

# The Cold War and the People's Welfare

By William Z. Foster

THE COLD WAR has roots running back to the earlier phases of the class struggle, notably the capitalist opposition to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Formally, the Cold War, as such, began about 1947, the date when the Marshall Plan was initiated. Its main purpose is to prepare for an all-out war against the socialist and progressive world. Its specific aims are to infringe upon and injure world peace, prosperity, democracy, organized labor, national liberation, and socialism. Its greatest champions are the monopolists of the United States (helped by the conservative labor leaders), and they are out to boss the whole world and to prolong everywhere by military force the obsolete and antiquated capitalist system. Their chief opposition is the socialist sector of the world, principally the Soviet Union and People's China, and the working and toiling masses, and the progressive forces generally, of all countries, who jointly counterpose to the war-like Cold War the perspective of the peaceful coexistence of all nations.

The Cold War is a malignant war threat which is kept hanging over the world chiefly by American imperialism and its partners, the monopolists and sword-rattlers of the world. Its vast war munitions production is immensely profitable to the em-

ployers. Although it has many war features and constantly presses in the direction of war, it is not now actual war itself. It is the longest and most militant war-scare in history, and is pregnant with war danger. It has kept the world so much on edge with its many war crises, that large numbers of people have come inadvicably to look upon it and its institutions as a sort of unavoidable way of life. "Brinkmanship," a term that originated in Dulles' boasts of the many times he had brought the world to the very edge of general war, is coming to be accepted by them as the normal type of diplomacy. Undoubtedly, however, had it not been for the powerful struggle of the peace and progressive forces over the years, and the breaking of the atomic bomb monopoly of the United States, the world long since would have been plunged into a terrible atomic war. The monopolists have become afraid of revealing outright their war goals, as this would scare off large numbers of their followers; but their deceit about it does not destroy the reality of the war threat which they present.

Under the Cold War, the imperialists are definitely, although cunningly, preaching the inevitability of war. This is not an easy thing to do, after the many defeats the warmongers

have suffered at the hands of the workers and other peace forces, who do not believe in the inevitability of war. So the advocates of war's inevitability are forced to do so by roundabout methods, by indirection, as at present. The warmongers seek to plant the idea that war is inevitable, and when they cannot do this directly, they try at least to create certain confused moods to this effect. This is the situation at the present time. Although there are relatively few who will argue militantly that there inevitably will be war, on the other hand, prominent capitalist spokesmen are quick to deny that the socialist countries are peace-loving. Thus they leave the matter hanging, but usually they become more definite about war's "inevitability" when matters take, however temporarily, a turn to the worse. The answer is to do away with the Cold War.

During the Cold War period, many dangerous developments have taken place. There has been a large number of "small" shooting wars (which have not always been so "small"), and all of them have borne the seeds of a general imperialist war. And they have left millions of poverty-stricken refugees in their wake. In practically every case, the imperialists have tried to extend these wars; this has forced the masses to struggle to restrict them. Among these "small" wars, along with other gross military provocations, are those of Korea, Indo-China, Hungary, Tai-

wan, East Germany, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Guatemala, Quemoy-Matsu, Tibet, Laos, etc., besides various other small wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In those countries where revolutions have occurred, the imperialists, in the first place those of Wall Street, have seen to it that by military provocations they were forced to take on the character of violent armed struggles. In addition to all these wars, the Cold War has produced several breath-taking crises, all manipulated by Washington. In fact, there has been almost a permanent crisis over the past decade in various communities. The Communist Party of the United States, at its special convention of 1945, which repudiated Browder's revisionism, was the first organization to point out the immediate approach of this broad imperialist war period.

### MILITARIZATION

The most characteristic and dangerous feature of the Cold War is that, during the years of its existence, the United States has built for itself a super-powerful offensive military machine of unheard of dimensions and danger. It has air bases everywhere, possessing all over the world a mighty air force, navy, and army. More than that, it has been instrumental in the building of military forces on the part of its innumerable capitalist allies. Insolently, American and other imperialists have built

air bases and rocket launching sites all around the countries of socialism. In doing this, they have put practically the whole capitalist world on the American dole and in its debt. The United States has become, very largely, the boss of the capitalist world, and it hopes, quite vainly, to run the socialist part of the world as well. Such imperialist war provocations lie at the very heart of the Cold War and are to be found in every corner of the globe.

