

# A Declaration of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Left Opposition of the Comintern)

## To the World Anti-War Congress at Amsterdam

The danger of a new world war is becoming more manifest every day. The causes of this danger have been bared in irrefutable fashion by Marxism.

For a long time now, the productive forces of humanity have grown beyond the limits of private property as well as beyond the boundaries of the national states. The salvation of humanity lies in a socialist economy based on an international division of labor. Under the influence of a conservative leadership, the proletariat has not fulfilled its revolutionary task. The world war of 1914-1918 was its retribution. The democratic champions of "peaceful development", the opponents of the revolutionary methods bear the direct responsibility for the dozens of millions of dead and wounded incurred by the imperialist slaughter.

The fifteen years that have passed since, have proved that the imperialist world has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Its internal contradictions have been further sharpened. The present crisis has revealed a frightful picture of the social disintegration of capitalist civilization, with its clear symptoms of developing gangrene. The salvation of humanity is possible only through the surgical action of the proletarian revolution.

### Capitalism in Blind Alley

The ruling classes are turning and twisting about in the straits of this hopeless situation. Their financial difficulties and their fear of the masses of the people prevent them from seeking a solution in the limitation of armaments. On the other hand, by raising the tariff walls ever higher, by restricting imports, the rulers are further strangling the world market, deepening the crisis, making more acute the national antagonisms and preparing new wars. The reformist parties who are today, just as yesterday, opposed to the revolutionary solution along the road of socialism, are once more taking upon themselves the whole weight of the responsibility for the misery of the crisis as well as for the approaching horrors of a new war.

Only in Czarist Russia power was wrested away from the hands of the bourgeoisie. Due to its revolutionary leadership, the young Russian proletariat was able, for the first time in world history, to show concretely what inexhaustible possibilities are contained in the régime of the proletarian dictatorship and of planned economy. The gigantic economic and cultural achievements of a backward country transformed into the country of the workers and the peasants show where the real road to salvation leads for all of humanity.

We are now awaiting from the Soviet government the completion of the second five year plan by a plan of a broad economic collaboration with the advanced capitalist countries and the development of the gigantic perspectives of human power before the masses languishing under the yoke of the crisis and of unemployment. No matter what practical, immediate results such a plan would have, its power of attracting to socialism would be immense for millions and millions of proletarian minds.

### Soviet Union in Danger

The present social régime in the land of Soviets is, to be sure, still a long ways off from socialism. But its incommensurable significance lies in the fact that it is started on the road toward socialism. It will all the more surely and quickly go over to socialism the sooner the proletariats of the advanced countries seize the power from the hands of the bourgeoisie and create the definitive premises of a new society, one that can only be achieved on an international basis.

The danger of world war is a danger to the very existence of the first workers' and peasants' state. No matter what the causes will be, no matter in what states the war will break out, in its ulterior development it will inevitably turn against the U. S. S. R. The world and the European bourgeoisie will not leave the scene without attempting a transfusion of blood from the arteries of the young workers' state into those of agonizing imperialism.

The past year alone has showed precisely how the flames of war lunge at the frontiers of the Soviet Union simultaneously from the Far East and from the closer West. At the same time strangling the independence of China, Japan constructs in Manchuria fortresses from which to strike at the Soviets. The antagonism between Japan and the United States cannot hold back the militarists of Tokio, for in a future war against the Soviets they will consider themselves in advance, as the very vanguard of world imperialism.

On the other hand, the coup d'Etat carried out by Hindenburg on Hitler's orders not only clears the road for the Fascist régime in Germany but also opens up the perspective of a struggle for life or death between a Fascist Germany and the Soviet Union. Big events are approaching for Europe and for the entire world.

The struggle against war signifies under these conditions the struggle to save the lives of dozens of millions of workers and peasants belonging to the new generation which has grown up since the great slaughter, to preserve all the conquests of labor and of thought, to save the first workers' state and the whole future of humanity.

