

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

No. 9

1940

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THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

EDITOR: EARL BROWDER

No. 9

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A YEAR OF IMPERIALIST WAR

THE imperialist war, which began with the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Poland on September 1, 1939, at once turned into a gigantic duel between Germany and the forces of the Anglo-French bloc. Ruthlessly and inexorably, the war dragged one country after another into its vortex. Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, having become theaters of war, capitulated either without a struggle or only after a brief resistance. This was soon followed by the capitulation of France. The territory of these countries, with the exception of a relatively small part of France, has been occupied by German troops. Italy, the fourth largest capitalist power in Europe, has entered the war on the side of Germany. Spain, having departed from her position of neutrality and having occupied Tangiers, is now preparing to take a direct part in the war. A large number of African countries have become centers of active hostilities: war is raging in Libya and Ethiopia, in British and Italian Somaliland, in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and in Kenya. The vast stretch from Haifa and Alexandria to Oran and Gibraltar is becoming one huge arena of armed hostilities. In the lull between the battles on land, the war in the air and on the sea is continuing with unprecedented and steadily growing intensity.

The military developments of the past year have changed the relation of forces among the capitalist states. Germany, having won a number of important victories, has strengthened her strategic position. On the other hand, the position of Great Britain, which has lost her principal ally—France—has been seriously weakened. The weakening of Britain's position on the continent of Europe is finding its reflection in other parts of the world, in particular in the Far East, where Japan is bringing ever greater pressure to bear on Britain, and where the latter is losing one position after another. Nevertheless, Great Britain, which is primarily a naval power, has been able to maintain her supremacy at sea, the losses suffered by her navy having been repaired by the seizure of part of the French, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch and Belgian navies and mercantile fleets. Britain is likewise reckoning on increasing support from the United States, which is at present maintaining the position of a "non-belligerent" power. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Britain and America are heading towards a military alliance, which is attested, among other things, by the negotiations for the establishment of military, naval and air bases by America in British possessions in the Western Hemisphere, and by the formation of a Joint Committee of

Defense by the governments of the U.S.A. and Canada.

Notwithstanding the fact that some of the European states which were drawn into the war during the past year have already been defeated and put out of action, the war as a whole shows a tendency to expand, rather than to contract. And that is quite natural. The cardinal aim of the imperialists in the present war—a new repartition of the world, a repartition both of spheres of influence in Europe and of colonies—is still far from having been attained. On the contrary, the war in Europe has tied new knots of imperialist antagonisms. It is preparing the way for a settlement by force of arms of the main bones of contention among the imperialist powers of all the continents of the world.

The course of the war has already raised the problem of the colonial possessions of the defeated countries—France, Holland, Belgium and Denmark. The repartition of the Portuguese colonies is likewise on the order of the day. The fate of some of the largest colonial empires, empires second only to the British, is thus involved. But the principal bone of contention is the colonial possessions of the British empire. Feeling that an opportune moment has arrived, the imperialists of the various countries are beginning to “specify” their demands and programs in relation to the territories of states that are obviously too weak to protect their possessions from the claims of more powerful rivals. Laying aside their attempts at “ideological” justification of their claim to oppress and enslave other

nations, the imperialist powers in all parts of the world are passing more and more vigorously to practical action.

On the excuse of defending the Western Hemisphere, and pleading the Monroe Doctrine, the American bourgeoisie is activizing its expansionist policy. It is vigorously ousting its rivals—Great Britain, Germany, Japan and Italy—from North, Central and South America. This was borne out, for one thing, by the Pan-American Conference recently held in Havana. The American bourgeoisie is taking advantage of the fact that other imperialist powers are engrossed in the war in Europe and the Far East to convert the whole American continent into its own monopoly market and its own exclusive sphere of influence; it is also striving to establish its military supremacy in the American continent and the adjacent seas. Talking loudly about the danger of an invasion of America by foreign armies, while in fact working for the furtherance of its imperialist, expansionist designs, the American bourgeoisie is building a huge navy, a powerful air force and a vast army. The appropriations for the armed forces in 1941 alone reaches the astronomical figure of \$12,000,000,000, a sum three times as large as America’s total capital investments in Europe and approximately equal to her total capital investments in other countries, not counting sums due to her on war debts incurred in the last world imperialist war.

Japan is likewise striving to take advantage of the favorable situation created by the European war. In

the camp of the ruling classes of Japan, those groups which consider the present moment most suitable for cashing in their claims to Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies are steadily gaining the upper hand. This so far is only their "minimum program"; what will come next is still to be seen. The Japanese imperialists, of course, would like to consolidate their hold on the Chinese spoils, but not feeling strong enough for this, and meeting with the stubborn resistance of the heroic Chinese people, they are making every effort to induce the Chinese bourgeois and landlords to capitulate. They are in a hurry to establish the "new order" in China, so as to free their hands and devote themselves entirely to the accomplishment of their far-reaching plans.

These plans, as well as the first steps taken by Japan for their realization, are indicative of the rapid aggravation of imperialist antagonisms in the Pacific. This applies particularly to the antagonisms between Japan and America, Japan and England, and Japan and France. France's recent capitulation to Japan on the question of Indo-China and Great Britain's surrender on the question of Burma only served to whet the appetites of the Japanese imperialists. Every day brings new tidings testifying to the aggravation of imperialist antagonisms in the Pacific zone, rendering the danger of armed collisions more and more apparent.

Thus the events of the past year furnish no grounds to assume that the end of the war is in sight. Quite the contrary; in fact there are nu-

merous symptoms to justify the assertion that the imperialists are striving to enlarge the scope of the war and to drag new countries and peoples into its orbit. Far from the danger of the present war growing into a world war having passed, it has become more acute than ever.

"The first year of the European war is drawing to a close," said V. M. Molotov in his report to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on August 1, 1940, "but the end of the war is not yet in sight. It is more probable that we are now on the eve of a new stage in the intensification of the war between Germany and Italy, on the one side, and England, assisted by the United States, on the other." (V. M. Molotov, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, p. 5. Workers Library Publishers, New York.)

* * *

Not only has the relation of forces among the capitalist states changed during this past year; the relation of forces between the world of capitalism and the world of socialism has also changed, and changed in favor of socialism. Capitalism has had to "squeeze up"; twenty-three million people, inhabiting a territory of over 420,000 square kilometers, have been liberated forever from the yoke of capitalism. That is the most striking, although not the sole, result of the changes in favor of socialism that have taken place in the past year.

Whereas the imperialists everywhere trample on the national independence and freedom of nations, and "settle" the national question by fire and sword, the Soviet Union is setting an out-

standing example of a genuine solution of the national question by making possible the peaceful and fraternal collaboration of numerous peoples within a multi-national socialist state. The increase in the number of the Soviet Constituent Republics from eleven to sixteen is not only a striking indication of the increased might of the Soviet Union, but also a brilliant confirmation of the correctness of the national policy of Lenin and Stalin. The indescribable enthusiasm of the masses of the Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina after their liberation, and the fervid enthusiasm of the people of Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia when the Soviet regime was established in those countries and they joined the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, all go to show how deeply the idea of socialism and Soviet government is cherished by the working people—not only by the industrial workers, but also by the broad mass of the peasants and working intellectuals.

The people, plunged by the bourgeoisie and its war into unparalleled suffering and hardship, are now rapidly learning from their own bitter experience. They cannot but see that the U.S.S.R., by pursuing a policy of neutrality and genuine peace, has insured peace and prosperity for its people, whereas the capitalist world is being consumed in the devastating fires of war. They cannot but observe that at a time when whole states, political parties and ideologies are crumbling, when the customary mode of life of the nations is breaking down, when hunger, mutilation and death have

become the lot of millions of people and everything around them is beginning to totter, the Soviet Union, which “will now be able to speak in a powerful voice in the name of a population of 193,000,000” (*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11), represents a mighty fulcrum for the lever which will lift the world from its hinges.

The case of the Baltic states once more shows that when the people are given the opportunity freely to determine their own destiny, they rapidly and unhesitatingly adopt the one true path, the path leading to a bright and secure future—the path of socialism. That is because socialism today is not a matter for abstract theoretical discussion within a narrow circle, but a matter of life and death for the peoples and nations which have been plunged by the bourgeoisie into the bottomless pit of imperialist war and driven by the bourgeois politicians and the traitorous Social-Democratic leaders into the arms of disaster. And this goes to show that the Social-Democratic lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who so zealously helped their masters to unleash this criminal war and who strove so diligently to destroy the faith of the working class in its own strength, have failed to accomplish their despicable ends. They failed because the glorious Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, is with a sure hand leading the working class and the nations of the Soviet Union towards epoch-making socialist victories.

* * *

Truly great and all-conquering
is the power of the teaching of
Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin!

Great and invincible is the power of socialism! Socialism is the concentrated expression of the cherished, although often still vague, aspirations of vast numbers of people inhabiting all the continents of the world and belonging to all nations and all races of mankind. The idea that "this cannot go on" is finding its way into the minds and hearts of millions of people who used firmly to believe in the immutability of the old order. This is today making itself very perceptibly felt among the workers, peasants and working intellectuals of the capitalist countries, who are groping for a way out of the world of darkness and medieval bigotry surrounding them, and who are looking for a means of escape from the insane devastation of the war and the ruin of whole countries.

Nothing can destroy the power of socialism! No brutalities, prisons or concentration camps can break it! Nor can it be destroyed by forests of scaffolds! Nor, of course, can it be destroyed by the cry that "Marxism is dead" and that everything in this war goes to refute Marxism.

The magnetic attraction of the Marxism of our era, the Marxism of Lenin and Stalin, for the working people of the capitalist countries is so great that even the most errant reactionary imperialists all over the world are trying to pose before the masses as Socialists and champions of socialist principles. These gentry realize that the horrors of the war, which it would require the genius of many a Dante to describe, are constantly opening the eyes of the workers of the non-proletarian working masses to the

senselessness and criminality of the capitalist system.

This accursed regime, which batters on the flesh and blood of the people and which is trying to prolong its existence by the systematic destruction of a large part of the wealth created by the people, by periodical and ever bloodier wars and by the extermination of millions—men and women, young and old—cannot but be hateful to the working people. This regime, which condemns to a slow and painful death millions of unemployed, whom it robs of the right to work, cannot but arouse disgust and vigorous protest among the widest sections of the working people. This regime, which converts the masses into cattle and robs them of all rights, cannot but arouse their indignation. The fact that in a war so terribly disastrous to the masses, the Fords, Rockefellers, Krupps, de Wendels, Rothschilds and other moneygrubbers are deriving fabulous profits from the sweat and blood of the people cannot but rouse the ire of the working folk. This war, with its hundreds of thousands of human victims, with its millions of refugees, with the starvation and wholesale destruction it brings in its train, is a powerful indictment of the bourgeoisie which is responsible for it.

But the imperialist war, which has shown the broad mass of the working people how corrupt and corroded is the whole organism of capitalism, is an indictment not only of the bourgeoisie; it is also an indictment of the Social-Democratic leaders, without whose treacherous policy the bourgeoisie

could never have succeeded in driving the people into this bloody shambles. After the war of 1914-18, two paths faced the working class masses. The path proposed by the Communists was the path of revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, the difficult path of the conquest of power by the working class, which, backed by the dictatorship of the proletariat, would build a new, socialist society and then proceed towards communism. This was the glorious path chosen by the working class of one-sixth of the earth, led by Lenin and Stalin. The other path was one of compromise with capitalism, of the "peaceful evolution of capitalism into socialism," a path which led to disaster.

In the mirror of war, the working class can now clearly discern these two paths and see whither they have led. The Social-Democratic leaders, intimidating the masses with pictures of the severe sacrifices which the revolutionary struggle would demand, and fooling them with promises of a tranquil, secure and peaceful life under the so-called bourgeois democracy, induced the majority of the working class to swerve from the revolutionary path. The majority of the proletariat followed the Eberts and Bauers, the Blums and MacDonalds, and allowed themselves to be deceived by their promises.

And what were the consequences? The very opposite of what the Social-Democratic leaders had promised and prophesied. These leaders have led the working people to the triumph of the most savage reaction, to the ruin and suffering of eco-

nomical crisis, to the hardships and horrors of the present war. The Bolshevik Party, on the other hand, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, has led the working class and the peoples of the Soviet Union to the destruction of capitalism, to the awakening of all the creative forces of the people, to the blossoming of true democracy, to the triumph of socialism.

* * *

During this past year of imperialist war, the conditions under which the working class is waging its struggle against the exploiters and against capitalism have considerably changed. This is particularly true of the conditions of the working class movement in Europe, where the effects of the imperialist war are being felt far more strongly than on other continents.

In the first place, the war has accelerated and revealed the complete ideological and political bankruptcy of the Second International and led to the virtual termination of its existence as an international organizing center. The present crisis of the Second International is incomparably deeper than the crisis at the time of the war of 1914-18. The Second International bore within it the poisonous seeds of that crisis at the time when the capitalist stabilization crumbled in the economic crisis of 1929-33, which scattered to the winds the reactionary Social-Democratic legend of "organized capitalism" and "permanent prosperity." Long before the first world imperialist war, the Second International was corroded to the core by opportunism, although externally it still seemed to be

sound and intact. But the case was different on the eve of the present war.

Even before the outbreak of this war the internal unity of all the Social-Democratic parties, of all the parties of the Second International, had already been thoroughly undermined, and the disintegration and decay of these parties and their ideological and political bankruptcy were proceeding at an accelerated pace. This was the result, on the one hand, of the countless treacheries perpetrated by the leaders of the Second International (their sabotage of the united and popular fronts—that most important weapon in the struggle for the prevention of the present war—their anti-Soviet and anti-Communist position, their betrayal of the cause of the Spanish people, their support of the Munich policy, etc., etc.), and on the other, of the growing influence of the Land of Socialism, of the Communist International and of the Communist ideas among the rank-and-file Social-Democratic workers.

The leaders of the Second International sought for a way out of this profound crisis primarily by orientating their whole policy on the Anglo-French bloc, claiming that this imperialist bloc was the personification of democracy and freedom. But the effect of this was only to aggravate the crisis in the ranks of the Second International. From the very outbreak of the present war the Social-Democratic leaders bound up the destinies of the Second International with the destinies of the Anglo-French imperialist war bloc and acted as the

direct agents of one of the warring camps. Consequently, the collapse of the Anglo-French war bloc as a result of the capitulation of the bourgeoisie of France and a number of other countries was bound to affect the Second International in the first place, was bound to lead, and actually did lead, to its collapse.

The French Socialist Party—which, after the British Labor Party, was the most powerful organization in the Second International—has virtually ceased to exist. It has shamefully collapsed under the burden of the crimes of its leaders and as a result of the bankruptcy of the whole policy of the French bourgeoisie, which was also the policy of the French Socialist Party. The leaders of the Socialist Party acted as lackeys of their bourgeoisie, helping it to plunge the French people into an inferno of suffering such as they had not experienced for many a century.

Some of the Socialist leaders, men like Belin and Spinasse, have cynically thrown off the mask and openly associated themselves with the butchers of the French people. Monsieur Belin, Minister in the Petain-Laval government, together with that other "Socialist" and even "theoretician," Spinasse, are doing their utmost to harness the French workers to the carriage of the "two hundred families." As to the "leader" of the party, the notorious Monsieur Blum, the initiator of the policy of non-intervention and the strangler of the Spanish revolution, who, with his friend Sérol, demanded the gallows for the

Communists, that wretched pigmy, who only a few months before the shameful capitulation hysterically called for a crusade of the British and French imperialists against the Land of Socialism, has now "re-signed" from politics and retired to "recuperate" in his aristocratic villa on the Cote d'Azur.

But it is not so easy for the masses who were deceived by the Blums to retire from the catastrophe into which they have been plunged by their bourgeoisie and the Social-Democratic traitors.

The majority of the Social-Democratic workers of France, as of other countries, are now standing at the crossroads: where are they to turn, how are they to escape the abyss? To this agonizing question no answer is furnished by anyone except the Communist Party, the only Party that strove to prevent the criminal imperialist war and warned the working people of France that the treacherous policy of the bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic puppets would lead to disaster, the party which even under the present difficult conditions is continuing its self-sacrificing struggle for the salvation of the French people and for the restoration of France on a new foundation.

Neither the French reactionary scum nor the bankrupt bourgeois Social-Democratic parties are capable of coping with the difficult task of restoring France. It is a task which only the working class, led by the heroic Communist Party, is equal to. Only the working class, united in the struggle, and with a revolutionary leadership, can weld together a united front of all the

French working people, in which there will be no place for capitulators or betrayers of the interests of the nation. Only with the support of such a people's front will the working class become the true leader of the entire French nation, and restore to this people, which has contributed to world history the glorious pages of 1793, 1830, 1848 and 1871, the place it is entitled to.

The problems confronting the French workers, and particularly the Social-Democratic workers, also confront, in one degree or another, the workers of a number of other countries, where the policy of the Social-Democratic leaders has also suffered bankruptcy, and where the ulcer of Social-Democratism has broken through to the surface. In Belgium, De Man, that "theoretical luminary" of the Second International and Chairman of the Belgian Labor Party, has openly deserted to the camp of the most vicious enemies of Marxism and still tries to "theoretically justify" his betrayal of both the interests of the working class and the national interests of Belgium. This cynical treachery is arousing the indignation even of many active members of the Belgian Labor Party, who are beginning to detect the true character of the policy of De Man and his followers. In Denmark, the Social-Democratic leaders, headed by Stauning, have adopted the course of voluntarily liquidating their party, with the purpose of forming a "united party" of the bourgeoisie by merging all the government parties into one. Similar tendencies are to be observed in other countries, in

Switzerland, for example, where in the Berne Canton a united executive committee of all the bourgeois parties, including the Social-Democratic Party, has been formed.

The Second International has suffered an unparalleled collapse, but its "stinking corpse" continues to poison the atmosphere of the labor movement. The Social-Democratic parties are continuing their insidious work in a number of countries. Social-Democracy exerts its influence even where the Social-Democratic parties have ceased to exist. And in England the Labor Party still retains its position and former influence in the working class movement. The British Labor Party, with eleven representatives in the bourgeois cabinet, is even intensifying its social demagogy, endeavoring to palm off the measures for the creation of a war economy as socialist measures. The British Labor leaders are helping their imperialist masters to intensify the exploitation of the working people of the home country, and to keep the peoples of India and the other colonies in subjection.

For the first time in many years a real opportunity has been created to liberate the Social-Democratic workers from the fatal influence of the agents of the bourgeoisie. But the Communists know that this liberation will not come of its own accord, automatically, without tremendous effort. They realize that where the bankrupt Social-Democrats are no longer able to perform their function as the main social support of the bourgeoisie, finance capital, taking advantage of the ideological influence of Social-Dem-

ocratism among the working masses, of the capitulationist sentiments, the skepticism and pusillanimity so zealously fostered by the Social-Democratic leaders among the working people, tries with the help of various demagogic "anti-capitalist," anti-plutocratic" and even "Socialist" slogans to create a new social support for the bourgeoisie from among elements of the proletariat who have been disillusioned in bourgeois democracy, and from the petty-bourgeois and declassed elements.

