People's Front and Imperialist War

By JAY LOVESTONE

(The article below represents the second section of an address delivered by Jay Lovestone at the recent International Congress at Paris. The first section, dealing with the People's Front in America, appeared last week. —The Editor.)

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WE ARE witnessing in our country gigantic and very clever preparations for arming the country to the teeth and for insuring its decisive role in the coming world war. At the same time, we must know that there is, alongside of the rising fever of chauvinism, a tremendous, tho confused, sentiment against imperialist war. In no small measure is this sentiment pacifist. Yet, there is a good deal of feeling in the country that there is no earthly reason for the United States waging any war today. Very many have not forgotten how the United States got into the last war, "to make the world safe for democracy." As many are cynical about Wilson's promise "to keep us out of war" and about his saccharin coated "fourteen points." The element of revolutionary proletarian opposition to imperialist war is still very small. Our organization has joined the broad anti-war movement to carry on work along with other labor organizations, like the Socialist Party and big trade unions, on a common program. At the same time, we are also propagating our own revolutionary position.

The Stalinist Policy

Some serious problems arise here. It is, of course, correct to utilize the divisions amongst the imperialist powers for the purpose of aiding international working-class solidarity and for strengthening the international working-class movement. Especially is this correct for a working class in power like the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. However, on the basis of the People's Front policy, the Stalin regime is dividing the workers of the world rather than uniting them. Stalin and his puppets are working to help one group of imperialist powers against another —the so-called "great democracies" against the fascist powers.

The American Communist Party carries out this Stalin policy in the most criminal fashion. One will find in the New Masses, a Stalinist organ in New York, an appeal to Wall Street and its government to aid China on the basis of Wall Street's own imperialist interests. When the U.S.S. Panay was bombed and sunk on the Yangtze River, the Communist Party's auxiliary organizations issued the battle cry "Once is Enough!" Incidentally, let me say that the Panay was escorting and protecting Standard Oil tankers. The People's Front policy, as we know, is supposed to be based on the theory of collaboration between the working class and the middle class, or the little capitalists, for the purpose of aiding the latter. We need not wonder too long about the Standard Oil Corporation as a little capitalist. You all know that this is a Rockefeller outfit. You can all see how in practise the People's Front not only does not help the proletariat but, in the last resort, does not really protect even the little business man. In reality, the People's Front policy is conducive to the defense of the best interests of the bourgeoisie.

And in the big industrial districts where there is considerable labor opposition to Roosevelt's war program, the Communist Party goes out of the way to miseducate its own members and to mislead the workers in order to have them become chauvinists, in order to have them become willing tools of Wall Street imperialism. Let me illustrate this by quoting from the Daily Worker of February 9, a description of the Lenin Memorial meeting held in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., seat of the hard-coal industry, by the Communist Party:

"The meeting was well controlled on the floor, the committee worked quietly and efficiently. Everyone was well disciplined. The meeting began with the singing of the 'Star Spangled Banner'; pictures were shown, 'Millions of Us,' 'Bombing of the Panay'."

An Agency Of The War Machine

Here you see how the Communist Party has become an outright agency of the Wall Street war machine. When Roosevelt announced his huge naval program, the only thing that the Daily Worker could say was that a bigger one had been expected. When one of the liberal Congressmen, Maury Maverick from Texas, came out against the President's rearmament budget, the Daily Worker rushed into a violent criticism of him. All of this is done in the name of the panacea of "collective security"! It is unnecessary for me to underline to you that, when the Stalinites in the United States speak of "collective security," they never say a word as to what class will enjoy the collective security they seek.

The Stalinites are working overtime in their fight against the forces striving for peace. They have gone as far as to denounce these forces to the government and to pledge to the government that, in the event of a war, they will be the first to fight against any organization or group that is "disloyal." The Stalinist leader, Browder, has declared: "If there should arise in America anything similar to the situation in Spain, where the democratic republic, while repulsing the fascist invasion, was stabbed in the back by the 'uncontrolled extremists,' then we, like our brothers in the Spanish Communist Party, would be in the forefront of the struggle to suppress such 'extremists' who are the real agents of fascism, and render them harmless."

Everybody now knows what a Stalinite means when he says "render them harmless." Try to count the countless Bolsheviks murdered in the U.S.S.R. This is Stalin's way of "rendering them

(*Continued on Page* 5)

THEN AND NOW

I THINK we shall find ourselves drifting into war with Germany. . . . Regrettable as this would be, there would be compensations. The war would be more speedily ended and we would be in a strong position to aid the other great democracies in turning into the right paths! —Colonel House to President Wilson, in a letter dated June 16, 1915.

