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INTERNATIONAL

COUNCIL

CORRESPONDENCE

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By the Groups of Council Communists of America

The period of progressive capitalist development is historically closed. The decline period of capital, a permanent condition of crisis, compels to ever greater convulsions of economy, to new imperialistic and military conflicts, to ever increasing unemployment and to general and absolute impoverishment of the workers. Thus is given the objective situation for the communist revolution in the capitalist countries. For the working class, there is only the revolutionary way out, which leads to the communist society. No one can deprive the workers of this task, which must be carried out by the class itself.

The publishers of Council Correspondence see in the acting self-initiative of the workers and in the growth of their self-consciousness the essential advance of the labor movement. We therefore combat the leadership policy of the old labor movement, and call upon the workers to take their fate in their own hands, to set aside the capitalist mode of production and themselves to administer and direct production and distribution in accordance with social rules having universal validity. As a fighting slogan and statement of goal we propose:

All power to the workers' councils! The means of production in the hands of the Workers!

THE POWER OF THE CLASSES.

I.

The power of the capitalist class is enormous. Never in history was there a ruling class with such power. Their power is first, money power. All the treasures of the world are theirs, and modern capital, produced by the ceaseless toil of millions of workers, exceeds all the treasures of the old world. The surplus value is partly accumulated into ever more and new capital; partly it must be spent by the capitalists. They buy servants for their personal attendants; they also buy people to defend them, to safeguard their power and their dominating position. In capitalism everything can be bought for money; muscles and brain as well as love and honor have become market goods. Said old John D. Rockefeller: "Everyone can be bought if you only know his price". The statement is not exactly true, but it shows the capitalist's view of the world.

The capitalists buy young proletarians to form a fighting force. In the same way as they buy Pinkertons against strikers, they will, in times of greater danger, organize huge armies of volunteers provided with the best modern arms, well-fed and well-paid, to defend their sacred capitalist order.

But capitalism cannot be defended by brutal force alone. Being itself the outcome of a high development of intellectual forces, it must consequently be de-

fended by these same intellectual forces. Behind the physical struggle in the class war, stands the spiritual contest of ideas. Capitalists know that, often better than the workers. Hence they buy all the good brains they can. Often in a coarse, open way; most often however, indirectly. This is done, for instance, by donating money for cultural purposes. Numerous students of science the world over have profited in their researches from the "Rockefeller Foundation". Thus the name 'Rockefeller' has a reputation in the field of natural sciences where 'Ludlow' is never heard of. This kind of philanthropy serves capitalism well. Capitalists have founded universities all over the United States where among other sciences sociology is taught, to demonstrate the impossibility and wickedness of communism. The young people leave the universities imbued with these ideas and they know high salaries and public honor await them if they do not deviate from the straight path of capitalism.

The capitalists buy the press; they buy the editors; they buy all the means of publicity, and in this way they mould public opinion. It is an invisible spiritual despotism by which the entire nation is made to think as the capitalist class wish it to think. Money reigns over the world, thus it can buy the brain power available.

Capitalist power in the second place is political. The State is the organization of the capitalist class. Its task is to render possible private production, and to enable the individual capitalists to carry on their businesses by protecting and regulating their intercourse.

The government makes laws for the protection of "honest" businessmen against "thieves" and "murderers". Against strikers and revolutionists, who are far more dangerous to the existing social order, laws even more drastic are made. For the enforcing of these laws, the police and jail are used. In every strike, in every political demonstration, the workers find the police arrayed against them, clubbing and throwing them into jail for the benefit of the capitalist class and to protect the capitalists profits. Gangs of hired thugs are sworn in as deputy sheriffs and given police authority; and when the workers cannot be subdued in this way, militia and citizen guards are mobilized against them.

In each capitalist country the army is the strongest force in the service of the capitalist class, because for its wars with other countries, it needs the fighting power of the whole country, all classes included.

The army is an organized body bound together by the strictest military discipline, provided with the most cruel, refined and effective means of killing and destroying. If it is used in political wars, where in the worst case the capitalist class suffers only heavy losses, is it not to be used then in case of revolution where the capitalist class is menaced with complete loss of all it possesses?

Thus the nation is the stronghold of capitalism. As a strongly organized power, nation-wide, directed by the uniform will of the central government, provided with a powerful army, it protects the capitalist class. Physical force, however, is not sufficient to subdue a people or a class. How many strong governments in history, though well-armed, have been overthrown by rebellions. Spiritual forces in most cases are decisive above mere physical power. In capitalism the rule holds good that in the long run it is more effectual to fool people than to beat them.

So capitalist power consists thirdly in its intellectual power. The ideas of a ruling class pervade the majority of the members of society. Certainly the capitalist class could not buy guards and intellectuals if these fellows did not share its ideology and sentiments. Capitalist government could not govern, even with its strong physical force, if the mass of the people were not filled with the same spirit as the government itself. How is it possible that in the mass of the people, even in the working class, this capitalist spirit prevails?

The main force is tradition and inheritance. The ideology of the capitalist class is nothing but the ideology of the former middle classes, the petty producers. The idea of private property as a natural right, the belief that everyone should build his own fortune and that free competition guarantees the best results, the maxim that everyone has only to care for himself and God will take care of the rest, the conviction that thrift and industry are the virtues which secure prosperity, and that America is the best country and should be defended against other nations, all these beliefs are inherited from the time and the class of small business. And this is the very creed big business wants the masses to believe in as eternal truths today.

The fathers or grandfathers of the proletarians of today were such small business men themselves; small farmers, settlers, craftsmen, even small capitalists, ridden down by competition. They, too, have inherited these ideas, and in their youth found them to be true. Then society changed rapidly and big industry developed,

and they became forever proletarians. Their ideas, however, could not change so rapidly and their mind clings to the old ideology.

Still, the school of life is powerful and impresses the mind with new ideas in line with the changing world. But now the capitalist school comes into action. With all available means, the capitalist ideas are propagated and artificially forced upon the minds of the people. At first in the schools when the children's minds are flexible and impressionable; afterwards for the adults from the pulpit, in the daily press, by the radio, the movies, etc. Their task is not only to keep the capitalistic way of thinking alive in the working class minds, but still more, to prevent them thinking at all. By filling their time and their minds with exciting futilities, they kill every wish for serious reading and thinking.

May this be called fooling the workers? The capitalistic class is sincere in this propaganda; it believes what it tries to urge upon the workers. But capitalistic ideology is foolishness for the workers. The workers have to foster the new ideas that are growing out of the changing world; they have to acquire the knowledge of the evolution of labor and of the class struggle as the way to communism.

Thus the power of the capitalist class is more than their money and political power alone. The small business men, the small farmers, who believe they will succeed by personal effort--as sometimes they do--are a part of the capitalist power. Every workman who only cares for himself and not for the future of his class, every workman who only reads capitalist newspapers and finds his chief interest in boxing matches, etc., by so doing contributes to the power of the capitalist class.

In the rapid development of technical and economic forms of production, the mind of man is left behind. This mental backwardness of the working masses is the chief power of the capitalist class.

II

What power can the working class set forth against it? First, the working class is the most numerous class in society. By the growth of industry it continually increases, whereas the number of independent businessmen has relatively decreased. The available statistics show that in the United States the working class is the largest class. Only the farmers and the salaried employees follow at some distance as important classes. The capitalist class proper is insignificant in num-

bers; and the small and middle class men and petty dealers are much less numerous than the wage workers. But number is not the only thing that counts. A number of millions, dispersed in widely separated homes all over the land, cannot exert the same power as the same number of millions pressed together in the towns. The big towns are the centers of economical, cultural and political life. The millions of workers, forming the majorities in the population in these centers, assembled into big class-agglomerations, must, under these conditions exert a strong social power.

In ancient Rome the proletarians were numerous also, and strongly concentrated. Their social power, however, was nothing because they did not work. They were parasites; they lived from public moneys. With the modern proletarians, the matter is the reverse.

The second element of power for the working class is its importance in human society. It is on their work that society is founded. The capitalists might be dismissed, the petty producers and dealers might be dispensed with, without impairing the production of life necessities which mostly takes place in the big factories. But the working class cannot be dispensed with. With its essential, fundamental role only the work of the farmers can be compared.