This danger is particularly great just now, when tens of millions of people have been thrown out of work, deprived of all means of existence and plunged into the yawning gulf of poverty and starvation. The problem of liberating the working masses from the influence of the Social-Democratic and other agents of the bourgeoisie will therefore be decided by the stubborn struggle of the Communists as a result of their efforts to unite the masses, the proletarian masses in the first place, into a common front of struggle against the common enemy. The bankruptcy of the Second International must not lead to any relaxation of the struggle against Social-Democratism; on the contrary, that struggle must be intensified in order to smash Social-Democratism once and for all and destroy the influence of all other anti-Marxist trends in the working class movement.

The imperialist war has not only led to the bankruptcy of Social-Democracy; it has also changed, and is continuing to change, the conditions of the labor movement

and of the revolutionary movement generally in other respects too. The war has cast into the balance not only the personal fate of the workers, peasants, working intellectuals and urban petty-bourgeoisie, but also the fate of a large number of peoples and whole nations. The re-division of the world implies a revision of the map of the world and the partition of countries and peoples. Consequently, for many European countries which have long existed as independent states, the national question is now becoming a political factor of cardinal importance. The lives of vast numbers of human beings will depend on the correct solution of this question.

This question has acquired tremendous importance not only in Europe, but on other continents of the world as well. The colonial and semi-colonial peoples, who have so long borne the yoke of imperialism, refuse to reconcile themselves to imperialist oppression and exploitation any longer. The peoples of the dependent countries, as is shown by the heroic example of the great Chinese nation, which for over three years has been waging a self-sacrificing patriotic war against foreign imperialism for its national independence, want to free themselves from all capitalist oppression, to work for their own interests and live a decent human life.

The increasing importance of the national question both in the developed and undeveloped capitalist countries is creating wider opportunities for the working class than ever before to win mass allies for a joint struggle against imperialism and its yoke. By making proper use

of these opportunities, the working class will multiply its forces, make it easier to wage its struggle against the class enemy, and help it to muster around itself all progressive forces, the various social strata in its own country and in a number of other countries which are equally interested in their existence as independent nations. And the Communists, the disciples of Lenin and Stalin, know that such a joint struggle of the working people and nations of various countries under the leadership of the international proletariat is the truly internationalist and the only proper way to settle the national question. The Communists, who love their people and share their torments and sufferings, are learning from the works of Lenin and Stalin to understand the enhanced importance of the national question in the international working class movement, to make a proper analysis and take proper stock of the concrete situation in each individual country, and to draw the necessary conclusions from this analysis for their struggle.

* * *

This year of imperialist war has created new conditions for the working class movement, and, in particular, for the Communist movement in one other respect too: in the majority of capitalist countries this movement is now developing in the midst of unrestrained reaction, repression and terror, of mass arrests and drastic sentences, in the midst of a bourgeois offensive against the elementary rights and liberties and the living standards of the working people.

In many countries where the so-

called bourgeois-democratic regime formerly prevailed, the bourgeoisie, with the help of its Social-Democratic agents, has already nullified the last remnants of the social gains won by the workers. And it is not without good reason that, in doing so, the bourgeoisie begins its attack on the working people by hounding and persecuting the Communists. For the bourgeoisie and the Social-Democratic politicians know, of course, that the Communists are uncompromising enemies of imperialist war and of capitalism, which engenders imperialist war; that they are devoted champions of the working people. That is why they try to discredit the Communists in the eyes of the masses. That is why they ban Communist newspapers and drive the Communist parties underground. That is why, too, the persecution of Communists has become the fashion even in such "exemplary" bourgeois-democratic countries as Sweden and Switzerland in Europe and the U.S.A. in the Western Hemisphere.

It is highly significant that whenever the bourgeoisie schemes some act of treachery against its own nation, it first launches its fury against the Communists. That was the way the betrayers of the Spanish people, the Casado-Miaja-Mera-Besteiro gang and their accomplices, Prieto and Caballero, acted. That was the line of the traitors in France—the Weygands, Blums, Daladiers, etc. And that was the recipe followed by the Belgian De Mans and the Dutch social-traitors in their vile work. It is with the banner of "anti-Communism" that the Wang Ching-wei and their accomplices

among the Right wing of the Chinese national bourgeoisie, all those barterers of the freedom and independence of China, try to mask their betrayal of the people.

Being a Communist in capitalist countries under present conditions means bearing the brunt of the blows of reaction. Being a member of the Communist Party means running the risk of being flung onto the streets, of starvation and privation, of prison and concentration camp, and all too often of losing one's life. There are no means, however vile and despicable, no barbarity which even the most "civilized" and "democratic" bourgeoisie does not consider acceptable and suitable in its struggle against the Communists. Forged documents and frame-ups, the burning and blowing up of Communist newspaper offices, the murder of prominent and active members of the Communist Party are by no means rare, and are all part of the arsenal of the bourgeoisie when they consider it necessary to strike at the Communists. In the U.S.A., that boasted land of democracy, the bourgeoisie has created something in the nature of a modern Inquisition in the shape of the arch-reactionary Dies Committee for the persecution of Communists and class-conscious workers. And the persecution of the Communists is the more vicious, the more the bourgeoisie stands in fear of the people, and the less the working masses are willing meekly to tolerate the despotism of the exploiters.

The past year of imperialist war has been a serious test for the Communist parties in the capitalist

countries not only because they have had to carry on the struggle in the midst of increasing terrorism and capitalist reaction and the tremendous pressure brought to bear on them by the entire machinery of state, by the press, radio, Ministries of Propaganda and by all other political parties, but also because of the extremely complicated political situation, which was subject to abrupt changes and demanded firmness and flexibility, staunchness of principle and rapid changes of tactics in adaptation to the new conditions. Today, a year after the outbreak of the war, it may be said that the Communists have stood the test to which they were subjected by the whole course of events.

In spite of the extremely abrupt changes in the whole international situation, the Communist Parties adopted the right course from the very outbreak of the war. On the whole, they gave a correct estimate of the situation and a proper definition of the class character of the war. The Communists were the only ones to tell the masses the truth about the causes of the war and about the aims which the various imperialist states are pursuing in it. Where some mistakes were made in the early days of the war, owing to an inadequate understanding of the imperialist nature of the policy of countries like Great Britain, France and America, and to an oversimplified attitude to such concepts as "aggressor," "fascism" and "democracy," these mistakes were very soon rectified.

During this year the Communists in the various countries have shown

many a brilliant example of devotion to the cause of the working class, of iron determination and heroism. In many cases they displayed their ability to take advantage of every legal opportunity, however slight, to establish contact with the masses. They often displayed considerable persistence in removing obstacles in their path. Who is not aware, for example, of the valorous and self-sacrificing struggle of the French Communists against the schemers of national treachery and national disaster? Who does not remember the heroic conduct of the French Communist Deputies before the military tribunal, when, scorning all personal defense and following the glorious example of the Bolshevik members of the Duma under the tsar and of Liebknecht and Dimitroff, exposed their accusers and themselves came forward as the accusers? And who does not recall the heroic revolutionary fighters of Spain, languishing in the concentration camps of "democratic" France, suffering hunger and countless privations, and often paying with their lives for having remained faithful to their ideas, for refusing to trust the promises of the imperialists and to yield to their threats and brutalities? And need we mention the Communists of China who by their self-sacrificing deeds at the front and in the rear are proving their inflexible determination, in conjunction with all the progressive forces of the country, to fight the war of national liberation to a finish.

In spite of the hysterical outcries of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic reactionaries during the Fin-

nish-Soviet war, the Communists never flinched or hesitated for a moment and staunchly upheld the banner of proletarian internationalism. They exposed the provocative designs of the imperialists and their accomplices in the Second International—the Blums, Citrines, Hoeglunds and Tranmaels—who tried to turn the edge of the imperialist war against the U.S.S.R. Even such a relatively small Communist Party as the Swedish, on which penalties were showered as from a cornucopia, discharged with honor its revolutionary duty to its own people and the international proletariat.

As the plight of the bourgeoisie grows steadily worse, as it finds it harder and harder to drive the masses into the shambles and compel them to bear colossal sacrifices and privations, as it loses its mass support, the bourgeoisie will strive harder and harder to paralyze the working class by disorganizing its forces, by infecting its ranks with the virus of capitulation, of fatalistic submission to the "inevitable," to the *fait accompli*. With the help of its Social-Democratic and other agents, the bourgeoisie is striving, and will do so more and more as time goes on, to enfeeble the proletariat with the poison of bestial nationalism, by inciting one group of workers against another at home, and one detachment of the proletariat against another internationally. But all the more will the Communists realize their mission and the historical mission of the working class.

In his article, "May Day and the Struggle Against Imperialist War,"

Comrade Dimitroff pointed out that in order that the international proletariat may carry out its historical mission, the fighting forces of the working class in each country must be united and a genuine popular front of the working people formed under its leadership, international unity of action of the proletariat must be achieved, the struggle of the working people of the capitalist countries must be combined with the anti-imperialist movement in the colonies and dependent countries, and the working people must be solidly rallied around the great Land of Socialism.

The Communists will devote all their energies to the achievement of these aims. They will tolerate no hesitation in their ranks and will eradicate every tendency, even the slightest, to bow before difficulties or to capitulate to the class enemy, to imperialism.

The Communists are fully aware that only by pursuing such a firm policy of principle in their own party, only by steeling their party ideologically and organizationally and enhancing its capacity to withstand all storms and stresses, will they be able to rally the broad masses of the workers around it and achieve the revolutionary unity of the proletariat in the struggle against the enemy. Only then will the working class become a force able to lead its people, put an end to the criminal imperialist war in its own way, and bring about a peace based on the real friendship of nations.

The conditions created by the war have considerably increased the responsibilities of the Communists

in every country to their working class and people. The tasks facing the Communists have grown tremendously, and so have the demands which the situation makes on every Communist Party and every Communist. The experience of the past year of imperialist war entitles us to say that the Communists will undoubtedly perform their revolutionary duty to the working people and that they will remain loyal to the banner of proletarian internationalism, the grand banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

THE WAR AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

BY J. KOPLENIG

THE shocks and upheavals caused by the imperialist war are immense. The complete bankruptcy of the Versailles post-war system, the shameful collapse of bourgeois "democracy" in France, the profound economic disorganization of Europe, the dire and unparalleled impoverishment of the broad masses of the people in the capitalist countries stricken by the war, the growing influence of the Land of Socialism on the working people, and the growing recognition by the peoples that a long war confronts them and that the ruling classes have proved incapable of laying any durable foundation of peace—all these factors are operating together to produce an unprecedented crisis of capitalism.

At this turning point of history, the existence of two paths of development has been brought home to the working people as never before. On the one hand, they perceive that the path of capitalism and of Social-Democracy, which is inseparably bound up with capitalism, has led to immeasurable poverty and suffering, to the bloody suppression of the working class and the mass of the people generally, and to the hell of a new imperialist war. On the other, they perceive that the path of socialism, the

path taken by the Bolshevik Party in the imperialist war of 1914-17, has led to the victory of the working people in the Soviet Union, to a society in which there are no exploiters and oppressors, to the establishment on one-sixth of the surface of the earth of a social order which has brought the people freedom and peace. In the light of these facts, the working class of the capitalist countries will once more glance back, will once more review the path traversed by the Second International in the course of a generation—and then will look determinedly forward and take the path that will lead it out of poverty and misery.

In 1914, the opportunist leaders of the Social-Democratic parties grossly betrayed socialism and internationalism. They openly deserted to the camp of the bourgeoisie. They backed their own bourgeoisie in the imperialist war and turned their parties into tools of the belligerent imperialists. After the victory of the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders made it their business to support the campaign of the bourgeoisie against the young Soviet state.

And when, in 1918, the working people in other countries, too, rose

up against the capitalist system, these leaders acted as a shield for the bourgeoisie, turned the Social-Democratic parties into a bulwark of the threatened capitalist system, and, by fraud and violence, by chicanery and force of arms, crushed the forces of revolution. They made the Social-Democratic parties a buttress of the Versailles post-war system and supported imperialist intervention against Soviet Russia. They split the working class and converted the Social-Democratic parties into loyal supporters of the state. They disarmed the working class and paved the way for reaction. Working in the service of the bourgeoisie, they systematically undermined the strength of the proletariat, and placed the Social-Democratic parties completely under the command of the bourgeoisie. And so we find the Social-Democratic leaders perpetrating one act of treachery after another, and leading the working class from defeat to defeat. They thus became the vanguard of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary proletariat, and the vanguard of capitalism in its struggle against the socialist Soviet Union.

But in spite of the treachery and ideological bankruptcy of Social-Democracy in the World War, after the war the Social-Democratic parties still remained a powerful force. The undeniable strength of the Social-Democratic leaders in the years following the first imperialist war and the recovery of the Second International from its political and ideological bankruptcy were due to several causes. Their alliance with

the bourgeoisie and the close collaboration of the revived Second International with the victorious imperialist powers on the basis of the Versailles system helped to strengthen the position of the Social-Democratic parties.

Moreover, in their policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the Social-Democratic leaders, especially in the "victor states," could rely upon a comparatively large labor aristocracy; in several countries (Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, etc.), the influence they enjoyed in the bourgeois state machine enabled them to corrupt and maintain their sway over a large section of the working class. The strongest basis of their power was the trade unions; and it was in the trade unions that they were able to strengthen their influence and to create a favorable soil for reformist illusions, skillfully exploiting the social concessions and reforms wrung from the bourgeoisie by the pressure of the revolutionary mass movement for their own ends, for the justification of their policy and for the enhancement of their prestige.

Lastly, it should not be forgotten that the petty bourgeois masses, radicalized and stirred into political activity under the influence of the war and the capitalist crisis, threw in their lot with Social-Democracy, which they expected would bring them a life of peace and a fundamental improvement of their condition along democratic lines. In this petty bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectual mass, with its vacillations, restricted outlook and illu-

sions, the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders found a broad backing for their reformist, anti-proletarian policy.

It should be added that the majority of the Social-Democratic workers were accustomed to regard the old leaders as their representatives, that they could not credit them with such heinous class treachery, believing it was all due to weakness and blunders and could be rectified, and that they were unable to see through the new and more refined methods of deceit practised by the leaders. These leaders were very dexterous in playing up to the prevailing moods of the masses, pretending to concede to these moods, and were thus able to deceive large sections of the working class and lead them astray.

As a matter of fact, when the World War ended, the Social-Democratic chauvinists donned the garb of ardent pacifists. They conjured up before the eyes of the masses a picture of peaceful collaboration of the nations through the League of Nations, which was in reality an instrument of the Western imperialist powers for the suppression of Germany and a weapon against the Soviet Union. They promised the workers a peaceful transition to socialism by way of bourgeois democracy, while actually, under the screen of democracy, helping the bourgeoisie to climb back into the saddle and allowing the reactionary forces every opportunity of reorganizing their ranks.

While the Noskes suppressed the revolutionary working class in an

orgy of blood, the Bauers and Hilferdings, by means of radical talk, restrained the working class from launching a struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. While the Eberts armed the White Guard bands, the so-called "Left" Social-Democratic leaders, under the guise of Marxism, supplied the ideological weapons for the fight against the Communists and the Soviet Union. As against the self-sacrificing struggle for socialism in the Soviet Union, they held out the prospect of a bloodless path to socialism within the framework of bourgeois democracy.

The Communist parties were still in the early stages of their growth.

All these circumstances made it possible for the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders, notwithstanding the first big crash of the Second International in 1914, to maintain their influence, even if a steadily diminishing one, over the post-war working class movement, and thus save capitalism in Europe for another generation.

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Thanks to the assistance of the Social-Democrats, the bourgeoisie was able to crush the revolutionary movement and to consolidate its rule once more, and capitalism was able temporarily to escape from its severe crisis. But this temporary strengthening of capitalism, its relative stabilization, which was accompanied by the strengthening of Social-Democratism in the working class movement, did not last long. The world economic crisis shattered the false theories of "organized

capitalism," "permanent prosperity" and "economic democracy." The offensive launched by the reactionaries against the social and political rights and gains of the working class aroused unrest among the masses. The influence of the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union on the working class of the capitalist countries, on the one hand, and the victory of reaction in Europe, the growing acuteness of the imperialist antagonisms and the crisis from which the Versailles system was suffering, on the other, shook the foundations of post-war Social-Democracy.

Until then the bourgeoisie had utilized Social-Democracy as its main support in suppressing the working class and in strengthening its rule; but now, in view of the growing dissatisfaction and radicalization of the masses, the Social-Democratic leaders were no longer an adequate guarantee of its security. In the countries most severely affected by the crisis, the bourgeoisie began to set up its open terrorist dictatorship and gradually to withdraw its support from the Social-Democrats. While utilizing the services of the Social-Democratic leaders, who had frustrated the revolutionary struggle of the working class and by their splitting tactics weakened its resistance to reaction and undermined its influence over its allies, the bourgeoisie had been building up a new mass basis for itself and now found it possible to dismiss its old lackeys as superfluous. The largest and most important party in the Second International, the Social-Democratic Party of Ger-

many, thereby lost the chief source of its power—the direct support of the bourgeoisie.

While, after the imperialist war, large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, who had grown politically active during the post-war crisis, had orientated themselves on Social-Democracy, from which they expected a radical improvement of their condition, now, in face of the economic crisis and the obvious untenability of the capitalist post-war system, they began to desert the Social-Democratic ranks. They lost their faith in bourgeois democracy and were driven by the policy of the Social-Democrats into the arms of reactionary parties, which by fomenting national enmity and by the use of anti-capitalist catchwords were able to win their support. Thereby the Social-Democratic parties lost an important mass basis.

While in the post-war period a relatively large labor aristocracy, which had won considerable social and political concessions from the bourgeoisie, formed the firm basis of Social-Democracy, now this basis began rapidly to crumble as a result of the economic crisis. Wholesale unemployment, reductions of wages, the abolition of social rights and the ejection of the Social-Democrats from the government machine all helped to undermine the social basis of the labor aristocracy. One of the most important pillars of reformism and of Social-Democratism thus began to totter.

While Social-Democracy was formerly able to deceive large masses of the workers and to maintain its sway over them by fostering illu-

sions about bourgeois democracy and the possibility of a peaceful development towards socialism, now these illusions began to fade away under the influence of the world economic crisis, the reactionary offensive and the growing danger of war, on the one hand, and the increasing power and growing example of the Soviet Union, on the other. The triumph of reaction and the shameful collapse of Social-Democracy in Germany shook the foundations of the Second International and the mass basis of Social-Democracy in a number of countries and exposed the contradiction between the fighting spirit of the masses and the capitulatory spirit of the Social-Democratic Party leaders.