Just substitute "Japan" for "Germany" . . .

New Rivalries in A

By Ellen Ward

IN the Argentine, Dictator Justo has just turned over the government to Dictator Ortiz. It is true that the country went thru the forms of an election in September 1937, and the election mumbo-jumbo is somewhat more complicated and lifelike than it is in Mexico, let us say. In February of this year, the people "celebrated" the inauguration and the United States sent its six largest bombers—flying fortresses we call them—to help celebrate whose victory?

Roberto Ortiz, millionaire, lawyer, gambler, represents the interests of the rich landowners who are not unfriendly to the embryonic fascist movements which they held in reserve. On the day of the inauguration, John White, New York Times correspondent, cabled from Buenos Aires:

"Ortiz has the complete confidence of the business interests, both foreign and local, and he is pledged to continue those policies which have made Justo's administration one of the most successful in the country's history."

Successful for whom?

Why shouldn't the business interests be well pleased? Ortiz was finance minister in Dictator Justo's cabinet. At the same time, he was attorney for British interests in the Argentine—this means all utilities and railways—and he was the preferred candidate of the landowners and the reactionaries of the land. It is no secret that his election was secured by force and fraud. He has no majority in the present Chamber of Deputies but soon they will hold a new election and the political gangsters will secure him a majority in the next Chamber.

Fascism in Argentina is not the unified, organized force that it is in Brazil. It has as yet no important national leader like Plinio Salgado.

The fascist Argentine Legion Civica is made up of some government employees, members of army officers families and sons of large landowners.

There are over ten fascist groups defending the interests of the landowners in the different regions of the country.

Industry In Argentina

Argentina's extreme nationalism began to develop during the years of the depression. As in other Latin American lands, the economic crisis resulted in considerable expansion of native industry which began to supply articles purchased abroad before the depression. During the last half-decade, there has been considerable growth in the manufacture of shoes, textiles, canned goods, toilet preparations, glass, furniture, pneumatic tires and other commodities. Argentina's shoes are today as good as the British in quality and workmanship and the development in textiles is making Argentina independent of the foreign market, so much so that some of our own New England manufacturers, who in former years supplied the Argentine market, have been losing so rapidly that they have been compelled to transfer their whole plant to Buenos Aires.

Altho Argentine trade with the United States has doubled in the last year and that of Great Britain declined slightly, England still holds first place in the market of Argentina. She buys one-third of all of the exports of the Argentine and has tied the Argentine currency to the British pound sterling. Before the depression her currency was tied to the American dollar.

Justo before, and now Ortiz, encourage the activities of the fascist groups because they find them exceedingly useful from time to time in protecting the interests of the landowners. The two more important fascist groups are La Guardia Argentina and La Legion Civica. Both have nuclei in the outlying regions of the country. They claim a membership of 50,000 in Buenos

War and the Popular Front

(*Continued from Page* 3)

harmless," because they disagree with him and are loyal to the international revolutionary working-class movement.

The supporters of the People's Front policy make a lot of noise that the reason they resort to this course is that they desire to defend and preserve the rights of the workers at home. In effect, however, the supporters of the People's Front are the very first ones to abandon and to make impossible the preservation of the rights of the workers in the imperialist countries. In which way? How? The People's Front policy is based on undermining and excluding independent action by the working-class movement. And in the colonies, the People's Front governments and supporters resort to and render support to the most reactionary acts of the bourgeois democracies. The administration and domination of colonial peoples at the hands of the People's Front government do not differ in the slightest from the treatment accorded these peoples by the fascist regimes. We need but turn to French Morocco.

The watchword of the People's Front is supposed to be "unity." Unity with whom? Unity for whom and for what purpose? For unity in the ranks of labor against capitalist exploitation and oppression? No! It is the unity of the working-class organizations with the organizations of the enemy class on the basis of the program and defense of the interests of the enemy class and the perpetuation of its socio-economic system—capitalism, imperialism. This is not unity but disunity in so far as the working class and its interests are concerned.

I have already referred to the work of our organization in the struggle against imperialist war. It is most encouraging to us to be able to tell you that such mighty trade-union organizations as the Steel Organizing Workers Committee, the United Automobile Workers Union, the Aluminum Workers Union—all affiliates of the C.I.O.—have gone on record for an amendment to the Constitution of the country to require that the government shall not be able to go to war without first getting a referendum of the people on this question. It is rather "queer" (to the superficial observer only, of course) that the Stalinites who are so anxious, in words, for defending the democratic rights of the workers, are the bitterest enemies of this proposed amendment which seeks, at most, to give the workers the little right of at least having something to say about their being butchered in an imperialist war.

