

# War and the Labor Movement

International Anti-militarist Commission

October-November 1935

Italy has opened hostilities against Ethiopia. This she has been enabled to do, thanks to the help of many countries – members of the League of Nations – thanks to that country which pretends to fight imperialism, and thanks to the workers who have produced war materials.

The same countries which now call for sanctions have helped Italy in her imperialist war preparations by granting loans, by supplying and transporting war materials. Capitalists have taken orders – workers have filled them. Communist Russia was no exception, for millions of dollars worth of goods have been delivered by her to Italy in the last few months. Mussolini and Fascism are responsible for the blood that is being shed in this war, but no less responsible are the "leaders" of the working class who instead of pointing out to the working men their moral duty thought only of the tactical advantages a defeat of Mussolini would bring with it.

In spite of the lessons of 1914-1918, the policy which raised socialism from "utopia" to "science" and placed it on the basis of "reality", shows itself in 1935 for what it really is. Authoritarian socialism has lost all creative capacity and has become enmeshed in the maze of capitalist entanglements. The Second and Third Internationals with their mass organizations have come out in support of the League of Nations – the concentration of the greatest imperialist powers whose only purpose is that of maintaining the status quo in world domination. Such tactics cannot prevent war and much less destroy its causes. The laws underlying capitalist economy are not abolished when one pretends they do not exist. Nothing is attained by this ostrich policy but that one is compelled to take the side of the satisfied imperialist powers against the hungry ones. Nothing else but that soon millions will be sent to their death under the hypocritical slogan of the League of Nations War for the protection of international right and security.

There can be only one choice for the true socialists in such struggles. The enemy lies at home. Capitalism must be fought, production for war must be stopped. The position of the anarcho-syndicalists in France, Spain, Sweden, Holland and Norway calling for wide strikes against war productions by the workers in their own countries is the only logical stand that socialists can adopt. They must have no part in sanctions. Sanctions are a part of imperialist policy.

While the Italian Social-Democratic Party is behind the League of Nations, the emigre paper, *Giustizia e Libertà*, writes that the salvation of the Italian people lies solely in revolution, that fascism cannot be destroyed by English guns. This point of view is much more reasonable than that of many anti-fascists whose opinion that war can be destroyed by war was refuted by Simone Weil, the French Marxist. Her refutation ended with the words:

”...Thus appears clearly the absurdity of the anti-fascist action, that accepts war as a method. It means not only fighting a barbaric tyranny by subjecting the masses to the burden of a still more barbaric slaughter, but also the extension in another form of the system one is fighting against. It is childish to assert that a state apparatus, mighty through conquest, would mitigate the pressure exercised by an enemy state on its people. It would be still more childish to believe that such a state would permit a social revolution and not smother it in blood ... In general it seems as if history more and more compels a choice in every political struggle between an augmentation of the unbearable oppression which is exercised by every state apparatus, and a merciless fight against the state itself.”

There is indeed only one way in our fight against fascism, against capitalism, against the prevailing order of things: An unconditional fight against every war and all war preparations. That means in the present situation: Stoppage of all production and transport to those waging war; stoppage of all production and transport on behalf of those countries which are preparing at present economically for the application of eventual military sanctions, such as England, France, etc., in so far as raw materials and articles are concerned of which one is sure they have been ordered with a view to eventual use for war purposes.

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