THE NATIONAL FRONT IS FORMING

By Bertram D. Wolfe

(The following article is the first of the series based on the stenogram of the report on "Problems of Strategy and Policy in the Struggle Against War" made by Bertram D. Wolfe to the plenary session of the National Council of the I.C.L.L. held recently.—THE EDITOR.)

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SINCE the report on the war question at the October session of our National Council, events have confirmed in fearful fashion the warnings and the predictions that were made at that time. The Chicago speech of President Roosevelt has proved indeed to be a call for rearmament. Roosevelt chose the Christmas season, December 28, to issue his request for a larger navy. The Communist Party, in a Daily Worker editorial on December 31, handles the question in characteristic fashion. First, it blames Roosevelt's naval program on the Tories—who are also for a larger navy. The politics of the Communist Party today brings it strange bedfellows and it might as well get used to embracing them without such protests of innocence and virtue. At any rate, having blamed the Tories, it proceeds to endorse the proposal. The only questions it raises are: "Who is to pay for the navy?" and "Who is to control the enlarged navy?" We know the answers to both of those questions.

Who Will Pay For The Navy?

Who is to pay for the increase in the size of the American navy? Housing will pay! Already the Roosevelt administration has offered a scandalous scheme for private construction, for government interest bonuses to the construction corporations, and for wage-cuts in the building trades. And the Daily Worker has endorsed this scheme!

Relief will pay! The future will pay! The future will be chained with fresh debts. The New York State Legislative Committee on Finance has just issued a report on the size of the public debt saddled on future generations. The New York State share of the national, state and local debt amounts to $3,000 per family, including the families on relief! The bulk of the families in the state of New York do not earn in a year of work nearly the amount of the per-capita debt per family in the state.

Who is to pay? The masses will pay, with poverty, with sweat and with blood!

And who is to control the enlarged navy? The Daily Worker insists that it should not be Admiral Stirling! Are the other admirals okay? We know, and the Daily Worker knows, that the admirals do not control the navy. The ruling class controls the navy, as it does the rest of the armed forces.

The Roosevelt proposal involves an addition to an already enlarged naval budget of over a half-billion dollars for next year, by supplementary naval estimates the amount of which Roosevelt refuses to state.

It involves a strengthening of the Hawaian and Philippine naval bases. Therefore, you can say goodbye to freedom for the Philippines. Again, the Communist Party accepts the new logic for its "communo"-imperialism and already James S. Allen has written an article in the Nation insinuating that the advocates of Philippine independence are Japanese agents.