A particularly devilish feature of the Cold War is the continued manufacture and testing of bombs and rockets. The United States is arming NATO and all its main allies with these murderous devices. These fiendish machines are being made to shoot one-fourth of the way around the world. A very bad aspect is the invariable accompaniment of the bomb and rocket blasts with malignant radioactive fall-out. The imperialist militarists have thus far successfully resisted the limitation or abolition of the bombs and rockets, as well as the abolition of testing. Above all, the forces of peace must find the way to put a stop or limitation to these murderous devices. There are forces of imperialism that would rather destroy the planet—if they could—than to lose the monster graft of the capitalist system. But the workers and their allies will stop such murderous impulses and desires, with the abolition of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and the fiendish rockets.

One of the worst of the current features of the Cold War is its enormous cost to the peoples. The fabulous outlay of our government for military expenditures, and everything connected with the Cold War, has been such as to impoverish the masses of people more and more. The government is squandering at present at least 50 billion dollars a year for war preparations; and its imperialist partners throughout the world, collectively, are getting rid of about the same amount. President Eisenhower has stated recently that the cost of war munitions has mounted so greatly that many airplanes now cost their weight in gold.

The national debt has also climbed out of sight, and is still mounting. The same is also true of tax rates, which are being forced sky high, with the main burden being thrust upon the workers and the toiling masses. The people have paid dearly in their living standards for the Cold War. Nor is there any sign that the government will voluntarily decrease these war (misnamed "defense") expenditures. Of course, the employers are reaping enormous profits; in fact, profits on war munitions are now being taken as one of the mainstays of the entire capitalist system. Since the end of World War II, about 500 billion dollars have been thrown away for this useless purpose. It is highly significant that it is only the capitalist employers and the war-making governments that have their hands on the coun-

try's real source of money supplies. In the ceaseless quest for funds to pay for the ever-mounting cost of munitions, no real criticism is directed against the cause of it all—the Cold War. The social services and public conveniences (schools, hospitals, housing, roads, municipal transportation, etc.) are constantly deteriorating, and yet they are still further being bled of resources, to feed the insatiable Moloch of Cold War. Other capitalist countries are about as bad off in this respect, or even worse off than we are.

### IMPACT ON SOCIALIST LANDS

Another bad feature of the Cold War situation is that it has deeply injured the industrial potentiality of the countries of socialism. These countries are straining every nerve to amass resources with which to build a new society, and on top of this strain they are forced, in self-defense, also to waste vast funds on non-productive military equipment. World experience has shown, however, that the capitalists, by means of their Cold War, may somewhat hinder, but they cannot stop, the building of socialism by forcing these tremendous military expenditures upon the socialist countries; but it would be sheer foolishness, nevertheless, to believe that they thus do not do considerable damage. The peoples, however, can build socialism, and heavily arm themselves, at the same time. All this sabotage, in the

spirit of Project X, and the forced military spending of the socialist countries, is in line with the general purposes of the imperialists and their Cold War, to slow down the growth of socialism and finally to destroy it altogether.

One of the most provocative and war-like features of the Cold War situation is the economic blockade which the imperialist countries, led by the United States, are trying to enforce against all socialist lands, particularly the Soviet Union and People's China. This blockade, if it is only partially effective at the present time, is principally because it lacks world mass support, even of certain capitalist countries, and because the socialist lands are effective in breaking it. Thus, Great Britain does ten times as much trade yearly with the USSR as does the United States. The economic boycott is a disruptive factor on the international scene. It tends to hinder the building of world socialism, and increases the war danger; it should be abolished. The imperialist governments are pushing it very hard; this is particularly the case with the United States, which has made the economic boycott a key factor in the Cold War. The aggressive opposition, however, of all the socialist countries is taking much of the sting out of it. Actually, about the worst sufferers from it are the imperialist countries themselves, who through the blockade deny their own industries a great deal of much-needed trade.