The workers have their hand on the production apparatus. They manage it; they work it; they command it; they have direct power over it. Not legally, for legally they have to obey the capitalists, and police and soldiers may come to enforce this legal right. But actually it is theirs, for without them the living producing machinery is a dead carcass. If they refuse to work, society cannot exist. It has happened already, that a general strike has paralyzed the entire economic and social life, and thereby wrung important concessions from the unwilling ruling class. Then for a moment, like a flash of lightning, that mighty power of the proletarian class, its intimate connection with the production apparatus, was disclosed.

To be sure, if this possible power is to become a living, actual power, a weighty condition must be fulfilled. Such united action of the whole class is not possible, if it is not sustained by a strong moral force. So, as the third element of proletarian power, we find solidarity, the spirit of unity, organization. Solidarity is the bond that unites the will of all the separate individuals into one common will, thus achieving one mighty organized action.

Is it right to speak of a specifically proletarian

virtue? Does not capitalism itself practice organization and united action in its factories, in its trusts, in its armies? Here the unity is based upon command, upon fines, upon penalties. Certainly, for common interests combined action must take place in each class, but here again the true economic position manifests itself, that capitalists are competitors, and workers are comrades.

Capitalism is based upon private business, private interests. The more eagerly the capitalist pursues his personal interests, the better for his business. Hence a hard egotism is developed that submerges natural human sympathies. The workers, on the other hand, cannot win anything by egotism. So long as they face capital individually, they are powerless and miserable; only by collective action can they win better conditions. The more they pursue personal interests, the more they are beaten down. The more they develop a feeling of fellowship, of mutual aid, of self-sacrifice for their class, the better it is for their interests.

When at the dawn of civilization, private property came into being, men separated, each to work on his own lot, in order to develop productivity of labor in mutual competition. In this century-long development, from small crafts to modern industry, civilized man rose to a sturdy self-determinism, to independence, to confidence in his own powers and to a strong feeling of individualism. All his energies and faculties were awakened to the service of his fighting powers. But this was at the cost of moral losses; egotism and cruelty grew in mankind, and distrust and enmity sprang up amidst fellowmen.

Now the modern proletariat is coming up, for the first time a class without property, hence without real interests one against the other. Still endowed with the personal energies and faculties inherited from their ancestors, they are trained by the machine into the discipline of common action. And though their attempts for a better living standard are helplessly beaten down by the overwhelming power of capitalism, much good comes from these attempts. Their common interests against the capitalist class awakens in them the feelings of brotherhood.

As the working class finds strength in its moral superiority over the capitalist class, it also finds strength in its intellectual superiority. To the feeling is added the knowledge. First comes the deed, the action of solidarity, that springs spontaneously from the depth of emotion and passion. After that comes the

insight that there is an unavoidable conflict of opposing interests. It is the first form of class-consciousness. With the deepening of knowledge, the ways of action, the fighting conditions are seen more clearly; and as is the case of all science, this insight will lead future actions along the most efficient ways of getting results.

After their number, their social importance, their moral force of solidarity, this knowledge is the fourth element in proletarian power. It is the science developed chiefly by Marx and Engels which explains, first, the course of history from the growth of society in its primitive beginnings, thru feudalism and capitalism, thence to communism, basing this analysis upon the development of labor and its productivity. And second, it explains the structure of capitalist production and shows how capitalism must break down by means of its own forces, by developing and exploiting the proletarian class, by driving it into revolt thru its own collapses, and by increasing thereby the proletarians fighting powers.

This science, Marxism, is a proletarian science. The capitalist class rejects it; its scientists deny its truth. Indeed, it is impossible for the capitalist class to accept it. No class can accept a theory that proclaims its own collapse and death; for by accepting it, it could not fight with full confidence and with full force. To fight against annihilation is a primary instinct, in a class as well as in an organism.

The capitalist class cannot see beyond the horizon of capitalism. So it sees the growing concentration of capital, the growing power of big finance, the heavy crises and the impending world wars, the rising tide of the proletarian fight with its threat of revolution, it sees all these phenomena without drawing one rational conclusion from them. It sees no sense in history, though its ablest scientists investigate every detail; it sees no light in the future, uncertainty and mysticism fill its mind. But it has one determination, to fight for its supremacy.

For the workers this science enlightens their arduous course to the future. It makes clear to them their life, their work, their poverty, their relation to their employers, and to the other classes. It explains to them the reality of the world as they experience it, different indeed from the capitalist teachings. Whereas the school of life impresses their minds with new ideas in line with the new world, it is this science of society that moulds these ideas into a firm consistent knowledge. And so the workers will eventually acquire the wisdom they need in their fight for freedom.

COMMUNISM AND RELIGION

I.

The fierce struggle which Bolshevism has waged and is still waging against religion in Russia is particularly well adapted to throw light on the essence of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks are conducting this struggle in the name of Marxism, just as all the rest of their policy is put thru. They invoke in this connection the Marxian dictum which stands engraved as a motto on the facade of the Moscow community center: that religion is the opium of the people. At the time when the youthful Marx wrote that, in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" (1843), his own struggle had points of similarity with the later struggle of Bolshevism in Russia. He stood, that is, as the most advanced among the Young Hegelians, foremost in the struggle for civil liberty against feudal absolutism in Prussia. The bourgeoisie was still without political power but was coming up; public life was harassed by arbitrary action of the police, intellectual life by the censorship, and the best minds were living abroad. Narrow-minded princes were using religion as justification of their right to suppress all liberty. Therefore, according to Marx's expression at the time, the criticism of earth had to begin with the criticism of heaven.

The rise of bourgeois society was always accompanied by a struggle against the Church, against certain forms of religion or against religion in general. This was quite in the nature of things, since under feudalism Church and Society formed a strictly interrelated unity. The Church fulfilled political and social functions which in later centuries were taken over more and more by the State and its organs: law-giving, instruction, administration, safe-guarding of communication, promotion of technics. In particular, everything intellectual in the guidance of society was its task, in the smallest village as well as thruout the body politic; the Church ruled like a super-monarchy over the whole of Christendom, and was the most formidable exploiting power. It was natural then that during the rise of the bourgeoisie any resistance to this exploitation should assume the form of heresy (Albigenses, Hussites). And in the following centuries when this resistance assumed the proportions of a seizure of power by the bourgeoisie, it came about under the banner of a renewal of religion, as the Reformation among the Protestants, the Calvinites and Puritans.

In the class struggles of the 16th and 17th centuries the religions were what political parties were in the 19th, the living organizations of that struggle; later they fossilized into churches with dead dogmas.

When the way was being paved for the revolution in France in the 18th century, the movement was directed not merely against the nobility and monarchy, but also against the Church. Obedience to the Church was bound up with obedience to the Prince; religion was the most important means of holding the masses in subjection. A powerful opposition, socially, to the ruling power determined therefore, spiritually, a breaking away from the Church. The principal form of this latter opposition was that of a hazy personal religious sentiment, apart from all clerical doctrine, as in the case of Rousseau, whose materialistic views were even at this time to be met with in a number of thinkers. Thru the discoveries of natural science, particularly of the law of gravitation by Newton, it had become established that nature is subject to a fixed order of natural laws precluding any arbitrary interference. This provided the rising bourgeoisie with weapons of free critical thought in its struggle against the Church. There was also the fact that the peasants and bourgeoisie looked with envy upon the great neglected landed property of the Church, a domain which they themselves had liked to possess in order to cultivate and improve it. And in the French Revolution of 1789 they did, as a matter of fact, rob the Church of those possessions. In view of the enormous state deficit, that was the only way in which state bankruptcy could be avoided: the seizure and sale of the holdings of the Church, so that they could be put to further use for agricultural and industrial purposes. Since that time, the Church has been the sworn foe of revolution. And consequently the revolutionary bourgeoisie was obliged to attack the Church more sharply than it would otherwise have been inclined to do, by way of the struggle against religion. The fact that in France, even down to the present day, rationalism and free thought are so widespread among the middle classes is in good part owing to that historical conflict.