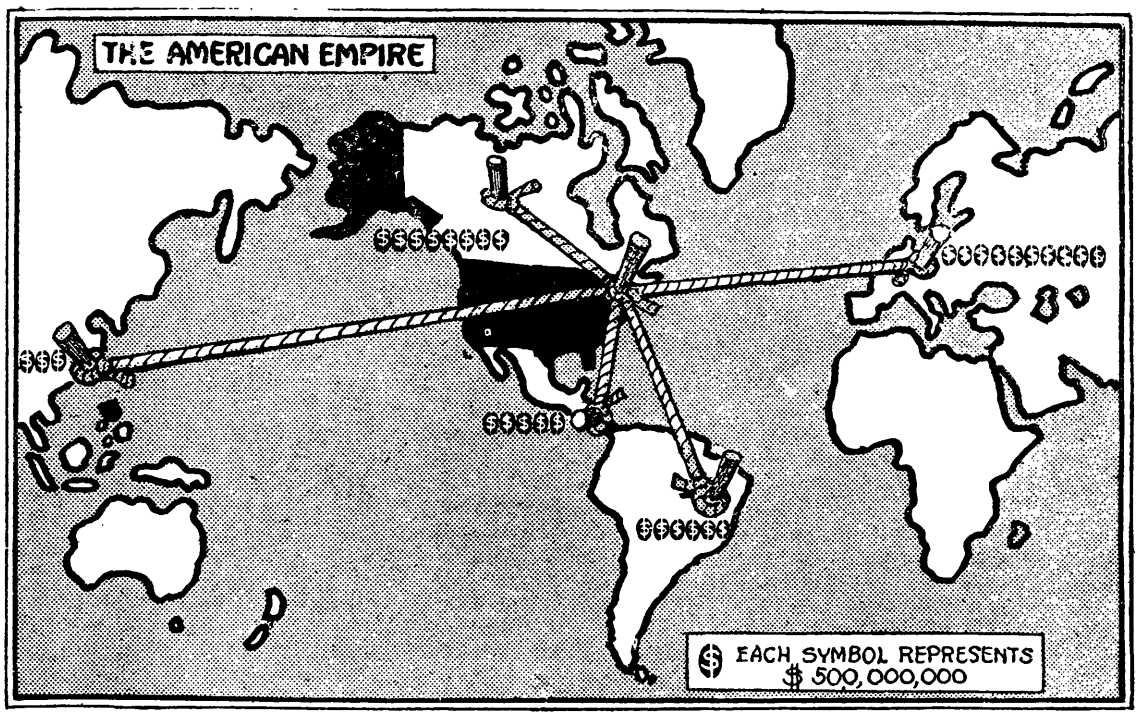
Developing The War Morale

The Chicago speech, as we foresaw, has been the beginning of the moral mobilization of America for war. Note, for example, the handling of the Panay incident. Note the dramatic method of treating the Panay films.

What are the facts? The Panay was a U.S. gunboat engaged in escorting three Standard Oil tankers. At the end of August, the President officially called on "all the 7,780 Americans in China to get out" and warned any who remained that they were doing so "at their own risk." The Standard Oil Corporation is powerful enough to ignore the warning. It is powerful enough to get a gunboat convoy from the U.S. Navy. And now, a short time after the August warning, Secretary Hull has declared that "our 7,000 soldiers, sailors and marines will stay in China. We have developed during a century certain rights, certain interests, certain obligations and certain practises," which require their remaining.

That is well put. The **certain rights** are imperialist rights: the right of a bandit with a gun over his defenseless victims, the Chinese people. The **certain interests** are big business interests. What interests have the American people in China—or what rights? The **certain obligations** are the obligations that an imperialist government contracts with its ruling class, and the **certain practises** that Hull refers to are the practises of sharpers, the practises of terror, the practises of the gangster on an international scale.

The Communist Party has become so shameless a lackey of imperialism that a proposal to withdraw the big business interests and the gunboats and Marines from China is denounced by the C.P. in the words of Morgenthau as a "scuttle-and-run" proposal.



Arousing A War Fever

Since the Chicago speech, the President has lost no opportunity to arouse a war fever in the United States and, to the Daily Worker's "credit," the same can be said of it. The Panay incident is only one example. Take the President's public order on spy photographs. Take the declaration of the head of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Robert Fechner, on the fact that the C.C.C. now has 2,300,000 youths trained for war. I quote: "Their training is such that they are about 85% prepared for military life." Take the letter of Roosevelt to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee on the enlargement of the navy. Take the letter of Roosevelt to Landon. What is the purpose of all these declarations of the President of the United States? The purpose is to create a fever condition, to arouse hysteria and panic. The purpose is to ask the American people to stop discussing, thinking and resisting; the purpose is to build up the familiar "Stand behind the President" psychology that leads to fascism.

And what shall we think of a one-time revolutionary party that hurls the word "fascist" at those who oppose this step towards fascism?—that hurls the words "militarist" and "war-monger" and "Tory" at those who oppose this militaristic, war mongering and Tory step toward armament, war and reaction? Is this not the standard, old-time tactics of the thief crying: "Stop thief?" The Communist Party today has become not the most powerful but certainly the vilest, and most vociferous enemy of peace, freedom and working-class independence and consciousness, not to mention of the proletarian revolution.

Let's see how the Daily Worker carries out the line of the President. Since the Chicago speech they have not let a day pass without some incitement to war psychology. I pick at random two weeks apart, the December 14 and December 28 issues of the Daily Worker. "JAPAN ORDERS DEATH TO HOSTILE ALIENS," is the main headline all along the front page in one of them. Subhead: "Extra-Territorial Rights Seen at Stake in New Nippon Decree." "ROOSEVELT TAKES OVER IN WAR CRISIS"—the main headline in the other. Hearst couldn't do better if he tried.

War The Touchstone

We have reached a stage where once again war becomes the dividing line by which all movements must be measured, tested and judged. This is even true among the liberals. I want you to note the widening gap between the Nation and the New Republic. I erroneously reported at the October plenum that the New Republic would line up together with the Nation in the war party in this country. Since that time, the New Republic has thought over the experiences of 1917 and has come out from the liberal standpoint as an active opponent of the coming war. And that makes, incidentally, a number of other differences in the whole tone of the magazine: the honeymoon between the New Republic and the Communist Party seems to have reached an end.

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Lenin's Political Genius

By Will Herberg

(V. I. Lenin died on January 24, 1924, fourteen years ago. The following article is written in commemoration.—THE EDITOR.)