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The defeat of the German proletariat, the reactionary offensive and the growing danger of war stirred the working class to its depths. Broad sections of workers who were under the sway of Social-Democratic influences began to look upon the capitulatory policy of the Social-Democrats and the split of the working class as the main cause of the defeat in Germany; and in a number of countries, against the wishes of the Social-Democratic leaders, they began to take up the struggle against reaction in conjunction with the Communists. The February battles in France and Austria and the October battles in Asturias in 1934, where Socialists and Communists fought shoulder to shoulder, once more showed the necessity for a united working class;

they revealed the elemental fighting urge of the masses and their desire for unity, and showed that real potentialities existed for a successful struggle against reaction and war. The initiative of the Communists in the formation of a powerful united and popular front movement met with the full approval of the working class and with a profound response among the working people generally. At the same time the peace policy of the Soviet Union showed the masses of the people, who were disturbed by the growing threat of war, the way to maintain peace.

The increasing acuteness of class antagonisms at home and the sharpening of the imperialist antagonisms, the growth of the mass movement against reaction, and the difficulties experienced by the bourgeoisie in face of the danger of war, led to a tactical change of front among the Social-Democratic parties in the European countries which were most directly menaced. Under the pressure of the mass movement, and in order to help the bourgeoisie out of this crisis, the Social-Democratic leaders in a number of countries began to change their tactics. They began to drop their resistance to the united and popular front and, in order not to lose their influence over the masses, sought to gain the leadership of the popular movement and to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie in a *new way*.

It is no chance thing that these developments went furthest of all in Spain and France. In Spain, a bourgeois democratic revolution

broke out against the thoroughly rotten semi-feudal system, which had become intolerable not only to the masses, but even to a section of the bourgeoisie, especially among the oppressed national minorities. Furthermore, the alliance between the Spanish reactionaries and the foreign force of intervention presented the bourgeoisie with the alternative either of forfeiting their national independence or of allying themselves with the forces of their own people. A section of the bourgeoisie chose the latter alternative, although hesitatingly, half-heartedly, and ready at any moment to capitulate and betray the cause of the nation.

In France, the bourgeoisie was disturbed by the changed alignment of forces in Europe. In view of the strong democratic traditions of the French people and the fighting spirit of the working people, it seemed advisable even to a section of the bourgeoisie not to place their trust in de la Roque and Chiappe, but to find other means of coping with their difficulties. The overwhelming majority of the Social-Democratic leaders followed the lead of this section of the bourgeoisie.

The People's Front arose owing to the initiative of the Communists, to the pressure of the masses and the exceptional difficulties experienced by the French bourgeoisie. The tremendous and nationwide enthusiasm aroused by the People's Front created real prospects for the revival of France by the working people, for a successful defense of freedom and peace on the basis

of the unity of the working class and the rallying of all sections of the working people around the proletariat. But the strength of the popular movement frightened even those sections of the bourgeoisie who had given their official support to the People's Front; the Blums and Jouhaux were dismayed by the growth of real unity among the working class and were determined to frustrate its development at all costs. Acting hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, they proceeded to betray the People's Front which they had always hated, to betray freedom and peace.

The Blums and Jouhaux professed to be in favor of the People's Front program, but actually they hampered the struggle of the masses at every step. They professed to be in favor of the struggle against reaction, but actually they acted as a screen behind which the reactionaries mustered their forces. They professed to be in favor of united action, but actually they sabotaged both unity and action. They professed to be in favor of peace and of collective security, but actually they encouraged the forces of war in every way and supported the imperialist war policy of the bourgeoisie.

When the heroic struggle of the Spanish people for freedom and peace reached its height and began to endanger the war plans of the imperialists, when there seemed to be a real likelihood of a victory for the masses under the leadership of the working class, and when the international solidarity of the workers with the embattled Spanish

people gave a powerful impulse to the united and popular front movement in all countries, the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders decided that the time had come to deal a dastardly blow at the united and popular front, at the forces of peace and at the international proletariat. They hypocritically professed their sympathy for the Spanish people, but actually the leaders of the Second International did their utmost to prevent international united action, and at the same time, Leon Blum, acting on the orders of the Entente imperialists, tied the noose of "non-intervention" which was to strangle the Spanish people.

Closely connected with their betrayal of the Spanish People's Front was the part played by the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders in the imperialist plot against peace and the strongest bulwark of peace—the Land of Socialism. They talked hypocritically to the masses of the necessity for a peace front in conjunction with the Soviet Union, but actually they supported the plan of leading British and French capitalist circles to embroil Germany and the Soviet Union in war and thus deliver a blow, not only to their imperialist rival, but also, and above all, to the Land of Socialism.

This treacherous policy of the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders pointed to a severe and un concealable crisis within the Second International. The contradiction between the fighting spirit and desire for unity of the Social-Democratic workers and of many Social-Democratic functionaries and the reac-

tionary machinations of the leadership of the Second International shook many Social-Democratic parties to their foundations. The defeat in Spain, where Socialists and Communists had shed their blood together, the defense of avowed traitors like Besteiro by Blum and the other "non-interventionist" Socialists, the sabotage of international solidarity and united action, and the constant yielding to reaction embittered large numbers of rank and file Social-Democrats.

The unceremonious way in which the British Labor Party had turned the Second International into a tool of the British bourgeoisie led to divergencies which affected even the Executive Committee of the Second International. The expulsion of the Spanish Young Socialist League, the contempt shown for representatives of illegal parties, and the marked and accepted supremacy of the British on the Executive Committee were all intended, as impending events showed, to prepare the Second International for war.

On the eve of the second imperialist war, the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders smashed the united front and the popular front which they had already done so much to undermine, and thus destroyed the only chance of saving peace. The reactionary leaders of the Social-Democratic parties and of the reformist trade unions therefore share full responsibility for the unleashing of the second imperialist war.

The peace policy of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact frustrated the anti-Soviet war plans of the imperialists. But the British and French imperialists and their Social-Democratic abettors did not abandon their criminal schemes. They unleashed the second imperialist war with the purpose of turning it into a war against the Soviet Union.

With the outbreak of the second imperialist war, the leaders of the Second International and of the Social-Democratic parties threw off the mask and openly came forward as agents of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism within the working class. In the World War of 1914-18, the Social-Democratic leaders in all countries had supported their own bourgeoisie and their own imperialists. But today, in view of the changed historical situation and of the victory of socialism on one-sixth of the surface of the earth, they have made it their aim to champion the interests of capitalism as a whole. In their mortal anxiety for the fate of capitalism and their bestial hatred of the Soviet Union, they are publicly prostituting themselves in the service of British imperialism, which they regard as the most powerful force in the European capitalist system. They are leading the pack of imperialist warmongers and are striving by their actions to prove to the bourgeoisie that they are the best champions of its war interests, its most reliable support in the struggle against the revolutionary working class and communism, and capitalism's best advocates.

In order to win the masses for the war and to harness them in the capitalist interests, the Social-Democratic leaders and the leaders of the reformist trade unions sought from the very outset to conceal the imperialist character of the war; they shamelessly denied that there was any connection between capitalism and war and dubbed the war an "anti-fascist" war for the "defense of democracy," a war in defense of the liberty of the nations, a war to guarantee a durable and "just" peace.

While driving the masses into the shambles of imperialist war on the cry of a "war for freedom and democracy," the Blums, Jouhaux and their friends acted behind the lines as sleuth-hounds and hangman's assistants of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the Communists and the revolutionary workers; they smashed the trade union and labor organizations and helped the bourgeoisie in every way to oppress their own people.

While claiming that this was an "anti-fascist" war, they led the campaign for a capitalist crusade against the Soviet Union, the strongest bulwark of the world proletariat. The Blums, Citrines, Hoglunds and Tanners were the vanguard of the warmongers that drove Finland to fight the Soviet Union. The champions of non-intervention in the Spanish war of freedom now did their utmost to further intervention in support of the Finnish White Guards in their counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union.

While the leaders of the Second

International talked about a war for the "freedom and independence" of the nations and for guaranteeing a "durable" and "just" peace by the reconstruction of Europe, they did their utmost to involve other nations in the imperialist war on the side of Britain and France; they supported, as they now support, the imperialists in suppressing the liberation movements among the colonial peoples; they waxed enthusiastic over the plans for the reconstruction of Europe, by which the European nations were to become helpless vassals of British and French imperialism.

The bankrupt émigré leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, men like Hilferding, Geyer and Siampfer, saw prospects of climbing onto the backs of the German people again with the help of British and French bayonets, and offered the British imperialists their help in making Germany dependent upon England and turning her into a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

The reactionary Social-Democratic leaders saw in the imperialist war an opportunity for renovating the dilapidated edifice of the Second International by siding with the Anglo-French war bloc. They staked everything on this card. The British Labor Party and the French Socialist Party formed a close alliance, proclaimed their eternal unity and sought to rally their followers in Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland and other countries around this "axis." They sang hymns of praise to the "unity" of the Second International, in which the parties of the smaller countries were grouped like

dominions around the British and French Socialist war bloc.

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The march of the war destroyed the last props of the already thoroughly decayed Second International. The masses have begun to see more and more clearly through the reactionary, imperialist character of the war, which the leaders of the Second International had extolled to them as a "war for freedom and democracy." In his May Day article, Comrade Dimitroff said:

"The longer the war lasts, the more it is being revealed as an *imperialist, reactionary war against the people's interests*. The masses are realizing more and more clearly that this is an *imperialist* war, because the bourgeoisie, which holds power and determines the aims of war, is out for conquest and the plunder and subjugation of other nations. They are realizing more and more clearly that this is a war *against the people's interests*, because it is a war for the rich, and because the poor are bearing all its burdens and costs, are suffering and dying in order that the rich may grow richer. The masses are realizing more and more clearly that this is a *reactionary* war, because in order to wage the imperialist war, the bourgeoisie are launching another war, a war against their own people, whom they are squeezing in a vise and condemning to political disfranchisement and slavery." (Georgi Dimitroff, *The Struggle Against The Imperialist War*, p. 9. Workers Library Publishers, New York.)

The truth of this statement has been confirmed by the events. Most marked of all are the effects of the French collapse. "Democratic" France, so extolled by Blum and his friends, has with their help been converted into a country where the masses are being suppressed by means of terror and where the most sordid and blood-thirsty reaction reigns supreme. The "democratic" French bourgeoisie, to whom the Blums and Jouhaux stuck through thick and thin, have sold and betrayed France and have preferred dishonorable capitulation to the salvation of the country by the forces of the people. The Socialist "defenders of democracy" hastened to surrender the last shadow of democracy and faithfully followed "their" bourgeoisie right up to the Vichy "National Assembly" which abolished the democratic constitution of France.

The majority of them voted for Pétain; not one of them put up any resistance, not one of them remembered with what passion he had called upon the people "to die for democracy." Instead, Blum has retired to the Riviera "to enjoy the autumn sun" and to recover from the strenuous work of putting through a policy which has spelled the ruin of millions of people. Jouhaux, shrugging his shoulders, has resigned from the leadership of the General Confederation of Labor and has turned over the trade unions which he had led to ruin to men like Belin, who immediately secured for themselves ministerial posts in Pétain's government and are now praising the "authoritarian regime"

no less zealously than they praised democracy only a few weeks earlier. It is these pace-makers of reaction who are the Socialist "defenders of democracy"! The bourgeois "democracy," in whose name the Blums and Jouhaux helped to unleash this frightful war, is but a patched cloak of capitalist dictatorship, which the first puff of wind will rend and sweep away.

The steadily growing realization by the masses that bourgeois democracy is nothing more than one of the forms of capitalist rule, a cloak for parasitic and doomed capitalism, is being strengthened by other events too. In Great Britain, the so-called "home of democracy," the bourgeoisie, with the active help of the Labor leaders, is abolishing the democratic liberties of the people step by step. Even "Nordic Socialism," that museum piece of the Second International, has gone down unsung and unhonored, and the Scandinavian workers too stand sobered before the naked hideousness of capitalism and are realizing that they have not "peacefully evolved into socialism," but have "peacefully" landed into an imperialist war. And so, the masks of capitalism, whether "democratic" or "socialist," are falling everywhere, and the working people in all capitalist countries affected by the war, whatever the brand of ideological fraud they may have been the victims of, are beginning to understand that capitalism means war, poverty, oppression and barbarity. And in all countries the working people are beginning to realize that only one system, only one state has

stood the test—the socialist system, the socialist state, which the Soviet people have erected under the leadership of the Bolsheviks.

The war propaganda of the Second International rested on the shameless idealization of bourgeois democracy and the scandalous calumny of the Soviet Union. Both lies have collapsed under the weight of the facts. In contrast to the bankruptcy of the bourgeois democracy stands the growing might of the Soviet Union. In contrast to the imperialist war policy, supported by the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders, stands the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union. In contrast to the endless destruction, impoverishment and oppression into which the imperialists and their "Socialist" hirelings have plunged Europe stands the glowing and durable success of the Soviet Union, which in the course of one year has liberated twenty-three million working people from capitalist oppression. Thus, the events of one year have refuted the anti-Soviet calumnies of the Social-Democratic leaders. Whereas capitalism, in all its forms of rule, is steadily losing credit with the masses, the Soviet Union today is the greatest hope of the peoples, the greatest source of strength of the international proletariat.

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The march of events, the whole course of the imperialist war and the rapidly growing influence of the Soviet Union are expediting the decay of the Second International. Its Executive Committee has vir-

tually ceased to exist, although the fact has been scarcely noticed. It has been "lost on the way."

In some of the countries the leaders of the Social-Democratic parties are clinging ever closer to the bourgeoisie and are tying the fate of their parties to the fate of their "own" bourgeoisies, to the fate of capitalism in the ebb and flow of the chances of war. This striving to cling even closer to the bourgeoisie and even to merge with it formally is also finding expression in the fact that the bankrupt Social-Democratic leaders in several countries, for example, in Denmark, are advocating the formation of a "united party," while in other countries, as, for instance, in Sweden, they are working for a bloc between the Social-Democratic parties and the bourgeois parties. This is a renunciation even of the semblance of political independence, manifesting itself in the most diverse forms, the endeavor of the lackeys to cling the firmer to their masters, the more the latter are endangered.

Parallel with the collapse of the Anglo-French alliance and with the shifting of the relation of forces among the imperialist powers, a tendency towards a regrouping is to be observed here and there in leading Social-Democratic circles. While the majority of the Social-Democratic leaders continue to remain under the influence of the British Labor Party, to place all their hopes on a victory of British imperialism with the support of America, Social-Democratic leaders in certain countries are beginning,

in common with a substantial part of their "own" bourgeoisie, to bank on a victory for Germany. While the Bevins are endeavoring to conceal their cooperation with the bourgeoisie in establishing a war dictatorship in England by talk about a "peaceful revolution," and to press the growing anti-capitalist sentiments of the masses into the service of a "war to final victory," the Henrik De Mans are beginning to discover "progressive" sides of a "new order" in Europe under the aegis of German imperialism and to adapt themselves to the anti-capitalist demagogy of the axis powers.

Thus, corresponding to the new state of affairs, we observe a novel form of "division of labor" among the remnants of the once "united and homogeneous" Second International. The De Mans and Belins differ from the Bevins and Attlees only in a change of front, and not of principles. It is still their common conviction that it is the most important function of all the Social-Democratic leaders to protect capitalism and prevent the working class from launching a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie in their own country, against the imperialist war and against capitalism. The only difference between them is that while the one group continues to believe that British imperialism is the stronger and more tenacious, the other is beginning to believe in a victory for German imperialism. Both sides, however, are bent on fighting for the interests of the capitalist system as a whole and as far as they

are able on preventing the people putting an end to the war in their own way against the wishes of the imperialists. Both sides want to have a Europe under strong imperialist control, whether German or British. Both sides are anxious to prove themselves the most efficient agents of the bourgeoisie.

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The collapse of the Second International is however only a harbinger of immeasurably greater upheavals. In this one year of war alone Europe has experienced the most profound changes. Tens of millions of people have been brought under foreign rule and have learned to know the full depth of bourgeois treachery. Tens of millions of people have been torn from their old ways and habits and plunged overnight into a misery from which they can see no way of escape under capitalism. A second winter of war is approaching, starvation is slinking nearer, and no end to the horrors is yet in sight. These vast masses are being stirred to unparalleled anger, they are filled with an irrepressible longing to put an end, not only to the war, but also to those responsible for it. Every new month of the war does more to change the ideas of the masses than many years of peace. It is this mighty process going on beneath the crust of enforced silence, and not the machinations of a gang of bankrupt leaders, that will decide the future. And this process will be stronger than all the old ties, now grown brittle, which bound many of the workers to the Social-

Democratic parties and on which the bankrupt leaders rely. Among the Social-Democratic workers, too, there is a growing longing to put an end to the imperialist war and its causes, a growing hatred of capitalism, a growing sentiment of international solidarity and feeling of kinship with the socialist Soviet Union. The great events of the past year have made a profound and lasting impression on the Social-Democratic workers and on tens of thousands of Social-Democratic functionaries.

It is obvious that the various reactionary forces will resort to every form of demagogy in order to lead astray the aroused masses who are seeking for a new way, and to stupefy them with "radical" catchwords. It is therefore the cardinal duty of the more enlightened section of the working class to carry on an untiring political and ideological struggle not only to give the masses a proper orientation, but also to unite them against the imperialist war and those responsible for it. The masses will not automatically enter the path of liberation, which is a path beset by severe and drastic struggles; the proletarian vanguard must therefore strengthen its ties with them as never before and help them to distinguish friend from foe and to draw the necessary conclusions from their own experience.

The case of the three Baltic states had shown what powerful changes are taking place beneath the surface. The Communist parties were illegal, the working people forcibly suppressed and reaction seemingly

all-powerful—yet, at the first opportunity of a free expression of the popular will, the real relation of forces was at once revealed—more than ninety per cent of the people in favor of socialism, and the Social-Democratic workers and the overwhelming majority of their functionaries making common cause with the Communists.

Or take the case of Finland. Barely eight months have elapsed since the criminal war of the Finnish reactionaries against the Soviet Union, yet the lie of the "unity" of the people with the bourgeoisie has been scattered to the winds. A powerful and daily growing opposition movement against Tanner and his friends has arisen within the Social-Democratic Party. And this movement of the masses has been joined by leading Social-Democratic functionaries who are voicing the demands of the class-conscious proletarians and of broad sections of the working people for social reform and for friendly cooperation with the Soviet Union. And in other countries, too, we find Socialist leaders, like Nicole, embodying in their fight against the Social-Democratic policy of betrayal, in their advocacy of proletarian internationalism and in their unreserved support of the Soviet Union, the wishes and will of the Social-Democratic worker masses.

