

XII. THE WAR PLANS OF ROOSEVELT AND WALL STREET

Four weeks ago, speaking in Boston, I characterized the military situation in the imperialist war as one of stalemate. Two days later the British Navy announced its mining of Norwegian territorial waters, and inaugurated a new phase in the development of the war. The following day German armed forces occupied Denmark and the key cities of Norway. The Northern front, so long talked of, was suddenly realized. But like most of the developments in this war, the form in which it has developed does not correspond to the plans of the General Staffs.

Do the developments in Norway constitute a breaking of the military stalemate? Let us try to find the answer in the facts that are known, disregarding the confusing and confused propaganda from London. The British Tories are proving themselves the most inept, the most stupid propagandists ever to appear in the modern world, but that does not make their propaganda any the more reliable. Only a few days before the Scandinavian events, the old fossil Chamberlain was chortling gleefully to the press that "Hitler missed the bus." Now, only a few weeks later, he is faced with revolt in his own Parliament over the bungling of his and Churchill's adventure on the "northern front," and his propaganda machine in the United States is furiously demanding that this country, the United States, must come into the war to prevent an imminent Nazi victory. Both of these extremes which we have witnessed in thirty days had little relation to the true situation. Considering only the relation of military forces there is as

little ground for the British pessimism of the end of April as there was for the optimism of the end of March. The feverish ups and downs of British ruling class moods arise not from any decisive changes in the military situation—this remains a stalemate—but rather from the inner weaknesses and strains of the Empire, from the *diplomatic war* which is much more active than the military conflict, and from immediate propagandistic aims in the diplomatic game. A military decision is as far from sight as it was a month ago.

Up until recently it had been assumed by Allied propaganda and by the American newspapers which almost uniformly reflect it, that, as they put it, "time is on the side of the Allies," that the Nazis must either win by a quick knockout blow or else slowly strangle to death under the pressure of blockade, while for the Allies the problem, they thought, is merely one of holding firm for a few years to have victory fall into their laps like a ripe fruit. That conception was a profound mistake which is now becoming clear to all. It is the Allies, and before all Britain herself, who require a military decision, and for whom the longer this is postponed the less possible it is to realize. For Britain, a military stalemate is a political defeat which more and more, with the passing of months and years, threatens the inner disruption and breakdown of the Empire. It is the growing recognition of this fact that gives official London the jitters, and which is spreading through the American bourgeoisie the urgent demand to do something quick to turn the scales of war toward the Allies. That is why the American press is quickly preparing the public mind for repeal of the Johnson Act, for big war credits, for lifting the restrictions on American shipping, for a limited military involvement confined to the Navy and Air Force. This discussion in the newspaper is backed up by the semi-official *American White Book*. This *American White Book* assumes the usual role of that anonymous spokesman, the "close friend of the President." It is accompanied by profuse explanations that "of course" no one would think of proposing a new American Expeditionary Force—although this is the moment chosen deliberately to allow it to leak out "by accident" that someone is really thinking of just that—and that someone is none other than the American General Staff itself,

and that its thinking has already produced a complete plan for the transportation of an A.E.F. of three millions.

Official British pessimism at this moment has the role to feed the fires under this pretty kettle of preparations to draw the United States into the war, and bring the kettle to the boiling point more quickly. For Britain, realizing that stalemate means political defeat and possible revolution, looks to America to break the stalemate; it looks to America to throw those material and human resources into the scales which alone can bring a military decision.

All of this is being adjusted to the developing war plans of the American bourgeoisie, definitely dominated today by the war party. The war has brought a miraculous conversion of the economic royalists to the cause of President Roosevelt and a third-term, while the President welcomes their new love almost as openly as he welcomed their hatred during the 1936 elections. After all, who could so effectively carry through the war plans of Wall Street as the man who gained the affections of the majority of the people by fighting against Wall Street—especially since he, while retaining the words and phrases of the New Deal, is so effectively scrapping all of it that is repugnant to the economic royalists?

