

## CHAPTER XV

# THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

THE fascist drive toward a second world war is gaining momentum. Already they have begun a new redivision of the world. Mussolini has invaded Ethiopia; the Japanese imperialists, having seized Manchuria and North China, are awaiting the word from their Nazi allies to launch a joint attack against the Soviet Union. The capitalist world is a powder-box, which may be blown to bits by an explosion set off in any part of the world. Let no one think that the United States is immune from the danger of another imperialist slaughter. It is intertwined with the whole system of imperialist relations, and inevitably would be drawn into the second world war. The problem facing all those who desire peace is to stop the present fascist war against Ethiopia, and to prevent it from spreading throughout the entire world.

What are the main forces that can be mobilized in support of peace? Above all, the toiling masses in the capitalist and colonial countries, and in that country where the working class holds power—the Soviet Union. To these main forces can be rallied the peoples of the smaller nations, especially those in Europe whose independence is threatened by a new world war.

The working class of the world, rallying behind it the support of all other toilers, is the only class that can stop war, or if war cannot be prevented, can turn the imperialist war into a civil war against the capitalist exploiters and

bring it to an end. It is the working classes through their independent action that can force the war-machine of the fascists to stall in its tracks. It is they who can exert pressure on the League of Nations to enforce collective sanctions on imperialist aggressors like Italy. Slow and weak as the League of Nations was in bringing pressure against Mussolini, yet it was useful in the fight against the war-mongers. It should be emphasized that these actions took place under pressure from the masses. It would be most dangerous to rely upon the League to carry out sanctions. The imperialists do not wish to apply sanctions. They have sabotaged them from the start. They will be applied only if the masses force the imperialists to carry them through. The fight for sanctions develops into a fight against the capitalists at home.

It is the independent action of the toiling masses that is the spearhead of the fight for peace. To compel League sanctions by mass struggles is important. The primary weapon is the independent struggle of the toilers, enforcing their own sanctions.

The rallying center in the world fight for peace is the policy of the Soviet Union. The final victory of socialism there has enormously increased the defensive power of the Soviet Union, and its influence in world politics. The peace policy of the Soviet Union is unquestioned even by its enemies. It has been expressed in repeated proposals for disarmament, in joining the League of Nations, and in the mutual defense pacts with France and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union has laid the basis for peaceful cooperation with those capitalist states which at the moment are interested in the preservation of peace. It stands at the head of a mighty concentration of forces that tend to prevent or postpone imperialist war.

In the struggle for peace, collaboration with the Soviet

Union is a fundamental factor. One cannot fight effectively for peace who refuses to utilize the tremendous power for peace of that socialist country both among the masses and in international diplomacy. The Soviet Union is the one country in the world which seeks no colonies, which is against all imperialist oppression, which supports all oppressed nationalities. Such a country can have no other policy but a peace policy, and its peace policy is a socialist one.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International put the question squarely before the toilers of the world. It pointed out that it was the revolutionary duty of every class-conscious worker to defend the Soviet Union. Its defense aids the revolutionary movement throughout the world. Its defeat would be a defeat for the people of the whole world. There can be no effective fight for peace which does not involve as its task the defense of the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, there are some people including "militant" Socialists who do not understand this most important point. They refuse to take a clear stand with regard to the defense of the U.S.S.R., and hence weaken the fight against the war-makers. For example, they raise all kinds of questions with regard to the Franco-Soviet pact. They oppose or raise doubts about this peace pact. Yet it was this pact which gave a tremendous impetus to the People's Front in France, which has prevented fascism from coming to power in that country. It was this pact which made Hitler hesitate in his mad drive towards a war against the Soviet Union. It is the peace policy of the Soviet Union and all that it expresses which is changing the relation of forces in Europe, making more favorable the prospect that if war does break out in spite of all our efforts, the fascist warmongers will be defeated. Everyone who slanders the Franco-Soviet pact is helping the fascists in their efforts to crush the French toilers.

He is helping to speed up the war preparations of the Nazis.

We Communists carry on a consistent struggle for peace in all capitalist countries. The fight for peace strengthens the preparation for the socialist revolution. It was the threat of revolution at home that kept the fascists in Europe from starting a second world war long ago. We have no illusions that, under capitalism, war can be done away with, but this only strengthens our struggle for peace and socialism as the only way of abolishing capitalist war.

Before the World War broke out the Second International, on the motion of Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, adopted the following resolution on war at its Stuttgart Congress:

"If nevertheless, war breaks out, it is their duty to work for its speedy termination, and to strive with all their might to utilize the economic and political crisis produced by the war, to rouse the political consciousness of the masses of the people and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."

This policy was betrayed by the leaders of the Second International, but it was followed faithfully by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who gave out the revolutionary slogan: "Turn the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war." This policy has guided us in our fight against the plans of the warmongers. It is the policy of supporting the Soviet Union and of fighting against the war plans of the capitalists everywhere that will keep the workers from falling into the trap of supporting the warmongers of their own country.

