

# WHEN WAR COMES

## Article 7.

This is the seventh of 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. Answer the war makers Nov. 21.—Editor.

WE have seen the hollowness of this castle-building; we have shown that modern capitalism cannot fight without mass armies. The greater and completer the mobilization of the entire population of the country for war service, the greater are the chances of success, and incidentally, the greater is the menace to the supremacy and very existence of capitalism.

Do what it will, capitalism cannot avoid the development and maturing process of these dialectical contradictions.

The same contradictions, the same seeds of its own destruction, so manifest in capitalist society today, are to be seen in the army, only in a more concentrated form. The fact that the existence of such contradictions has been disclosed spells the beginning of the end of bourgeois supremacy, the break-up of its last and most important line of defense.

All these questions were raised and thoroughly dealt with by Lenin during the last war. They are organically related to the fundamental policy, the aims and objects of the revolutionary vanguard during imperialist war, namely, to help to bring about the defeat of one's own government, utilizing each and every setback to pave the way to turn an imperialist war into a civil war.

Lenin's analysis and deductions not only hold true as regards future warfare, but their significance has been increased a hundredfold by the experience of the post-war period and present-day preparations.

### War Intensifies Capitalist Contradictions.

First of all, Lenin emphasized time and again that in wartime all capitalist contradictions were bound to become intensified to the extreme.

"War is no accident, no 'sin' as claimed by Christian clergymen, but an inevitable development of capitalism and just as legitimate in capitalist life as peace itself. The wars of our time are national wars. It does not follow, however, from this truth that we must drift with the 'national' tendency of chauvinism. We must realize that in wartime and at the war the class contradictions, that are rending the peoples, continue to exist and will continue to manifest themselves with the added emphasis given them by the war."

Today, this position would seem to be self-evident. But the facts show unmistakably that

not only the reformist officialdom (who know better), but a considerable section of the working class are prone, where war is concerned, to believe seriously that the contradictions of the "civil peace" can be temporarily muffled.

As we stated earlier, realities will quickly end this illusion. Lenin underlined that besides developing and intensifying internal class contradictions, war would throw them into greater relief, for war increases the instability of capitalism, showing up all the "cracks" in the capitalist system. All these conditions in their entirety inevitably lead to a revolutionary situation.

Lenin defines the chief signs of the existence of a revolutionary situation as follows: (1) any crisis in the policy of the ruling class creating a break through which the seething discontent and antagonism of the oppressed peoples surges up; (2) an unusual intensification of the poverty and distress of the oppressed classes; (3) a marked increase, in view of these reasons, of the activity of the masses, who in "peacetime" allow themselves to be quietly robbed, but in time of discord and upheaval are impelled by the very crisis itself and urged by the ruling groups to make an independent historical move. . . . The conglomeration of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation.

### War Produces a Revolutionary Situation.

These changes will inevitably occur during an imperialist war and the result will be the situation described above. The unstable position of the capitalist governments during war will bring the first factor into play for "no government is sure of the morrow, none are free of the menace of financial ruin, loss of territory or exile. . . . All the governments are sitting on a volcano—all appeal to the initiative and heroism of the masses."

The second factor inevitably arises through the very mechanism of war economy, where the "colossal profits of certain groups of capitalists is offset by the terrible want and distress among great sections of the population, coupled with the increased exploitation of the workers. Finally, the third factor is brought about by "national" warfare and the existence of mass armies, the deep dissatisfaction of the masses, the subterranean "murmur of the multitude" awakened at last from its long sleep and apathy by the sledge-hammer blows of war.

All this enabled Lenin yet, in 1915 to assert that "a revolutionary situation was at hand," stressing at the same time that this did not mean that an immediate revolution was inevitable. Whether a revolution would be the outcome was yet to be seen from the development of the revolutionary mood of the masses and whether the vanguard was able to utilize the crisis to hasten the general debacle. As we know it was only two years later that the weakest link in the imperialist chain—Czarist Russia—broke and in the shortest period recorded in history a revolutionary situation turned into the victorious proletarian revolution.

(To be continued)