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LENIN'S political genius is so original, so profound and so many-sided that it necessarily defies any attempt to encompass it within the scope of a formal analysis. Yet there are certain of its phases that virtually leap to the eye out of the facts themselves and, in this article, I want to examine and illustrate one such aspect, from which, it seems to me, we can learn a great deal of infinite value to us as revolutionary Marxists in America. I refer to Lenin's supreme capacity for instantly grasping a sudden change of situation in its essential meaning, isolating its really significant features and adapting his policies realisticaly to the new conditions even tho that might involve the abandonment of traditional views and tactics—yet all the while retaining absolutely intact his fundamental principles, aims and objectives.

Soviets In The 1905 Revolution

1. During the years preceding the 1905 revolution, Lenin had hammered away without cessation —first against the Economists and then against certain sections of the Mensheviks—at the primary necessity of developing the workers movement and its institutions along party, along social-democratic lines. The central nucleus of the Bolshevik faction had been educated to look upon "non-partyism" with the greatest suspicion, as essentially only a disguised form of bourgeois-liberal "laborism." And we cannot deny that, under the circumstances and political relations of pre-1905 Russia, this attitude of the Bolsheviks was thoroly justified from the point of view of the newly born social-democratic party striving to establish itself as the true representative of the Russian working class.

Then came 1905. The forces of the rising strike movement, turning into revolution, demanded a "broad class organization outside of party." In June and July, the Menshevik Dan had already suggested, in the "new" Iskra, the formation of "organs of revolutionary self-government." The Bolsheviks in Russia—Lenin was in exile— adopted a hostile attitude to this idea, primarily because it presupposed non-party workers organizations of a political character. In October and November, the Mensheviks passed from theory to practise and called for the formation of a delegate assembly of workers in which one deputy should represent 500 constituents. Such a council was immediately formed in Petersburg, primarily as a general strike committee—the famous Soviet of Workers Deputies, of which the Menshevik, Zborovski, was the first, the non-party socialist, Nossar-Khrustalev, the second and the independent socialist, Trotsky, the third and last president. Similar bodies sprang up in other parts of the country.[1]

Even at this point, the Bolsheviks, true to their pre-1905 doctrine, remained hostile to the new soviets and the idea underlying them. But, in November, Lenin returned to Russia. Literally one glance at the situation was enough for him; he saw that the movement had far outgrown the narrow limits of former days and that the non-party soviets, with room for Socialist-Revolutionaries and unaffiliated elements as well as for social-democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks), not only corresponded to the deepest needs of the moment but constituted a powerful force for the further development of the revolution. Under his influence, the Bolsheviks reversed their stand, entered the soviets and became quite an influential tendency within them. At any rate, they abandoned their outworn approach to the workers movement and adopted an outlook and an attitude far more in harmony with the new situation.

The idea of soviets had originated with the Mensheviks but, significantly enough, they never attained to a clear appreciation of the role and meaning of these institutions. It was Lenin, with his keen political insight and profound Marxist understanding, who grasped the deep implications of the new manifestation as the "peculiar organs of the embryonic revolutionary power, . . . organs of government, . . . embryos of dictatorship,"[2] a point of view repeatedly reiterated by the Bolsheviks in the years that followed and brilliantly confirmed by history in 1917.

War And The Socialist International

2. In August 1914, Lenin was living in a little mountain village in Galicia together with Zinoviev and a few other close co-workers. The war had broken out and they were all waiting to learn of the attitude taken by the German social-democracy, which set the tone and more or less guided the policy of the Socialist International. Despite all the recent falsification of his-

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1. See Boris Souvarine: Staline, pp. 76, 80.

2. V. I. Lenin: The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers Party, 1906.

The National War Front Is Being Rapidly Formed

(*Continued from Page* 3)

In the labor movement, it is necessary for us to realize that the differences between us and the Communist Party today are not tactical differences. The differences are differences **in attitude towards the whole social order.** The Comintern today wishes to distinguish between the "stuffed" beasts of prey and the "hungry" ones. To them, the beast of prey whose maw is crammed is no beast of prey at all. On the other extreme are the bourgeois pacifists of a type who propose to satisfy the "hungry" beasts of prey—Germany, Japan and Italy—at the expense of the backward peoples and who call Germany, Japan and Italy by the lovely proletarian-sounding name of the "have-nots."

