

Naval Bases and Imperialism

The Struggle for Position at the Coming Conference in London

By Albert Glotzer

The five power naval conference to be held January in London is another chapter in war preparations. The conference will present a picture of spectacular jockeying for advantageous positions and for further maneuvers in alignment of forces.

The world map today offers a sectionally divided picture. By agreement, the imperialist powers have designated the rights of possession among themselves to the extent that no part of the globe, with the exception of the Soviet Union, is free from capitalist domination. The last arrangement in division of territory was made following the last war and the defeat of the Central powers. But what appeared to world capitalism then as a "fair" distribution of the spoils, has today become obsolete in view of the decisive economic changes that have taken place in post war capitalism.

The New Economic Center of Gravity

The outstanding change in world economy is the transference of the economic center of gravity from Europe under the hegemony of England, to the United States. At the same time all facts point to the decline of England, American capitalism, contrary to its pre-war position, when it maintained itself primarily on the basis of the home market, has its roots sunk in the soil of world economy. It dominates the European market, has penetrated into Asia, South America, etc., and in this way brought about the sharpest antagonisms between itself and the other powers.

America is pressing England ruthlessly. Any alliance between them can only mean the further domination of the U.S. The struggle for markets and a redistribution of colonial possessions and "spheres of influence" is driving headlong to war. This is especially clear in the pre-conference discussions and negotiations. While these changed economic conditions force the United States to lock horns with its outstanding competitor, England, they equally force her into sharpest antagonism with France, Japan and other imperialists. The contraction of the world market is forcing its solution through war. It is the only way that capitalism solves its contradictions.

The pre-conference atmosphere is an extremely bitter one. The preliminary discussions between the U.S. and England are looked upon with disfavor by the other powers. Japan, France and Italy reject the ratios of naval armaments laid down by these two countries. If there are to be ratios, they too demand an equal voice. Open talk of war is on the order of the day. John Steele in the Chicago Tribune of December 20, speaks of England as "our enemy". Every power assumes a most bellicose attitude, backing it with threats to one another.

The Conflict in Ratios

The matter of ratios in armaments will appear to be the main issue at London. This alleged issue of difference is indicative of the nature of the conference. The ratio of 5-5-3 as agreed upon by the U.S. and England is disputed by the other three participants. Japan asks for an increase in the ratio to 10-7-7. France demands a naval strength of 800,000 tons. Italy calls for parity with France, with the added statement that she is willing to concede this point if France will in return allow her concessions in Northern Africa.

The issue of parity and ratios, if accepted at face value, can mean nothing. What is important for the unmasking of the London fraud is the more cogent question of actual war preparations. It is necessary to remind the working class that the parity agreements are not parities based upon a decrease in armaments and the ratios of strength, but are on the contrary parities and ratios based upon increased building and further expenditures for war. The establishment of parity or ratios between the imperialists is a meaningless cloak to mislead the workers into false security. Agreements between these robbers are less than worthless. The whole history of capitalist diplomacy shows this. London will be the scene where the gauging of each other's strength will be attempted, where the more concrete steps for war can be taken, and from where a barrage of pacifism will be laid under the direction of reformism and social democracy.

The possession of naval bases will play a tremendous role in the coming conflict of the seas. They serve as an intermediary point for supplies, refueling and ammunition. An examination of these naval bases

of the three leading powers, England, U.S. and Japan will shed light not only upon the strength and role of these bases, but will at the same time give a picture of the areas of conflict. It will be seen too, that naval bases exist where the interests of the imperialists are the greatest, and as such serve also as a center of military operations against colonial uprisings.

England's Naval Bases

Taking England first, her twenty-six bases form an almost complete circle around the globe. Beginning at Wei-hai-wei, on the East coast of China, directly opposite Japan, starts the first of a long arc of bases. Following along the coast Southward lies Hong-Kong, Singapore and Rangoon on the South marks the complete arc around China. From there a continuous path is cut around the whole of Southern Asia (in the main, India) beginning at Trincomales, to Colombo, and Bombay. The bases then proceed thru the straits separating Africa from Asia, at Aden, Port Port Sudan, Suez, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar. The bases then proceed thru the straits separating Africa from Asia, at Aden, Port Port Sudan, Suez, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar. The bases then proceed thru the straits separating Africa from Asia, at Aden, Port Port Sudan, Suez, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar. The bases then proceed thru the straits separating Africa from Asia, at Aden, Port Port Sudan, Suez, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar.