In the 19th century, the bourgeoisie was obliged to continue this struggle, not only in France but in other countries in which it was coming up, in order to gain the complete mastery. And in this connection the struggle against the prevailing religion had to be carried on for a double reason:

In the first place, the traditional forms of religion had their origin in an outmoded and backward mode of production, to which they were well adapted,--a world

of handicraft and small peasantry, from which society was now lifting itself. This religion rested upon outward forms of devotion and was a narrow, stupid superstition of petty bourgeois and peasants, among whom the pastor or priest was the one and only literate intellectual. In the developed bourgeoisie itself, a different religion was growing up, one which conformed to the needs of a commodity-producing society: the personal faith of an independent bourgeois thrown upon his own resources. In him, the traditional doctrines were losing their force. To this may be added the rapid development of natural science, which, as the basis of the rapid development of technics and of the flowering of capitalism, received at the hands of the bourgeoisie a special care. This science taught the extension of the universe, the laws of nature, the millions of years of the history of life on earth, the evolution of the animal kingdom to man; in all fields of knowledge it contradicted the bible stories as primitive ignorance. And here we have the advent of the keenest among the new views, namely, bourgeois materialism, which is often also given the name of natural-science materialism. It taught that the entire world, inclusive of life and the development of humanity, is governed only thru natural laws, that these natural laws are capable of explaining all riddles of life and fate, and that a higher mysterious power is not needed to that end, and does not exist. Because these thinkers of the bourgeoisie believed that the capitalist development would bring about general well-being and remove all misery, all poverty and all stupidity, they saw all problems as solved or soluble, and no longer had need of any higher power.

The bourgeoisie could not be content, however, with its own abandonment of the old religion, but was obliged also to attack and combat it. For the bourgeoisie wanted to win the power in society out of the hands of princes, nobility and landed proprietors. The power of all these reactionary classes, who wished to maintain what was old and outworn, rested upon the submissiveness of the unenlightened masses, the peasants and petty bourgeois; and this submissiveness was anchored in their religion. Because religion was the foundation and the Church the ally of the traditional power, therefore the bourgeoisie was obliged to conduct the spiritual struggle against religion and church. It had to break this mass away from its spiritual leaders, and convert it into its own following. And this was done by spreading enlightenment and education among this mass and filling it with new ideas. Innumerable are the literary works of a popular scientific cast which came into being around the middle of the 19th century, for the purpose of "enlightening the people", that is,

in order to win the masses for the bourgeoisie, to inculcate them with the political and religious views of the bourgeoisie and so to take the foundation out from under the old ruling elements. And where the struggle became hard and furious, the most radical views were disseminated and materialism attained an added significance.

The reason why this struggle soon came to nothing and was discontinued when the bourgeoisie was master of the state power, and frequently even before that time, will be seen farther on.

II.

In Russia the struggle had to be waged against the same powers against which the bourgeois revolutions were directed in western Europe: the princely absolutism which by means of a horrible police regime held down all stirrings of a libertarian development, and against big landed property which held the peasants in thrall. The struggle had to be waged in the midst of a population which in intellectual respects resembled most the peasant masses of medieval Europe, long before the bourgeois revolution. The Russian muzhiks were, in fact, much more ignorant and backward than these latter. In Russia also the Church was a foundation-pillar of the princely power, and even without reserve a subordinate organ of Czarism. There also religion, in harmony with the primitively barbarous economy, was a barbarous blind belief in the miraculous power of saintly bones and of candles, and the simple souls were charmed and intoxicated by means of sumptuous light and glittering gold vestments.

The means by which the Bolshevik Party was able to win the political power and demolish Czarism and the bourgeoisie was this: it championed the economic interests of the peasants, their striving to get possession of the land, against the landed proprietors, set this up as the goal of the revolution and thus won the peasants for its program. But next it had to take care that the peasants should not, subsequently, after they had attained their goal, turn against the Party, take up with a bourgeois policy of their own and to that end make use of their old spiritual power, the Church, as a rallying point. For this reason the reactionary power by which the peasants had hitherto been dominated had to be destroyed, so that the peasants should become supporters of Bolshevism spiritually as well as materially. That was possible only by way of a struggle against the Church, in the most radical form by way of an intensive propaganda against religion in general.

This struggle, which was waged directly thru the "League of the Godless" but with the support of the State, was scarcely distinguishable in character and content from the one which was waged earlier in western Europe by the bourgeois materialists and free thinkers. It had nothing whatever to do with Marxism. And the philosophical polemics of Lenin dating from the time prior to the Revolution (in the complete edition of his works, collected under the title "Materialism and Empiriocriticism") are quite on the level of bourgeois materialism; which, of course, is quite natural since his struggle in Russia was directed against the same sort of opponents. The propaganda in Russia was distinguished from that of western Europe only in the circumstance that it was waged with still more primitive arguments and cruder instruments, because it was directed against a still more barbarous superstition. The procedure has, of course, been described before: the muzhik's understanding of the arguments based on natural science is rather limited; but he sees and hears these godless ones direct the fiercest sort of attacks against God, give utterance to the most terrible blasphemies,--and no flash of lightning from heaven strikes the evil-doers. That proves to him that God doesn't exist, or at any rate doesn't care about what people do here below. And so he draws his conclusions: he lets the priest go hungry, converts the cross into kindling wood and the church into a stable, hangs pictures of Marx and Lenin in his room and perhaps burns candles to them. The younger generation, however, takes up with the youth groups which educate themselves in national economy and natural science, and it takes over Materialism as a recognized and matter-of-course doctrine. In Russia a new generation is growing up, and has been growing up a sufficient number of years to form a new stratum of adults to whom religion is only an historical phenomenon, a superstition of elderly people belonging to the past. The Russian Church has gone under with Czarism.

This is not to say that religion generally, in Russia, has disappeared or is surely disappearing. First because we have in fact the occurrence, in limited measure, of what was posited above: where the peasants come into conflict with the government, their revolt assumes the form of a churchly resistance. When their allegiance to the old small-peasant mode of economy comes into conflict with the semi-violent introduction of modern agriculture and large-scale operation in the kolhozes, the peasants seek strength by coming together in the Church, in the old religion, the symbol of what is old and which likewise is being suppressed by the State. The economic struggle is waged in the ideal form of a religious conflict; and the western-european press prints stories about horrible religious persecu-

tions in Russia without a suspicion that these so-called persecutions signify mainly an economic-political conflict regarding the building up of Russian agriculture. As a focus of all economic reaction, religion remains in existence.

Besides, as is well known, on the Volga the peasant villages of the Germans maintain their evangelical faith, remaining unphased by the atheistical propaganda. Religion is here a much more deeply rooted personal conviction, brought along from the petty-bourgeois commodity production of western countries, and therefore practically immune to the primitive arguments of the "godless". These peasants become involved in conflicts with the bases of the state-socialist economic system. And so it is quite natural that the prevailing system comes into conflict also with these German peasants; and because the opposed social ideas express themselves in the form of opposed religious ideas,--Atheism on the one hand, and Protestantism on the other--here also the struggle assumes the form of a religious persecution.

Religion is not simply a superstition invented by priests and rulers and which can be combatted by atheistical propaganda. Nor is it a mere outcropping of ignorance which can be destroyed thru indoctrination with natural science. It arises from the incapacity of human beings to control their own destiny. It is an expression of the feeling that unknown and overpowerful forces, of either natural or social origin, are masters over life and destiny. Whether and in what form religion will continue to exist in Russia depends therefore on the country's further economic development. The atheism of the youthful Russia is in harmony with this first period of the rise of state capitalism: the Russians see before them an unrestricted and boundless development toward well-being and superfluity; they see the problems of life as solved and no higher power is needful. But Russia is already becoming involved in world policy, which at the present time is issuing in the derailment of capitalism toward world war, decline, revolution; the dangers which menace the rest of the capitalist world cannot be evaded by Russia, she is not the master of her destiny. Recent press reports are significant in this respect; they state that the Russian government, after the treaties with the west-European governments, has now negotiated with the Roman Catholic Church regarding permission of Catholic propaganda. If by the side of the prevailing state capitalism there should still remain or arise in Russia private property and commodity production in considerable measure, the acquired Materialism, as against the spiritual effects of this material reality, would become a mere outward form.

III.

Just as the Communist Party carried over the bolshevist methods into the political class struggle of western Europe and America, so it has also copied here the Russian method of combatting religion. And so in this question also we are presented with an instructive example of the great opposition between Bolshevism and Communism, as an outcome of the opposition between the primitive Russian society of czarist times and the developed capitalism of the West.

