

# WHEN WAR COMES

## Article 3.

The following is the third a series of articles (compiled by the Social and Economic Department of the Red International of Labor Unions) which give in clear outline, the forecast of what war will bring, the conditions that will ensue and the historic developments that will mark the transformation of the capitalist war into civil war, developments in which every worker will find it necessary to act as an agent of that transformation. Let all understand, then, that the developments which are today but forecasts, will tomorrow be grim realities—which must be faced.—Editor.

Despite the seeming 'plan and system' of the war economy, capitalist contradictions will be multiplied and intensified during the war with lightning rapidity in, so to speak, geometrical progression.

The most important task facing the revolutionary labor movement during each imperialist war is to defeat its 'own' imperialists.

The peculiar features of the military apparatus during future warfare, touched upon above, open up many possibilities of preventing or at least interrupting the smooth running of the war machine, the strategical 'points' mentioned in the foregoing being especially vulnerable, which may well bring the entire apparatus to a standstill. The very development of capitalist contradictions will from day to day loosen the whole structure, and the purposeful action of the organized revolutionary vanguard will therefore prove the final and last blow to a tottering system.

Of course, it would be absurd to underrate the difficulties, to close out eyes to the obstacles. How formidable they really are is already clear today. From the moment war is declared the entire industry and the whole economic life of the imperialist countries will be militarized and subordinated to the military dictatorship. All the peace-offerings of capital, all the cant about 'democracy', all their prating about the 'freedom' of the press and the right to combine will be swept aside. All agitation against war, every attempt to resist it, will be firmly and ruthlessly suppressed with all the brutality habitual to capitalism.

With the declaration of war the revolutionary legal press will be shut down; the legal apparatus of the revolutionary parties will be smashed. A great espionage system will be established at the enterprises and in the working class districts.

Every economic strike, every attempt of the workers to struggle for their minimum demands will be considered 'treason'. In this connection the imperialists will act deliberately, consistently, and from their own point of view, correctly. In view of the foregoing characteristics of war economy, every economic movement of the workers irrespective of the wishes or desires of the participants, will become a political fight undermining the very basis of the imperialist war machine

### Prepare Ideology For War

But the imperialist war apparatus will not only make use of repressions. From the very com-

mencement of hostilities everything that will mould the ideology of the population at large will be set into motion; definite steps will be taken "to work up public opinion."

But extremely important is the fact that the social-democratic parties and the reformist unions will take up their place in this apparatus, will form the backbone of the agitation and propaganda that will be undertaken; in a word, they will form the "political department" of the bourgeois war offices. They will leave no stone unturned to urge and maintain the "civil peace" with their bourgeoisie and mobilize all the forces of the workers to fling back the "treacherous enemy."

They will place the entire apparatus of the reformist labor movement (which in some countries is pretty extensive) and all their experience in befogging and diverting the workers at the disposal of the General Staffs and the Administrative bodies of the country mobilized for war.

One of the most important tasks that these centres of imperialist war will charge them with will be to struggle against the revolutionary labor movement, against any sign of protest of dissatisfaction springing up among the working masses.

### Class Struggle Sharpens

But apart from all these serious difficulties and obstacles, the development of objective conditions will make inevitable an intensification and extension of the class struggle.

As we already pointed out there can be no rapid conclusion to the wars of the future. Should the forces of the warring groups be equal, every effort would be made to mobilize and take advantage of all possibilities and resources, and the great leading trusts be directly interested in prolonging the war, it will lead to complete exhaustion.

The new possibilities of striking at the vital centres of the enemy with the help of aviation and chemistry will not change this position of things as many military experts contend, but will only make the struggle more bitter than ever.

Besides, this will be a war that will embrace in actual fact the whole world, a war in which there will not be—and cannot be—any neutral countries.

As Engels wrote in 1887: "No war is now possible for Prussia-Germany other than a world war. And this would be a world conflagration on an unprecedented scale. Between 8 and 9 million soldiers will be set at each other's throats and will devour Europe as no swarm of locusts could. The devastation caused by the Thirty Year's War—but now compressed within a period of two or three years involving the entire continent—with hunger, epidemics and the utter debasement of the troops and the peoples, caused by the general poverty and the complete breakdown of our artificial system of trade, industry and credit will end in general bankruptcy; the old governments will come toppling down and all their political wisdom will not avail them; it will be such a crash that dozens of crowns will roll in the gutter and no one will be found to pick them up."

(To be continued)