Africa is similarly circumscribed. Aden, Port Sudan, Suez, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar on the North, Freetown, and St. Helena, on the west, Simontown at the South Cape and Port Louis off the East Coast. In this hemisphere are located seventeen of England's total of twenty six bases, since it is here that her possessions are the most numerous and the antagonisms the greatest.

Central and South America mark the second decisive section of imperialist exploitation. Here as well as in Asia, England and American interests clash most violently. In this section, England's bases begin at Halifax on the East coast of Canada, continue to Bermuda, East of the United States thence to Kingston and Port Castries in the Caribbean Sea. Port Stanley, East of the Southern end of South America marks the fifth base forming one line along the Atlantic coast of North and South America. The remaining four bases are in the Pacific. Esquimalt on the West coast of Canada, King George and Sydney in Australia, and Auckland in New Zealand, complete them.

The seven bases of the United States are concentrated in the Central America and Pacific territories. On the map they present an almost straight line. Located in the Caribbean are two, one at Guantanamo Bay and the other at the Virgin Isles. Number three is located at the Panama Canal, which is of vast importance, since the canal serves as a gateway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, rendering transference of forces relatively less difficult. The remaining four bases are in the Pacific beginning at Pearl Harbor, proceeding westward to Samoa, Guam and the Philippines.

Japan's six bases lie off the coast of China at Ryoyun, Elko, Chingka, Futamiko, Amami-o-shima and Bako. They are all definitely in the area of China, the main seat of Japan's interest.

England's Favored Position

From the above it appears that England is in a favored military position. There is no question but that the possession of so overwhelmingly a number of bases are a positive advantage over the supposedly greater fighting force of the U.S. But this is not the most decisive question. The bases indicate the areas of conflict, the centers of the greatest competition, but do not necessarily mean that the possession of a majority of them is the overwhelming factor.

The most decisive factor in the event of war is the resources of the various contenders. Increased building and expenditures presents a problem to all of the powers with the exception of the United States. Her resources place her in a most favored position. This is indisputable. While France demands her share of extended naval construction she is at the same time in favor of a let-up because of lack of resources. Likewise Japan, and England feel the difficulties. America alone can continue with a steady building program and will maintain this position. In addition no other country has its industries so completely

organized on a war basis as the U. S. Particularly the two most essential industries to war, steel and chemical, are ready at a moment's notice to prepare for war production.

New Methods of Sea Struggle

Another factor of importance which is also a point of difference is the type of warfare and methods to be employed. It is apparent that the old methods of ship versus ship struggle is giving way to undersea and air methods. This will call for faster ships and more effective guns. It will mean increased airplane carrier building and likewise submarine construction. In addition the fact the expense in the building of huge battleships is a tremendous one, plus their decreasing effectiveness, will lead an attempt to reduce their role in war. This reveals the whole MacDonald program of battleship reduction as hypocrisy.

But these questions are not the most important ones for us. At this stage the crucial problem is that war is on the horizon. The bloodbath is being planned, one that will far exceed the last war in brutality and slaughter. London is a preface to it. "Disarmament" and "peace" discussions, headed by pacifists and "socialists" are gestures made only to lull the international working class into a false sense of security. The time is ripe for struggle against the threat of war, with which capitalism is always pregnant. To arouse the international working class, to organize it to defeat the imperialist war with the weapon of proletarian revolution that is the task of the Communists.

A Proposed Party Questionnaire

"The first four pages of pages of every Moscow newspaper today are wholly devoted to Stalin. There is column after column of tribute to 'the peerless warrior of Communism', 'the closest comrade and follower of Lenin', 'the iron Leninist', 'socialism's victorious chief'... In the critical period there is little doubt that Stalin's support won the day for Lenin... Stalin reorganized the Red staff and suppressed the counter-revolution with characteristic vigor... Stalin did not oppose the NEP—he never opposed Lenin, etc., etc."

—Comrade Walter Duranty, in the New York Times of comrade Adolph Ochs, 12-22-1929.

In view of all this startling information, all of which, we confess, we were not aware of up till now (we even admit that we thought the contrary was true), we suggest that the following catechism be given to all workers who desire to join the official Communist Party. If the worker gives the old style, pre-third period reply (hereinafter printed in parentheses), he should be immediately denounced as a renegade and expelled from the party even before he is admitted. If he makes the correct, i. e., third-period-new-style reply, he should be admitted with honors and put on the most convenient district committee. We herewith submit a few of the questions and answers (both styles):

Question 1: Who founded the Social Democratic Labor Party of Russia (Bolsheviks)? Answer: (Lenin). Stalin.

