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A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WAR QUESTION

THE ROAD TO WAR is paved with resolutions for "Peace". A great wave of "peace" assemblies has rolled over the country. It becomes imperative to cut through this smoke-screen with the sharp-edged tool of Marxist analysis; to show the nature of war generally and of the coming war specifically.

NATURE OF WAR... "War is the continuation of politics by other, forceful means" said Lenin. Thus the conflict of the industrial politics of the developing north and the slave politics of the cotton south was continued in the form of Civil War. The conflict between the imperial politics of the Entente Powers and the Central Powers was continued in the form of World War.

NATURE OF THE COMING WAR... The coming world war will also be a continuation of conflicting economic interests and imperial politics. The civil war in Spain has lined up France and England against Italy and Germany. The full fledged war in China has drawn together England and the United States against Japan. Both wars form part of the rapidly spreading conflict between the two imperialist blocs. The one bloc consisting of England, France, and the United States demands peace in which to enjoy its colonial possessions and imperialist supremacy. The other bloc, consisting of Germany, Japan, and Italy, demand a redivision of the spoils-- and they back their words with arms. The fact that the Soviet Union exists, that it tries to become a member of the "satisfied" imperialist bloc, this fact complicates but does not change the imperialist nature of the coming war. Lenin called the World War an imperialist war because its dominant character was the continuation of the conflict of imperial politics into war. We call the coming war an imperialist war for the same reason.

WAR AND THE WORKER'S PARTIES... War is the great test of a workers' party. In times of peace the test of a workers' party is that it oppose capitalist exploitation of labor, that it fight for the overthrow of capitalism and for the achievement of socialism. In times of peace various organizations may claim to be workers' parties. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Relatively few students and fewer workers are sufficiently developed politically to test the claims and separate the frauds from the real thing. War is the great winnower of frauds. It strips them bare for all literate workers to repudiate. War exploits not merely the labor but even the lives of the workers. To support war is to support capitalist exploitation at its highest. War as the Nye Committee has shown, will cause the immediate establishment of a military-fascist dictatorship in the United States that will have power to destroy collective bargaining, to break unions, to reduce wages, and to maintain high profits for capitalists. To support war is to support government oppression of the working class. But war arms tens of millions of workers and places in their hands the weapons for the overthrow of capitalism.

SUPPORT OF WAR IS LINKED TO COUNTER-REVOLUTION... Wherever the Socialists supported the last war the outcome was the shattering of worker's organizations, dictatorships, fascism and more war. The German Socialists supported the war. Hitler's Nazis are the true descendants of the "Socialists" Noske and Scheideman, who crushed the revolution. And today Germany presses toward more war. Supporting war brings not peace but counter-revolution.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORTS WAR AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION... The Communist Party of the United States supports the coming war. Their leader, Earl Browder, promises in public that "in a war against the Fascists (substitute Japan) I would join the armies of the United States." The youth leader promises even more bluntly. Dave Grant, state secretary of the Massachusetts Young Communist League, in answer to the question "In case of war, would you fight?" answered under oath, "Yes."

In a speech on "Democracy and the Constitution" Earl Browder announced in behalf of the C.P. that "If there should arise in America anything similar to the situation in Spain, where the democratic republic while repulsing the fascist invasion was stabbed in the back by the "uncontrollable extremists" (a minority of the anarchists and the Trotskyist P.O.U.M.), then we, like our brothers of the Spanish C.P. would be in the forefront of the struggle to suppress such "extremists", who are really agents of fascism, and render them harmless."

The only "fascist invasion" he could possibly have in mind is war with Japan. Of just such a war Lenin said "Japan and America (capitalists) want to fight; they will fight for...supremacy, for the right to loot...Of course, defense of the fatherland in such a war would be a heinous crime, a betrayal of socialism.

Of course, to support one country against another would be a betrayal of communism." The job of a workers' party is to turn capitalist war into a struggle for the overthrow of capitalist system and its wars. Those who preach such

action would be, of course, "uncontrollable extremists" i.e. revolutionists who cannot be controlled by capitalists of their country or any country. Browder promises to American capitalists that in a war against Japan, they need not fear "extremists" in the rear. The Communist Party "would be in the forefront of the struggle to suppress such "extremists"...and render them harmless."

WAR MONCERS ON THE CAMPUS... On the campus the fight against war has become a fight against the actions of the peanut patriots and the program of the Y.C.L. The YCL far better than the ROTC mobilizes and prepares student support for war. Let us analyze each of their outstanding slogans.

DEMOCRACIES VERSUS DICTATORSHIPS... This slogan was foreseen long ago. In its resolution on War, the Sixth Congress of the Communist International said "In the last imperialist war, the Allies made use of the slogan 'Fight against Prussian militarism!'; while the Central Powers used the slogan 'Fight against Tsarism!' both sides using the respective slogans to mobilize the masses for war. In a future war between Italy and France (expand this to Italy-Germany-Japan against France-England-U.S.) the same purpose will be served by the slogan "Fight against reactionary Fascism", for the bourgeoisie on the latter countries will take advantage of the anti-fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war." That the bourgeoisie should today "take advantage of the anti-fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war," is to be expected. That the Communist International on a world scale and the C.P. nationally should do likewise indicates their complete support of the bourgeoisie, and their gross betrayal of the workers.

