic sanctions and financial sanctions, but to see that these sanctions shall not be rendered ineffective by the military operations of the peace breaker. In other words, to put at the disposal of the League of Nations such a measure of force of a military, naval and aerial character as may be necessary to make the sanctions really effective.

"I overheard a delegate say . . . 'It means war!' It may mean war, but that is the thing we have to face. We have to face the fact that there is no real alternative now left to use but the applying of sanctions, involving in all possibility, war."

At least Citrine is not trying to dance at two weddings at the same time, as his weak sisters here and elsewhere are doing.

Sanctions and Fascism?

Of course, the Daily Worker, forgetting that the theory of "social fascism" has been dropped, is already denouncing those who are opposing the sanctions policy as pro-Mussolini. Nothing can be a more striking example of the inherent chauvinist nature of this policy. In 1917 those who opposed the war were "pro-German." Today they are "pro-Mussolini." If the Daily Worker thinks any revolutionist will be frightened by such denunciations, it ought to read over the history of the 1917 period in this country.

As a matter of fact, if anything can be said to play into the hands of fascism it is the policy of sanctions. In France and in England the fascist movement has suddenly begun an energetic campaign for peace, against sanctions. Writing in "Plebs" for October, R. Cospock, general secretary of the National Federa-

tion of Building Trades Operatives says:

"The Labor Movement's action in rushing to announce to the world that it not only agrees with economic sanctions, but, if need be, with military sanctions (that is, war), has given the fascists the magnificent opportunity of saying that in Britain it is not the Labor Party but the Fascist Party that is the peace party."

Ethiopia and Belgium

The Daily Worker muddled "expert" who insists that opposition to sanctions is help to Mussolini should read Lenin's answer to those who in 1914 insisted that opposition to the war is help to the Kaiser's rape of Belgium. As is already obvious, even to the blind, sanctions will not keep Mussolini out of Ethiopia, and if their application leads to war, those who supported sanctions will be responsible for the war. This is the real danger. Through the policy of sanctions British imperialism is what must be avoided if we wish to avoid a repetition of 1914.

To say all this must not lead to the conclusion, as some comrades think, that we should be neutral as between Italy and Ethiopia. We should leave to the pacifists the task of condemning all belligerents. As between these two, we are for Ethiopia and would like to see Italy defeated. Those who ridicule this idea under the slogan "Heil Haile Selassie" show that their sense of humor is better developed than their political understandings. The internal regime of Ethiopia has nothing to do with it. It is a case of a country resisting an imperialist invasion, and we side with that country as we sided with China against Japan, without cheering for Chiang Kai Shek; with Morocco against France and Spain without endorsing Abdel Krim, with Nicaragua against the United States without kissing Sacasa. But in siding with Ethiopia we reject an appeal to other imperialists on "behalf of Ethiopia."

If in the course of carrying out such a policy some of our demands look like sanctions, it is only a secondary resemblance. There is a considerable difference between advocating a boycott on munitions to Italy and advocating the policy explained by Citrine.

Finally Effective

It may be that our action will be limited and ineffective. That will depend on the strength of the labor movement. But by keeping clear of entanglements with the imperialists, by preserving the independent action of the working class as a class, our policy will in the end become effective.

There can be no doubt that it would be easier for the working class to adopt a clear policy if the Soviet Union's policy were not so confusing. Today the Soviet Union stands for sanctions and its defenders deny it means war. But two months ago when the Soviet Union sold war supplies to Italy and some of us criticized this action, we were told by the Daily Worker (echoed by the Lovestonites) that the Soviet Union was doing it to avoid war. Of course, the communists can do nothing else except echo the policies of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union was continually hammering away at peace and disarmament, the communists in this

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YPSL Student Tours Coll

CHICAGO — Albert Hamilton, student secretary of the Young People's Socialist League began a speaking tour October 15 of the colleges in the Midwest and on the West coast. His itinerary in-

Dances, Costumes At Farm Carnival

NEW YORK—A new high in YPSL entertainment is expected to be reached by the Yipsel Carnival, Barn Dance and Costume Ball Saturday, October 26 at the YCLA center, 22 East 15th Street. All the stars of the entertainment world, including Levy and Nathan, will be present to add to the glamor of the occasion.

Under the slogan "Dirt cheap for dirt farmers!" costumed participants will be admitted for 35c; non-costumed seekers after pleasure must pay 45c. Music will be furnished by Bob Green's Hayseeds.

— Don't Buy Fascist! —

"America And War" Coast Forum Topic

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Austen Lewis, well known Socialist attorney, is opening speaker in a series of weekly open forum meetings planned by the San Francisco Joint Board of the ILGWU. The forum is under the direction of Jennie Matyas, educational director and international organizer. Lewis is booked to speak on "Can America Stay Out of War?"

— Don't Buy Fascist! —

DISCUSSION GROUP

NEW YORK—A discussion group in revolutionary Socialism will hold its first session Saturday, October 26, at 6 p. m. at 21 East 17th Street. The group is open to all members of the party and the YPSL.

— Don't Buy Fascist! —

STUDENTS UNITE

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (Special) —Sixteen student organizations have united into the Students' Committee for Peace and Freedom. The chairman is Robert Newman, 198 Chambers Street, Cambridge.

country sounded exactly like pacifists in their slobbering about peace. Since the Franco-Soviet pact and Stalin's famous statement, they sound exactly like militarists.

If it is true that the labor movement should preserve its independence of imperialist entanglements, it must be said with equal emphasis that in the eyes of the working class the position of the Soviet Union is not strengthened, but, on the contrary, is weakened by its association with imperialists.