Question 2: Who led the overthrow of the czar and a little later, of Kerensky? Answer: (Lenin and Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 3: Who negotiated with von Kuehlmann and General Hoffman at Brest-Litovsk? Answer: (Joffe and Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 4: Who organized the Red Army? Answer: (Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 5: Who led it to victory and suppressed the counter-revolution? Answer: (Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 6: Who founded the Communist International and led it? Answer: (Lenin and Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 7: Who was Lenin's closest collaborator? Answer: (Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 8: Whom did Lenin call the ablest man on the Central Committee? Answer: (Trotsky). Stalin.

Question 9: Whom did Lenin propose, in his "Testament", to remove from the position of Party secretary? Answer: (Stalin). Trotsky.

Question 10: Whom did Lenin denounce as disloyal, rude, unreliable, etc., etc., etc?

No Work in San Antonio

Labor Warned to Stay Clear

By ESTHER LOWELL

SAN ANTONIO, Texas-(FP)—Warnings to workers who read San Antonio's page advertisements in northern papers that jobs are scarce in the winter resort city are being broadcast. Sec. Wm. L. Hoefgen of the Central Trades Council first sent out the signal to all unionists. Now the U. S. employment Service, Dept. of Labor, reiterates it, telling workers not to go to any part of Texas before communicating with the service on the availability of jobs.

San Antonio has been following the well-trod pattern made by Los Angeles—high pressure advertising in newspapers, magazines and by radio to lure tourists. The labor surplus inevitably brought to the city by such a campaign is then used to beat down wages which the local unionists have labored hard to raise.

Strangers to Rock Pile

Two union delegates have appealed to Mayor Chambers to give city employment to more workers who are nearly destitute. Over 200, mostly local men, have been put into park and street cleaning service. A good many strangers have been arrested as "vags" and sent to the rock-pile to work off \$50 fines!

Already the Salvation Army reports its quarters overflowing with jobless. There are only 40 beds in the army hall and twice as many men crowd in at night to use chairs and floor. The admission charge on the second night bars most from repeating at the hall, but newcomers are always ready to take their turn, so great is the number of unemployed. "Coffee-and" is given each lodger at breakfast and an average of 36 other meals a day served to those who otherwise would starve. The men work an hour apiece for meals, but there is not enough work to give all a chance. Salvationists had over 200 applications for Christmas baskets 10 days before the holiday and reported donations considerably under other years.

Similar failure to reach its holiday charity goal was reported by the Empty Stocking group which furnishes food and clothing and renovated playthings to the poor. The organization was barely able to get half its modest \$1,500 budget! The Rotarians this year abandoned their previous practice of giving gifts to poor children from the municipal Christmas Tree.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

Starvation in North Carolina

RALEIGH, N. C. (FP)—The Raleigh News and Observer publishes this story of North Carolina destitution:

"WENDELL, N. C.—Wendell recently had a most vivid and pitiful example of the actual want, verging on starvation, which the farm situation in this section has made only too common.

"A gaunt, ill-clad couple, man and wife, with their little girl and boy trudging painfully down the splendid concrete highway pulling a boy's wagon loaded with all they had left in the world, all except the boy's dog, which not even grim want could force the father to take from his son, though there must have been little enough food for that extra mouth. Pitifully little on the wagon—a clock, a picture, clothing, Christmas and birthday gifts of happier days—nothing of any value and all that was left after half a lifetime of hard work."

Answer: (Stalin). Trotsky.

Question 11: Who opposed Lenin on the national question, on the union with Tseretelli, on the monopoly of foreign trade, etc., etc.? Answer: (Stalin). Trotsky.

Question 12: Who led the French revolution? Answer: (Robespierre and Danton). Stalin.

Question 13: Who led the Crusades against the pagan? Answer: (Richard the Lion-Hearted). Stalin.

Question 14: Who built the pyramids of Egypt? Answer: (Cheops and Rameses). Stalin.

Question 15: Who built Noah's Ark? Answer: (Noah, Ham, Shem and Jephthah). Stalin.

Question 16: Who ate the apple? Answer: (Adam). Stalin.

Any comrade can think up lots more of these questions