In France and Belgium, we observe the collapse of Social-Democracy, part of whose guilt-laden leaders are hastily retiring from politics, while others are openly going over to the camp of counter-revolution. The Socialist workers

and sincere Socialist functionaries regard the Communist Party as a firm stronghold; they see that its strength lies not only in the truth of its position in all situations, but also in its courage, staunchness, and confident fighting determination, which is capable of vanquishing all difficulties. And in Britain and the British colonies, too, notwithstanding persecution by the Government and reprisals by the Labor leaders, a growing opposition movement to the capitalist war dictatorship and to the imperialist war, and for a policy of friendship towards the Soviet Union, is developing within the Labor Party and the trade unions.

Despite the temporary disablement of considerable sections of workers who have been deceived by the Social-Democratic leaders and led to defeat, the revolutionizing of the Social-Democratic masses and the re-education of many of their functionaries is the most fundamental and decisive feature of present developments. This process is creating new and favorable conditions for the realization of a united front against the imperialist war and the men responsible for it, a united front against the leadership which is allied with the bourgeoisie, a united front of all the forces opposed to the imperialist war policy. The Social-Democratic workers are not a nameless and formless mass; they have their organizations, and even where these organizations have now been destroyed, they have their traditions. A united front with them, therefore, implies cooperation with organized forces, that is, with lower

and even leading functionaries who value the will of their members higher than class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. A united front with the Social-Democratic workers can only be the result of untiring effort in explaining the character of the war and of the criminal war policy of the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders; but it is possible only on the basis of a daily and persistent struggle for the direct interests of the working class, for bread and freedom.

Notwithstanding the profound upheavals going on within the ranks of the Social-Democratic workers, the realization of a united front faces very serious obstacles. In Britain, for example, it must not be forgotten that although by their inclusion in the bourgeois state machine and their participation in the war government the reactionary Labor leaders are exposing their true character, yet at the same time they have secured wide opportunities of parading as "protectors of the daily interests of the workers," and of taking credit for every slight concession made by the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the British Labor Party, men like Attlee, Bevin and Morrison, are endeavoring to harness the working class to the bourgeois war chariot by talking of the historical mission of the British proletariat. Indeed, a heavy responsibility lies on the shoulders of the British proletariat. If the British working class pursues an independent proletarian policy, if it coordinates its struggle with the movement among the oppressed colonial peoples, if it orientates itself by the

peace policy of the Soviet Union, it may substantially influence further developments in the interests of the international working class and of the masses in all countries, and give a strong impetus to the struggle against the imperialist war.

Social-Democratism was and is the chief hindrance to the establishment of a united front, to the mustering of the forces of the working class against the imperialist war. Social-Democratism, the ideology of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, has survived the Second International and continues to influence the minds of large masses of workers. Social-Democratism is chiefly revealed today in a systematic attempt to undermine the faith of the workers in the strength of their own class, in the systematic spread of discouragement, and in the attempt to insinuate into the minds of the proletariat the idea that in this drastic situation it must renounce an independent policy and place itself under the "national" leadership of the bourgeoisie.

Behind all its manifold masks, Social-Democratism under present conditions essentially means saving capitalism, fighting Communism and preventing proletarian class unity. It is therefore no wonder that Social-Democratism is merging more and more closely with other anti-Marxist ideologies, that the boundary dividing it from the "totalitarian" ideologies is steadily vanishing, that, for example, a Henrik De Man or a Marcel Déat can make a complete change of front without perceptibly changing their phraseology; which,

however, does not mean that other representatives of Social-Democracy will not drape their struggle against the Soviet Union and the Communists in "Marxist" and "Leftist" arguments. Thus, everywhere, and not only where the Social-Democratic parties still possess a legal mass basis, Social-Democratism performs the function of disorganizing and disorientating the working class and of instilling skepticism in the strength of the proletariat. It is therefore the most important duty of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat to wage a relentless struggle against Social-Democratism in all its forms.

In order to weld together a united front against the imperialist war and those responsible for it, it is above all necessary to explain, on the basis of historical events, to the entire working class and the working masses in general that Social-Democracy is now completely and definitely bankrupt, and to help them to realize that Social-Democratism is the most dangerous poison which the bourgeoisie uses to cripple the strength of the proletariat. The whole policy of Social-Democracy has pitifully collapsed; but there is one thing in which it has succeeded: it has temporarily created doubt in the minds of large numbers of workers as to their own strength.

In the struggle against Social-Democratism it is therefore essential, and a prime requisite for a new rise of the working class movement, to inspire the masses who have been temporarily discouraged with confidence in the might and

strength of the proletariat and with an unshakable belief in their own final victory, citing for this purpose the profound shocks suffered by capitalism, their own revolutionary struggles in the past and, above all, the shining example of the victorious working class of the Soviet Union.

The capitalist system is being shaken to its foundations. Behind the working class stand huge reserves—the masses of the people who have been plunged by capitalism into war, poverty and slavery. A determined struggle against the imperialist war will help to unshackle powerful forces in all the capitalist countries. But:

“It is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to Social-Democratism in the labor movement. That is why the era of dying capitalism is also the era of dying Social-Democratism in the labor movement.” (J.V. Stalin, “The International Character of the October Revolution,” *The October Revolution*. International Publishers, New York.)

The Communists of all countries are working to rally the laboring masses around the Communist International, the International of Lenin and Stalin, the only international organization capable of uniting the forces of the world proletariat in a struggle for the accomplishment of epoch-making tasks.

THE REAL TRAITORS

BY MAURICE THOREZ

I

THE people of France are passing through a tragic period. Our country has been overwhelmed by the frightful disaster of the imperialist war, defeat and foreign invasion. Hundreds of thousands of young, healthy men laid down their lives on the battlefields. There are not enough hospitals to accommodate the tremendous numbers of wounded, sick and crippled. Two million soldiers who have been taken prisoner are condemned to hard labor. Their food consists of nothing more than a bowl of rice a day. Epidemics are rampant among them; they are doomed to a slow death. Millions of unfortunates, driven from their homes by the invasion, are still roaming the roads of France in abject misery.

Scores of towns and hundreds of villages have been destroyed. The fertile fields of Flanders, of Picardy, of Ile de France, have been laid waste. Everything is in a state of ruin and utter desolation. Multitudes of workers find their factories deserted or pillaged. Back home, the demobilized soldiers find themselves without work and quite often without family and shelter. Mothers, widows and orphans weep over their lost husbands, sons and fathers. The physical and moral suf-

ferings caused by the war are aggravated by the bitterness of defeat and the burden of foreign domination.

Many were stunned by the swift course of the events. They could hardly comprehend the extent of the catastrophe. Many have given way to a feeling of gloom and dejection which borders on despair. But there is also another voice heard ever more distinctly, a forceful voice which calls: "We want to know who are those responsible for the disaster! We demand their speedy punishment. We demand that the rulers, the responsible parliamentarians, the incompetent generals, the cowards and traitors are punished as they deserve for their vicious crimes against the people, against France."

The capitulators of Vichy are in a hurry to stage the farce at Riom in order to obscure the real issue, the question of the actual, the root causes of the imperialist war and France's defeat. By placing the sole responsibility for the debacle at the door of their predecessors in power, the present rulers hope to be able to conceal from the masses of the people the truth that it is the entire bourgeoisie as a class, and its regime of capitalist oppression and exploitation, that is primarily to blame. Petain and Laval are staging

a trial against Mandel and Reynaud in order to escape a true trial in which the people would act as judges.

If the trial were to be taken at all seriously, the least to be expected would be the restoration and extension of popular liberties; it would have to be a trial at which every soldier who had fought at the front, every victim of the war and every toiler would be given the opportunity to appear in court and testify to what they had gone through. It would have to be a public trial, with wide publicity in a free press, so that the masses would be in a position to exercise control over the proceedings.

This is not the case, however, in the so-called Supreme Tribunal which has been illegally set up by the men who engineered the coup d'état. Moreover, this Tribunal is made up of some of the worst reactionaries, who sit behind closed doors and permit only those things to be said that serve the interests of the Government and its German and Italian patrons.

The trial at Riom is also designed to divert the just anger of the people into channels desirable to the reactionaries. It is one of the means employed by the new regime in its effort to win over the vacillating sections of the urban and rural middle classes. By prosecuting some of the manifestly most compromised politicians, such as Daladier and Blum, the Government of Vichy really hopes to discredit the People's Front, through which the Daladiers and Blums came to power only to betray it in the most disgraceful fashion. Its aim is to dis-

credit the working class, which is the soul of the people's resistance to the attacks of the reaction. And there is a distinct anti-Semitic note running through the overture preceding the trial, by which the Vichy government hopes to get into the good graces of Berlin and Rome.

It goes without saying that the Communists have not the slightest sympathy for the accused in the trial at Riom. We, and we alone, had the courage to brand them as warmongers and traitors to the people long before the present catastrophe. At that time these men were encouraged in their criminal policy by those who today are staging the farce of a trial. And before the outbreak of the war, we alone fought the policy of "non-intervention," the policy of Munich and of insane hostility toward the Soviet Union, the policy that led to the big betrayal.

At that time the gentlemen of Vichy could hardly conceal their malicious glee and did everything to encourage the Blums and Daladiers. We, at the head of the revolutionary working people, were the only ones who fought against the imperialist war which all the parties, including the Socialists, defended. That was why our Party was banned and persecuted, our legal press suppressed, our deputies robbed of their mandates, the adherents of the Communist Party hounded, and thousands of them thrown into prison and concentration camps. Our deputies were arrested and condemned, and they still languish in prison, because in their letter addressed to the despicable Herriot they dared demand the conclusion of peace when

it was still possible on favorable terms, before the debacle of May and June, before our country was ruined, before it was compelled to submit to a foreign yoke. But that demand ran counter to the designs of the enemies of the people, the 200 families and their worthy agents, the whole gang that clamored for death to the Communists.

II

The direct and enormous responsibility of the reactionary clique now in power becomes particularly evident when we examine the causes of France's collapse more closely. It is beyond any doubt that the principal reason for the collapse was the ruling bourgeoisie's fear of the people, its mortal hatred of the working class, of the international working class movement, of Communism, of the Soviet Union—the bulwark of the world proletariat.

War is the continuation of politics by other means. Before the war the French bourgeoisie pursued a reactionary policy, which became even more pronounced during the war which its greed and rapacity had unleashed. Before the war the bourgeoisie pursued a policy of attack upon the working class and the masses of the people, a policy of violent reaction against the People's Front which had considerably improved the lot of the laboring masses, extended their liberties and aroused great hopes throughout the world. During the war the attack upon the working class, upon the laboring masses, was carried on with even greater violence. It ma,

well be said that that was the only war the French bourgeoisie really waged. All the social gains of 1936 were abolished, all the liberties of the people were abrogated. The trade unions which remained true to the interests of the workers were dissolved and their functionaries thrown into prison. The "Socialist" Sérol introduced the death penalty for revolutionary proletarians. At the same time the Cagoulard murderers, the Fifth Column traitors and spies in the employ of foreign powers, were given full freedom to carry on their nefarious activities.

In its foreign relations the French bourgeoisie pursued a policy of conspiracy with the imperialists who today are despoiling our people, a policy of appeasement, of surrender, of betrayal, exemplified by the treaty of Rome, "non-intervention," the strangling of the Spanish Republic, the imperialist conspiracy against the Soviet Union. The most pronounced feature of the foreign policy of capitalist France before the war, as well as during the war, was its rabid hostility toward the Soviet Union, the great land of socialism and peace. This policy was pursued in violation of the pact of mutual assistance between France and the Soviet Union, which was the surest guarantee of peace our people had and the most powerful security of its independence. Actuated by the criminal design to incite the German empire to make war upon the Soviet Union, the French bourgeoisie made one concession after another to Germany. And even when war had already been declared, our infamous rulers still cherished the hope of an armed

conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union. At the same time they insolently plotted acts of provocation against the Soviet Union. They armed the Finnish White Guards; they organized the army of the Near East with Weygand as commander-in-chief; hatched plans for air raids upon Baku and Batum, and hoped to draw Turkey into war against the Soviet Union. This has been fully confirmed by the revealing correspondence between Weygand and Ambassador Massigli.

In view of all this, is it to be wondered that the war of the capitalists, the war waged for imperialist interests and with reactionary methods, which divided and weakened the people, ended in defeat and debacle? That is the cause of the present tragedy. That is the enormous crime of the bourgeoisie!

In a lecture delivered on May 27, 1917, in Petrograd, Lenin recalled the glorious example which our people had once set:

"Just as within the country the French revolutionary people displayed a revolutionary energy witnessed for the first time in centuries, so in this war at the end of the eighteenth century they displayed enormous revolutionary genius; they remolded the whole system of strategy, they broke all the old laws and customs of war; and in place of the old army they created a new revolutionary people's army and introduced new methods of warfare." (V. I. Lenin, *War and the Workers*, p. 16, International Publishers, New York.)

In 1792 the people themselves took up arms, because they were aware that they were fighting for

their own cause and, at the same time, for the cause of human progress. At the head of the armies raised by Carnot the Convention placed generals who were twenty-two years of age. The enemies of the people, the traitors and incompetents were sent to the guillotine.

In 1940 the people were driven into an unjust war against their will. And the bourgeoisie, which fears the people most of all, itself weakened and undermined the defense of the country. It disorganized the production of war materials. It left the leadership of the armies in the hands of eighty-year old men, thereby emphasizing in a graphic manner the senility and decay of the regime. The traitors to their country held places of vantage in the government, in the general staff, at the head of the police.

As the decisive hour was approaching, the French bourgeoisie, concerned primarily with the preservation of its privileges, was more and more consciously heading toward defeat. After the very first German victories, when at the front the workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms fought to hurl the invading enemy back, the ruling circles and the generals thought only of how to hasten the collapse, how to organize the surrender. At a meeting of the French government, Weygand declared openly: "We cannot permit a repetition of 1917 with infinitely worse consequences. This time 'they' are sure to make the revolution." "They" meant—the soldiers, workers and peasants of France, whose anger was rising, who were beginning to see the great betrayal.

The French bourgeoisie remained true to the traditions of Thiers and the Versaillese.

III

Once the question of the responsibility for the defeat of our country is examined in the light of the antagonistic class interests, the answer is clear and categorical: the big bourgeoisie bears the full responsibility for the catastrophe which has befallen the nation. In determining who is the criminal it has ever been the rule to establish the motive: who profited by the crime? The ones who profit by the crime committed against France are the reactionaries, the adventurers of Vichy. The personal guilt of these gentlemen is beyond any doubt.

In 1918, the atmosphere of "victory" helped to relegate to the background the bloody memories connected with the name of Petain from 1917 on. People no longer gave thought to the fact that he had ordered the shooting of many Frenchmen. In his memoirs (*The Year of Unrest*), Poincare relates how Petain went about "restoring order" at the front after the mutinies, how people were picked out at random and summarily executed in scores at a time. This bloodthirsty wolf had just as little regard for the lives of the young soldiers who in 1925 were sent to their death in Morocco. Hundreds of soldiers were court-martialed in that year, and many of them were sentenced to death. In recent years it was Petain who was entrusted with the commission of making his friend, General Franco, a gift of the gold stolen

from the Spanish Republican Government. It is obvious why the reactionary press clamored: "We want Petain as leader! We want Petain as dictator!" It is also obvious why the preparation of the French army was criminally neglected. For in the course of many years Petain was its chief, and then its most authoritative adviser; not to speak of the long period during which he held the post of War Minister. It is also from Petain in the first place that an accounting should be demanded for the four hundred billion francs expended between the last two wars on national "defense," or, to be more exact, on national "desertion."

The next in line who has to be closely investigated is none other than Weygand, that royal bastard who used an assumed name to smuggle himself into the School at St. Cyr, and who now also wants to set himself up as master of the French workers and peasants. Weygand succeeded Petain as Commander-in-Chief. During a long period he was in charge of the higher military schools. It is quite clear now that during the last weeks of the war Weygand played the part of *agent-provocateur*, that he was the one who consummated the job of organizing the betrayal. This reactionary scoundrel left the scene of his intrigues against the Soviet Union in the Near East, in order to deal the French armies the finishing blow. He completed the work of disorganizing the defense. Weygand is a general who dared once to raise his riding whip against a soldier who had not been prompt enough in saluting him; he is a member of the board of directors of the Suez Canal,

a plutocrat who is personally interested in the protection of his capital.

Another man who was busy along the same lines—not so ostentatiously as these “generals,” working more in roundabout ways and therefore all the more dangerous—is the sinister Laval, the corrupt corrupter. The demagogues at Vichy declaim against politics and politicians. They claim to offer the French people “new” and “clean” men—and they push to the forefront a Laval, a man of whom it may be said in his own words: *“Lacking people, the bourgeoisie picks up its men from the garbage heap into which the working class dumps its dregs.”* For Laval, a shyster lawyer, was once a Socialist. He even boasted of his radicalism and, together with his boon-companion Johaux, was connected with the Anarcho-Syndicalists. Today Laval, who in 1914 was as poor as a church-mouse, is a millionaire and owner of a chain of provincial newspapers. He was the spiritual parent, and undoubtedly the organizer as well, of the Cagoulards, whom his friend Michelin, the industrial magnate of Clermont-Ferrand, provided with leaders. He was the patron of that dirty traitor Doriot. Laval signed the treaties of Rome, by which Ethiopia was betrayed to the invaders. Subsequently he sabotaged the sanctions against the aggressor. He has been notoriously in league with France’s enemies.

Next comes Marquet, a man with no scruples, ship-owner and Socialist Mayor of Bordeaux. Together with his accomplice Déat he once formed the Neo-Socialist Party with the program of “Order, Authority

and the Nation,” which meant capitalist order, despotic rule and aggressive nationalism. Marquet’s party led an unnoticed existence. He himself deserted it after two years to answer Doumergue’s call to join the government of the men of February 6, and to make common cause with Laval and Petain.

Ybarnegaray, of the Croix de Feu, another member of this assorted company, represents his superior, Colonel Count de la Roque, whose ancestors fought under the King of Prussia against the soldiers of the First French Republic. Ybarnegaray, an immoral and licentious pleasure-hunter, is a dyed-in-the-wool politician. It was he who behind the scenes arranged with Blum and Laval for the transformation of the Croix de Feu into the French Social Party. He was Franco’s semi-official representative in France, where he organized the campaign against Republican Spain. A rabid warmonger, he demanded in November that the Communist militants be shot because they fought against the war.

Another member of the clique is Leméry, a colonial robber, Senator from Guadeloupe, and a crafty politician. He had a hand in all the shady affairs, in all the swindles of those stock-exchange brokers who, like Oustric, robbed both the people of France and the colonial slaves. Leméry was a regular contributor to that reactionary gutter sheet *La Liberté*, which was transferred from the hands of the notary public Aymard, who had been deprived of his license for shady dealings, into the hands of Tardieu and, subsequently, into those of the dirty provocateur Doriot.