Let us be under no illusions. The War Party of the American bourgeoisie is on the march, and Roosevelt stands at its head. American neutrality has long become a myth; our Government is no more neutral than Italy, it is merely non-belligerent, and like Mussolini searches for the most propitious moment to become a belligerent. This is the hard fact, which must be recognized if we would avoid becoming the victims of mere wishful thinking.

Wall Street is preparing to take America into the war to save the British Empire from collapse. Of course, its aim is not *simply*, not *merely*, to save the British Empire; it envisages a salvaged Britain which will occupy much the same relation to America which the Portuguese and Dutch Empires bear to Britain, which in the last years the French have come to occupy. Wall Street looks upon itself as the predestined receiver-in-bankruptcy for its British, French and Dutch class brothers.

However much the British imperialists implore and welcome America's immediate help, which it must be admitted they are getting in increasing measure, it cannot be said that they are pleased exactly, to find themselves looked upon as predestined wards of a greater American imperialism. No, they don't like it. Very hot disputes go on behind the curtains as a result. That is why Britain is buying anywhere and everywhere but in the U.S. all commodities for which there are other sources, and only buys here what is unavoidable, what cannot be gotten elsewhere. That is why Britain turned over most of her Argentine trade, which the war stopped, not to the United States but to Japan, from whom it will be easier to regain it after the war. That is why Mr. Hull had to intervene with a sharp note to Tokyo, intended to be read in London, to stop a deal between the British and Japanese whereby the Dutch East Indies should pass under the "protection" of the Japanese for the duration of the war, as part of a larger arrangement for the whole Far East. It is very exasperating to British gentlemen, and shattering to their nerves, to find the American barbarians, their former colonials, assuming the airs and demanding the position of prospective masters—but needs must when the devil drives, and after all, maybe they will muddle through again as so many times in history! It is equally exasperating to hard-boiled American financiers and their political agents to find their British beneficiaries so stubborn, so ungrateful, and even treacherous—but after all, the dollar is mighty and will prevail, so they think! In the meantime, each side keeps a sharp and suspicious eye on his partner, and both get about their immediate business of the war, which is more and more becoming a common enterprise.

Our American "military experts," professional and amateur, have suddenly become concerned with Alaska and the Aleutian islands. In the last weeks they have shed bitter tears in public about the exposed and undefended condition of these outlying possessions of the American Empire. They suddenly discover, to their great perturbation, that the Soviet Union is only 35 miles away from Alaska, across Behring Straits; and the resulting shock is almost too much for their nervous systems. A great outcry is being raised to transform

Alaska and the Aleutian Islands into impregnable fortresses of American military power. It is, of course, a mere coincidence that Alaska jumps into the news at the very moment when the Dutch East Indies, in the South Pacific, is the subject of fierce dispute between London, Washington, and Tokyo. How could either London or Tokyo, and especially Tokyo, possibly question the legitimacy of American fortifications, air fields, and naval bases in Alaska, where they are to be built for the single-minded purpose of checking the Communists, a purpose for which Tokyo has professedly conducted a long and disastrous war in China? Apparently America is getting ready to join the anti-Comintern Pact. If in the process the American mailed fist comes uncomfortably close to the Japanese nose, that must be understood as a mere geographical accident, and should only serve to cement good Japanese-American relations, relations so touchingly demonstrated by American supply of over half of Japanese war material requirements which continues unchecked. Anyone who would dare to question the validity of this viewpoint which I have just explained would thereby expose himself as a dangerously subversive person. If it is hard to swallow at its face value, the very difficulty of swallowing it only serves to emphasize the danger of questioning it. If you question it, you are liable to find yourself on the secret list of J. Edgar Hoover and be subpoenaed by Martin Dies.