Communism, the emancipation of the working class, signifies the end of religion. With the vanishing of earthly misery, there vanishes also the heavenly reflex of this misery. When humanity directs the labor process with conscious design and its own existence is thereby assured, when man is the master of his destiny and is not mastered by any enigmatic superior forces, he then sees the whole world before him with open clarity, and no phantasmagoria of an anguished mind can any longer cloud his insight. But even when this goal is not yet attained, the realization that it will be attained has a liberating effect upon the mind. Historical Materialism, the Marxian doctrine, teaches us to understand the social forces. The workers see that there are no mysterious supernatural powers which bring them poverty, misery, war, destruction, but that all these things are outcomes of capitalism; things which they, thru their struggle, can conquer and set aside. Therefore these forces, altho still very powerful, are no longer mysterious; and hence religion vanishes among the working masses who, thru Socialism or Communism, have acquired a basis of Marxist insight. This does not come about thru the force of atheistical arguments against religion, by which the workers are convinced and won over. Rather, by reason of the new social insight, the feeling of timid uncertainty is dissipated and vanishes from their consciousness, so that their minds become accessible to arguments which in reality they scarcely need any more, and their religion goes by the board.

A profound difference exists between the Marxist Historical Materialism and the bourgeois Materialism dating from the middle of the last century. The latter thought to be able to explain human society by means of natural laws and was quite unaware of the fact that society has its own laws. Marxism points out these laws of society by which the development of humanity is conditioned. Bourgeois materialism believed that thru knowledge of the natural laws and thru their application in technics, man could master his destiny

and thereby also become spiritually free. But this application, the development of Capitalism, gave rise to still greater misery and to unknown powers which were still more formidable. Marxism explains these powers and enlightens the workers regarding the manner in which the workers themselves, with the aid of this science, can conquer them. The opposition of the two kinds of materialism comes forth most clearly in their respective conceptions of religion, the one regarding it as a simple effect of ignorance regarding nature, the other as an effect of social factors. And on this basis we see that the manner in which religion is combatted by Bolshevism is quite on the plane of bourgeois materialism.

If religion were nothing more than a product of ignorance, it would have had to vanish more and more among the educated class, the bourgeoisie, in the last half-century of increasing scientific knowledge and constantly better instruction. But what do we see? That during this time this class, even its intellectual part, has grown more and more religious. Of course it is often said that this is merely owing to the fact that the bourgeoisie has an interest in maintaining religion among the people and therefore supports religion by its own example. No doubt this comes into play among other things, but it is not the main matter. With such superficial views regarding its opponents, the proletariat can only weaken itself. The bourgeoisie is not made up, intellectually, of hypocrites any more than it is composed, economically, of evil-doers and politically of blockheads,--regardless of what the propaganda of party politicians thirsting for power would have us believe. The religious sentiments in this class are for the most part genuine, and we shall endeavor to show that such is quite in the nature of things.

Religion is the fantastic form in which people give expression to their unconscious sentiment of their connection with the universe, so long as they do not know the real connection. Man has always been dependent on the world for his existence and this dependence will continue to exist because man always remains a part of the world and his life is a part of the total process of universal history. But in the periods of history which lie behind us he failed to realize clearly this dependence and to master it. In the early times of primitive cultural conditions, the means of living were offered him by way of natural phenomena independent of his will, (sunshine, rain, fertile soil); but at the same time, powerful forces were capable of destroying him. More recently, by means of technical devices, later supported by natural science, he learned

to direct these natural forces, to use them and draw them into his service. His life became richer and more secure. This was followed, however, by the advent of social forces, arising out of the forms of production in which, with advancing technology, people worked together in ever greater units: tribes and, later on, cities and nations, leading to states and classes. Struggle of the tribes for land, struggle of the cities and states for trade and profit, struggle of all against all in sharp competition, struggle of the classes for their share of the product and for power, war and crisis in modern times -- all these things, as mighty forces, drove people forward and brought them success or decline. The individual felt powerless, and was so in fact; happiness and disaster were not dependent on himself. While he lived in the midst of a world of constantly richer possibilities, brought about by way of collective human effort, but without conscious design and plan, he was visited by catastrophes and threatened with extinction by forces which he did not understand and failed to master, forces which likewise were brought about by way of collective human effort, but also without conscious design and plan. This dependence on a world totality standing high and mighty above him and beyond his understanding expressed itself in a feeling of fear and dejection, occasionally of confidence and calmness, but always of subjection to the sublimated personifications of these forces, hence in religious feelings.

In the modern capitalist class, two tendencies are working counter to each other. On the one hand, its technical power has never revealed itself so mighty as in the present period, the period of the rise and perfection of aerial navigation, the enormous acceleration of international communication, spiritual and material, of the refinement of machine technique and of the more substantial interweaving of labor and science. That which previously had been noted as an astonishing compendium of unconscious growth -- man's mastery over nature and the natural forces -- was now proudly proclaimed as the program of a consciously directed technico-scientific advance. Thus there arose in the bourgeoisie the consciousness of unlimited possibilities, the feeling of being capable of everything. This was especially true of the masters of production, the world's economic leaders, who saw themselves as the directors of human destiny. The spiritual reflex of this tendency was not so much materialism, insight into the natural forces of the world, as cynicism, contempt for what others revere.

In the midst of this feeling of confidence, however, another sentiment was at work even long before the advent of the present world crisis in which the anarchy

of capitalist production has driven its masters to desperate exertions and fearful doubt regarding the future. For the menace of the proletarian Revolution has hung like a sword over the bourgeoisie from the very time of its rise to power. As soon as the working class, a half-century ago, began to organize, took up the struggle and proclaimed its socialist goals, it was all up with the self-confidence of the bourgeoisie. And thereupon the bourgeois Materialism melted away, and only feeble remnants of it have been at work since that time in a part of the petty bourgeoisie and of the workers. For it was now revealed that natural science could not liberate humanity and that technique under capitalism could bring no general happiness, no peace, no freedom. The future grew dark and uncertain; the bourgeoisie saw its world full of incomprehensible and menacing forces. And so there arose in the class all sorts of mysticism and superstition.

The bourgeoisie has been shaken in its self-confidence by two catastrophes: first the World War, then the world crisis. And now there hangs over it like a tormenting storm cloud the menace of a still more devastating world war. The bourgeoisie does not have its world in hand. Powerless and without an idea as to what is to be done, it stands confronting the irresistible power of these social forces. And when they have again been unleashed, it sees the rise of the working class, which is still for the time being calmed by means of unemployment relief to exorcise hunger revolts, and still held in check thru the possibility of parliamentary protests or thru hope of a better economic order promised from above. But after all it hears the rumbling in the depths, it sees here and there the flashing up of the new ideas which lend force to a coming revolution, it is thinking more about the revolution than the workers themselves do, and it is making ready to proceed against it with the sharpest means at command. For the bourgeoisie can see in revolution and Communism nothing other than chaos, extinction of all culture and the end of humanity. And yet it feels instinctively that it is powerless to evade this catastrophe. Thus there arises in this class more and more strongly the belief in a super-human, supernatural power by which the world is governed. And it clings still more strongly to this belief because of the feeble hope that in this way perhaps the workers may be held back from their goal and the strength which lies in their unity may be broken.

IV

The rise of the socialist labor movement in the last half-century is the first case in the history of humanity in which irreligion has become a mass pheno-

menon. These masses had brought religion with them as a tradition out of their earlier petty-bourgeois or peasant mode of production. But, thrown together as workers into capitalist industry, they learned to conduct the class struggle, they learned a few things regarding the development of society to socialism, they recognized that their deplorable situation was owing to natural and understandable causes, and they saw the possibility of putting an end to that situation thru their own strength. In the most important practice of life, their minds had occasion to concern themselves only with realities, with the understanding of real things, and so the traditional fantastic thinking was bound to be dispelled and gradually vanish. This process is still going on.

The connection between society and ideas is not to be conceived mechanically as a formula, prescribing necessarily to each definite class a definite mode of looking at things. Society works upon us continually thru all the influences and forces of our surroundings, hence upon each of us differently in various particulars; and so the doctrines impressed upon us in youth and the traditions of earlier states of existence are gradually overcome, in one case more rapidly and in another more slowly. Differences may also occur in accordance with occupation: wherever workers are exposed to unforeseen catastrophes -- as in the case of miners and fishermen -- even tho they may know that inadequate safety measures play a part under capitalism, there remains in their minds a deeply rooted religiosity.