Further we have here Belin, another traitor to the labor movement, formerly Second Secretary of the Confederation Generale du Travail (C.G.T.),* a bitter enemy of the workers' united front and of the Communists, strike-breaker and editor-in-chief of *Syndicats*, a sheet published for the propaganda of class collaboration in the trade unions. Belin was Flandin's and Bonnet's man. He gathered around himself a gang of inveterate bureaucrats and young careerists, of the type of Dumoulin and Froideval, Vigne and Delmas, who threw themselves with sadistic joy into the work of disrupting the re-united C.G.T., posed as "pacifists" before September, 1939, and then became rabid warmongers.

In addition to the high dignitaries, one finds in the government of Vichy some lesser lights in the person of willing flunkies of the financial oligarchy, like Mireaux and Baudouin. Mireaux is a member of the Comité des Forges. He is director of the *Temps*, "the bourgeoisie turned newspaper," to use the expression of Jules Guesde. Baudouin is director of the Bank of Indo-China, and member of the boards of numerous companies.

Outside of the government, but zealously supporting it and waiting for their turn, are other criminals, such as Bonnet, Flandin, Spinasse, Doriot. Bonnet was always the soul of the defeatist wing. Corrupt to the core of his bones, he was the protégé and protector of the notorious Stavisky, the swindler who pocketed hundreds of millions of francs

which he stole from small depositors. Bonnet entertained Stavisky at his table during the negotiations in Stressa for a four-power pact directed against the Soviet Union, a country he hates with a fuming hatred. He sabotaged and helped kill the pact of mutual assistance between France and the Soviet Union. He had sympathy only for the despots and their henchmen. He persecuted the Communists, the true champions of the interests of the French people.

As early as July, 1939, Bonnet told the German ambassador that he would "bring the Communists to reason." (See the *Yellow Paper* of the French Government.) When he became Minister of Justice he organized the persecution of the Communists. Together with Sérol he staged the trial against our courageous deputies, without however daring to face them in court himself.

Flandin, who comes from a rich bourgeois family, has always been distinguished primarily for his cynical business deals. While he was Minister, he held at the same time the well-paid post of legal adviser to the Aeropostale Air Lines. Despite the fact that he was somewhat implicated in scandalous affairs, he became Prime Minister. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs when the German troops reoccupied the left bank of the Rhine, which did not prevent him subsequently from defending the policy of the German imperialists.

Spinasse is the mouthpiece of the majority of the Socialist deputies who voted for the inglorious end of the Third Republic and hailed Pétain as "savior." At one time Spi-

* General Federation of Labor.—Ed.

nasse steered a course between Blum and Paul Faure, joining now the one, now the other. In recent years he had definitely attached himself to Paul Faure. The two of them headed the clique in the Socialist Party that openly preached capitulation. In this they had the support of Brunet, a member of the Socialist Party who at the same time acted as legal adviser to the German Embassy and regularly attended the Nuremberg Congresses of the National-Socialist Party.

In 1925 Spinasse earned the plaudits of the reactionaries for a speech full of hatred against the Soviet Union, in which he announced for the *n*-th time that the end of the great Land of Socialism was at hand. Later, speaking from the rostrum of the Chamber of Deputies, the "theoretician" Spinasse sang the praises of the America of the billionaires and of the Sacco and Vanzetti case; he extolled capitalist "rationalization," repeated the fable of "a car in the garage" of every American worker, and wound up with a couplet on the "benefits" of class collaboration. He is the "Socialist" whom Blum praised so often for his "profound knowledge" and "culture."

As for the traitor Doriot, he causes embarrassment even to his own financial backers; for he and his gang of police spies of the type of Teulade, and swindlers of the sort of Sabiani, are too much compromised. This creature of Laval, after he was kicked out of the Communist Party, was in a great hurry to join the mercenary gangs of the reaction. He maintained close connection with foreign secret services;

but this, of course, did not prevent his dirty sheet from distinguishing itself during the war by its rabid chauvinism and calumnies against the Communists, whom it accused of "treason."

Nor do the above exhaust our list, which may be further extended to include Déat, Chiappe, Bergery, Maurras, Fernand Laurent, Bailby, Mistler, Barthelemy, and all the other scoundrels who have had a hand in bringing about the misfortunes which have befallen our people.

IV

The crime of most of the accused at Riom, the crime of Daladier, Blum and their ilk, consists in the fact that they consciously helped to realize the reactionary and imperialist war plans of the bourgeoisie, primarily by disrupting the fighting alliance between the working class, on the one hand, and the peasantry and large sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, on the other.

In its fight against reaction, the Communist Party had forced the Socialist Party and its leaders to join the united front and to sign the joint action pact of 1934. United, the working class was able to enlist peasants, artisans, small business men, many officials, professionals and intellectuals into the ranks of the People's Front. Thanks to its united action, the working class was able to exercise strong influence upon the ever vacillating and wavering elements of the petty bourgeoisie. It began to fulfil its task as leader of all the exploited masses. The reaction was forced to retreat.

Then the Blums and Daladiers embarked upon their work of disrupting the People's Front and upon their splitting activities in the ranks of the working class. They worked assiduously to disrupt the alliance between the working class and the middle classes, in order to isolate the revolutionary proletariat and bring the petty bourgeoisie back under the ideological and political influence of capital. They succeeded in detaching the petty bourgeoisie from the revolutionary proletariat and in opening the gates to the sinister forces of war and reaction.

Today the people are in the grip of frightful misery. All the people—workers and peasants, manual laborers and brain workers, young and old—languish under the double yoke of reaction and foreign occupation. And it is against the forces of reaction that the people must launch out in the first place; it is upon the Petains, Lavals and Co., the chief organizers of the defeat, the agents of capital and the willing servants of foreign powers, that the wrath of the French people must descend with all its force and severity.

The government of Vichy spells disaster for the country. It is the government of a class which has lost all national feeling, which permits France to be mangled and mutilated. It leaves in the lurch whole provinces and sections of the people which were welded together into the united French nation by the fire of the great bourgeois revolution. The men of Vichy want to hurl our country back, not decades, but a whole century. Under cover of the "back to the soil" slogan they are

trying to turn France into an agrarian country that would be dependent upon industrial Germany.

The bankrupt politicians at Vichy talk of the rejuvenation of France, while exerting their efforts to impose upon our country an infamous regime of regression and reaction in every sphere of activity. They want the workers to be chained to the factories and work long hours for starvation wages. They want to bind the peasants to the land, to turn them into the serfs of old, into slaves to be despoiled by the big finance corporations and the state. The last remnants of liberty have been abolished. The trade unions have been "coordinated." The youth are sent to labor camps. The reform in the school system is designed to train, not thinking persons, but automatons in the service of the capitalists. The church is again becoming an institution of the state. In the country of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists obscurantism is again being enthroned. What the demagogues, who are now out to strangle France to death, call "new" is nothing but the return to the darkest periods of the past. It is a regime that may be described in the words of the poet as one that would "muzzle the father and stultify the child."

The Third Republic of the bourgeoisie is dead; it has collapsed in dirt and blood. Under its ruins it has buried all the old parties of bourgeois democracy, the Socialist Party not excepted. The regime which was ushered in by the sanguinary overthrow of the glorious Paris Commune and by the rule of Thiers and Marshal MacMahon,

ended with the sanguinary overthrow of our whole people and with the rule—a very temporary rule, to be sure—of Laval and Petain. Their rule is very temporary indeed, for history moves forward, not backward.

“. . . in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward.” (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 111.)

Our people do not look backward to the past, but forward, toward the future. And the future means the people deciding their own destiny. Rallied around the working class and led by the Communist Party, the French people will free themselves from every exploitation and oppression, and will achieve the independence and revival of the nation.

In the general collapse of institutions and parties, only the Communist Party has remained intact. It continues to enjoy the confidence of the working masses, for it has fought courageously and perseveringly against the imperialist war and against all the enemies of the people. The Communist Party can and must rally and unite the dispersed forces of our people, weld them together, organize and lead them in the struggle against capitalism, in the struggle for socialism.

The Communists are already organizing resistance to the oppressors. They are fighting for the alleviation of the unheard of sufferings of the masses. They are fighting for work, bread and freedom. They are fighting for the demobilized and for those languishing in prisons.

They are fighting for immediate relief for the unemployed, refugees, widows, orphans, old people and all war victims. They are fighting for relief for the peasants, for the rebuilding of our devastated cities and villages. They are fighting for the demand that the rich be made to pay, and for the nationalization of the banks and big industries. They are fighting for the release of the political prisoners and the reinstatement of the Communist deputies. And they are fighting for the demand to punish the men who are guilty for the disaster—all of them.

The Communists address their call for struggle to all the working people. They appeal particularly to their brothers, the Socialist workers, who now see the shameful bankruptcy of their party and the treachery of their leaders; they appeal to the peasants of the Radical Party, who have been shamefully betrayed by unscrupulous politicians. The Communists appeal to all who are not indifferent to the glorious traditions of the revolutionary history of our people, who remain true to the heroic traditions of the struggle for progress and liberty. A statement published by the Communist Party of France and circulated throughout the country reads in part:

“The bourgeoisie has brought our country to the brink of the precipice. Today, when German imperialism is putting into effect its plans for the enslavement of France, the only concern of the French bourgeoisie is to preserve its privileges, its capital, its class rule. It is prepared to sacrifice the independence of our country and the vital interests of our people. It is prepared to

join hands with the conquerors in order to hide themselves behind German bayonets from the reckoning which the people will demand in its wrath. The bourgeoisie and its 'Socialists' are the real curse of the people. Theirs is a regime of organized treason to our nation. . . .

"As always and under all circumstances we Communists stand by our people also in these days of severe trials, terror and immeasurable suffering. The fate of the people is our fate. We have a profound faith in the forces and in the future

of our people, in the future of France. Our people will not be crushed. The dark forces of the traitors, adventurers, plunderers and conquerors will never break its liberty-loving spirit."

When victory is attained by the working class, by the people, and when the foundations are laid for a new, socialist, free and independent France—then, and only then, will the hour strike for the real trial.

HUNGER IN EUROPE

BY E. VARGA

THE working population of continental, capitalist Europe are beginning to feel the pinch of hunger. If the war lasts another year famine in Europe will become widely prevalent.

The reasons for the disastrous shortage of foodstuffs are the bad harvest this year, the suspension of food imports from overseas and the direct destruction of food stocks as the result of war operations, especially the bombing of ports, railway junctions and cities from the air.

The bourgeois press generally attributes this year's poor harvest to unfavorable weather conditions; severe frosts in the spring and heat and drought in the summer. However, unfavorable weather conditions could lead to such serious consequences only because the land was badly cultivated and insufficiently manured, and agriculture generally neglected. This is true both of the belligerent and the neutral countries.

All this was inevitable. Agriculture in the capitalist countries is in the hands of millions of individual farmers, the overwhelming majority of whom are small peasants. In Germany, for example, on May 17, 1939, just before the outbreak of the war, there were 3,900,000 farming and forestry enterprises with an area of half a hectare or over.* Of

a total cultivated area of 55,300,000 hectares, 46 per cent consisted of farms of over 50 hectares. The rest, or the greater part, consisted of small, middle and big peasant farms. In France, Holland, Belgium and the Balkans, an even larger share of the arable area is held by peasant farms. As mobilization was more or less general in all the European countries, this means that many millions of peasant farms have been deprived of their male labor power, a loss which the labor of women, old men and children could not replace.* In Germany, the shortage of agricultural labor has been mitigated by the employment of large numbers of Polish, French, Belgian and other prisoners of war and by the importation of laborers from Bohemia and Moravia. Furthermore, students are ordered to work on the farms during their vacations. A reporter of the *Berliner Boersenzeitung* who visited one of the student camps wrote as follows:

"*Halle-on-the Saale*. Early part of August. Here is the daily plan for weekdays posted on the labor camp's blackboard:

5 a.m.: Reveille, dress, wash, coffee.

5:40 a.m.: March to place of work.

6 p.m.: Return from work.

* "Official Statistics of Business Enterprises," *Berliner Boersenzeitung*, July 23, 1940. (A hectare equals 2.471 acres.—Ed.)

* In some countries—France and Belgium, for instance—the situation was further aggravated by the flight of a large section of the peasant population from their homes.

6:15 p.m.: Warm food.

7 p.m.: Dismissal.

10 p.m.: Retreat.

“On Sundays the students may stay in bed until 8 a.m., and retreat is an hour later—11 p.m. After all, Sunday must be marked in some way—unless an urgent job intervenes, which of course upsets all paper plans.”

It should be added that in many countries not only male labor power, but also horses, carts and fodder have been requisitioned for the army, and that the shortage of gasoline has restricted the use of tractors in agriculture. In addition to all this, there is a shortage of artificial fertilizers. Of the three most important—potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus—Europe has supplies only of the first two; apart from Thomas phosphates, derived in the blasting of phosphoric iron ores, phosphorous fertilizers are mostly obtained from overseas phosphates, of which there is at present a shortage. And it is in the production of grains that phosphorous manures are most essential. Under the circumstances, a bad harvest was inevitable, irrespective of weather conditions. This was similarly the case during the World War, the only exception being England, where, as we know, only a small portion of the land is cultivated in peace times. In all the other European belligerent countries there was a severe decline in agricultural output.

Comprehensive figures as to the size of the harvest in all European countries are not yet available, and are scarcely likely to be published

before the end of the war. We shall have to content ourselves with incidental data.

The Rome International Agrarian Institute has so far published only the following statistics:

WHEAT HARVEST

(millions of double-centners*)

Rumania Hungary Italy Greece

1939	44.9	30.7	80.0
1940	29.9	22.8	73.0	9.3

The drop in the harvest is not only due to a smaller yield per hectare, but also to a contraction of cultivated area. In Rumania, for example, only 3,160,000 hectares of wheat were sown in the autumn of 1939, as compared with 3,870,000 hectares in the autumn of 1938, a reduction of almost one-fifth. These figures include Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Rumania will accordingly have only a very small surplus available for export this year. The yield of other grain crops likewise falls short of last year's levels. As regards the harvest in other European countries, we have only newspaper reports at our disposal, which, however, enable us to form a clear enough picture.

At the end of July it was reported from Sweden:

“To judge by crop reports received so far, owing to prolonged drought, a very unfavorable harvest is to be expected, and many even fear a crop failure. This is particularly serious under present condi-

* A double or metric centner equals 220.46 lbs.—*Ed.*

tions, when Sweden is debarred from overseas imports. . . . In view of the fodder shortage . . . it is already anticipated that 15 per cent of the cattle will be slaughtered by the beginning of 1941." (*Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, August 2, 1940.)

A report on the state of the crop in Switzerland states:

"As regards cereals, the harvest outlook is not so favorable. Winter crops suffered heavily from the severe cold and have not recovered to this day." (*Pester Lloyd*, June 15, 1940.)

The following report from Bulgaria was made at the beginning of July:

"Cool and excessively damp weather has retarded the crops and affected them unfavorably. Nevertheless, it is hoped that crop conditions may yet improve and that an average harvest may be expected." (*Tuerkische Post*, July 10, 1940.)

In Hungary, the harvest is poorer than in 1939, not only in the case of wheat (of which we wrote above), but of nearly all other grain.

The harvest in 1939 and 1940 was as follows (millions of double-centners):

	Rye	Barley	Oats
1939	8.7	7.9	3.7
1940	7.5	7.1	3.9

The oat harvest was the only one to reach the level of 1939. The poor harvest has had the effect of raising prices, the official prices for wheat having been increased from 20 to 23 pengö.

Poorest of all is the harvest in

France. Although no official data are available, it is generally known that in the autumn of 1939 the area sown to winter wheat was only one-half of that of previous years. Statistics which appeared in the *Petit Dauphinois* show that the grain harvest in the Department of Isere was about 450,000 quintals,* as against 650,000 quintals last year; in Savoie, 100,000 quintals as against 150,000 quintals; in Haute-Savoie, 220,000 quintals as against 350,000 quintals; in Haute-Alpes, 100,000 to 110,000 quintals as against 195,000; in Drome, 500,000 quintals as against 850,000 quintals. The *Petit Dauphinois* adds that the consumption of bread will have to be severely restricted. In addition, the wholesale flight of the population from the northeastern regions—the principal wheat areas—has created serious difficulties in the gathering in of the harvest.

Similar difficulties have arisen in Belgium from the same cause. All this indicates that in capitalist, continental Europe the harvest this year will be much smaller than in 1939.

The suspension of food imports from overseas countries is the second important factor making for the spread of starvation in Europe. The *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* wrote on August 15 that Europe:

" . . . as a whole is quite unable to supply its own requirements in bread and fodder. In the years 1934-35 to 1938-39 the European continent imported on the average the following quantities of grain annually (thousands of tons):

* A quintal equals approximately 100 lbs.—Ed.

<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Flour</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Total</i>
5,668	473	5,014	1,580	630	13,365
1,587	88	1,279	576	123	3,653*
4,081	385	3,735	1,004	507	9,712

* "These amounts came from Europe itself (Eastern States). Under normal conditions, therefore, roughly ten million tons of bread and fodder grain are required in addition

to the amount produced by the European continent itself for the proper nourishment of men and animals throughout the twelve months of the year."

But conditions in Europe today can in no way be regarded as normal; and as the grain harvest on the European continent this year will obviously be below average, the need for grain imports from non-European countries is more likely to be greater than in previous years.

"Should the European harvest," the paper goes on to say, "be 5 per cent below normal, it would mean a reduction of over 6,000,000 tons, for in 1937, for example, the yield of wheat, rye, barley, corn and oats in Europe exceeded 120,000,000 tons. It may consequently be necessary to secure fifteen or sixteen million tons from non-European countries."

According to the *International Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics, 1938-39*, imports of foodstuffs into Europe in recent years were as follows:

Compared with its own harvest, Europe's imports of grains from overseas are relatively small. But these imports were largely confined to a few West European countries; Great Britain (whose imports are not included in the above figures), Belgium, Holland and Denmark, Dutch and Danish dairy farming and Danish pig-breeding were built up on the importation of overseas fodders. They must now be correspondingly contracted. The *Berliner Boersenzeitung* wrote on July 6, in reference to Holland:

"The suspension of fodder imports from overseas is bound to necessitate reconstruction. A reduction of the number of cattle conformable to the home production of fodders is essential in order to ensure, above all, the supply of bread grains for the population."

The shortage of fodder for cattle

IMPORTS INTO CONTINENTAL EUROPE FROM OVERSEAS (thousands of tons)

	1937	1938
<i>Grain</i> (wheat, barley, oats, corn, rye)	17,321	15,202
<i>Oilseed</i>	1,156	983
<i>Fats</i> (butter and vegetable oil)	227	224
<i>Meat</i>	194	207

eventually leads to a shortage of meat and fats for human beings. The suspension of imports of oil-seed, fats and oil from overseas will therefore make itself more and more felt as time goes on. This is also true of the whale oil, the British blockade having rendered whale fishing impossible.