International proletarian unity is another vital factor that is infringed upon by the restrictive policies of the Cold War. It is a well-known fact, for example, that the American Negro people are receiving a great deal, if not most, of their support from progressive international forces. Yet, it is a common occurrence in the United States situation to find some Negro leaders, who have been badly corrupted by the Cold War, taking a position that the Negro people in America are little, if at all, persecuted. They thus are cutting off valuable international support that the Negro people of this country need very much. This could also be a powerful factor for the interests of the workers in many fields, but everywhere it runs up against the poisonous influence of the Cold War, which makes a special attack against proletarian internationalism on all fronts.

### "NATIONAL UNITY"

The Cold War also generates a false tendency toward "national unity." In most war times, this national unity is a very definite and damaging thing; we do not have war at the present time, but the employers are able, nevertheless, to develop harmful moods towards a false national unity. This means to paralyze the workers from various militant activities, by forcing them into a form of unity with the employers. The influence of this is very consid-

erable, and the conservative, slow-down, effects of such national unity tendencies and moods must be combatted. In World War II, a certain measure of national unity was justified, as this was a progressive war against fascism; but there are no grounds for this in the present situation.

Another of the favorite capitalist devices under the Cold War is a strong tendency towards no-strike regulations. It is a tremendous advantage to the employers to tie up the workers, in one way or another, so they cannot, or in any event, do not, strike effectively. Consequently, in the present situation, when a war is repeatedly made to seem to loom on the horizon, they adopt all possible means to establish no-strike conditions. They cannot openly put across such a proposition, despite all their war shouting, but they always seek to accomplish it at least partially. That they do much damage in slowing down strikes, in creating fewer strikes, and in general injuring the strike action of the working class, is indisputable. Never in the history of the labor movement were the trade unions so bound about with restrictive hindrances to effective strike action as they are now.

### IMPACT ON LABOR

The Cold War, with its constant threat of a world war, is decidedly detrimental to many forms of freedom of the labor movement. Let

us not forget that the Taft-Hartley Act, which former President Murray of the CIO called fascist legislation, is a product of the Cold War. The deadly McCarthyism, another Cold War product, threatened the United States with fascism. Everybody was gagged with hysterical shouting that we were just about to go into a war, and of course it was lyingly presented as a progressive war. Similar legislation, of much that could be cited, were the McCarran Acts, for the regulation of immigration, restriction of passports, outlawing of the Communist Party, etc. The Cold War served very well to promote such reactionary types of legislation, until the people here, and especially abroad, rose against it and condemned it. There are still, however, many lingering effects of McCarthyism. The Cold War disadvantageously affects every form of labor progress. Characteristic of this period are the evil Eisenhower and Kennedy labor "reform" bills.

Class collaboration is also highly favored by the Cold War. It, too, reaches its highest development in periods of war, especially a justified war; but in the present false situation, the bourgeoisie are able to create many class-collaboration conditions, which normally approach a war situation. This, too, weakens the efficiency and the fighting strength of the working class, in strikes, demonstrations, political action, and so forth. All tendencies toward class collaboration in the Cold

War, implied as well as actual, should be combatted in the interests (both immediate and long-range) of a militant and effective labor movement.

The Cold War definitely has deleterious effects, too, on the struggle of the oppressed colonial peoples for national liberation. The imperialist countries, with the United States in the lead, are busily building air bases in all countries which will admit them, which they direct against the socialist and anti-imperialist world. They habitually make their plans for industrialization or trade in any country dependent upon definite programs of militarization. Therefore, the number one enemy of the erstwhile colonial lands is the leading imperialist power, the United States. Yet, some colonial countries are enticed or bribed into at least partial support of the imperialist powers under the Cold War conditions. This is a grave injury to the people's progress in every field.

