

New 'Front' Organized; G.O.P.-Roosevelt-C.P. Prepare Labor for War

Drive Is On

(Continued from page 1)

detrimental to the interests of the working class. It was on the question of the advocacy of disarmament advanced by middle-class pacifists as a cure-all for war that Lenin developed his struggle against pacifism. The La Follette-Ludlow amendment falls into the same general category as the policy of disarmament. In so far as it adds an element of democratic procedure it carries even greater dangers to the revolutionary struggle against war.

Will the proposed amendment have any efficacy at all in preventing war? We shall not speak here of a war which will commence by an actual invasion of any territory belonging to American imperialism. The amendment does not require a referendum in such a case. We shall confine ourselves to such cases where the American imperialists will be convinced of the necessity of an appeal to arms and where they can not afford to wait until the enemy invades their territory.

Marxist Conception of Cause of War

Unless the Marxist conception of the fundamental cause of imperialist wars is to be discarded the answer to the question: will the amendment prevent any kind of war? must be a very emphatic negative. An imperialist war (and the United States can fight no other kind of war) is not caused by the invasion of any enemy power. It is caused by imperialist rivalries for markets, for raw material, for fields of investment and these rivalries are inherent in imperialism. They exist long before the declaration of war and the act of invading enemy territory.

It would be far more sensible for pacifists to advocate a referendum on the question of preventing our capitalists from making foreign investments. Possibly the pacifists of "socialist" persuasion will go to the root of the problem by presenting the bright idea of abolishing war by referring the question of the existence of capitalism to a referendum vote. For the revolutionary worker it is quite evident that to abolish war it is necessary to destroy capitalism itself and therefore to consider the struggle against war as part of the struggle against the capitalist class.

One can say with the utmost certainty that a provision in the constitution requiring a referendum could not possibly prevent the government from entering into war if the decisive section of the capitalist class deemed it necessary. Should we assume the impossible, namely, that the Ludlow amendment would become part of the constitution, one of three things would follow in case the capitalist government would be convinced of the necessity of going to war against an imperialist rival. Either Congress would declare war without a referendum on the pretext that our territory was invaded or a referendum would be taken quickly in the midst of a tremendous war incitement with a favorable vote absolutely certain, or the requirement of a referendum would be ignored altogether. Judging by recent experience

the probability is that future wars will all be "undeclared" wars. It is absurd to think that any kind of a constitutional amendment would prevent the ruling class from guarding its interests. There are already many constitutional provisions which are ignored in an "emergency" and one more will be immaterial.

Objections of Capitalists

Why then does the big capitalist press raise such lusty objections to the Ludlow amendment? It is a mistake to think that because certain sections of the capitalist class object to certain measures that they represent any danger to the rule of the bourgeoisie. Almost every measure of the least liberal character was fought strenuously by the reactionaries but that does not mean that when such a measure was passed it affected adversely the vital interests of the ruling class. Bourgeois democracy, it is true, prefers to cover itself with legality and hence it is preferable in the eyes of the ruling section not to have any provisions in the constitution or on the statutes which they might have to disregard but in a crisis bourgeois democracy ignores bourgeois legality completely or at best interprets the law to suit its interests.

Just as it is certain that the capitalist class will disregard all its laws in case the proletariat threatens its existence so is it certain that it will not permit any laws to stand in the way of its making war when that is essential.

For the workers, however, especially for the politically advanced workers, the question can not be settled by the undoubted fact that the necessity for a referendum will raise no barrier to an imperialist war. It is also important to understand that the attitude of the workers on the question of supporting or opposing a war must not be determined by the irrelevant factor of who struck the first blow. What is important and conclusive is the nature of the war. It will be a struggle for imperialist booty on the part of the American government whether it is invaded first or itself takes the initiative in invading some other country. And revolutionary workers can not support an imperialist war regardless of the immediate events that led up to that war.

One of the most dangerous aspects of the amendment is its "democratic" nature. Does it not require a popular vote and is that not exceedingly democratic? Undoubtedly there are people sufficiently naive or formalistic in their thinking who will support the amendment on account of its democratic character. But to forget that democracy under the capitalist regime is essentially the right to deceive the masses is to forget the very essence of correct working-class politics. We can very well envision a tremendous war propaganda, a referendum during which the revolutionary opponents of war will be ruthlessly suppressed and a huge majority rolled up in favor of war. What follows? That the war has been formally consecrated by the vote of the people. And the formal democrats will then be under the necessity of

supporting the war on the ground that the majority voted in its favor.

It goes without saying that revolutionary workers would not fall for such argument but we must recognize the possibility of greater confusion if a referendum should precede a formal declaration of war.