Besides the above mentioned national trade-union organizations, the Chicago Federation of Labor, affiliated with the A. F. of L., has also adopted a sound position on the war question. The United Mine Workers of America, led by John L. Lewis, has moved in the same direction. So have the Minnesota and Wisconsin Federations of Labor, affiliated to the A. F. of L., and the Illinois Labor Party. It is clear to all of you that too great importance cannot be attached to the fact that the unions in such basic war industries as steel, motors and aluminum, have taken a sound position on the war question.

Let me say, in concluding, a few words about some questions raised here in the course of the debate. There never can be any real antagonism between mass activities and a revolutionary Marxist, or communist, theoretical position. We yield to none in our desire and effort to participate in the mass movement of the working class in our country. We have always striven, and shall continue to strive, to lend life to our revolutionary position thru such participation in the class struggle.

Let me say also that it would not be correct to maintain that the present People's Front strategy is simply identical with the class collaboration game played by the old social-democratic parties. There are several differences between the first edition and the present edition of the People's Front. The first edition of the People's Front, led and fostered by the social-democrats, made possible and helped insure the victory of fascism over the workers. This People's Front did not have the communists in it. At that time, the communists were against the People's Front policy. The second edition of the People's Front has the communists in it as its loudest and most energetic proponents and makes impossible a victory of the workers over fascism. These differences, I submit, are not unimportant. It should be folly for any one to believe that the right way to fight the People's Front is by being in it and by being responsible for it. We should be against it; we should be outside of it and we should call and hold to responsibility those in it and those for it. Unless we pursue this course, we will sacrifice our right to and duty of independent working-class action and will ourselves resort to a policy of dependence on the bourgeoisie or their labor partners.

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taries of the various commissions reported on general findings of each commission. Then there was an intermission during which the chairmen of all five commissions met and drew up final resolutions for the conference, based on resolutions submitted by each commission. In a final session of all delegates, these resolutions were read and ratified by a vote of the entire conference.

The commissions were: 1. world economic cooperation; 2. problems of peace in Europe; 3. the Far East; 4. militarism in the United States; 5. religious and ethical problems and peace.

We divided our forces as best

East, we succeeded in leading the entire discussion during the morning session and were pretty well set to put thru a resolution favoring removal of American armed forces from the Far East. In the afternoon session, however, the Y.C.L. packed this commission to the rafters, voted down our resolution and put one thru calling for "collective security" against Japan.

3. In the commission on militarism in the United States, a Y.P.S.L.er presented the Ludlow referendum proposal. Discussion was very hot and there was a great deal of support for it. Seeing this danger, the Stalinites put thru a motion to table the resolution indefinitely. This shameful act of railroading went thru even tho the conference was a one-day affair and tabling meant refusing to let it come to a vote, because there would never be an opportunity for this commission to meet again. Unfortunately the Y.P.S.L. put up no fight.

4. In the commission on European problems, we again succeeded in bringing a war-referendum resolution to the floor and also succeeded in putting it to a vote. It was defeated 40 to 21. We then asked to have it submitted as a minority resolution since it had received the support of one-third of the delegates. Two Y.C.L.ers from Temple University fought the motion to submit a minority resolution. But their caucus leader spoke up for "democracy." Even so the motion was carried by only five votes.

At this commission, a resolution was carried that embodied the entire American Students Union program rolled up into one plus the O'Connell "peace" bill. Again the vote was 40 to 21. We could not present a substitute resolution, the chair ruling there was no time for discussion!

At the last session, the most important one, the rule disqualifying all those who were not then actual students from speaking was clamped down and this did us some damage. (It should be noted that the head of the A. S. U. and some of its leading officials are no longer students themselves.) At this session, we tried to submit a substitute resolution for the one adopted by the committee on "collective security" and the O'Connell "peace" bill all together. Jack Lamping, president of the Methodist Youth, presented the case. Our proposal was defeated as was to be expected. Yet we were able to get a 25% vote. This I consider very good because the conference was Y.C.L.-packed in the first place.

That the Communist Party's jingoism has become so notorious that it is already reflected in current fiction, can be seen from the March issue of Harpers. In a story on the next war, called "Fantasia for Trumpets," the author, A. H. Z. Carr, has his Mr. Miller declare in great perplexity to a young man who had just enlisted in the army: "I can't understand you. If you were a communist or if you were a boy looking for adventure —but you know what it means."