The Cold War also creates conditions that make it very difficult to build up the various branches of the labor movement. It is no accident that revisionism, one of the most detrimental influences in the labor movement, received its greatest impulse in this and other countries during the Cold War. It is characteristic, too, that the trade-union organizing campaign in the South has been let go by the boards, with nothing substantial being done. It is also a fact that although organized labor has

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increased its membership and united strength through amalgamation, it has made no real progress at organizing a political party of the working class. The United States still has the unwelcome notoriety of having the only large labor movement in the world that does not have its own political party. For this, the Cold War, in all its ramifications, is largely responsible. The sword-rattlers are so busy telling the workers that not the monopolists but the Russian people are their main enemies, that they successfully block the achievement of the most elementary tasks in the labor movement.

The Cold War also unfavorably affects the living and working conditions of the masses. Its enormous emphasis upon military expenditures, and its constant threat of war, upset and distort the whole economic order. Capitalist economics are bad enough, but they are made even worse when the most vital social expenditures are thrust aside for useless military outlays. It especially does great harm when the labor movement is twisted into supporting such military expenditures, instead of the normal outlays. This not only makes for unemployment in the long run, but it is also lining up the labor movement on the side of the sabre-rattlers. Some of our labor leaders, in fact, can more than compete with the professional militarists when it comes to plumping for government expenditures (for military ends) under the false pretext that they are indispen-

sable for the making of jobs to take up the slack caused by unemployment in general.

There is constant pressure by monopolists who find it very profitable to continue the Cold War, to oppose every effort to put a stop to this monstrosity. Due to the ceaseless peace activities of the Soviet Union, People's China, and the other peace-loving forces of the world, several world peace conferences have been held in recent years to try to end the Cold War. These peace conferences have done no little good, but they have been bitterly opposed by the imperialists, especially by the United States government. If this country has participated reluctantly in such conferences, it has been only under the pressure of the militant peace activities of the socialist countries, the former colonies, the World Peace Council, and the common people of the world who want peace.

Many times, America's allies, to Washington's displeasure, have been the open advocates of these peace conferences, and have helped to drag this country's government into them. At the present time, a series of conferences has begun in Geneva, looking towards a Big Four Summit Meeting later this year. This situation has been marked by the usual reluctance on the part of the authorities in Washington: open opposition to the holding of any kind of a conference, quibbles over its agenda and representation, the presenta-

tion of conference proposals which are known beforehand to be unacceptable, and the like. The aim of the advocates of the Cold War is to reduce these international peace conferences to the lowest possible level or to abolish them altogether.

### END THE COLD WAR

The time is over-ripe to end the Cold War, with its constant implication of a shooting imperialist war. For generations people have rejected, rebelled at, and condemned such wars; but never have they had such a good opportunity as now to be done with the terrible war monster for good. The great mass of the people, including many genuine leaders in politics, science, and religion, find themselves convinced that humanity must not be permitted to tear itself to pieces with atomic and hydrogen bombs. The working class, however, is the main force against war. We are living in an age when the abolition of imperialist war has become a burning necessity and practically realizable for the people of the world.

A basic need, in the abolition of the Cold War, is to explode the nonsensical "national defense" argument, on which the modern agitation for war is based. There is no real national defense problem in the world, except that created by the various capitalist powers in their eagerness to possess themselves of each other's

wealth by violence; by their need to repress the undeveloped peoples; and by their determination to destroy the socialist world. As for the socialist countries, they are peace-loving in their very structure. Their historic role is to abolish war, not to wage it. A special danger in the Cold War situation is the constant reiteration on the part of many people that there is no real danger in the present world conditions. They pass off the pro-war agitation as only so much terror talk, in spite of the many wars the imperialists have waged during the Cold War period. Such passivity and blindness to danger is just what the warmongers want in order to initiate their much-wanted war. The persistent propagation of war under hypocritical Cold War slogans, which takes place in every capitalist country, must be counteracted by determined moves on the part of the workers and their allies to abolish the Cold War altogether. Especially must we be done with the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons.