### Clarity on War Danger

All the greater, therefore, is the task and all the more necessary is clarity in the question of its solution. To condemn war is very easy, to conquer it is difficult. The struggle against war is a struggle against the classes which rule society and which combine in their hands all its productive forces and all its destructive weapons. By meetings, by resolutions, by moral indignation, by newspaper articles and by congresses it is not possible to prevent war. As long as the bourgeoisie will have at its disposal the banks, the enterprises, the land, the press and the state ap-

paratus, it will always be able to drive the people to war whenever its interests demand it. But the possessing classes never cede power without a struggle. Look at Germany. When the fundamental interests of the propertied classes are threatened, democracy cedes its place to open violence. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie is possible only with guns in hand. That is to say: to imperialist war there can only be opposed—civil war.

We Bolshevik-Leninists absolutely reject and denounce the deceptive differentiation between a "defensive" and an "offensive" war. In the armed struggle of the capitalist states such a differentiation represents only a diplomatic screen with which to deceive the masses. In reality it so happens that the capitalist brigands always conduct a "defensive" war, even when Japan marches against Shanghai and France against Syria or Morocco. The revolutionary proletariat only distinguishes between wars of oppression and wars of emancipation. The character of a war is for us defined not by diplomatic falsifications but by the class which conducts the war and by the objective aims for which it proceeds with it. The wars of the imperialist states are, independently of the external pretexts and of political rhetoric of an oppressive character, reactionary and hostile to the people. The character of a war of emancipation cannot be anything else but that of the wars of the proletariat and of the oppressed nations. The armed insurrection of the proletariat against its oppressors is inevitably transformed after its victory into a revolutionary war of the proletariat state for the reinforcement and the extension of its victory. The policy of socialism is not and cannot be of a purely "defensive" character. It is the task of socialism to conquer the entire world.

### Pacifism -- Poison for Masses

Therefrom we deduce our position with regard to all forms of pacifism, purely imperialist pacifism (Kellogg-Briand-Herriot, etc.) as well as petty bourgeois pacifism (Rolland-Barbusse and their partisans in all parts of the world). The essence of pacifism lies in this, that in a hypocritical or in a sincere manner, it condemns the use of force in general. By weakening the will-power of the oppressed, it serves at the same time the cause of the oppressors. Idealist pacifism opposes its moral indignation against war as the lamb opposes its plaintive bleating before the butcher's knife. But the task consists of this: of opposing the knife of the bourgeoisie with the knife of the proletariat.

The most influential pacifist force is the social democracy. In a period of peace it is not niggardly with cheap tirades against war. But it remains on the ground of "national defense". This decides the question. Every war no matter in what manner it may begin, menaces each of the warring nations. The imperialists know in advance that the pacifism of the social democracy will at the first roar of cannon be transformed into a most servile war patriotism and become the most important reserve of militarism. That is why the most intransigent struggle against pacifism, the unmasking of its treacherous character, is the very first step on the road toward a revolutionary struggle against war.

The League of Nations is the citadel of imperialist pacifism. It represents a transitory historical grouping of capitalist states in which the stronger ones command and buy out the weaker, crawl on their bellies before America or attempt to resist her; in which all are equally enemies of the Soviet Union and prepared at the same time to cover up any and every crime of the most powerful and the most rapacious among them. To consider the League of Nations directly or indirectly, today or in the future, as an instrument of peace—this only the politically blind are capable of, only those who are altogether helpless or the avowed poisoners of the conscience of the people.

### Disarmament -- a Lever for War

The question of this pretended "disarmament" has nothing and can have nothing in common with the question of preventing war. The program of "disarmament" only signifies an attempt—up to the present only on paper—to diminish in peace-time the expense of this or that sort of disarmament. It is above all a question of military technique and of the imperialist coffers. The arsenals, the munition factories, the laboratories and finally, what is more important, capitalist industry as a whole—preserve their force in all the "disarmament programs". But men do not fight because they have arms. On the contrary they forge to fight. In case of war all the peace limitations will fall aside like so much chaff. Already in 1914-1918 the states did not fight any more with the armaments which they had provided for themselves in peace time, but with those which they manufactured during the war. It is not the existing arsenals but the capacity of production of the countries which is decisive. For the United States a limitation of armaments in Europe during peace time is very favorable because it allows it to manifest all the more decisively its industrial domination in time of war. The German bourgeoisie tends toward a reduction of armaments so as to equalize the handicap in case of a new bloody conflict. For Germany, general "disarmament" has the same meaning as naval parity with France has for Italy. Of what value all these plans will really be depends upon the combination of imperialist forces, the state of the budgets, the international financial settlements, etc. The question of disarmament is one of the levers on the arena of imperialism in which the new wars are being prepared. It is pure charlatanism to attempt to distinguish between defensive and offensive machine guns, tanks, airplanes. The Ameri-