Another factor to be considered is the development of the labor movement itself. In the early days of its rise, when clear indoctrination with principles prevailed, the enlightenment was the most thorough-going. When, later, the great droves of fellow-travelers arrived, -- those who came to socialism only by reason of electoral successes and direct interests, not by reason of a profound transformation of their basic views, -- the traditional religion which they had brought along out of their petty-bourgeois surroundings remained practically unaffected. When the Social Democracy became a party like any other, in competition with the others, and the churches learned to compete with it by way of social slogans, social measures and labor organizations of their own, the dissemination of materialistic thinking among previously religious workers came to an end. There is also the fact that the theoretical indoctrination as well as the inner assurance regarding the future are weakened as a result of the reformistic degeneration of the movement. The bourgeoisie proves to be more powerful, the goal farther away and duskier than was formerly thought. And the

devastating forces of society reveal themselves, in war, in general disorder, in world crisis, mightier and more uncontrollable. All that could be opposed to them was merely a certain vague belief that finally after all the workers would win. But this belief expressed itself more as an ethical love of peace and declarations of the fraternity of the peoples than in strong and militant preparedness for the revolution. It is obvious that in such a labor movement tendencies of a religious coloring come forth more and more strongly and a sort of christian socialism gains in influence. And so we find, together with the political, also an intensified spiritual rapprochement with the bourgeoisie.

In apparently complete opposition thereto, we have the anti-religious propaganda of the Communist Party, which, following the russian example, includes in its activities that of combatting religion directly. Such a thing may appear quite radical, especially to those workers who themselves were obliged to overcome the religious traditions and have continually met with religion as a great impediment among their comrades. But in reality it is very superficial, remaining attached to the surface and the outer layers. To be radical is to get at the roots of things. The root of religion is the social essence, in this case the dependence and powerlessness. To attack this root requires -- so long as society is not itself transformed -- the bringing of such insight into the social development as to give rise to the certainty that liberation can be attained thru human effort. It is only that which can set aside the power of religious thinking. It does not come about thru theoretical discussions directed to demonstrating the falsity of religious dogmas; that is nothing more than an attack upon the outer form, upon the effect, while the cause, the inner essence, is left unclarified. Only a clear understanding of the forces by which society is driven and of how the thinking and acting of human beings are determined by vital needs of an economic nature, -- it is only this that makes the belief in supernatural explanations superfluous and senseless. Without this understanding, however, unbelief or atheism is just as much a dogmatic belief and just as lacking in solid foundations as is religion.

The atheism which is being propagated by the C.P. and the vague religiosity of many socialist circles are, one as much as the other, bourgeois modes of thought. Atheism and religion have this in common, that they are unconscious expressions of a sentiment produced in human beings by society. They are accordingly both dogmatic; that is, they regard themselves as absolute

truth and combat and persecute each other because they hold the opposed ideas to be determining as regards the practical struggle. In making use of the name Materialism as the doctrine of reality -- the doctrine which investigates, with a view to understanding, only reality, the real forces of the world -- we at the same time deny that atheism has any right whatever to bear this name. As a descendant of bourgeois materialism, atheism sees, to be sure, the reality of nature, but not the reality of society, hence only that of the less significant half of the universe. Its value is that of an empty hull, of a negative solution, because it merely asserts that the religious explanation of the world, the one by means of supernatural beings, is out of order. The thing that might give it a positive content, -- the real explanation of the world's development, a clear knowledge of the forces and their effects by which our life is governed, -- that is lacking. This content can be given only by Marx's historical materialism.

It was said above that the C.P. has propagated atheism and combatted religion, but the statement is in reality too favorable. It is the free thinkers who combat religion with fairly considered arguments. What has been done by the organs of the C.P. was not much more than jeering and offensive outbursts against religion. It is perhaps the clearest indication of the intellectual poverty of the communist parties that, in their intellectual dependence on Bolshevism, they came out in western Europe against religion with the same simple means with which the muzhiks were impressed in Russia. And of course it was not intended as serious combat, -- in such matters, that is beyond the capacities of the Russian Bolsheviks, -- but was designed merely to harass the bourgeoisie and to impress the workers with a bit of theatrical boldness. It is the old method of external appearance in the place of inner strength, -- a method which is at work also in their policy of employing high-sounding words, behind which there is only a reformistic striving for outward successes with a view to power. And as proof by example to show how faintly communist and how completely bourgeois this alleged materialism is, there comes as the last somersault the slogan of tolerance: now that Russia is making its peace with the western powers, the Communist International seeks to get on the good side of the bourgeoisie and, to that end, proclaims religious tolerance, the old bourgeois principle.

To the bourgeoisie, it is a principle. The bourgeoisie has received -- as a troublesome legacy from the earlier centuries when class struggles were reflected

in religious differences -- the various religions and churches, now contracted to rigid articles of faith. In spite of the fact that each must assume, according to his own doctrine, that the other fellow is forever lost, one must respect the other's belief, as otherwise no business could be conducted among the different sects. Business does not admit of any dispute about religious beliefs, and business is the main matter. And so in the capitalist world one must tolerate. Also in the case of political affairs.

The real communism is not tolerant. A communist worker whose deepest desire is to bring his class to a strong unity of action does not tolerate having his comrades remain without understanding of the social development. He knows that so long as clarity is lacking regarding society, the mind is filled with some belief or unbelief. The conversion of a belief to an empty unbelief does not bring his class any strength. He will set about with all his power to provide insight, clarity, understanding of society, insight into the goal and the struggle of the working class, in order that the workers may see with clear eyes the reality of the world by which their destiny is determined. It is then that the supernatural traditions lose their force. In this way the unity of action of all workers as a strictly coherent and conscious class is prepared and secured.

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C L A S S S T R U G G L E I N W A R

Second World War Inevitable.

The first world war was a consequence of the rise of German imperialism which began seriously to threaten the power of England and France. German heavy industry, more modernly equipped than the English, was a dangerous competitor in the world market. At the same time German imperialism reached out its tentacles to the raw-material districts hitherto dominated by England and France. The famous episode in which the cruiser 'Panther' was sent to North Africa to demonstrate for the mining interests of the German Mannesmann concern in Morocco was an eloquent example of this. Mainly, however, the power of German imperialism was directed toward Asia Minor (Bagdad Railway, Balkan policy, annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.). The developments, following the Balkan wars, finally resulted in the world war.

Today similar signs appear and the forebodings of a new world war are increasing. Another world war is inevitable, for the development of the productive forces cannot be arrested and with their development the newer countries become imperialistic and fight for a place in the sun against the older ones. Since the Asiatic countries have been drawn into the circle of world capitalism and machine production has been introduced there, and because they begin with a technique and productive methods at the highest stage of development, these young capitalist countries reach an enormous degree of economic, political and military power. They demand "their share" of the world market and try to secure for themselves raw material sources.

Japan, not undeservedly called the Germany of the East, in many respects recalls the situation of Germany in 1914. In addition it must be remembered that the semi-feudal conditions in the interior of Japan make possible a degree of working class exploitation that seems impossible even today in the older capitalist countries. It seems that Japanese capitalism has become a competitor that can no longer be defeated by economic means.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Japan swallows one Chinese province after the other, while extending economic control over the more distant territories of English and Dutch India, Australia, etc. That English imperialism is vitally threatened thereby is well known, and therefore it is generally expected that the occurrences in Eastern Asia are but the prelude to the new world war.

Russia's development to an industrial and military power of the first rank intensifies the strain of the situation further. Russia, too, is trying to extend its influence in China (Soviet China, uprisings in Turkestan and conflict over the Chinese-Eastern railway, 1929). Full and skillful advantage is being taken of the disintegration of the great Chinese empire which no longer represents an economic or political entity.

The big conflict over a redistribution of the world can break out any moment, therefore all countries are arming at a feverish pace. The great battle will not be long delayed. Probably it will not begin directly as a world war but as a conflict between two countries into which the others gradually will be drawn. Therefore every armed conflict today between two countries is at the same time an advance skirmish to the second world war.

The Ideological Preparation for the Second World War.

Armaments are proceeding with feverish haste in all countries. But they are not limited to the production of physical means, such as tanks, poison gas, bombs, etc. More important than these is the ideological preparedness for the war, so that, above all, the working masses will participate enthusiastically. A working class forced to participate in war against its will means resistance and insubordination; and strikes that endanger the successful pursuit of war break out too easily. No matter how well equipped technically the war machine may be, it can function in case of war only if supplied with all necessities by the labor in the factories of the whole working population. That is why the ruling class must, above all, prepare the working class ideologically. A systematic propaganda, equipped with all the means of modern society, has long been at work to influence the thinking of the working masses to create the belief that in case of war they will be fighting to protect their own interests.