As regards the destruction of foodstuffs resulting from war operations, as far as we know no calculations or estimates are available, but the amounts involved must be very considerable progress. It is calculating crops by the movements of motorized divisions, harvest losses due to shortage of labor (Belgium and Northern France), fires caused by bombardment and bombing, inundation of large areas (Holland), the sinking of food transports at sea, the destruction of food stores in ports, on railways, at mills, etc., by bombing from the air, and so on and so forth, together result in enormous losses, no estimates of which can however be made owing to lack of data.

But while there is a growing food shortage in continental Europe, in the overseas countries there are huge surpluses of agricultural produce which cannot find a market. This applies above all to South America, which always marketed its surplus produce in Europe. Just as in the crisis period of 1929-33, the destruction of agricultural produce in overseas countries is again assuming very large proportions.

The *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* of July 28, 1940, for example, reports on the subject of the destruction of corn in the Argentine:

"Judging by statements made by the Argentine Minister of Finance regarding the projected burning of six million tons of corn of this year's crop, the negotiations for the realization of this plan, in which experts from various Ministries are participating, have already made considerable progress. It is calculated that this year, of the seven million tons of corn which Argentina will have at her disposal after deducting the quantity required for home consumption, only one million tons at most can be exported. In order to leave no carry-over to the next harvest year, and likewise in order to economize foreign currency on the import of fuel, six million tons of corn are to be used by industrial plants, railways, etc., for fuel purposes. In view of the unequal calorific value of coal and corn, which is disproportionate to the present price of corn (roughly 44 pesos per ton), the government will have to make a subsidy either to the farmers who sell their corn for fuel, or to the manufacturers who acquire it for this purpose."

Coffee stocks in Brazil are steadily growing. This year the government will buy up no less than seven million sacks from the planters and "withdraw them from commerce," in other words, destroy them. This at a time when the population of Europe—especially of Italy and Germany, where coffee is a popular beverage—are compelled to do without coffee altogether.

But even in countries lying closer to Europe, such as North Africa, agricultural produce has been rendered unsalable by the war. Thus, the *Deutsche Nachrichten-Bureau* reported from Tangiers on June 30, 1940:

"The situation in French North Africa is becoming more serious every day owing to the British blockade. Produce that formerly used to be exported from Morocco and Algiers mainly to France cannot find a market any longer. On the other hand, these regions are now experiencing a lack of goods that used to be imported from France, for which there are no substitutes. Trade has been practically crippled."

A natural consequence of the impossibility of importing agricultural produce into Europe is that there are no longer any world market prices. There is one price movement for agricultural produce in overseas countries, and another in Europe. Prices overseas are falling; in Europe they are mounting. Here are a few examples:*

being waged on both sides as a "total" war, that is, not only against the army, navy and air force of the enemy countries, but against their entire population. In modern warfare, the maintenance of one soldier at the front involves the labor of from six to ten workers at home.* The home front is therefore no less important and decisive a factor in war than the armies in action.

England has cut off the whole European continent, including her former allies—France, Holland, Belgium and Norway—from overseas imports, on the plea that foodstuffs or raw materials shipped to these countries are directly or indirectly of service to Germany in the war. Germany, for her part, in the interests of war, is subjecting the civilian population of the regions she has

	June 1939	June 1940
Wheat, Budapest, Hungary (<i>pengo</i> per 100 kg.)....	19.9	20.8
Wheat, Braila, Rumania (<i>lei</i> per 100 kg.).....	433	625
Barley, Braila, Rumania (<i>lei</i> per 100 kg.).....	359	460
Corn, Braila, Rumania (<i>lei</i> per 100 kg.).....	400	520

On the other hand, grain prices in the Argentine have dropped considerably. In the U.S.A. and Canada, which chiefly sell their produce to Great Britain, prices remain approximately at last year's low level.

* * *

The brunt of the war is chiefly borne by the working people. The ruling classes of the belligerent countries are doing their utmost to win the war, heedless of the plight of the working masses. The war is

occupied to similar, or even more, severe restrictions of consumption as the German civil population.** For example, Fischboeck, the Commissar-General for Dutch Economic Affairs, announced in the Dutch press that:

* This calculation includes not only the number of civilian workers required to maintain a soldier at the front, but also the number of enlisted men employed at home on work for the armed forces.

** As we know, the "normal consumer" in Germany receives on his ration card about half the amount of fats, meat and sugar he used to get before the war. Men engaged on heavy work receive about an equal amount in addition in the form of meals at the factories, or the peacetime ration in all. Men engaged on still heavier work receive even more.

* From the *Revue internationale d'Agriculture*, Rome Agrarian Institute, June, 1940.

"Rationing of the more important foodstuffs and their proper distribution with the help of ration cards is essential. The Imperial Commissioner has declared that the Dutch people have the same rights and duties as the German people, and the Dutch people will therefore understand if, like the German people, they have to impose restrictions upon themselves in many respects."

And as a matter of fact, bread and flour have been rationed in Holland since June 17. A cautiously worded message from The Hague states:

"From today on bread and flour in Holland will be rationed. Only biscuits, cake, etc., are temporarily exempt. The ration, consisting of two kilograms of bread per person per week, is not too meager, and besides an additional 50 per cent, and in special cases even 100 per cent, is provided for men engaged on heavy work. Most households will therefore be able to manage on the established bread ration, especially if they introduce slight modifications in their diet, in particular, by serving more potatoes at mealtimes than formerly. The pure white wheat flour that was mainly consumed in Holland will disappear, as the grain will be more heavily milled and will, moreover, contain an admixture of rye and potato flour." (*Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, June 26, 1940.)

At the same time, a portion of Holland's foodstuffs is being diverted to Germany. The *Berliner Boersenzeitung* stated on June 28, 1940:

"An exemplary job was done in the case of market gardening immediately after the occupation. Not-

withstanding damaged bridges and railways, within a short period it was possible not only to restore the export of market garden produce hitherto dispatched to Germany from Holland, but also to direct to the German Reich what Holland formerly used to export to the enemy countries. For several weeks now over one hundred railway cars of vegetables are being dispatched from Holland to Germany daily."

A similar far-reaching restriction of food consumption is to be observed in Belgium. In this connection, the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* stated on July 17, 1940:

"Of the numerous regulations that have been or are about to be passed governing food consumption, we will mention the prohibition of the use of rye as fodder, which is to follow a similar prohibition already issued in the case of wheat; next, restrictions on the manufacture of dough goods, beer, alcohol, and similar articles that involve an expenditure of essential bread and fodder grains. It will however . . . be further necessary to adapt the number of cattle to the available amount of fodder, and first to be considered is a contraction in the breeding of poultry and pigs. . . . The number of cattle is to be maintained undiminished the longest, the plan being to economize fodder in this respect by prohibiting the rearing of bull calves. But if this should prove to be insufficient, the number of cows will also have to be reduced. The adult population will have to restrict their consumption of whole milk. The production of margarin is to be sharply reduced during the summer months in order to save raw material for the winter, when butter will be scarce."

Equal distribution of the most essential foodstuffs means "well-organized starvation," as Lenin called it, for the working people, especially for industrial workers, urban civil servants, office employees, etc. The landowners, kulaks, and even the middle peasants are always able, no matter how strictly food is controlled, to find ways and means of keeping well fed with the help of home-grown produce. Rich people in the cities are in a position to supplement the rationed foodstuffs by the purchase of expensive unrationed foods, such as game, fish, poultry, vegetables, fruit, etc.; they also find opportunities for securing additional food through relatives and friends or other "connections" in the countryside, or to dine well at expensive restaurants, and so on. Generally speaking, rich people never go hungry even in wartime. Hunger and privation in wartime, as well, remain the lot of the proletarians, of the laboring people, who very often receive only the printed ration card, but not the rations enumerated in it, or whose incomes are often too small to permit the purchase of all the rationed articles.

With the outbreak of the war, a wave of high prices swept over Europe, which, especially owing to the bad harvest and the extension of the British blockade to the whole continent of Europe, are still mounting, with the result that the standard of living of the European working people has seriously deteriorated.

But the war has caused a rapid deterioration in the standard of living of the people not only of continental Europe, but of Great Britain as well. This is clearly shown by the

following facts: The official cost of living index rose in the period of August, 1939, to June, 1940, by about 17 per cent, while the volume of retail trade increased in the same period by only about 2 per cent. Hence, the amount of goods available for sale to the population was 15 per cent less than before the war. And since the rich obviously buy no less than before the war, the drop in consumption by the working people must be greater still. When we bear in mind that working hours in England are now from 60 to 84 per week, instead of 44, as they were formerly, and that the workers' rest is disturbed every night by air-raided alarms, the grave deterioration in the condition of the British working class will be obvious. . . .

The first year of war has brought Europe, or rather, the European proletariat, to the verge of famine. The gains won by the working class after the first imperialist World War have been completely lost in the present war. Millions and millions of proletarians are condemned to starvation, privation, death on the battlefield, mutilation and disease in order to decide whether the British or the German imperialists are to have the lion's share in the spoliation of the colonial peoples.

Thus the starving people must suffer in order that imperialists may gorge to satiety. The war is robbing the working people not only of their freedom and lives; it is also robbing them of their bread. The struggle for bread and freedom is therefore becoming more and more directly a struggle against imperialist war and against the capitalist system, which means hunger, slavery and war.

THE WAR AND THE MISERY OF THE MASSES

THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

BY W. GREENLEY

A YEAR has elapsed since the outbreak of the imperialist war in Europe. During this year armies have been destroyed, hundreds of thousands of people sent to nameless graves, men in their prime crippled and invalided for life. Densely populated countries were the scene of devastating battles; great cities—monuments reared by centuries of human labor—are lying in ruins, amid which crying mothers are seeking in vain for their children, and families can no longer find their homes. On the plains of France the grain is rotting on the stalk, for the furies of the war have driven the farmers from their land. The roads are thronged with millions of aimlessly wandering people who have escaped with nothing but their bare lives.

Every night people in Western European cities, robbed of their sleep, crowd into dark and damp holes, while bombs are dropped on airdromes, factories, mills, schools and hospitals. "It is the tragedy of war that fathers bury their sons." In Western Europe today mothers bury their infants and children their mothers.

In the stock exchanges, however, capitalists are staging new orgies of profit-making. The price of the

stocks of Vickers-Armstrong, of Krupp, of Roechling, etc., is soaring. Across the Atlantic the Morgans, du Ponts, the steel and aluminum manufacturers, the oil companies—all stretch out their greedy hands for the long awaited profits which the misery of Europe brings them.

Against this background of destruction, desolation and capitalist ghoulishness we can see the outlines of even greater disasters impending. Large parts of Europe are threatened by the lingering death of starvation, which does not kill in a sudden dramatic fashion, but carries off people all the more surely and in greater numbers. America reports a bumper crop and a large surplus of wheat, which, however, is denied the starving masses of Europe. And in South America food products, wheat and coffee, are burned or dumped into the sea, because there is no market for them.

In the meantime, the second winter of the war is approaching.

It is not only the individual who suffers from the war. Millions of people are hurled into its inferno; at one stroke it destroys what has been created by the labor of man in the course of decades; it reduces whole countries to a state of barbarism, it brings in its train a mod-

ern edition of the great migrations of nations.

Everywhere the line between front and rear has been obliterated. The story of how the war broke in upon sleeping Brussels was described by the war correspondent of the Italian newspaper *Popolo d'Italia* who was in the city at the time. The rudely awakened people of Brussels stood in their night clothes at their windows, apparently unable to realize what had happened. Exploding bombs and the cries of the wounded announced the beginning of the tragedy. The correspondent then goes on to describe the panicky mass flight that started at once. In all the train compartments the lights were out, and one could hear only the crying of children and anxious voices of women.

The fate of Brussels was shared by many cities in Belgium, Holland and, subsequently, in France. The story told by a French refugee from Paris conveys some idea of the mass misery inflicted by the war upon the population of France:

"I left Paris yesterday, about 1 p.m. The exodus from Paris presented a frightful picture. . . . In the course of two days more than two million people fleeing from the capital. . . . Since noon refugees are streaming from every direction, thronging all the country roads and highways. A terrible sight. Peasant carts drawn by horses, oxen or cows, handcarts, bicycles, children's cars, people on foot—all running for safety . . . fleeing. Each cart is loaded the same way: some hay and straw, a sack of flour, blankets, chairs, cupboards, bundles of clothes, a crate with chickens and rabbits. . . . And amidst all this

grandmothers and grandchildren. The men, even the old, walk; refugees pushing handcarts or riding bicycles loaded with the most unimaginable stuff. Where were all these unfortunates to find some place for themselves on our roads? . . . What misery! . . . Hungry children crying for food . . . an aged, sick woman in a handcart pushed by a twelve-year old girl . . . mothers calling their lost children, their voices drowned out by the infernal roar of motors. . . .

"Night came. A terrible night. The Gorgonian coils of the stream of refugees . . . twisted ever more fantastically. . . . Endless caravans of ambulances with wounded, some civilians on the running boards. . . . More ambulances. Huge cannons, and on the trailing cars, along with soldiers, women pressing children to their breasts. . . . A German plane circled above us. The panic was indescribable. . . ."

At the beginning of August the number of refugees was placed at ten million. The breakdown of the railway service and the shortage of gasoline made it extremely difficult to provide facilities for the refugees to return to their homes. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* reported in its issue of June 24 that the number of refugees in Southern France was estimated at between six and eight million. To this the paper added the following comment:

"Although the Southern provinces are the richest in France, the food supply is dwindling rapidly. If the situation is allowed to continue, or if it is aggravated by the influx of more refugees, starvation is imminent."

In recent weeks the German press

carried reports also about the return of the population of the border districts in Western Germany, which had been evacuated at the beginning of the war. Many of these places have been laid waste by artillery fire from the Maginot Line. According to a report in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of July 27, 587,000 people had left their homes at the beginning of the war in the one district of Saar-Pfalz.

"When you pass through the approaches to the West Wall today," the paper says, "you can still see large stretches of land lying uncultivated and, like the prairies, overgrown with weeds. This is mostly the unsafe ground which is infested with thousands of mines, and for the time being nobody can set foot on it."

Ever since hostilities began in the West, the cities of North and West Germany, the coastal cities of Belgium and Holland, and the ports and industrial cities of England have been constantly, day and night, in danger of aerial bombardments. The raids have become an everyday affair, so that the approach of enemy planes is no longer even announced by air raid signals.

The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* wrote in its issue of June 20 that the immediate warning of coming air raids would throw whole provinces into a state of alarm every night for hours on end, thus causing a considerable drop in the output of important plants. The same newspaper reported in its issue of May 23 that in one air raid the casualties were: 33 people killed, 31 badly wounded and 39 slightly wounded. In another

air raid, according to a report in this newspaper on July 19, 580 people were made homeless in one night. There is growing restlessness among the population in the districts that suffer most from air raids. In this connection *Der Ruhrarbeiter*, a newspaper appearing in the Ruhr district, a section subjected to especially heavy bombing by British airplanes, came out sharply against persons who complain of insufficient air raid precautions. The paper pointed out that there are bound to be casualties in air raids, and that air raid warnings must not be given too soon, because it would be unreasonable to rouse people from their beds when the danger is still far away: there is always enough time to reach the shelters when the airplanes are already flying over the section of the town concerned. The paper therefore insists that the population must have confidence in the anti-aircraft defense. The *Nieder-rheinische Volkszeitung*, in its issue of May 22, castigates the "prattlers" who spread rumors about air raids and threatens them with exemplary punishment.

The correspondent of the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* describes (on July 31, 1940), the permanent state of alarm in which the population of Western Germany is kept by the air raids. In one city the people set their alarm clocks every night for a quarter to one in the morning, in order to have time to get to the shelters by that time, when the air raids usually start.

The figures published by the British Home Secretary on the air raid casualties in the month of July show that a large percentage of the vic-

tims are women and children. According to these figures, out of 258 killed in air raids 57 were women and 23 children below the age of sixteen. This is apart from the great number of the severely and the slightly wounded.

The effect of the air raids on the civilian population in Italy may be gauged from an article in the *Popolo d'Italia* (in its issue of June 14), in which the newspaper warned against rumor-mongering. There are people in the streetcars, cafes, and in the drawing rooms of the intellectuals, the paper complained, who whisper in each other's ears fantastic stories about air raids. One story, for instance, had it that half the city of Turin had been destroyed by air bombings. The *Popolo d'Italia* threatens such "rumor-mongers and defeatists" with long terms in jail. The *Giornale d'Italia* complained in its issue of June 18 of the inadequate number of air raid shelters. There had been many cases of panic among the people rushing for the shelters. In this connection the paper criticizes the profiteering elements who have rented out air raid shelters for storerooms or billiard rooms.

Class distinctions are maintained even in face of death from the air. Thus one could read in British newspapers even before the outbreak of the war about the steel and concrete air raid shelters wealthy people had built for themselves on their private estates. These shelters are protected against gas attacks, are equipped with electric lighting fixtures and fitted out with many conveniences. The rest of the population, those who cannot afford pri-

vate shelters, have to put up with holes dug in the ground, whose covers provide protection only against small bombs and splinters.

Thus the war, while depriving millions of people of their homes, driving them from town to town and from country to country, is at the same time forcing other millions to return to the life of cave-dwellers, to creep underground, while death, unleashed by the imperialists, is raging above.

* * *

In every capitalist country the working class is the hardest hit by the war. In the mines, at the blast furnaces, at the lathes, the workers toil like slaves, driven by their rulers, turning material wealth into instruments of destruction at as rapid a rate as possible. Ten, twelve and fourteen hours of work a day are the rule. Reactionary trade union leaders in league with ministers and manufacturers are busy inventing ever new pretexts to lengthen the hours of work and to intensify the speed-up.

All limitations on working hours, speed and exploitation have been removed, and all provisions for labor protection have been abolished.

"For thousands of workers yesterday was not a day of rest," the *London Times* wrote on May 27, 1940, "but a day and night of sharpened activity. During the full twenty-four hours of this different Sunday men and machines in aircraft works, royal ordnance factories and engineering shops were working ceaselessly."

And on May 30 Bevin, the British "Socialist" Minister of Labor,

declared that every worker in England must give up his annual holiday for the duration of the war, and that the workers employed in essential industries must work seven days a week. And before that, J. A. Hall, a Labor and trade union leader, called upon all former miners between the ages of 70 and 80 to return at once to the mines. In the course of a few months the 12 and 14-hour day in England led to such exhaustion of the workers that even the efficiency engineers of the munitions works at Coventry were obliged to admit that such long hours are "inexpedient" and that work above ten hours a day no longer "returns a profit."