How quickly our country has been transformed in the eight months of the imperialist war toward which we are supposed to be neutral! A few months ago we were all called upon, on pain of being denounced as un-American, to pledge our undivided allegiance to General Mannerheim; but since March 12, when the Finnish Government found it necessary to withdraw from its role in the Allies' war plans, American imperialism finds it necessary to come forward more and more openly in its own name and for its own claims to empire. One by one the spurious garments of morality and high principle have been stripped from or have been discarded by each and all of the imperialist powers, including the United States, and they stand naked in the arena of the imperialist battle-royal. You know what a battle-royal is? It used to be a very popular sport a few generations ago. They set

up a boxing ring and put thirteen boxers in the ring at once, and each one had to fight all the others until there was only one left standing up. That is the kind of game imperialism is playing today; that is the character of the imperialist war, to decide which imperialism shall hold world hegemony, which gang of monopolists, profiteers, and freebooters shall collect tribute, grind down and exploit and rule the peoples.

The American people are overwhelmingly against this imperialist war and want no part in it whatever. This sentiment is clear and unmistakable; it grows more decisive with each development of the war. And while the miserable debacle of Chamberlain and Churchill in Norway is prodding the American bourgeoisie to rush quicker into the war, it is only another lesson to the American people to say: We must stay out of it and stay out of it at all costs.

But the American bourgeoisie, the ruling class, the economic royalists, just as clearly and decisively are taking the path of war. The War Party, of which Roosevelt has assumed the leadership, holds in its hands not only the ultimate power of ownership and control of the nation's economy, but it holds also the immediate reins of power, of governmental power. It presents the country, step by step, with accomplished facts of war involvement. The people, the working class and toiling masses generally, can only express their desires but cannot make decisions on practical policy of government. The government, with the War Party in full possession, step by step moves into the Second Imperialist War and sets up its instruments of repression of the masses, prepares to crush out mercilessly all opposition among the masses to its policies.

That is the meaning of the wave of prosecutions of trade unions and their leaders under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, in which the first blow was struck by the sentencing to prison of Ben Gold, Potash, Winogradsky, and their associates on charges over six years old and long forgotten, and under the law supposed to have been passed to restrain the monopolies, those same monopolies which have waxed fat under Roosevelt even more than under Herbert Hoover. The long battle of the labor movement to prevent the application of the Sherman

Act to the trade unions, supposedly decided many years ago in favor of labor in the Clayton Amendment, is suddenly reopened by the Roosevelt Administration, through court and administrative measures and labor's victory is snatched from it overnight, without even the formality of passing a repeal. Even more, the very fundamental right of labor to its own independent organization has been challenged in these court decisions; the doctrine of conspiracy of a century ago, whereby labor organization was by its very nature illegal restraint of trade has been resurrected, in a form which, if not resisted and overthrown, will transform the Wagner Act into a step toward the fascist corporate state, and the trade unions into glorified company unions. The reactionary offensive against the working class, which began with the persecution of the Communist Party, has already spread to a general war against the labor movement, both American Federation of Labor as well as the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Martin Dies and J. Edgar Hoover direct the trench-fighting of this reactionary war against the labor movement and against the democratic rights of the people. They have become very unpopular. But don't let our attention be diverted from the real culprits. Martin Dies and J. Edgar Hoover are merely the glorified office boys of higher powers. President Roosevelt leads and directs the whole offensive on behalf of the capitalist class and must bear the full responsibility. The time has long passed when it was possible to oppose Dies and Hoover but to support Roosevelt, and the quicker this is made clear to everyone, the better it will be for the labor and democratic camp.

How intimately our domestic life is tied up with foreign policy is typified by the work of the Dies Committee. The ineffable chairman of that body, a man who claims to be a democrat by virtue of the fact that eighty per cent of the adult population of his Congressional District are denied the right to vote while he is elected by about twelve per cent, this champion of democracy a la mode announced the other day that he had unearthed a Communist plot to overthrow the Government of Mexico. He announced further that he is going down near the Mexican border in late June or early July to hold hearings to expose these things.