Of course this ideological preparedness is not accomplished by openly proclaiming that the conflict will be over the redistribution of markets and raw material sources. The workers are called on to defend "their own" (national) culture, as was done in the world war of 1914. Then it was the horrible specter of bloody Czarism with its savage Kossacks that was used to drive millions of German workers into the arms of the militarists. The French workers were urged to overthrow the Prussian rule of force and German monarchism while the English and American workers were fighting to bestow the blessings of Democracy on the world.

Today similar methods are invoked.

The hopeless economic conditions in Middle Europe have forced a union of all national forces thru which monopoly capitalism gained the strength to begin the struggle for a redistribution of the world. The fascist governmental form, which subordinates all capital and working forces of the nation, is but the preparation of these countries for this struggle soon to begin. Fascism and National Socialism thus drives irresistibly toward war. However, this is also true of the great powers of the West, altho with them it is a question of maintaining their privileged position. What they have seized and stolen in the course of years, they want to keep. Both fascist and democratic powers are driving toward war. Capital in the fascist countries must extend its sphere of power; capital in the democratic countries cannot permit this and heads for "war against fascism". This struggle of "democratic" against "fascist" capital is skillfully being camouflaged into a struggle in which the working masses will be directly interested.

In the fascist countries the great capitalist powers of the West are accused of exacting tribute from the whole world and the whole "people" are rallied to fight as one to find the way out of need and misery to a better future. In the western countries, on the other hand, Fascism and National Socialism are exposed as the rule of force that barbarously suppresses all free expression and above all robs the workers of their political rights and independent organizations. Therefore the slogan "Against Fascism!", becomes the rallying cry of all open and concealed partisans of the ruling class and serves to enroll the broad masses in the war front.

Revolutionary workers will not be fooled by such propaganda. They know that the war is not over Fascism; that victory for one as for the other means no better future for them. It is a matter of indifference to them who the victors may be in this struggle for a redistribution of the world. They know they will have to pay the bill no matter who wins.

The condition of workers in the "democratic" countries is generally better than in those where fascism rules. But this does not mean that fascism is to blame. If the living standards of the masses are higher in countries like England, France and Holland, than in Germany, it must be remembered that capital there has greater reserves, that have been accumulated by unbridled exploitation of the colonies. This exploitation of the colonies still makes possible comparatively good standards for workers in Western Europe. Counterbalancing this is the immeasurable misery of the hundreds of millions of the colonial populations. On the other hand, living standards in the fas-

cist countries did not drop because fascism seized power, but fascism became predominant because of worsened economic conditions.

A new war only brings greater misery and sharper exploitation for the working masses. Whoever wants war against fascism in order to arrest the further decline in living standards deceives himself. The workers will gain nothing by their support of such a war.

Must not the working class defend the political rights granted by bourgeois democracy against Fascism? Can they sacrifice without struggle what generations of workers have achieved and what has been realized only at the end of the last war: free and universal suffrage, right of organization and assembly, freedom of the press, i.e. bourgeois democracy also for the working class? No one can deny that fascism when it destroys these recently acquired rights confronts the working class as an enemy. But he who concludes that therefore the working class in the democratic shall join its bourgeoisie in war against the fascist countries deceives not only himself but the working class as well.

The ruling class in the democratic countries are no less of an enemy to the working class than the master class of the fascist countries. It is an illusion to believe that the working class in capitalist countries can use bourgeois democracy as a means to defend its interests within these countries; that it can assert itself thru it and finally will be able to use it as the lever to secure political power. The working class never possessed such power. On the contrary, the working class never received political privileges until the great labor organizations were able to insure that no "misuse" of their privileges would occur. Those privileges were not to be used to enforce the interests of the working class against the ruling class. Where such efforts have nevertheless been made, the recognized labor organizations openly aligned themselves on the side of the ruling classes. They denounced such efforts as illegal and declared as wild-cat strikes those actions of the workers that refuse to subordinate themselves to their compromising leadership. Then, political rights, right of assembly, freedom of the press, and the right to organize and strike are abolished by the democratic order as efficiently as by the fascists. Armed force is on parade and demonstrates the absolute power of the owning class.

Those political rights that the working class can exercise only thru the recognized labor organizations serve only to subordinate the working class to the democratic order. They merely impose the duty of submission to the labor leadership and to the ruling class. But the fiercer the class

struggle, the more the workers are compelled to fight without political rights and against the labor organizations who use these rights as the means of proletarian subjugation.

It is but a step from this condition to the general abolition of political rights and democracy when the labor organizations prove unable further to restrict the activities of the working class.

In Germany and Italy these measures by the ruling class have already been taken and undisguised dictatorship has become a fact. In the countries as yet democratic there need be no doubt that the same methods will be pursued once the labor organizations recognized by the state can no longer "deliver" the working masses. The stern reality of an intensified class struggle destroys the illusion that "political rights" lead to the emancipation of the working class, and the workers are confronted by the undisguised dictatorship of the ruling class. The bourgeoisie is as fascist here as there. It is its own bourgeoisie that binds the workers to capitalist domination by means of "democracy" and "political rights", and applies the open fascist dictatorship when democracy fails.

The working class must fight capitalism everywhere, regardless of whether it uses democratic or fascist forms of government. It is exploited by capital in a democracy as well as under fascism. Therefore we workers can be indifferent about who wins the victory in the war. A class conscious worker cannot think of supporting his "own" bourgeoisie; he has only one enemy - the ruling class that oppresses him. Whether his "own" country's war activities suffer thereby, even tho the military defeat of his "own" bourgeoisie were to result from this attitude, he has no reason to adopt a conciliatory attitude toward his "own" ruling class.

The workers everywhere in the world are an oppressed class. If they are to emancipate themselves from wage slavery and take over control of production, they must everywhere and at all times fight the owning classes.

The Jingoism of the "Working-Class Movement"

The so-called working class movement has already assumed the role of driving the workers to war on the side of "their" national bourgeoisie. The owning class never tires of professing its love of peace, while in order to "insure" peace it increases its armaments. Similarly, the Social Democracy and the trade unions proclaim themselves the champions of peace, while preparing the masses for a war against Fascism.

The bourgeois slogan "In times of peace, prepare for war", is adapted by the labor movement to read: "If we want peace, we must prepare for war against fascist Germany and Italy". Of course they (still) condemn the imperialism of the democratic countries, but fascist imperialism receives the bulk of their condemnation. The socialist parties and the trade unions with their bureaucracies no longer present a hostile front to the democratic state. The state recognizes them; their function is that of mediator between bourgeoisie and proletariat in the democratic order. The democratic state forms the basis of their existence, - a victory of fascist imperialism threatens that existence. Fascism where victorious with the destruction of democracy also destroys the labor organizations based on democracy and replaces them with the fascist party organization. The old labor organizations disappear, but the classes remain within a new, fascist framework. The capitalist class of the democratic countries makes its peace with fascism. It can adopt fascism in its own country without recourse to war. It can become co-ordinated (gleichgeschaltet) under the fascist imperialism; can make the fascist dictatorship over the proletariat its own.

Not so the labor bureaucracy. Its existence is interwoven with that of bourgeois democracy. It is an instrument of that democracy and therefore defends and fights not only for democracy, but for its own privileged position when it demands war against the fascist countries.

Since the emergence of Russia as a great-capitalist power, the policies of the Third International have also been changed. Russia follows a policy of alliances with other capitalist powers and the policies of the Third International have been adapted to this new trend.

In France, which has entered into an alliance with Russia, the Communist party has formed a united front with the Socialists and thus has joined the "national front". In the other countries, too, such as England, Holland and Belgium, this united front has become a chief objective. The slogan for this united front wooing is: "Rally all forces against fascism." They say Nazi-Fascism threatens the national independence of the masses in all democratic countries. The Communists should stand in the first ranks of the fighters for national independence.

With this the Third International has joined the front of "ideological armament"; it co-operates with the ideological preparation for war that is essential for the waging of any modern war. In this respect, conditions differ from 1914. Then many workers had not expected the co-operation of the Social Democracy and the trade unions with the bourgeoisie. Like lightning in a clear sky came the

surprise of the war and also the betrayal of the working class. Today, when everyone is convinced that the war will break out any moment, both fronts are already occupied. There is no doubt today that the so-called labor movement will co-operate. Not only, as Bebel said in 1912, by shouldering the musket in the hour of danger in order to defend the fatherland, but by preparing the workers for the war with constant and insistent propaganda at this early stage.