Le Consirrit, French Communist Party soldiers' paper, directs its members to "obey your officers even if they are Fascists. Don't disrupt the discipline of our army. Vive l'armée de la République!" Shall we shout "Vive?" That is the method of gelatinous spined fakers but not the action of hard-headed revolutionists.

COLLECTIVE ACTION... Collective action for the purpose of collective security means exactly what it says "collective action". It means that the imperialist powers having similar interests to protect against Japan or Italy or Germany work together diplomatically and prepare to pool their military forces when politics continues into war. It does not mean that they get together to ask Japan merely to please leave China. It means "action" to compel Japan to leave. "Collective action" is, and must be by its very nature, a military alliance for war. That arch-imperialist, Teddy Roosevelt, saw this twenty-five years ago and said "As regard Manchuria, if the Japanese choose to follow a course of conduct to which we are adverse, we cannot stop it unless we are prepared to go to war." Collective action at Brussels is merely a cloak for the military alliances that prepare for action because not merely Manchuria, but all of China is at stake. To support collective action is to support imperialist war. Wall Street, the C.B., the YCL, and our campus liberals support both.

DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION... All revolutionists want to defend the S.U. Upon this there is no disagreement. Disagreement arises when the question is posed: What is the best way to defend the S.U.? A correct answer must take into consideration the fundamental fact that the Soviet economy is a socialist economy. Amidst the far-flung decline of capitalism everywhere, the Soviet economy becomes the symbol of progress and solution for economic evils. Its existence and development constitutes a standing indictment against capitalism. It is revolutionary propaganda of the most effective type for the overthrow of capitalism. The C.P. drew the correct implications from this analysis in 1935 when it discussed the Franco-Soviet Pact and the possibilities of a war with Germany. "In the event of a war which would find both the S.U. and France fighting against Germany what would the French Communists do?" asked the Daily Worker of May 11, 1935 and it answered "Whatever the exact circumstances in which the hostilities would begin, the French Communist Party would continue to wage its relentless and unceasing struggle against French capitalism and their own imperialists. It would raise Lenin's slogan of turning imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war. A soviet France would be the best and only genuine ally of the Soviet Union." This was the correct revolutionary position then. Conditions have not changed. France is still capitalist. Its war will still be an imperialist war. When the C.P. supports the French army it betrays both the workers of France and the defense of the Soviet Union. But WE, THE YOUNG PEOPLES' SOCIALIST LEAGUE, FOURTH INTERNATIONAL RAISE LENIN'S SLOGAN "OF TURNING IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WAR. A SOVIET FRANCE WOULD BE THE BEST AND ONLY GENUINE ALLY OF THE SOVIET UNION."

OXFORD PLEDGE... The American Student Union was founded while war was already on the horizon. The central core of the platform was the Oxford Pledge. Those who became members swore not to defend their country in any war it may undertake. As such it constituted a real step against war. It showed a complete lack of faith in the war aims and purposes of the existing government. "The fight against war preparations of the imperialists" said the Daily Worker of May 11, 1935, "is an integral part of the fight against capitalism. It should be emphasized that under all circumstances the main task of the working class is to overthrow its own capitalism." The struggle in this direction makes for peace, the defense of the SU

and for world socialism. The fight to maintain the OAS was the struggle to keep the ASU facing in an anti-war line, the progressive forces by the Stalinists at the last ASU conversion of the ASU into an appendage of the Roosevelt line. The fight against War is in part, a fight against the its program of Collective Security.

NOTE - Since the above was written, two months ago, when it was impossible to publish it, there have occurred some events which strikingly bear out the above analysis.---

Roosevelt's Chicago speech for "quarantining the aggressor" dollar war budget, the Jingoistic "Panay" newsreel all serve above analysis to the hilt. America is preparing for imperialism to maintain its robber hold over South America, Cuba, the Philippines, and to fight against the hungry imperialist desires of Japan, Italy and Germany. Only the bosses profit by such an imperialist war. (The task of the students is to join with the revolutionary YPSL (Fourth Internationalists) to fight against the war aims of the government and to convert the war into a struggle for socialism.) This also means the combatting of those patriotic elements in the labor movement which seek to tie the workers and students to the imperialist war machine. Of primary significance are the Communist Party and the Young Communist League, which far from being revolutionary are reactionary and will serve as recruiting sergeants for the next world slaughter.

We repeat the only effective group that can fight imperialist war is the Young People's Socialist League (Fourth Internationalists). Its program offers the only solution; join us and put it into effect.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE
(Fourth Internationalists)
City College Branch
1723 Amsterdam Avenue.

*Dismiss in the anti-war struggle. This effect of
the bulletin upon potential anti-war forces = 0.*

Feb, 1938

This will
 following as the only method
 party. Give guidance to
 movements of which we
 are a part or a minor
 main basis. Add to
 in integrity, as well as
 clarity to the entire
 movement.

of these means * Change the
 nature of the treaty &
 more agitational in nature
 * Agitational on the part
 of the group. Increase
 our budget of supplies
 & activities.

2/180
 2/160
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