

# World Socialism

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## FACING THE WAR GODS

**H**ITLER'S occupation of the Rhineland has intensified the chaos in the international labor movement, which so far has been unable to hammer out a uniform policy for the entire movement.

Some view this act as of no significance; some even believe this development will make for peace by removing one of the bones of contention. Such views only show how great is the power of imperialism to create ever new illusions among the people. It is necessary that the workers of the world know that the Hitler move into the Rhineland is one of the biggest steps taken in recent years toward war. They must beware of pacifist illusions which would render them passive and helpless before the onward march of imperialist war preparations. At the same time, however, it is necessary to warn the working class against "answering" Hitler by supporting capitalist plans of rearmament, new alliances or League of Nations action.

### No Capitulation To War Gods!

War cannot be prevented by capitulating to Hitler. The proposal of George Lansbury, for instance, to reallocate the colonies and assign Germany a share (similar proposals were made by Comrade Jesse Wallace Hughan in the New York World-Telegram recently) would only lead to endorsement by labor of the imperialist scramble for the redivision of the world, which, far from being a hindrance to war, is today the main focal point of war. It is an abandonment of the fight for complete freedom of the colonial people and objective support of the imperialist exploitation of them. The fight for the freedom of the colonies is an integral part of the struggle against imperialism, and there can be no compromise on this issue.

A mistake of a different type is made by the majority of the National Committee of the British Independent Labor Party, (fortunately not supported at the National Conference), who declared that "both Italy and Ethiopia are governed by dictators and that the workers should not take action on one side or the other . . ."

This position also leads to abandonment of the struggle for the independence of the colonies, for we can have no prior guarantee that the internal regime in the colonial country will be an ac-

ceptable one. The important point to remember is the objective nature of the struggle, not the internal regime. Would the British comrades refuse to support India's struggle for independence because it was led by Gandhi whose policies are unacceptable? Of course, in supporting the struggle for independence, we can by no means abandon the fight for a correct basis for that struggle.

### A Chinese Illustration

If Japan endeavors to seize China, for instance, the support of the workers should of course go to China; but simultaneously the fight against Chiang Kai Shek must go on. As a matter of fact, only by defeating Chiang in China can a fight against Japan or any other imperialist power be conducted successfully. If it is true, as is reported, that the Chinese communists offered conditional help to Chiang Kai Shek to fight Japan, it is certainly an error. For it will not only weaken the revolutionary fight against Chiang, but also the people's struggle against Japan.

Already the imperialist armament plans are finding some support among the workers who see in rearmament a defense against Hitler. Monmousseau, a leading communist, demands that France "answer gun with gun and cannon with cannon." The general council of the Belgian Labor Party (Socialist) also declared itself along similar lines.

"The Belgian Labor Party is in favor of the defence of the country against any unprovoked attack. In favor of a national defence organized differently."

"Differently" however does not refer to the social base of this defence, but only to the technique of organizing it. It is elaborated as:

"Military defence, based on the substantial destruction of the routes of penetration, the preponderance of defensive armaments, the mobilization of all the defensive forces of the nation, and the limitation of the period of service and of the

financial burdens to the indispensable minimum. Public monopoly of the implements of war; nationalization of the industries which produce them."

The British Labor Party doesn't go quite that far in its policy of national defense. It opposes the vast armament plans of the Tory government. But such opposition is really illogical, since it substantially agrees with the need for rearmament. Its representative at the Labor Youth Conference, for instance, favored "backing up the League of Nations covenant by force if necessary," and this policy is in line with that adopted at the last Labor Party Congress.

### Not Defense But Attack

The fallacy of all these positions is that they coincide with the capitalist method of "defense" against Hitler, accept such defense within the limits of the capitalist system in their own countries, and are consequently class-collaborationist. Working class defense against fascism must first of all be an attack against capitalism at home.

Workers cannot be opposed to armies and armament in the abstract. The question is: In whose hands will the army and navy be? Soviet Russia's right to armed defense against capitalist aggression is recognized by all class-conscious workers. A Socialist Spain would have to arm itself against the danger of invasion and counter-revolution. Socialists of course must believe in national defense of a workers' country. Any other national defense is merely support for the home imperialists against foreign imperialists—a return to the tragedy of 1914.

The slogan "Socialist rearmament" in this sense may have some value, although the wisdom of coupling these two words is highly questionable. But when it is interpreted, as does Comrade Harold J. Laski, as support of defense for an acceptable objective such as defense of the Soviet Union or struggle against fascism, then it is robbed of its Socialist content and in reality becomes mere national defense.

Again and yet again it is necessary to repeat: the struggle against fascism, the defense of the Soviet Union, the protection of the colonial people, cannot be achieved by placing more power in the hands of the imperialists, which will eventually be used against the workers at home. It can be accomplished only by wresting the power from the capitalists and setting up a new society, with power in the hands of the working class.