The imperialists have turned the munition plants into military barracks in which the workers are subject to martial law and are "held in check" literally at the point of guns. In Italy, 929 plants employing 700,000 workers have been placed on a military footing. On June 11, sixty French workers employed in the wharves of Cherbourg were sentenced to death and executed summarily for an alleged refusal to work. In Aix de Provence 32 men and women workers of munition plants were sentenced to long prison terms.

The capitalists have also abolished the labor protection regulations and safety measures—another of the gains which the workers fought for in the course of many decades. The number of accidents in factories is rapidly increasing. Occupational diseases are spreading. In the chemical works cases of severe poisoning have become a common occurrence. In the case of

poisoning caused by nitrous gases the blood corpuscles become disintegrated. The faces of the workers become livid, the lips blue; the symptoms include asphyxia, weakness, dizziness and short periods of abnormal hunger followed by a loss of appetite. The disease of cyanosis is but a precursor of other severe illnesses, as, for instance, a form of anaemia, from which many workers have already died, or a severe form of jaundice caused by liver trouble. Adult members of the family, children and even infants, who have nothing to do with the plant, often contract the illness through contact with the poisoned worker, because it is contagious through the skin. According to the famous English scientist Professor Haldane, cyanosis is raging in numerous plants.

* * *

Driven by want or mobilized by the authorities, millions of women and children are also forced into the purgatory of capitalist war industries. According to an estimate in the *Times* (London) of April 19, 1940, England will mobilize a total of 4,100,000 female labor reservists, i.e., all single women and widows, as well as a third of the married women, from fourteen to fifty-five years old. Women mobilized to work in the war industries of Coventry work mostly in night shifts of from ten to twelve hours; they work in night shifts ostensibly that they "may devote the day to their family duties."

In the U.S.A., delegates representing three million unemployed women, wives of unemployed and W.P.A. workers, formed a group

bearing the characteristic name "Daughters of the Depression." The average wage of women workers in the engineering industry is but 61 per cent, and in all manufacturing industries in the U.S.A. 57 per cent, or not much more than a half of the wages paid to men.

The imperialist "protectors of the family" are subjecting the young generation to wasteful exploitation such as has never been known in history. Child labor has assumed enormous proportions. In British metal plants in the neighborhood of Manchester fourteen-year old children work 56½ hours a week without extra pay for overtime; in the textile mills of Salford young people of tender age work as much as 60 hours a week.

The Italian Government passed a law on April 2, 1940, according to which children from thirteen years of age and upwards are conscripted for work in war time.

In Japan the authorities, in an effort to meet the shortage of coal, conscripted elementary and secondary school children for work in the mines. The children were first sent down into the pits in February 1940, and by February 16 the *Japan Advertiser* had already reported an accident in the mines of Ziba in which two boys of fifteen years lost their lives.

According to a report in the *Berliner Boersenzeitung* of June 8, the German Minister Hess ordered the drafting of young people for auxiliary farm work. This order extends to all school children who have reached the age of ten.

Millions of children who had to be evacuated from various countries

during the war are living in most frightful unsanitary conditions: barns, basements, old barracks, or even in the open field. Epidemics are quite common in the overcrowded camps. In England alone half a million children have been evacuated. The deterioration of the school system as a result of the evacuation has elicited the following comment of the well-known educator Beatrice King:

"During the Spanish war the Republican Government went ahead with a great program of educational reform. After only a few weeks of war, Britain is throwing overboard many of the educational gains of the last decade or more."

Another educator, Max Morris, wrote the following:

"Teachers will be faced with the most difficult pedagogical questions in the new conditions [the evacuation of children]. . . . Hundreds of rural schools have inadequate heating and lighting systems, are deficient in sanitary arrangements, have little or no facilities for washing, and provide meager means for drying clothes."

The hardships of the war have brought about a frightful increase in the number of children who are suffering from rickets or are crippled. According to official statistics, in June, 1940, there were 19,888 crippled children in the city of New York alone; 29 per cent were cases of rickets.

In Japan the school system has virtually collapsed as a result of the mass resignations of teachers.

The *Asahi*, in its issue of Jan. 11, 1940, admits that the cause of these resignations is the niggardly salary paid the teachers in Japan. In the Iwate district 40 per cent of the teachers works on a part time basis. Thousands of teachers have gone "fortune hunting" to China.

* * *

Everywhere the tremendous burdens of the war are being shifted onto the shoulders of the working people. Thus, the British capitalists, in their war budget for the year 1940, have cut the expenditures on social security by a full £17,500,000 and the expenditure on unemployment relief by £14,000,000.

In the United States, Roosevelt's starvation budget for 1940 represents a still more brutal attack upon the living standard of the masses. Roosevelt's budget proposals in January, 1940, provided for an increase of \$574,000,000 in the expenditure on armaments, the expenditures on W.P.A. and unemployment relief has been cut by \$477,000,000, public works by \$300,000,000, agricultural aid by \$400,000,000, expenditures on student and youth camps by \$60,000,000, and on relief for the youth by \$15,000,000. Since that time the appropriations for armaments has risen to many billions.

At the same time the masses in the capitalist countries suffer from the increased burden of taxation. In addition to the higher tax on wages which is deducted every pay day and which no worker can avoid paying, the laboring masses are further bled white by the rulers through the imposition of sales taxes. In its latest war budget the

British Government has imposed additional taxes on sales of necessities. Shoes and clothing are taxed at the rate of 12 per cent of the retail price; so-called articles of "luxury," including furniture, are taxed at the rate of 24 per cent of the retail price.

In glaring contrast to this spoliation of the masses are the war profits raked in by the capitalists. The British Government has concluded an agreement with the railway companies guaranteeing the latter a *minimum* annual profit of £40,000,000 over and above their average profits during the years 1935-37. This caused quite a flurry on the stock exchange. L.M.S. Railway stock which was down to 9¼ in 1939 skyrocketed to 13¾ on January 17, 1940, and 21 on February 12, 1940, and they still keep on rising. The very first year of the war brought the British limited liability companies huge profits; 861 firms which showed a profit of £164,000,000 in 1938 had increased their profits to £175,500,000 in 1939.

The Essen *National-Zeitung* of May 19, 1940, described the orgy of war profiteering in Germany. According to that paper, the successes scored by German arms had brought about the following rise in the price of stocks: Contigummi by 13 per cent, Siemens-Halske by 11.5 per cent, IG-Farben from 186½ to 195. In its issue of May 26 the paper frankly admits that:

"... in the past week one gained the impression that this principle [that everything presupposes work] is occasionally [!!] abandoned, as, for instance, when shipping securi-

ties had risen a full fifteen points and when there was such a general speculative demand even for colonial securities that the proper authorities [!] ordered that securities of the latter kind be taken off the list of quoted stocks. Thus, for instance, the stocks of the North German Lloyd rose 18 per cent after a rise of 10¾ per cent in the previous week."

The American armament industry is reaping staggering profits. The *Wall Street Journal* in its issue of February 8, 1940, reports in a matter-of-fact tone that U. S. Steel showed a profit of \$112,200,000 in 1939, as against \$1,700,000 in 1938, or an increase of 6,448 per cent. The du Pont Company, leading American chemical concern, showed a net profit of \$23,130,000 in the first quarter of 1940.

Nor are the smaller parasites to be outdone by the big capitalist sharks. The rationing of food products and clothing, for instance, has opened up new possibilities for profiteers and swindlers. Ever since the outbreak of the war the German press has been full of warnings against manufacturers who have been offering for sale all kinds of substitute products and articles at high prices; for in the most cases the wares offered for sale turned out to be spurious and unfit for use. The *Berliner Boersenzeitung* reported on July 28 numerous cases of profiteers sentenced in court for violating the official price regulations and engaging in illegal commerce.

* * *

Apart from the immediate destruction wrought by the war, its

effects reach out far into the future. Just as it is breaking up families and depriving them of the hope of ever uniting again, so it is breaking up all the old economic relationships. Europe has been cut adrift from the world economic system. Thousands of arteries and ties which bound Europe to other continents have been severed; as a result of the war Europe is in danger of being bled white and ruined economically too. Shipping has been suspended, millions of tons of vessels and cargo have been sent to the bottom of the sea. The complicated and vital system of commercial relations has become utterly dislocated. Industrial centers, ports, railway bridges, etc., have been demolished and are being demolished every day. Modern airplanes are doing the work of destruction much more thoroughly and on a much wider scale than during the first imperialist war.

In the past weeks the world press has been full of photographs showing the ruins of once flourishing cities. The central section of the great commercial city of Rotterdam has been reduced to a heap of debris. In Belgium the war raged in one of the most densely populated regions of the world. In Northern France, the most important French industrial centers were the scene of hostilities. In these regions important industrial plants and thousands of railway and highway bridges have been blown up. Here the war wrought havoc with a region which had once been humming with industrial activity.

According to incomplete official French data, the material damage

caused by the war in France alone is estimated at a hundred billion francs. The country is suffering from a lack of materials even for the most vital work of reconstruction. The occupation of large parts of France by German troops has separated the country into two parts with all economic connections between them severed. France's inadequately mechanized agriculture has been disastrously hit, first by the mobilization and then by the hostilities and the peasants' flight from their farms. A considerable part of the crop cannot be harvested and whatever is harvested will supply but a bare 50 per cent of France's needs.

Owing to the suspension of imports from overseas, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway are facing a serious food shortage. In an article entitled, "The Food Situation in Belgium and Holland," the Vienna *Suedost-Echo* (July 5) says:

"Owing to this narrow base . . . Belgium is in a position to supply but 51 per cent of her needs in food products. . . . Owing to the density of the population it is impossible to reclaim any appreciable amount of land. . . . Belgium is largely dependent on imports from overseas for her food products."

According to data cited in the same newspaper, Holland is now in a position to cover not more than 67 per cent of her needs in food products out of her own resources. The country is in need of large imports of grain and fodder. In the beginning of August the American Ambassador in Belgium reported that the food situation in

that country was extremely grave. He pointed out that formerly Belgium imported 75 per cent of the wheat the country consumed. The present stocks, he said, would last only to the middle of September or the beginning of October. The American Ambassador further reported that only a small part of the Belgium industries were still running.

The situation in Denmark has been described as follows in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* of July 30:

"Denmark will have to do without the from 600,000 to 800,000 tons of fodder and 600,000 or 700,000 tons of grain it imported in normal years. The present supply of oil cake amounts to but one-tenth of the annual requirements, and, what is still worse, the prospects for the harvest next autumn are not good, owing to the protracted drought."

The paper goes on to report that about one-half the number of hogs and fowl will have to be slaughtered, that the consumption of gasoline has been cut to 25 per cent of the normal, that there is a shortage of coal, and that the number of unemployed has increased by 50 per cent. From Norway it is reported that bread is being mixed there with 25 per cent of grass.

The prospects for the harvest are rather poor in other parts of Europe as well. Hungary, for instance, reports that the crops are seriously damaged; in Rumania official circles expect a considerably smaller crop this year than in any recent year. The Italian Minister of Agriculture estimates that this year's wheat crop in Italy will amount to 73,-

000,000 metric centners,* as against an average of 80,000,000 metric centners in the preceding three years.

As a result of the dislocation of economic life and the break up of economic ties many countries are faced with famine. Famine is now approaching much faster than during the first World War. A traveler through Europe writes the following in the *American Mercury* for June, 1940:

"All normal life is thrown out of adjustment. . . . Already throughout Europe people are facing breadlines. What will they face a year from now, if a war of extermination really gets going? Europe faces famine!" (Quoted from *Readers' Digest*, June, 1940.)

Whole countries have already been reduced to starvation by world imperialism. In Canton and other Japanese-occupied cities in South China the shortage of rice brought about serious hunger revolts in May, 1940. In Central Lombok (Indo-China) scores of thousands of people are in the grip of hunger. Epidemics caused by undernourishment are raging in Java. Now, in the second winter of the imperialist war, Europe, too, faces famine. And famine brings with it the silent artillery of germs, whose frightful ravages the nations felt towards the end of the first imperialist war when epidemics carried off millions of undernourished people. Even after one year of war one is reminded of the words of the well-known English economist Maynard Keynes who said of the situation

after the first World War that everyone could feel the earth shaking under the European continent, that a civilization was dying in horrible convulsions amid starvation and the struggle for bare existence.

The bourgeoisie has brought about the isolation of individual countries, the severance of economic ties, the dislocation of production; it is reducing the nations to starvation, and is thereby undermining the foundation of its own existence. Yet while the imperialists are busy destroying a continent, they talk of the "unity" and "reorganization" of this very continent. All the plans that are now being hatched for the future betray the inability of the ruling classes to bring Europe real peace. The utter decay of the bourgeoisie is reflected in the plans of the reactionary regime in France, which has already announced its intention to "de-industrialize" France to a large extent, which would mean hurling France back generations in its development. Nor can the other plan-makers conceal their worry over the "new Europe" which they are announcing with great pomp and circumstance. The Italian newspaper *L'assalto* finds it necessary (in its issue of July 19) to warn of the social and economic difficulties which will have to be faced after the war, particularly mass unemployment. The very thought that the war might end is contemplated with fear among certain capitalist circles. This fear is strongest in the United States. Thus the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* wrote in a report from New York on June 6:

"The Bureau of Agricultural Eco-

* A metric centner equals 220.46 lbs.—*Ed.*

nomics is of the opinion that the very possibility of a speedy termination of the war . . . even if it should turn out in the end to have been premature, would lead, in the next few months, to a slowing down of economic recovery, if, in view of the new uncertainty, there were a general tendency in American industry to decrease considerably the supplies now on hand."

Amid the explosions of bombs and the alarming reports of hunger and pestilence, the ruling classes of Europe have nothing to say that would hold out any well-founded hopes of a real peace to the peoples.

Sooner or later, however, the changes which the war causes in the life of the masses must affect their way of thinking. The insecurity and poverty in which the masses of the people in the capitalist countries live even in times of peace have been accentuated by the war to the point where they are denied their bare existence. Millions are being uprooted, driven from their homes, separated from their families, torn from their usual occupations. As a result of this great upheaval, old ideas and prejudices are being discarded, the masses begin to see everything, beginning with their daily experiences and ending with questions of "high politics," in a different light. Nothing is so indicative of the ideological ferment caused by the war as the fact that the ruling classes, with the support of their agents in the ranks of the working class, are now beginning to talk of "reforming" society and even talk

of "socialism." The capitalists who have nothing to offer the nations but mutual murder and destruction have suddenly begun to pose in all the belligerent countries as protagonists of "Socialist" ideas. The masses, however, will not be deceived by bourgeois socialism which is heralded, on the one hand by mass murder and starvation, and, on the other, by the wild orgy of profiteering.

One day the masses of the people in the belligerent countries will demand an accounting, even if for the present their sentiments and wishes are drowned out by the deafening noise of the war and the shrieking chauvinism of the rulers. This war, too, will confirm the words Lenin wrote during the first World War, at a time when the murderous clamor of imperialism and chauvinism was at its height:

"The experiences of the war, like the experience of every crisis in history, of every great calamity and every sudden turn in human life, stun and break some people, *but they enlighten and harden others.*" (V. L. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 176. International Publishers, New York.)

The masses of the people, facing another terrible winter of war, will refuse to go on sinking into misery. They will find within themselves the strength to offer increasing resistance to the imperialist war and to rally their forces in the fight for peace, in the fight against the imperialists.

THE STRUGGLES OF THE FINNISH WORKERS

BY F. SCHILLING

UNTIL the end of the war with the Soviet Union which they had themselves provoked, the leaders of the Finnish bourgeoisie succeeded to a certain extent in fostering the illusion both in Finland and abroad that "national unity" between the bourgeoisie and the working people existed. In doing so, the leaders of the Finnish White Guards banked on the effects of the national-chauvinistic campaign which they had been conducting for decades, and especially in the past few years and, with the help of lying and calumny, worked up sentiment to fever heat. Their aim was to cover up the cleavage between the workers and the exploiters by fomenting national enmity and discord.

Everybody knows what a prominent part was played in this by the Finnish Social-Democratic leaders, who in Finland have particularly close ties with the bourgeoisie. They were the most zealous advocates of "civil peace" and "unity" between the workers and manufacturers, between the lumberjacks and peasants on the one hand, and the big wealthy landlords and bankers, on the other. They even urged the workers to enter the Lappo League (the Black Hundreds of Finland) to join forces with this wretched and reactionary hireling gang of

the capitalists and White Guard adventurers in the name of "national unity" and, together with them, defend Finland's "ideal democracy."

With the help of a bloody terrorism, a censorship that suppressed every free utterance, and the arrest of over a thousand revolutionary workers, whose names Tanner's gang reported to the secret police on the very outbreak of the war, Tanner and Mannerheim succeeded for a time in preventing all open resistance to their fraudulent "national unity."

But they could not prevent their own inevitable military and political defeat. Doubts and misgivings about the "unity" with the manufacturers and bankers had begun to stir in the minds of the Finnish workers during the war, but when the war ended the broad masses of the working people of Finland quickly realized the falseness of this "unity," the magnitude of the deceit practised on them. This is recognized today even by many friends of the Finnish White Guards.

A correspondent of the Basle *National-Zeitung*—one of the most rabid anti-Soviet sheets during the Finnish-Soviet war—reported on August 8, that profound changes were taking place in the political views of the Finnish people, espe-

cially of the working class. Even this reactionary journalist, who on the outbreak of the war busied himself with spreading lies about the supposed "unity of government and nation," now finds himself obliged to state that it can scarcely be asserted today that "the working class unanimously supports the foreign policy of the government." The mirage of "national unity" is indeed losing its charm, and the press of the government clique is gloomily discussing the causes of the collapse of this illusion. Tanner has described the situation in the following words:

"Unfortunately, since peace was declared, antagonisms and contentions have arisen between the resettlers and the rest of the population, between the employers and the workers, and among the various Party groups. . . . The most deplorable thing, however, is that even among the Social-Democratic population dissension has arisen over the measures which it will be necessary to take in the early future." *

The meaning of this is that the dissension and strife now prevailing in Finland have affected nearly every section of the Finnish people and fundamentally center around three questions: (1) Who is mainly to bear the cost of the recent war gamble, and how is economic reconstruction to be effected? (2) Who is responsible for the "sad plight" of the Finnish people? (3) What path shall the Finnish people follow in the future and, in particular, what shall be the orientation of the Finnish working class?