In this country the forces on the side of peace have as yet not fully united their ranks or agreed upon a consistent policy. The American Federation of Labor at its 55th Convention went on record as being against war. But it gave no satisfactory plan of how to fight the war danger. The Convention supported, without conditions and as its sole pro-

gram, the foreign policy of the Roosevelt government and endorsed the support of the Baldwin regime by the British trade unions. It is a policy that offers no effective opposition to war and makes the workers the tail to the imperialist kite.

Roosevelt has no consistent peace policy. His embargo of arms shipments in the Italo-Ethiopian war was a blow against Mussolini but also prevented the Ethiopians from obtaining arms necessary for their defense. His "neutrality" did not prevent Italy from securing vast quantities of the most necessary war materials. We cannot depend upon Roosevelt to keep us out of war. In 1916 Wilson was re-elected President on a program of neutrality, and six months after he had plunged us into a war to protect the profits of the Morgans, the duPonts and other war profiteers. It was the very slogan of neutrality which was used by the warmongers to bring America into the last world conflict.

We must distinguish between the illusions that certain sections of the toilers, especially the middle-western farmers, have about isolation, and the neutrality demagoguery of the Hearsts and Coughlins. When the latter speak of isolation, they mean maneuvers for war. They exploit the peace sentiments of the American masses to prepare for a war against the colonial peoples and the Soviet Union. When the masses speak of American isolation they mean peace. It is the job of those who want peace to expose the real aims of the Hearsts and the other warmongers. We must show the masses that their desire to keep America out of war can be accomplished not by any means of isolation, but by following a consistent and truly international peace policy. We must explain that the only way to fight seriously against war is by the independent action of the toilers against the war-makers, using this action at the same time for pressure on the League of Nations and Roosevelt government, in favor

of measures for peace and for cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Only in this way can the American toilers pursue an independent and effective and really international peace policy which will try to keep the United States out of war by fighting against the war danger all over the world. Such a policy would keep the masses from falling victim to the isolation doctrines of the Hearst-Coughlin warmongers. It will also keep them from becoming the tail to the so-called international policy of certain sections of American finance capital, which favors the League of Nations.

Some militant Socialists, in particular Norman Thomas, have been overwhelmed by the weight of the traditional plea for isolation and have succumbed to the lure of its pacifist implications. They repeat the wornout slogan: Keep America out of War. But it is utopian to believe that we can keep the United States from being involved in a second world war unless we combine our efforts with those of the peace forces in every nation. To confine our peace efforts within American territory is to guarantee the success of the war-makers and condemn the peace movement to inevitable defeat. Peace can be maintained only if we oppose the outbreak of hostilities all over the globe. The war in Ethiopia affects us directly; if we do not prevent Mussolini from winning a victory, then it will surely spread, and we will find ourselves in another war to protect the profits of the bankers and war profiteers.

For the militant Socialists to follow the policy of isolation and neutrality is to lead the American masses into the same trap that was sprung by the warmongers in 1917. We Communists say that it is the duty of every sincere working class leader to do everything possible to organize the American peace forces and to combine their actions with the

peace forces in every country, to fight every move by the imperialists that threatens to provoke a second world conflagration. This is quite different from urging the United States merely to stay out of war. Such a policy which advises us not to take sides in the struggles going on in Europe, Africa and Asia would cripple the activities of the potentially powerful peace forces in this country which could be used to preserve the peace of the world.

Isolation, no matter how well intentioned, helps the forces of war; makes easier the outbreak of another world conflict into which the United States would be drawn. These American Socialists are members of the Labor and Second International. Apparently they belong because they believe that the working class must combine its forces on an international scale if it is to defeat capitalism. Then why don't they see that the working class must also unite its forces on a world scale if it is to defeat the war plans of the fascists? It is only in this way that we can keep the world at peace and America out of war.

The war danger places the following practical tasks before every sincere fighter for peace:

1. To secure the adoption of resolutions, condemning the war-makers and declaring support for their victims, in all trade unions and all other organizations of workers, farmers and middle classes. This is the most simple, most immediate line of action in the struggle for peace.
2. To organize mass meetings, demonstrations and parades of all kinds to protest against the war danger and to bring the anti-war program sharply to the attention of those people not yet aware of these issues.
3. To place emphatically before Congress and the President by means of these actions the demand for complete

embargo of trade and loans against Italy and all other fascist aggressors.

4. To do everything possible to bring together all the peace forces in every locality and throughout the nation into a great concentration against war and fascism. For this purpose we must give much more support to the American League Against War and Fascism, which already represents the largest united front ever built in America. This will be a decisive step toward building a great National Congress Against War and Fascism, that will be broader and even more representative. No one can be said to be doing his duty in the anti-war fight unless he is actively participating in building toward this national organization of all peace forces.

5. To organize independent actions of the workers. At the moment this involves stopping all shipments to Italy. This can be begun in a small way; minor actions develop decisive ones which influence the whole world. Everyone remembers that the tearing down of the Nazi flag from the steamship Bremen by outraged New York workers shook the world, and is still the subject of conversation among the masses in Germany and in Europe.

6. To secure united action between Socialists and Communists in the United States on the war issue and to call upon the Second International to accept the repeated proposals of the Communist International for world-wide united action against war.