National Independence and Leninism

The question of nationality and especially the defense of national independence plays an important role in the labor movement. With Marx we say, "the workers have no fatherland!" The nation is the organizational framework within which the owning class regulates the exploitation of the oppressed class. But the struggle of the working class is aimed at the abolition of this exploitation, and the owning class of a nation with its national exploitation organization. In this conflict the workers of all countries confront the exploiters of all nations as comrades, and their aim is the communist organization of production throughout the world. Therefore, a proletarian revolution cannot stop at national boundaries. It smashes, if it has the power, all national boundaries in order to build the communist world order. The revolution, instead of stopping at national boundaries, fights to abolish them, - not the defense of national independence, but its destruction, is its aim. The victorious working class builds the communist world economy in place of the various nations in constant warfare with each other. If this world economy is divided into districts of production, these divisions are not national barriers because such an organization has no exploitative character, - the districts are not antagonistic to each other.

Revolutionary Marxism has long expressed itself unequivocally on this question. It remained for Lenin to surrender this concept and to sow confusion in the camp of the workers with the theory since known as Leninism.

"Leninism" teaches that oppressed nations fighting for national independence are the allies of the proletariat. The theory therefore demands that workers of countries oppressed or threatened by the imperialist powers assist their own bourgeoisie in the struggle against the foreign oppressor. Thus the Third International urged the workers in Lithuania to defend their fatherland against Poland; the proletariat of Turkey was urged to support its ruling class in the defense of national independence, while Soviet Russia gave material aid to the economic and military strengthening of the Turkish nation. The Turkish nation in turn showed its gratitude by suppressing strikes and

other forms of the class struggle with barbaric severity.

Similarly, the national war of deliverance in China was hailed as revolutionary in the proletarian sense and the Chinese proletariat was urged to rally to the support of the Kuomintang (People's Party). The bourgeois General Chiang Kai Shek was honored by the Communist International as the leader of the Chinese "Red Army", and the impression was created (in 1927) that the world revolution would start anew in China. It took but a short time before this illusion spread by the Third International was shattered. The young Chinese bourgeoisie took clever advantage of the working class support in Canton, Shanghai, etc., while national independence against imperialist England, America and Japan was at stake. But hardly had it secured a measure of independence when it turned against these same workers. On command of the same "red" general, Chiang Kai Shek, a reign of repression ensued that was marked by barbarous mass executions, tortures and massacres, without consideration of their previous service to the Chinese "nation". The workers were caught completely by surprise. They were not prepared for this. Had not the Communists themselves pictured Chiang Kai Shek as the red general, the leader of the revolution?

The president of the United States gave birth to the twin of this Leninist theory, namely, the "right of self determination of nations". After the war, this theory served the imperialist powers in partitioning up the Austrian monarchy, in the cutting off of Germany from important markets and sources of raw material, and to create independent border states around Russia. Their purpose was to prevent any of these countries from becoming great powers and the "right of self determination" served them to good purpose in this.

The "national independence of oppressed nations" of Leninism, where realized, has the same effect as Wilson's "self determination of nations". Both are supposed to safeguard the existence of the small independent countries against the imperialist great powers, but interpretations differ on the application of the theory to specific cases. Then the great powers decide in line with their own interests and the safe-guarding of their own power. Soviet Russia thus strives to develop forces that will resist the great imperialist powers, but only to strengthen its own position.

Thus this theory, whether in its Wilsonian or Leninist form, plays a role in the quest for power of the ruling classes in the new capitalist countries where a young bourgeoisie strives for political independence, as well as in the policies of the modern industrial countries (including Russia) that support national "independence" or "self determination"

where it accords with their interests, but fight and destroy it where it conflicts with them.

The Third International not only championed the national independence of Turkey, Lithuania and China, but in the period from 1921 to 1925 Germany was included in the list of countries oppressed by the imperialists whose national interests must be defended. The secret military treaty (Rapallo 1922) between bourgeois Germany and Soviet Russia was justified on these grounds. This treaty enabled the German bourgeoisie to build factories in Russia for the manufacture of war supplies that Germany, according to the Versailles treaty, could not erect within Germany itself. With Russia's help, the German bourgeoisie was armed in its struggle against the imperialist oppressors, France and England. When this "national emancipation" of Germany finally assumed the form of the National Socialist Hitler government, hostile to Russia, the Third International reversed its former attitude to Germany. Germany is now damned as a fascist imperialist country, the worst enemy of the national independence of small nations, whose national independence is threatened by Hitler fascism.

The Leninist theory of the struggle for national independence has caused enough mischief in the German revolutionary movement since 1921. Leninism, as propagated by the German Communist Party, demanded co-operation with its own bourgeoisie in resistance against sanctions by the entente and the occupation of the Ruhr by French troops.

The Communist Party claimed to be the national party of Germany and Clara Zetkin offered the government the assistance of the Red Front Fighters. And all this while the masses in various parts of Germany were in revolt against the bourgeoisie.

And this phase of Leninism has not yet been out-grown. In 1916 in "Against the Stream," Lenin wrote that wars of national liberation in Europe are not impossible. The first practical application of this theory was in the national emancipation struggle of "oppressed" Germany, and today it reappears in the United Front tactic that throws the various Communist parties into the "struggle for national independence" of the countries that are threatened by the now "free" fascist Germany. The Tribune of Holland, Oct. 2, 1935, says: "But Lenin has already pointed out, among others in his discussion of the Junius pamphlet of Rosa Luxemburg, -that even for the future national wars are not impossible in Europe and not every war in Europe need be an imperialist one. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International now presents this possibility in concrete form. Why? Because the victory of German fascism, which is the chief force driving toward war, threatens the national independence of a number of small states. Such

countries as Czechoslovakia, the Baltic states, Austria and Holland are indicated.

The Seventh World Congress considered it likely that in case of war in defense against fascist attacks the national bourgeois resistance would assume the character of a national war of liberation.

While Holland, for example, is not immediately threatened, its bourgeoisie would be not only that of a small nation, but the oppressing, imperialist bourgeoisie of a great colonial empire.

What is the duty of Communists in such a situation? The Seventh World Congress answered: "The Communists will fight in the front ranks of the struggle for national independence."

Again the Third International is being used to throw the revolutionary working class into the struggle for the interests of the industrial great-state Russia, and Leninism supplies the theory for the justification of the fact that the working class is thus being surrendered to the national bourgeoisie and the war craze.

The Fourth International (Trotzky Opposition) and "Leninism".

The so-called Fourth International of which Trotzky is the prophet which is still in the hopeful prospect of organization claims to be the unadulterated representative of Leninism. It advocates the support of oppressed nations in their struggle for national liberation. "Unser Wort", Sept. 1935, No. 9, Trotzky half-monthly organ, says: "An international boycott against Italy and its Allies in the Abyssinian war must be organized. Every shipment, every Italian ship on which there are goods for Italy must be stopped". Further on in the same publication of that date it says: "The proletarian can emancipate himself only if he simultaneously fights for the emancipation of the oppressed colonial nations. The proletariat therefore fights for the victory of Abyssinia and the defeat of Italy. The only question is with or against its own bourgeoisie.... We must expose the fraud of imperialist sanctions and advocate revolutionary proletarian sanctions against the world bourgeoisie. The proletariat with its own organization must carry on the boycott not only against Italy's war but against the war preparations of Great Britain as well. The transport workers' strike in all imperialist countries must be advocated and organized."

The "Neue Front", Nov. 21, 1935, says: "Before any of the others, we have advocated the determined defense of Abyssinia; but also before the others, we have opposed the

sanctions of the league of nations and advocated those of the working class.....If the sanctions are left in the hands of the imperialists, the working class loses all control of future developments and helplessly confronts the danger of war consequent to the sanctions."

The "Nieuwe Fakkell", Holland Trotzky organ, of Sept. 6, 1935, calls for the defense of the rights of the Abyssinian people, but not in common with the British government because the latter is concerned only with the power and prestige of British imperialism."

Very well, they want independent action of the working class. But, overlooking that such action in reality fits into the plans of the English government, or of the League of nations, or of the Second or Third International, the question arises: what are these peculiar rights of the Abyssinian people? So far as we know, there exists no "people" for the revolutionary working class. That concept remains for the ruling class. The "independent nation" consists of classes that stand in direct contradiction to each other. The rights of "the people" always were but the rights of the ruling class.