The basis of this strife, whose class character is becoming more and more apparent, is the seriously shattered and in part totally destroyed industry of the country. The economic consequences of the criminal war policy of the Finnish bourgeoisie are now standing forth in all their magnitude. Finland's economy and industry were mainly centered on two branches: export, and war preparations against the Soviet Union. The branches of industry producing export goods, chiefly forestry and paper-making, were developed to the utmost, whereas the other branches of industry, those producing the needs of the population at home, were grossly neglected. American, British and French capital, which held all the key positions in Finland, were deeply interested in keeping Finland economically under their complete sway. This one-sidedness laid its impress on Finland's economic relations with the outside world and caused her foreign trade to become the decisive factor in her economic life; for the big demand for goods of every kind could only be met by the surplus output of two branches of industry.* This is an economic structure usually characteristic of colonial and semi-colonial countries. It once again made clear how little the ostensibly free and independent Finnish state really was free and independent, and showed that it was in fact only an advance post of the Western imperialists.

* From a speech made by Tanner in Uleaborg, quoted in the *Svenska Pressen* of July 16, 1940.

* In the period, 1921-37, 86 per cent of Finland's total exports consisted of the products of the timber and paper industry; 50 per cent of the total timber exports went to Great Britain.

From this it will be clear what disastrous consequences the closing of the channels of world trade must have had for a country which a gang of warmongers had already pumped dry for the sake of a criminal war against the Soviet Union. According to a report in the Swedish *Svenska Dagbladet* of June 6, 1940, Prime Minister Ryti declared in the Finnish Parliament:

"As a result of the enormous expenditure incurred by the state in connection with the war with the Soviet Union, and of a considerable decline in the national income in consequence of the war of the Great Powers, the losses amount to a sum equivalent to at least one-fourth of Finland's total national wealth. . . . But what is graver still is the fact that, as a result of the war of the Great Powers, the national income is bound to be reduced to one-half of that of the previous year. The result will be a dwindling of our entire industry, with its consequent unfavorable effect on the labor market and, in a short time, on property values as well."

Naturally, it is the working people who will be the first to feel the effects of this catastrophic state of economic affairs. The *Suomen Sosialdemokraatti* reports that in recent months the price of milk and fats has risen by 20 per cent, of meat by 20-80 per cent, of potatoes by 40 per cent, of rye flour by 40 per cent, of oatmeal by 90 per cent, and of rye bread by 45 per cent. At the same time wages were reduced.

Lauritz Hansen, Chairman of the Danish Trade Union Federation, speaking at a congress of the Danish

Municipal Workers' Union at the end of June, referred to the situation in Finland and said that "a fortnight ago workers' wages in Finland were reduced by 25 per cent, and that without any negotiations with the trade unions." Wages were cut, although "the cost of living had risen 100 per cent." The Finnish workers are also severely affected by the scourge of unemployment. Mass unemployment is rife not only in the towns but in the countryside as well. The Finnish newspaper *Pohjois-Savo* issues a warning against the flight from the land that has begun in the countryside, and says that:

"All workers accustomed to agricultural labor must remain at their posts under all circumstances, otherwise we shall land in insuperable difficulties."

The newspaper anticipates a further rapid rise in unemployment, and warns against all these men being left idle. Let them be "tied to plots of land, however small."

In addition to all these hardships, there is the unsoivable problem of the 450,000 refugees, the nearly half a million people forcibly driven from their homes by the Government and the Finnish reactionaries, and now languishing under the worst imaginable conditions in temporary shelters in various parts of the country. The Swedish *Göteborgs Handels-Tidning* of June 4 published a report describing the frightful health conditions prevailing among the Finnish refugees, especially the children.

"The children," the report states, "suffer most from these conditions,

which render them extremely susceptible to infectious diseases and epidemics, from which many of them die. Investigations of the evacuated children have shown that in a number of areas half the children are suffering from one illness or another, and that the mortality among them is fourteen times higher than among the rest of the juvenile population."

The ruling government clique has proved itself incapable of solving a single one of the problems facing the country, for in none of them can they discard their narrow, reactionary capitalist viewpoint. An illustration of this is the burning problem of the forcibly evacuated population. Here we have 450,000 people who are anxiously waiting day after day to be allotted new homes, new places of work, new land. They were promised by the rulers of Finland who drove them from their homes and then forbade them to return that the Finnish Government would take care of them and see to it that they were provided with a new basis of existence. But instead, they are now meeting with a flat refusal from all those whose duty it is to aid them.

A bill was introduced in Parliament providing for the allotment of land to the forcibly evacuated peasants, but the big landowners and rich peasants put up a fierce fight against it. It required three whole months before the Rapid Settlement Act was passed at all, and when it was passed, it was the cause of the bitterest disappointment for the homeless and landless peasants all over the country. The act, as passed, provided in effect for the assign-

ment only of *state* land for settlement purposes, land which lies in the wild northern parts of the country. The government realized that it would be no easy matter to drive the Karelian peasants into the forests of Lapland, when they knew very well that more than enough arable land was available in the south of Finland. It therefore endeavored to inspire the evacuated peasants with the hope of being able to purchase certain unoccupied and uncultivated lands belonging to the big landlords, capitalist companies and the church, and at present held for speculative purposes. And although even this clause of the act was hedged in by so many reservations as to make its realization practically impossible, the landowners and the agents of the capitalist companies raised the alarm.

They saw this bill as an attack on the sacred rights of private property, although not a letter of it, and still less its spirit, offered any grounds for such an interpretation. But there must be no joking with so sacred a thing as the principle of private property. "Such laws undermine the feeling of social security in relation to property," declared the aristocrat Estlander in the Sejm. A rider to the act provides that land allotments are to be made only to such peasants as are in a position to pay for them. Ok-sala, a big capitalist and member of the Sejm, has admitted that not all the peasants who formerly possessed land can hope to receive allotments under the act, and even those that do will not receive enough to guarantee a minimum standard of existence. Large numbers of property-

less peasants will consequently be left entirely without land.

Such is the "aid" rendered to the peasants who have been forcibly driven from their homes by the ruling classes and to whom such dazzling promises were made. They are now encountering the cold-blooded selfishness of the big agrarians, the capitalist companies and the church, which have no intention of voluntarily surrendering a single foot of their land.

That the Peasant Party, the party of the big agrarians, met with no serious opposition to their demands in Parliament and in the government might have been expected from the fact that Prime Minister Ryti himself is one of the biggest and wealthiest landowners in the country, and that ex-Minister Tanner, the leader of the Social-Democratic Party, owns a total of 30,000 hectares* in the Province of Njundskoi. And in order to make things definitely safe for the future, in the middle of July the Government was reconstructed on the demand of the big landlords and the number of their representatives in the cabinet still further increased.

And how do matters stand with regard to state aid in other respects? Speaking on this subject, Ryti declared in parliament that the Government saw itself obliged "to reserve the property of the state for the coming periods of crisis." But not all, of course: huge state subsidies have been made to capitalists whose property suffered as a result of the war. But as far as the war widows and orphans are

concerned, we learn from an article by Gustav Näsström which appeared in *Stockholm Tidningen* that:

"... war widows, with tear-stained eyes, are to be seen standing with their children in the corridors of government buildings anxiously waiting for some sort of indication as to how they are to live, now that the war has robbed them of their husbands and has deprived them of the basis of their existence."

There was much talk about "reconstruction" in Finland, but what responsible circles meant by that was only the reconstruction, or rather the new construction, of fortified lines and other strategical works. After the loss of the Mannerheim Line, huge sums were spent on the building of a new "line." Ten thousand soldiers and a large number of workers recruited for labor service were set to work on the job. The workers of Helsingfors significantly dubbed this line the "Tannerheim Line," in token of the sinister role played by the Social-Democratic Party leader in its erection. Vast sums were also spent on fortifying the Aaland Islands, which, however, had to be rapidly demilitarized on the demand of the Soviet Government. At any rate, as the Finnish working people are aware, many millions that were so urgently needed to aid the victims of the war were again squandered by the incorrigible warmongers.

* * *

In brief, the Finnish working people are faced with the following situation in their country. The

* A hectare equals 2.471 acres.—Ed.

war instigated by their bourgeoisie, whose criminal character is now becoming clearer and clearer to the masses, has caused serious economic damage to the country; the war in Western Europe and the consequent collapse of the calculations of the Finnish bourgeoisie, as well as the stubborn adherence of certain Finnish reactionary circles to the policy which had led to the Finnish-Soviet war, has aggravated, and is continuing to aggravate, the crisis in which the country finds itself. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie is not prepared to bear any of the losses resulting from the war and the crisis and is throwing the whole burden on the shoulders of the working people: the big landlords refuse to surrender any of their land, the employers have cut wages by 25 per cent, while the big farmers and profiteers are steadily forcing up prices.

This state of affairs could not fail to have its effect on the working class movement. First a series of strikes broke out. The workers demanded higher wages and put up a resistance to further wage cuts. In some cases this struggle was partially successful. On July 16, a meeting of the executive committee of the Trade Union Federation was held in Helsingfors, where a rather tame resolution was adopted, which, however, declared that in the big plants especially no improvement of wages was achieved, for two reasons, (1) that "the trade unions have not yet fully resumed their activities since the conclusion of peace," and (2) that the measures taken by the Government "have strengthened the hand of the em-

ployers' organizations in rejecting the workers' demands for higher wages." After pointing out that the employers, in violation of earlier agreements, have not reinstated workers returning from military service, and that the measures of the Government in this respect are inadequate, the resolution goes on to say:

"The conference considers it necessary to make it clear to the employers that their unyielding attitude in the question of wages entitles the workers to resort to more effective means for the attainment of their rights."

This cautious tone of the resolution, which still breathes the spirit of civil peace, is characteristic of the reactionary, pro-employer leadership of the trade unions, headed by Eero Vuori, a member of Tanner's intimate clique. In spite of his disapprobation and resistance, movements are breaking out in industry after industry; but all he does is to implore the employers and bankers to keep their earlier promises and thus restore the lost "unity."

At the beginning of July, the representatives of two big trade unions, that of the paper workers and that of the textile workers, applied to the employers' organizations of these industries, requesting that negotiations be started for wage increases, referring in this connection to an earlier agreement reached with the Employers' Federation.

The employers' representatives replied that they had no intention of increasing wages under any circumstances and refused to have

anything to do with the trade unions. The Finnish Social-Democratic press is now trying to make out that such a result of the "unity" and "civil peace" was unexpected. The *Suomen Sosialdemokraatti* exclaims that this "came as a cold shower," while the *Abo Sosialisti* enquires uneasily "whether the employers have no intention of honoring the bills given in January." E. Vuori, the Chairman of the Trade Union Federation, writing in the *Suomen Sosialdemokraatti* at the beginning of July, expresses concern about the "discontent recently to be observed among the workers."

"Dissatisfaction is rife," he writes, "over the continuation of compulsory labor service, the calling up of new age categories to the army and low wages."

Vuori sorrowfully declares that the result of all this is that "people are beginning to think" and are "conceiving all sorts of ideas." But he himself can think of nothing better than to appeal to the employers to improve the lot of the workers in order to avoid conflicts. He says nothing about the necessity of organizing an active struggle in the interests of the workers through the trade unions. And this fully accords with the policy of the Finnish Social-Democratic and trade union leaders, a policy which has not been modified one iota. It is the old reactionary policy which Tanner, Vuori & Co., have been pursuing for years, and whose highest aim—to which everything else is subordinated—is to maintain the bloc with the bourgeoisie in order to prevent revolutionary developments in Finland.

The working masses who presented the "January bills" to the capitalists for payment quickly came to realize that it would be treasonable and criminal to believe any longer in the alliance between the workers and the capitalists, or to rely on it in any way. But the policy of Tanner and Vuori, and of Social-Democratic leading circles generally, continues to be based on this alliance. Every attempt of the working masses to defend their interests and to free the working class movement from its crippling dependence on the bourgeoisie at once meets with the resistance of the reactionary Social-Democratic and trade union leaders. It was therefore inevitable that with the first signs of unrest among the workers after the war, an opposition movement should be formed within the Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions, a movement which grew in strength from week to week and now represents a serious force in the country.

* * *

This Left wing of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party has started its own newspaper, *Vapaa Sana* (*The Free Word*), the first issue of which contains something in the nature of a statement of program. It begins by declaring that the decisions and guiding principles of the Social-Democratic Party have not been adhered to, and that:

“. . . quite different trends have come to the fore in the movement, especially among circles which, owing to their economic status, are susceptible to bourgeois influence. . . . The interests of the working

class have been subordinated to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

"Only socialism," the statement goes on to say, "can put an end to international antagonisms, just as only socialism can do away with social want and social injustice. . . . The ideal of the working class—socialism and internationalism—must again come into its own. The working class must strive to win over all the other laboring and freedom-loving sections of the population . . . in order to unite solely against capitalism, by which they too are oppressed. . . . We must make it clear to all that the idea of socialism lives, and that its realization is more than ever an urgent necessity for the working people. It is our endeavor to achieve the greatest possible unity of the working class of our country under the banner of socialism, internationalism and peace."

Although still couched in very general terms, this program reflects the profound change of opinion that is taking place in the Finnish labor movement, and above all its growing awakening to the fraud of "common interests" with the bourgeoisie. Even more clearly than in the statements of program, the character of the strong opposition movement in the Social-Democratic Party is expressed at public and party meetings, and not least of all in the rapid growth and activities of the new organization, the Finnish-Soviet Peace and Friendship League. Here the sentiments of the masses are more clearly expressed; here bitter words and stern indictments are uttered against those who were responsible for the war, here a radical break with the anti-Soviet

policy of the Government circles, which has plunged the country into such profound misery, is openly demanded; and here, too, the need for a new government is openly discussed. Writing on August 8 in reference to the scope of the opposition movement, the correspondent of the Basle *National-Zeitung* said:

"The radical wing has broken away from the Social-Democratic Party. This is not a question of un-influential lone wolves, but of well-known members of parliament, men who enjoyed respect and confidence in the party. Among those who have taken the war path against the party leadership are Deputies Ampuja, Hejo, Wiik and Sundstrom, the latter two of whom functioned as party secretaries."

What is particularly striking about this movement in Finland is its development, which began among the rank and file of the labor movement, then rapidly spread and swept a number of leaders into its train. This development enhances the prestige and strength of the newly-formed Left wing and also lends it weight and importance in the international working class movement, especially in the working class movement of the Scandinavian countries. For have the Höglunds, Staunings, Hansens and Tranmaels betrayed the Scandinavian workers any less than Tanner has the Finnish workers? Have they not, too, harnessed the workers to the wagon of imperialism and waged a rabid war campaign against the Soviet Union? The developments in Finland are symptomatic and are bound to have their

effect on the Social-Democratic parties in the other northern countries.

The correspondent of the Basle *National-Zeitung* already mentioned, whose reports are wholly sympathetic to the Finnish Government, is of the opinion—in common with a number of Swedish newspapers—that what is going on in the Finnish Social-Democratic Party “is bound to have a strong influence on internal political developments.” And this, too, is obviously what the Finnish ruling clique is afraid of. Everything goes to show that the working people have begun to see through the deceit which drove them into the war, and that the hypnosis originally induced by this deceit is beginning to wear off. G. Nastrom, the correspondent of the *Stockholm Tidningen* mentioned above, states in his report:

“One expected to find in Helsingfors [as a bourgeois journalist he would, of course!—F.S.] two symptoms of post-war sentiment: a burning hatred of Russia, and a soaring, tragic fervor. But one finds not a trace of either.”

This is confirmed by other observers. Thus, the Finnish newspaper *Borgobladet*, published in Swedish, states, that “on the basis of reports received from various parts of the country, sometimes a definite disinclination for national defense is to be observed, a lack of understanding of the necessity for constant military preparedness and for the consequent emergency regime.”

The same circles which for twenty-two years have been wield-

ing their reactionary rule in Finland: in 1918 stifled the revolt of the workers in an ocean of blood; in 1918, 1919 and 1921-22 attempted to invade the Soviet Union; in 1930 effected a bloody coup d'état, and which finally, in 1939, provoked the insane war against the Soviet Union, have learned nothing from events and, to this day, have not abandoned the hope of again resuming openly their old policy, which they are now obliged to pursue circumspectly and clandestinely. Their thoughts and actions are not inspired by the sorrows and sufferings of the people, or by any desire to ensure for them a peaceful future, but by new risky and venturesome plans, for which they are trying to find imperialist backers. But in their reactionary ambitions and lust for power, they forget the profound change of attitude that is taking place among the masses.

This change of attitude among the working people is enhanced not only by what they see going on in their own country, but, and no less, by what they know to be going on beyond its borders. They learned of the new constitution that has been adopted in the neighboring and kindred Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic, a constitution which guarantees the working people complete freedom, true democracy, work, prosperity, cultural and national progress and, above all, peace. The development of the three Baltic countries, the three new constituent republics of the mighty Soviet Union, whose peoples have been spared the horrors of war and have entered the path of freedom and prosperity, serves as a contrast, en-

abling them to judge the full magnitude of the crime committed by the reactionary gang of warmongers against their own country. The constitutions of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic and of the three new Baltic Soviet Republics sound in the ears of the Finnish working people as a powerful denunciation of the plutocratic regime by which they are governed, as a program for their future struggles.

* * *

In response to these developments among the masses, the plutocratic regime is again attempting to resort to its old methods of terrorism, attacks on meetings, dismissal of workers, and the arrest and assassination of working men. But it seems as if they have lost their former virility and will not succeed in mastering the movement. In the middle of July, the Finnish Government was reconstructed: Tanner resigned and was replaced by Kallikoski, a big landowner. Tanner was one of the men chiefly responsible for the fatal policy hitherto pursued; as a Minister, he was no longer of much use to the bourgeoisie; in fact, he was rather a handicap. And the Government was also a handicap to him. Tanner, since his resignation from the Government, even more strongly cherishes the hope of being able to dam the powerful movement of sympathy for the Soviet Union among the Finnish working people, by passing himself off as a warm supporter of friendly and peaceful relations with the Soviet Union, and at the same time denouncing the

workers and intellectuals in the new pro-Soviet League as disturbers of friendly relations with that country.

He forgets that his hypocritical professions of friendship for the Soviet Union have been denounced once already, in November, 1939, when, as negotiator for the Finnish White Guards, he donned the guise of a "Socialist," when as a matter of fact, as the Soviet press rightly pointed out at the time, he was the "evil spirit of the negotiations and the man who engineered their breakdown."

In face of the change of attitude in the labor movement, the reactionary leaders of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party are also appealing for "unity of the workers" and calling for a fight against the "splitters." Yet at the same time that they are calling for a fight against the Left wing and the friends of the Soviet Union, they are appealing to the workers to join Mannerheim's new Ex-Combatants' League, whose avowed aim is to "continue the fellowship-of-arms that was tried and tested in the war." But a large section of the Finnish workers are today aware that when men like Tanner talk of unity, they mean nothing but unity with the bourgeoisie and Mannerheim. The Finnish workers have begun to realize that only by emancipating themselves from this fraudulent unity can they achieve the firm unity of their own class and of all the working people and forge the weapon with which to win for their country the freedom, happiness and prosperity for which they so ardently yearn.

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