can program is also dictated therein by the particular interests of American militarism the most terrible of all. War is not a game which is conducted according to conventional rules. War demands and creates all the weapons which can annihilate the enemy with the greatest amount of success. Petty bourgeois pacifism which sees in the project for ten percent, thirty-three percent, or fifty percent disarmament the "first step" towards prevention of war, is more dangerous than all the explosives and all the asphyxiating gases, because Melinite and Yperite can only do their work because the broad masses are poisoned in peace time by the pacifist fumes.

### Who Has the Weapons?

Without the slightest confidence in the capitalist programs for disarmament or for the limitations of armaments, the revolutionary proletariat poses one single question: *In whose hands are the weapons?* All sorts of weapons in the hands of the imperialists are identically directed against the working classes, against the weak nations, against socialism, against humanity. On the other hand, weapons in the hands of the proletariat and of the oppressed nations are the only means of sweeping our planet clean of oppression and of war.

The struggle for the self-determination of nations, for all peoples, that is to say, for all parts of humanity which are oppressed and which strive for independence is one of the most important parts of the struggle against war. Whoever supports directly or indirectly the régime of colonization and of protectorates, the domination of British capital in India, the domination of Japan in Korea or in Manchuria, of France in Indo-China or in Africa, whoever does not fight against colonial enslavement, whoever does not support the uprisings of the oppressed nations and their independence, whoever defends or idealizes Ghandism, that is to say, the policy of passive resistance in questions which cannot be solved except by force of arms—is, no matter what his intentions may be, a lackey and an apologist or agent of the imperialists, of the slave holders, of the militarists, and aids them in preparing new wars in the name of the old chains or the new.

The principal force against war is the proletariat. It is only through its example and under its leadership that the peasants and the other plebeian layers of the nation can rise up against war. Within the proletariat two parties are struggling for influence: the Communist Party and the social democracy. The intermediate groups (The S. A. P. in Germany, the P. U. P. in France, the I. L. P. in England, etc.) cannot expect to rise an independent historical role. In the question of war, which is the other side of the question of the proletarian revolution, the irreconcilable opposition between Communism and social patriotism will reach its extreme acuteness.

### C.I. Capitulates to Pacifists

Whoever attempts to put all the programs, all the parties, all the flags into one bag in the name of pacifism, that is, of the superficial struggle against war, in words, renders the best service to imperialism. In the question of war, no less than in all the other questions, the Communist Party must seek to free the working masses from the disintegrating and demoralizing influence of reformism.

Monde, the organ of Barbusse, Gorky and the other organizers of the Anti-War Congress, is pursuing a systematic agitation for the fusion of the Communist and the Second Internationals. For a struggle against war, Barbusse addresses himself in the same manner to Lenin as to Vandervelde. That is merely falsifying Lenin and rehabilitating Vandervelde. We reject the policy of Barbusse and his followers and we condemn it as the most dangerous political poisoning. We consider as a serious mistake of the Communist International and of the Red Trade Union International their leaving the initiative for the call of the conference to the unprincipled and impotent pacifists.

We consider the non-entrance of the U. S. S. R. into the League of Nations as altogether correct, practically as well as in principle. We regret all the more, therefore, the fact that the Soviet Union has covered with its authority the Kellogg pact, which is a complete humbug and whose role it is to "justify" only such wars as correspond to the American interests.

We also consider as erroneous the tendency of Soviet diplomacy to embellish the policy of American imperialism and particularly its initiative in the question of disarmament. We recognize fully the importance for the U. S. S. R. of normal economic and diplomatic relations with the U. S. A. But this aim cannot be achieved by verbal capitulations before the maneuvers of American imperialism, the strongest and most rapacious of all. We are awaiting from Soviet diplomacy a clear and public expose on the question of the war danger and the struggle against it. It is necessary to alarm the peoples in a loud voice. The less Soviet diplomacy adapts itself to the maneuvers of the imperialists in this burning question, the more courageously it raises its own voice, the more closely they will align themselves with the U. S. S. R. the more surely they will defend it against the rising danger.