The means for ending imperialist war are now at hand, more so than ever before. For one thing, there are the ceaseless and highly organized activities that are being carried on against every manifestation of the capitalist war spirit by the peoples of the socialist lands. They are unendingly opposed to war in all its forms, and their diplomatic and other international activities spell the eventual end to this murderous

dream of the war-makers. Then there are such organizations of the peace-loving peoples, covering both the capitalist and socialist sectors of the world, as the World Peace Council. This body was formed in Prague and Paris in 1949, just about the time the Cold War got under way. It originally consisted of delegates of 560 organizations from 72 countries, embodying about 600 million people. Among its principal activities were the Stockholm, Vienna, and Helsinki Appeals, which did much to arouse masses of the world to the war danger. The Peace Council has since come to embrace fully a billion people, and it is a real power in the world for peace. Then there are innumerable other individual, scattered and unaffiliated, organizations, totalling up to many scores of millions, which, in their respective spheres, including the United States, keep up a never-ending agitation against war. They want especially to reduce armaments, and eventually to abolish them, together with the war threat. We must support the work of all these organizations. This is the way to world peace. There must be no imperialist atomic or hydrogen bomb warfare, or war menace.

The real issue behind the war danger is whether or not the industries and the land of the world shall be owned privately or by the people at large who use them. The basic issue is the fundamental one of capitalism versus socialism. Bound up

with this is the matter of workers in every branch of activity being able to gain a decent living without paying the masters their usual profits. The capitalists and their followers, who are the agitators of war, hold to the absurd idea that the industries of the world should be privately owned, and that the people should pay through the nose for the privilege of using them to produce the necessities of life. And what industries of their neighbors the employers do not already possess, they are ready to grab through international war. The hoary conception of war, which is now doubly indefensible, is the very soul and backbone of the capitalist system. Upon it the capitalists, and above all the monopolists, base their entire society and its many institutions—government, industry, science, education, religion, and all the rest. The main task of the people is to limit and abolish this exploitation principle and practice, root and branch, and with it the whole capitalist system, including the institution of imperialist war. What is happening in the world now is the wiping out of capitalism and war, and the irresistible growth of world socialism. The Cold War, with all its hypocrisy and violence, will not be able to prevent this process.

One of the major points in the struggle to abolish the Cold War is to oppose all those labor leaders, who under the false flag of "national defense," seek to protect the capi-

talist system and the profits of the bosses. It is impossible to make a real defense of the workers' interests, and at the same time to advance policies like the Cold War, that the employers consider indispensable to the maintenance of their profits system. The trade-union leaders who distinguish themselves by their advocacy of war, or what could lead to war—wholesale military preparations and vicious anti-socialist propaganda—by these very acts sacrifice and betray the interests of the working class and of the whole people.

The Communist parties of the world have many great issues to fight for and win in their relentless struggle for the emancipation of the workers. One of the most essential and important of these issues is the ending of the Cold War with all its implications of active, shooting, imperialist war. Let us not forget the criminal and unnecessary use that was made of the atomic bomb in Japan, by the same people who are today advocating its use against the socialist nations of the world. They defend their previous use of the atomic bombs, and they would be only too glad to use these bombs once more, if they got a chance to do so, and thought they could accomplish it without being destroyed in the process. We must be very intolerant, also, of the whole idea that imperialist war is a legitimate instrument to use in international disputes. We

must settle all such international quarrels by negotiations, and where these involve different social regimes, generally by a policy of peaceful co-existence. We must insist upon the current peace conferences in Geneva following these general lines. These conferences must be made by the peoples to do their anti-war will, and under no circumstances should the imperialist diplomats be allowed to sabotage them to failure.

In this period that we are now living through, the socialist countries, anti-imperialist governments of erstwhile colonial peoples, communist organizations, and organizations of the people generally, have two basic tasks. First, they must prevent war; and second, while preventing war, they must carry on without relaxation the struggle of the unions and other mass democratic bodies, the national liberation movements, and the building of socialism with all its ramifications. These elementary things the workers and their allies can, will, and are doing. And all the power and desperation of the sabre-rattlers, with their Cold War, cannot stop them. The abolition of the Cold War, however, will speed up this whole constructive development. It is imperative for the further progress of humanity. Geneva and ensuing summit conferences, must take important steps forward in this historic task of abolishing the Cold War.