Now it so happens that in July the Mexican Republic is holding a Presidential election. Mr. Dies evidently plans to try to influence that election from across the border. He evidently has advance information from his friends of some things that are being planned for Mexico. But not Mr. Dies nor any of his friends are supporting the Mexican Government, they support rather those who are planning to overthrow it. The present Government, headed by President Cardenas, represents the Party of the Mexican Revolution, called P.R.M., which has behind it the overwhelming majority of the Mexican people. This Party has nominated Manuel Avila Camacho as its candidate in the July election. The opposition forces have all gathered around one candidate, General Almazan. General Almazan stands for turning over the Mexican oil industry to the U. S. Oil Trust, for turning over the Mexican railroads to international capital, primarily American, for returning the huge landed estates to American landlords, among the largest of whom is William Randolph Hearst. For these reasons he is being supported by American capital in a big way, but for the same reasons he has not the slightest chance of receiving anything approaching a majority vote of the Mexican people.

Because of this, General Almazan and his supporters are preparing to seize power in Mexico by an armed insurrection. It is known that huge quantities of military supplies are being smuggled into Mexico from the United States in preparation for this uprising. Conspiratorial circles within the Mexican Army are being recruited for this rebellion, through inducements of cash and promises of power and influence. The Communist Party of Mexico is supporting the present Government of Cardenas, and the candidacy of Manuel Avila Camacho, who has no need to think of any but constitutional measures to insure his election. What does it mean, therefore, when Martin Dies announces a Communist plot in Mexico? It means that Mr. Dies' bosses have given him the word that the Government of Cardenas and of his successor, Camacho, is going to be denounced as "Communist" by the Almazan forces, in connection with the forthcoming elections, just as General Franco denounced the Republic of Spain as "Communist"

immediately following the Spanish elections; it means that like Franco, Almazan is planning an army uprising against the Republic under the slogan "Down with the Communists"; it means that American capital and in all probability the Washington government also is already prepared to support Almazan's uprising. A flood of detailed evidence from Mexico itself bears this out.

Martin Dies is preparing to become publicity agent in the United States for General Almazan and his armed insurrection in Mexico. It is not for nothing that General Almazan is a personal friend of John Nance Garner and that they visit one another.

Thus we see that the fight for trade union rights and civil liberties is intimately tied up with the questions of American foreign policy, of peace or war. The same forces that drive against the American labor movement and its achievements in social legislation are at the same time driving the United States into the imperialist war in Europe and toward imperialistic adventures against the Latin American countries. All problems today can be summed up in the struggle against the War Party in the United States.

The War Party includes the dominant circles of both the Republican and Democratic Parties. It is true that they are somewhat embarrassed by the fact that 1940 is an election year, and they fear the people may find a way to use the elections to demonstrate their almost unanimous hatred for the war and their determination to stay out of it. Therefore, the two major parties have a "gentleman's agreement" not to make the war question an issue between them. They find it difficult; it is an almost irresistible temptation on the side of the Republicans to play demagogically with this issue, because it is an almost sure road to power if they could defy their financial masters sufficiently to seize the issue boldly and go to the country with it. Very interesting things arise out of this conflict between their hunger for votes and their loyalty to their financial masters. Young Dewey, for example, after having dutifully obeyed his Wall Street backers when in his New York speech he indorsed Roosevelt's war policies, went out West and mixed among the people a little bit, and being a little further

away from home succumbed to the temptation to win votes at all costs. He plumped head-on for banning all war credits to belligerents and no involvement whatever in the war. Of course, that was only one speech; he still has a chance to be forgiven. There is not the slightest doubt that he thereby enormously strengthened himself among the voters, but he gave his Wall Street friends a terrible headache, even though they knew he is "an absolutely reliable fellow."