### Free the Bolshevik-Leninists!

At the same time we consider it our task to declare here openly: Now, in the face of the terrible danger that is drawing close, it is necessary to finally repair the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy against the revolution and Communism; it is necessary to free the thousands of Bolshevik-Leninists, the organizers of

the October revolution, the creators of the Red Army, the participants of the civil war, the inflexible revolutionary fighters from the prisons and exile. For the dictatorship of the proletariat and the world revolution, against imperialist war, they want to fight and they will fight with an energy incomparably greater than that of the drawing room pacifists and the numerous Stalinist bureaucrats.

The years of the furious campaigns of slander, of the most cruel persecution and violence against the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists have been and will remain also years of the uninterrupted and unimpeachable confirmation of the criticism exercised by them, of the perspectives outlined by them and of the policies proposed by them. Through the action of Stalin, with the blessings of "humanists" a la Barbusse, Lenin's most trusted companion-in-arms of the Red October is confined to Fascist Turkey, laid open to the murderous plans of the White Guards. While the Stalinist bureaucracy maintains in the face of the fateful events and the gigantic tasks, an embarrassed silence—there is ringing forth from Prinkipo and Barnoul the voice of the genuine champions of revolutionary Marxism, the voice of L. D. Trotsky, the voice of Ch. G. Rakovsky. In this hour of approaching decisions, this alone must be demanded: Return to the vanguard of the world proletariat its revolutionary leadership. Bring back Trotsky to the Soviet Union! Bring back Rakovsky from the Siberian exile! Put them and the thousands of Bolshevik-Leninists at their revolutionary battle posts!

The policy of the united front in the struggle against war demands special attention and revolutionary perseverance. The Communist Party can and must propose openly, without these doubtful intermediaries, to all the working class organizations to coordinate their efforts in the struggle against war. For their part the Bolshevik-Leninists propose the following points on the basis of which struggle agreements are possible, at the same time maintaining a complete guarantee of the independence of the organizations and of their banners.

### We Propose:

1. Renunciation of all hopes in the League of Nations as well as other pacifist illusions.
2. Denunciation of the capitalist "disarmament" programs, which serve to dupe the peoples.
3. Refusal of all votes for military budgets and drafts to the capitalist governments—not a man, not a cent.
4. Exposure of the humbug of "national defense", because the capitalist nation defends itself by oppressing and dividing the more feeble nations.
5. A campaign for economic collaboration with the U. S. S. R. on the basis of a broadly laid out program in the elaboration and realization of which mass organizations of the working class are to be drawn into participation.
6. Continual and systematic exposure of the imperialist intrigues against the first and only workers' state.
7. Agitation against war in the war factories, among the soldiers and sailors. Preparation of revolutionary points of support in the war industries, in the army and in the navy.
8. The training of the Red Army not only in the spirit of a courageous defense of the socialist fatherland but also in the spirit of constant readiness to come to the aid of the proletarian revolution in the other countries and of the uprisings of the oppressed peoples.
9. Systematic education of the laboring masses of the entire world in the spirit of the greatest devotion to the first proletarian state. Despite the indubitable mistakes in the policy of the present ruling faction, the U. S. S. R. remains the genuine fatherland of the international proletariat. Its defense is the unflinching duty of every honest worker.
10. Indefatigable explanation to the workers of the entire world that a socialist society can be established only on an international scale, and that the real support of the U. S. S. R. lies in the extension of the proletarian world revolution.

### Foreign Representation of the Russian Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists)

Left Opposition of the C.P.G.(B.-L.)

Left Opposition (B.-L.) of Greece

Communist Left of Spain

Communist League (Opp.) France

Communist League of America (Opp.)

Communist Left Opposition of Belgium

Left Opp. of Czechoslovakia

Left Opp. Group of the C. P. G. B.

Left Opp. of the Swiss C. P.

Bulgarian Left Opposition

Left Opp. of Italy (N.I.O.)

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