Attitude of Lovestoneite Leadership

That the pacifists and liberals who call themselves socialists should favor the Ludlow amendment is to be expected. Lacking any Marxian base for their thinking they grasp at every formula, outside of the bitter class struggle, offered to solve the problem of war. It was left to the Lovestoneite leadership to lend a Marxist coloration in support of the amendment. In the January issue of the Workers Age an editorial favoring the amendment bases its argument on the proposition that "Today, it is this resolution which marks the vague, the half-formed line dividing the pro-war and anti-war forces in America, separating those heading for military dictatorship from those calling for a measure of democracy on such a vital issue."

So, the people are now divided into pro-war and anti-war forces and our politics are to be determined not by the necessity of educating the working class to the real nature of imperialist war and rallying the workers as a class in the struggle against imperialist war but by the advisability of taking our stand with the forces who call for a measure of democracy on such a vital issue.

The editorial proceeds to explain its support of the amendment by asserting that it "would offer at least the possibility of raising our voice against the predatory wars of American imperialism." As if we could not raise our voice without a referendum and as if American imperialism would permit us freely to raise our voice in time of crisis. "Not so much as an effective means to end war but as offering a tribune for anti-war agitation in the struggle against capitalism, do we support the movement that is gathering around the LaFollette-Ludlow amendment." Is it necessary to support an amendment which will create illusions and confusion in order to carry on agitation against imperialist war? Should not Marxists take advantage of the agitation around the amendment to explain the nature of imperialist war and thus help clarify the minds of the masses about such a vital question? Our agitation can be a thousand times more effective if we do not support the amendment. For then we can really explain how wars can be abolished. The Lovestoneite centrist leadership succeeds in covering itself with revolutionary phrases in a great many situations but when vital problems arise it also succeeds in exposing its real nature.

Attitude of Communist Party

From the leadership of the Communist Party nothing could

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be expected except opposition to the Ludlow amendment. Difficult problems confront the Communist party bureaucrats. To pose as the champions of peace when in reality they are the most consistent advocates of war involves them in many contradictions. They have succeeded in rallying many workers and middle-class people who believe that the Communist party leads the struggle against war. The Ludlow amendment appears to be an excellent measure to such people. The Communist leaders, in common with all the realistic politicians of the capitalist class, want no hindrance whatsoever to quick action against a possible enemy of U. S. imperialism, especially if that enemy happens to be hostile to the Soviet Union. It is therefore compelled to line up with all the conscious forces of the capitalist class and thus come into conflict with many of its supporters who are sincerely against war.

The opposition of the Stalinists to the Ludlow amendment and our refusal to support it is an excellent example of the possibility of diametrically opposing and hostile forces voting together for totally different reasons. The C.P. opposes the amendment because it wants American imperialism to go to war against Japanese and German imperialism since the latter two threaten the safety of the Soviet Union. We do not favor the Ludlow amendment because it will have no effect on the question of war and will create dangerous illusions and throw the working class off from the track of the class struggle against war. The C.P. favors collective security of the capitalist states to prevent war and considers the Ludlow amendment ineffective. We also consider it ineffective but we favor the proletarian revolution to prevent war. That some of the arguments of the Communists are borrowed from the Marxist arsenal (see Hathaway's article in the Daily Worker of Jan. 6) merely proves the old proverb of the ability of the level to quote scripture.

The position of the revolutionary Marxists is unambiguous. We are opposed to all imperialist wars but we realize that such wars cannot be prevented by anything except the overthrow of the capitalist regimes and the establishment of workers' governments. Our struggle against war consists of two elements: the constant education of the masses as

to the nature of and cure for war and our participation in the class struggle for the purpose of organizing the masses for the overthrow of imperialist governments. The issue of war is only one of the issues upon which we attempt to organize the masses and at certain times may become the most important issue but we do not separate that issue from the general class struggle at any time.

We too will take advantage of the agitation around the Ludlow amendment. But we shall tell the American workers that it will not have the slightest effect upon imperialist wars. Some wise-acres will allege that we oppose a popular referendum before war is declared by congress, thereby favoring that war be declared without a popular referendum. The question of the referendum is absolutely immaterial. We oppose the idea that any kind of a referendum will help the workers in the least. What is material is the necessity of the workers to understand the nature of war and to have no illusions about it.

Around the Ludlow amendment we must carry on an agitation that the only solution for war is the destruction of the capitalist system.

The Budget

Roosevelt's touching solicitude for the unemployed and his love of peace are both written in dollars in the new budget. Over \$800,000,000 was cut from the unemployed relief appropriations and just about that much put into the navy... That's how those touching fireside radio talks are translated in action. The Daily Worker endorsing the budget is apparently operating under a new slogan "All unemployed funds for the war".

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