Once in office he could be depended upon to follow instructions even more than Roosevelt who, after all, is not a business man but who has something of the temperament of an artist who sometimes makes trouble. But among the big boys today, the almost unforgivable crime is to play with this war issue. Even the demagogic manipulation of it to get votes is not considered good form, particularly among the upper classes; it shows you are a little bit vulgar and uneducated; you don't belong. It is too dangerous; the people might take you seriously and get out of hand; it is playing with fire. Even Norman Thomas has received his instructions not to go too heavy on this question, and he is obeying orders.

What shall be the guiding line for our struggle against the war party? As in all such fundamental questions, we can go directly back to Karl Marx and find there the direction, which is as fully valid today as it was when it was written. (By the way, on May 5, we are going to commemorate the anniversary of Karl Marx's birth, and it would not be a bad idea if everyone of you were to make a resolution that day to go and buy a volume of Karl Marx and study it for the guidance it gives us today.)

Karl Marx, collaborating with Frederick Engels, in his historic address to the International Workingmen's Association in 1864, gave a classic outline of the tasks of the working class in the struggle against war. Marx said:

The working classes have the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics, to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments, to counteract them if necessary by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice which ought to govern

the relations of private individuals as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.*

Just think over that little paragraph a little bit; it gives you your task today, your basic tasks in the struggle against the war party in America. Master yourselves the mysteries of international politics. Don't pay any attention when the President tells you he is better informed than you are; if that is so, he is committing a crime against the country, because all the information he has belongs to us, and we are going to get it.

That is the first rule—destroy the secrecy of secret diplomacy, tear the mask off, show the true face and meaning of all the steps being taken to drag the American people into the universal slaughter of a dying capitalist system, reveal the truth to all the people. That is the first big task. Watch with the greatest vigilance the diplomatic acts of our own government; let nothing escape the closest examination, for often, the seemingly most simple and virtuous gestures hide the most sinister plots and intrigues directed against peace. And always remember that we cannot demand of other peoples to restrain and control their governments unless we begin by restraining and controlling our own government. Rouse the masses to counteract and defeat imperialist diplomacy with all the means in our power.

When unable to prevent the execution of imperialist policies, at least register the most determined and universal denunciations of those acts.

These are the simple tasks, the elementary tasks, the foundation of the struggle against war, as laid down by Karl Marx in 1864. It was upon this foundation, and further developing the science of Marxism, that our great leader Lenin led the Russian people in the struggle against war, and through that struggle, to the establishment of the new socialist society on one-sixth of the world. Upon the foundation laid by Marx, Engels and Lenin, our great Stalin has further demonstrated the practical road to peace. Upon that foundation has been reared the great new society, the socialist society, already beginning the transition to communism, the marvelous success of which has been

* "The Inaugural Address," *Founding of the First International*, p. 38, International Publishers, New York.

registered in the consolidated security of that land in the midst of a world at war and bitterly hostile to it.

These things are not accidents. It is no accident that a capitalist world, raging in its dying agonies like a wild beast, and wanting to tear the Soviet Union limb by limb, when faced with a final decision to begin the job, turns away from it and, instead, begins to tear one another limb from limb.

The Soviet Union, in its expanding strength, its consolidated foundation, its tremendous and world-shaking achievements is providing us with the very best of help in our own struggle against war. Just compare the problems of today with those of 1914-15. Is it not clear already that it is the glorious example of the Soviet Union that has opened up new perspectives for all of us? Is it not clear that it is the existence of the Soviet Union, the realization of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin that has thrown the fear of God into the hearts of capitalists that never knew it before, and has so encouraged, stimulated and informed the masses of the world that long before the second imperialist war has gone four years, there will be a repetition on a larger scale of the great outcome of the first imperialist war that gave birth to the Soviet power and socialism on one-sixth of the earth's surface?

The second imperialist war, through the struggle of the masses to bring it to an end, will give birth to a socialist system in one or more other countries.

Speech delivered at an anti-war mass meeting sponsored by the Young Communist League at Royal Windsor Manor, New York City, May 3, 1940.