"Communist" Agents Of Imperialism

The difference between the bourgeois-pacifist agents of the "hungry" imperialisms and the Comintern agents of the "satisfied" imperialisms does not prevent us from answering both of them alike in the words of Lenin:

"It is not the business of Socialists to help the younger and stronger robber to rob the older and fatter bandits nor to help the older and fatter bandits to guard their loot against the younger and hungrier ones . . . but the socialists must use the struggle between the bandits to overthrow them all."

Next, the Comintern wants us to distinguish between large and small nations. Belgium is a small nation—the oppressor of the Congo. I want to ask: Is Poland a large or a small nation? It is bigger than Italy. Italy is a small nation, smaller than England; Japan is a small nation compared with China!

We have to ask the Comintern and those who still listen to it: Since when does honest analysis determine these political questions with a tape measure?

Next, the Comintern is ready to revive the shame-covered slogan of the last war: "Make the world safe for democracy." Have we learned nothing from 1914 to 1918? Are Poland and Rumania and Yugoslavia democracies because they are small and allied with France? In today's paper we read the following: "France to Refuse To Arm Old Allies. A virtual embargo ordered on armament supplies to Rumania and Yugoslavia." And the article begins: "Officials said tonight that the French government had ordered a virtual embargo on armament shipments to Rumania and Yugoslavia, long French allies, because of their growing friendship with Italy and Germany.

"Edouard Daladier, Minister of National Defense, has ordered the suppression of government licenses for exportation of military supplies to those countries until further notice."

That indicates the instability of the constellations that are manouvering today in preparation for a general world war. Who knows now at this moment whether England and Italy will not be together in the next war, whether Germany and England will be together or not in the next war?

Furthering Fascism Here

Another slogan, more effective because it has not been disgraced and exposed as has been the slogan, "Make the world safe for democracy," is the slogan of the "war against fascism," which the Comintern offers us as justification for imperialist policies in the coming war. We cannot make too clear that, while fascism on the one hand is a preparation and driving force for war, war on the other hand is a preparation and driving force for fascism. The living body of Tom Mooney is still rotting in jail in this "free democracy" as the first victim of a mere preparedness campaign in 1916 prior to our entrance into the last war. Have we forgotten the censorship during the last war? The raids? The jailing of Debs, Ruthenberg and Bentall? All three are dead—but are their names so soon forgotten?

Modern warfare is totalitarian warfare. It must of necessity embrace the entire population. And modern democracy is dictatorial "democracy" of a ruling class that has become imperialist, reactionary and is in full decay. Consequently, imperialist war can only give us a fascist state and a war in the name of the struggle against fascism must inevitably bring fascism to this land and to all other bourgeois participants. You can see it coming at the present moment.

War, like fascism, requires the myth of national unity to obscure political issues and class lines. I say that the declarations of Landon, Knox and Stimson are little short of terrifying in their significance. They have come out for "national unity" in a "national emergency." That means that, in the judgment of our ruling class, the emergency is here.

Examine the Landon letter, also a "Christmas season" document, dated December 20th. It says: "Politics cease at the water's edge." That is a beautiful formula. It says: "There must be no demagogic playing of politics at the expense of the country's unity in dangerous situations such as now confront us." Landon even goes out of his way to attack the British Laborite members of Parliament who opposed the entrance of Great Britain into the war in 1914. He denounces the LaFollette-Ludlow Amendment and Roosevelt rightly replies: "Your pledge strengthens the hand of the government."

The Stimson letter also opposes the LaFollette-Ludlow Amendment, demands full power for the Executive and, to give proof that the Executive should be trusted with full power, cites the examples of President McKinley and President Wilson in the Spanish and World Wars! McKinley—who concealed the fact that he had in his desk, at the moment, the Spanish apology for the blowing up of the Maine and their offer to withdraw from Cuba, because he wanted America to enter into a war with Spain. And Wilson—who concealed his pledges to enter the World War and ran for reelection on the slogan: "He kept us out of war." If we need any practical proof on the danger of trusting all power to the executive head of a "democratic" imperialist nation, McKinley and Wilson give us that proof.

The national front for war has been formed. Stimson of Hoover and Standard Oil fame, Landon of the Liberty League (Browder's chief American "fascist"), Colonel Knox of the Chicago Daily News and Earl Browder of the Daily Worker!

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(The second article in this series will appear in the next issue.

—The Editor.)

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leaders are showing a great deal of concern with the growth of the progressive group in Cleveland. They fear that as soon as the rank-and-file wakes up to their trickery and sheer dishonesty, it will shove them out and never let them come back.

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