Ethiopia forms no exception to this. On the surface, the Italo-Ethiopian war appears as a conflict in which Ethiopia appears as the defender of national independence. In reality what takes place is a conflict between two great-capitalist powers: England and Italy. Ethiopia had long been partitioned off among the great powers, to the disadvantage and dissatisfaction of the Italian bourgeoisie. They demand expansion of their sphere of interest, and the free disposal over the still remaining mineral resources. What the feudal exploiting caste of Ethiopia does or does not want, does not matter. This caste, still trying to maintain these medieval methods of exploitation has subordinated itself entirely to the league of nations,--in this case, France and England. Ethiopia fights for national independence only insofar as it desires to perpetuate the existing conditions of exploitation. But in this fight for "national independence" it must subject itself to the interests of the great powers. Ethiopia is but a figure on the political checkerboard that is moved at will by the great powers. "Independent" Ethiopia, therefore, has not made a single independent move in this whole matter, but from the beginning has allowed England to dictate its policies. Italy is not waging war against an independent Ethiopia, but against England; a war as yet fought on Ethiopian soil because England must conserve and prepare its forces for greater conflicts to come.

In the Italian-Ethiopian conflict, the imperialist antagonisms of the great powers have unavoidably collided. So far this conflict is but a preliminary of the incipient

second world war; it can become the spark to ignite the whole capitalist powder barrel. This does not mean, however, that the second world war must follow directly.

The ruling powers, of course, will try to avoid the world conflagration as long as possible; for, though they may know where they begin, no one can say how it will end. In the final analysis, it is not the will of the ruling powers that decides, but the necessity of maintaining their control. All the more is it the duty of revolutionary propaganda to fight the ideological hegemony of the ruling class to prevent complete destruction of the working class.

The Fourth International, which, even as an opposition to the Third International, still defends Soviet Russia, has accepted Leninism as its political guide. But Leninism is a theory adapted to Russia's development as an industrial great-power, and drives the workers who support it irresistibly into one of the imperialist fronts.

Prevention of the War.

The attitude of the labor organizations on the war problem offers a gloomy picture. The Social-Democratic and Communist parties and labor unions already have joined the national fronts. The Fourth International adopts an equivocal attitude; it wants to fight against fascism and for the "independence of oppressed nations", but at the same time also against the internal bourgeoisie. But equivocation in such a question is impossible; it leads either to political bankruptcy or to a theoretical opposition to all imperialism simultaneously with actual support of one.

Besides the various political and trade union organizations already in the tow of nationalism there are still various groups, such as pacifists, revolutionary idealists, anarchists and left Marxists, etc., though few in number who refuse to be drawn into the whirlpool of nationalism but direct their energies to prevent war. The question is only - can the war be "prevented"? This can be answered only after reviewing what the working class can do, what forces it has at its disposal, what implements of resistance it has and what objections are aimed at in resisting war.

Will the masses in case of war carry on an independent policy? Will they, in opposition to all political parties, unions and the government, reply to the mobilization order with the general strike and insurrection? So far, there are no indications of this. The masses would have to fight against the state and the whole so-called labor movement, and would have to carry on independently under their own direction. True, here and there signs of such a struggle

are visible, but in view of the great forces they would have to oppose in case of war, their influence seems negligible.

Since the waging of war becomes a question of existence for the ruling classes in the various countries, they prepare in advance against any pacifist or proletarian interference with their plans and immediately, at the outbreak of war, will ruthlessly suppress any attempt on the part of the masses. Therefore war against war cannot be waged in the sense of "preventing" it; the question involved is one of power. It is not a question of "preventing" war, but one of whether the working class can entirely vanquish the capitalist class and establish its own control over society.

The propaganda of the general strike to prevent war does not reckon with this eventuality. Of course the anarchists attach the slogan: "Thru the general strike to the social revolution", to their general strike propaganda. But in this form the slogan is sterile, because it presents a completely erroneous picture of the revolutionary process. For the general strike as conceived by the anarchists is an illusion. They picture the strike as a general and complete cessation of work by all proletarians. In actuality, however, the mass of workers follows the lead of the big labor organizations and is under the spell of nationalist ideology. The opponents of war, at its outset, constitute but a small minority. The illusion of the general strike and of the social revolution that is to follow, then collapses like a house of cards.

It is otherwise, if the social revolution is not viewed as an appendage of the general strike, but as a process that follows its course in time, thru "peace" and war, to its final conclusion. This process is the process of the evolution of the masses under their own direction. The official labor movement has no further concern in the defense of the class interests of the masses, because its essential element is one of cooperation between capital and labor which can result only in a worsening of the conditions of the working class. The class interests of the proletariat can be defended only by the sharpest struggle against the bourgeoisie and the old labor movement. This conviction is slowly gathering strength. That this is so is proved by the mass movements of recent years in Spain, France, Belgium and Holland. Among the workers the conviction is growing that every friendly relationship with the bourgeoisie must be destroyed,--that the working class can maintain itself only thru a ruthless class struggle against the capitalist class.

Thus the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat becomes irreconcilable and the world proletariat

finds its unity against the world bourgeoisie. This unity arises out of violent class struggles in all countries. The masses lose their old national conceptions that aim at the co-operation with their own bourgeoisie, making way for new aims - the overthrow of the national bourgeoisie, the destruction of capitalism, the abolition of wage labor and the establishment of a planned communist world economy. That is the revolutionary process of the mass movement. That is the genesis of the social revolution.

Though the concept of the general strike to prevent war is an illusory one, it is yet possible that large groups will resist. Such resistance in the form of mass strikes, although not universal, can be of great importance to the struggle against the war, but they cannot prevent it. Such mass strikes at the outbreak of war are of great value for the future struggle of the masses because they show the methods they will have to adopt finally. They prove indeed that they have not been corrupted by nationalism and that they are still fighting the class struggle; that they are still fighting to overthrow their own bourgeoisie. Mass strikes against war are of an essentially political character; they are not only anti-war actions and anti-bourgeois, but in addition a call to the whole working class to follow their example. Especially in time of war, when every kind of propaganda among the masses has been made impossible, such political mass strikes are indispensable to the revolutionary struggle. They are a rally call; they are an example; they become the program of the general insurrection and of the proletarian revolution.

The Enemy is Within the Country.

The revolutionary worker knows no fatherland. The owning class of the whole world is his enemy. But if he wants to emancipate himself from bourgeois rule, he can do so only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie that rules him. The enemy is his own bourgeoisie. Liebknecht coined the phrase: "The enemy is within our own country". The sentence should be modified. The immediate enemy is within the country, for the bourgeoisie of other countries is no less an enemy. But the working class of each country must first settle with its own bourgeoisie.

But let us not be deluded. At the outbreak of war large sections of the working class are not revolutionary. They are imbued with nationalism. The foreign bourgeoisie appears as their enemy. Powerful war propaganda will see to that. And because mass strikes and other actions against their own bourgeoisie at the same time seem to strengthen the foreign bourgeoisie, large numbers of workers will refuse to strike. Even revolutionary workers will waver at times. Naturally, the fear of fascist imperialism is greater than that of democratic imperialism. This is already

apparent in the attitude of the Trotzky Fourth International in the Italian-Ethiopian war, when it calls for the defeat of Italy in favor of Ethiopian victory. How much greater will be the influence of this fear on the policies of these groups if their own democratic country is threatened by the fascist or National Socialist enemy. And when the fascist enemy is strengthened or assured of victory by the class struggle against the internal bourgeoisie, we can safely predict that these groups will recoil from the consequences of such action. But the war will intensify suffering and misery until they are unbearable, and eventually forces the masses to resist. Then it becomes clear that the immediate enemy is within the country. The resistance of the working class grows and leads to mass movements. Then it will become apparent to what extent the essential character of this mass movement is understood by the workers, for on this largely depends the outcome of the movement. The more the workers realize that mass movements, directed and carried out by the workers themselves, are not mere actions of misery and desperation, but at the same time contain all elements of communist society, the more revolutionary will these movements become. They then aim directly at the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the rule of the workers' councils.

The task of the revolutionary workers, inseparable from the task of the working class as a whole, is clear. He who has freed himself from the magic formula, general strike, as the first step in the social revolution, who has finished with Leninism and its "defence of the independence of oppressed nations", who realizes that the prevention of war is possible only if the working class seizes power, and who is indifferent whether the internal bourgeoisie or the "enemy" are victors in the war, for him the matter is clear.

The workers in all countries, freed from the old movement with its democratic and other illusions, have only one goal: the development and strengthening of the independent mass movement of the workers in the whole world--in peace as well as in war--until the masses of the proletariat have seized all social functions and thus build the communist society throughout the world.

(Taken From RAETE KORRESPONDENZ)

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