

Are We Prepared for the Coming World Conflict?

By **BERTRAM D. WOLFE**

(concluded from last issue)

A number of years ago, we correctly sensed the danger in the inseparable slogan, war-and-fascism, and when the American League Against War and Fascism was formed, we instructed our delegates to raise the demand that this slogan be separated and one type of organization be formed to fight against one and another against the other, because otherwise we said that an imperialist power like Great Britain or France might use the slogan to mobilize its own masses for its own objectives. Were we correct on that warning? We were. Did we follow it out and wage a merciless ideological war on that aspect of the American League Against War and Fascism? We did not and now we are paying in some measure the price in the unpreparedness of our own organization and the masses.

Now, in this situation in which we are now entering, we face certain enormous difficulties. Think of the persuasiveness of the slogans with which our enemies are equipped at the present time. We must very carefully explain our stand and the necessary steps to be taken by the working class. No matter how skillfully we work, no matter how successfully, we must recognize that, at the very best, we face a period in which we must learn again what we have perhaps forgotten, how to swim for a time against the stream and that stream a mightier torrent presumably than the one that faced us in 1917.

We must begin at once to carry on a sharper fight against the diplomatic, military and moral preparations of our own country for war so that we can rearm ourselves and the working class in that process.

Altho we do our level best, a raging flood is coming and our organization must consider that.

is our situation in the labor movement today? We are a cadre organization. We have for our size, amazing number of key posts in labor movement.

When the war hits these shores,

rest assured of it, we will lose our posts—all of them—in the labor movement if the situation in the slightest resembles what it does today. We can lose them in two ways. Some of our people can go the path of renegacy—even our organization has no guarantee that its ranks will remain intact—and those who do not go this path will go the other path that leads right thru jail doors.

In either case, and the former case I believe will be the exception, our key men are marked men once a war begins.

So that today, recruiting among the masses becomes literally a life-and-death question for ourselves and for the future of a revolutionary struggle against war. As you know, the non-conscription armies are accustomed to have a large of officers staff—cadre of officers—but officers who, the moment a war breaks out, become the kernel of cadres which are filled out with recruits into a gigantic army. We have reached the stage today when we must begin to expand our cadre forces on the same principle or we will be absolutely impotent before the size of the task with which we will be confronted.

No Democracy For Revolutionists

You may think that perhaps we have a special advantage in that a democratic country must keep up democratic pretenses. It is true that France took longer than Germany during the last war to get the full military dictatorship going but we cannot count on anything like that because the pretense of democracy will not be extended to us. The excuse will be that American imperialist aims are those of a "holy war" and opponents of American imperialism will be branded "agents of fascism" or "agents of the Mikado," to whom no democratic rights need be given. The Spanish government's treatment of the P.O.U.M. shows the technique and Browder's speech in Massachusetts shows that there are already applicants for the role of class treason. For that reason, our fight with the C.P. ceases to be

"UNITY" PETITIONS DANGER TO UNITY

A dangerous "unity" campaign is now being pushed in various parts of the country by some so-called friends of the C. I. O. Under the influence of the socialist, Paul Porter, a movement has been initiated from Kenosha, Wisconsin, to collect a million signatures to a petition insisting that the C.I.O.-A. F. of L. negotiators remain in conference "until such time as they can establish a united labor movement capable of organizing still unorganized millions." In Cleveland, the Stalinites, controlling the C. I. O. council, are circulating a petition for "unity" without even mentioning industrial unionism. And, according to press reports, the International Typographical Union, unofficially affiliated to the C. I. O., has published post-cards addressed to William Green and John L. Lewis inscribed with the slogan: "Get together or get out!"

All of these schemes are essentially the same—and they are all misleading and dangerous. Misleading—because they all proceed on the utterly false assumption that all you need for unity in the ranks of labor is just a "reasonable" approach, a willingness to negotiate, a spirit of compliance, that there really are no fundamental and deep-going issues dividing the industrial-unionist C. I. O. from the craft-unionist A. F. of L. Dangerous—because they are calculated to create the demoralizing impression that the C. I. O. leaders don't want unity and have to be forced to continue negotiations thru a petition campaign. In their very nature, all of these "unity" schemes tend to undermine the confidence of the workers in the C. I. O. movement and its leadership and thereby to play into the hands of reaction. They should be opposed as a menace to the true interests of the C. I. O. and the labor movement.

a family quarrel between two sections of the same communist movement. The official section still trades on the name but its line, its words and its deeds, have ceased to be communist. As it gets used to its new tasks—its best elements will leave it on the road—it will be

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Are We Ready For New War?

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obliged to open a merciless fire on those who stick to their revolutionary guns, for there is nothing that renegacy fears and hates so much as reminders of its own revolutionary past. It will fight us with a fury which makes its past slander and frameup campaigns against us seem mere child's play. Already, in a number of unions, its spokesmen have become the chief Red-baiters, altho they do it surreptitiously so far, as men who are unused to their roles. Already, today, they are making the C.P. program synonymous with bourgeois liberalism; the C.P. declarations on war are even now changing from those of liberal pacifism to the language of the recruiting sergeant. By the same logic with which they make their brand of "communism" synonymous with bourgeois liberalism, they are forced to try to make proletarian revolution synonymous with fascism. Spain shows, Browder's speech shows, that they do not shrink from the logic of that fact.

We have one advantage in all this. If we make the turn on time, rearm as we should, make our stand clear, far and wide, then we will win to our side that great mass of aroused and disillusioned youth upon whom the main burden of war falls and we will see our ranks swell to a gigantic force in proportion as we live up to our duty

in the months facing us now.

Our Tasks Today

This report is a step in the carrying out of our decision to open a discussion in the leading committees and the units on the theoretical problems and the practical measures involved in this turn.

The next phase will be to explain our position as fully, as carefully, as widely and as clearly as possible to the workers. For this purpose, we must make our weekly Age into a mass organ so that we can make our position more widely heard and we must speed the tempo of our recruiting in the mass organizations and the filling out of our cadres into a fighting force that will be equal to the task before us.

This is not a report which will be followed by a few brief remarks from the floor and then a summary closing of the discussion. This is a report intended to open a discussion in every unit and fraction of our organization, then in every section of the working class thruout the land. At this stage, every member of our organization has the floor.

BALTIMORE

WILL HERBERG

Labor and the New Deal'
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12
7:30 P. M.

Workers Educational Club
522 Park Avenue
Baltimore