

MANIFESTO ON WAR

***And Decay and Corruption
Of International Capitalism***

Issued October 1937



**Published Online by
Socialist Labor Party of America
www.slp.org**

July 2006

Manifesto on War

Issued by the Socialist Labor Party of America

“The governing classes do not really want war, but they do want to keep up a continual menace of war. They want the peril to be always averted, but always present. They do not want the cannon to be fired, but they do want it to be always loaded. Those who perpetually spread abroad rumors and alarms of war only half believe them, or more often do not believe them at all, but they see great advantages to themselves in inducing the people to believe them. You know, comrades, what those advantages are. They are political and financial. A people living under the perpetual menace of war and invasion is very easy to govern. It demands no social reforms. It does not haggle over expenditures on armaments and military equipment. It pays without discussion, it ruins itself, and that is an excellent thing for the syndicates of financiers and manufacturers for whom patriotic terrors are an abundant source of gain.”

— *Anatole France*

“The attitude of the Socialist Labor Party toward antimilitarism is—‘Organize the working class integrally-industrially!’ Only then can the revolt against militarism result in a Waterloo to the [parasitic capitalist] class of sponge, instead of a massacre to the class of labor.”

— *Daniel De Leon*

PUBLISHING HISTORY

FIRST PRINTED EDITION November 1937

SECOND PRINTED EDITION December 1937

ONLINE EDITION July 2006

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS

P.O. BOX 218

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94042-0218

<http://www.slp.org/nyln.htm>

I.

The world we live in is rapidly being turned into a vast battlefield, encircling the globe. Inability on the part of some nations to maintain themselves as successfully competing units of capitalism constitutes in the main the springs of action leading to war, while territory lying beyond their boundaries, containing raw materials, minerals, coal, oil, iron, etc., constitutes in the main the objectives, the coveted prize of the nations which suffer, or consider themselves as suffering, from unjust restrictions. In the parlance of international capitalist commentators, the present furious struggle between various capitalist units — whether proceeding actually on the battlefield, or through exchange of diplomatic communiques — is a struggle between the “Haves” and the “Have-Nots.” It is, in effect, a struggle similar to that proceeding within each separate capitalist country — and particularly within the large industrially developed nations — where competing capitalist concerns seek to eliminate each other, with the result that the smaller units are forced out of existence, or absorbed into the surviving mammoth concerns, which then proceed to war upon each other, with further elimination of competitors, and so forth.

But similar as is the struggle, and the cause and motive of this struggle, with respect to competing concerns within each nation, and the struggle of competing nations on the international field of capitalism, the latter by no means presents the simple aspect and clearly indicated course of the former. For with the former the process is purely economic, except in so far as it is attended by political, i.e., legislative interferences, and the power of the State, enforcing order, while on the international field the deadly contest (unrestrained as it is, and obviously must be, at this stage by any international “police power”) is confused and confounded by a variety of subsidiary or contributing factors, including national and racial prejudices, religious, or would-be religious, claims and pretensions, apart from the transitory effect of ambitions of adventurers, recently risen from obscurity to occupy positions of authority in various belligerent countries. These subsidiary, or perturbing, factors, however, do not alter the essential character of the conflict, nor do they qualify to obliterate nor materially obstruct the effect of the basic cause, and the economic laws flowing from that cause, viz., capitalism, which laws operate within the capitalist system with an immutability comparable to the operation of

Manifesto on War

the immutable laws of nature.

Capitalism, that is, the capitalist system of private (or State) ownership of the land and plants of production, means of transportation, mines, etc., is the basic cause of the present state of world anarchy, of wars, declared and undeclared, and of the prevailing poverty and misery which within each country drive workers to strikes and bloody premature uprisings, and which, among nations in general, drive the “Have-Not” countries to take by force that which is denied them by the “Have” nations, and which the latter either desire for their own collective use, or as exclusive “hunting grounds” for one or two of the most powerful units of capitalist imperialism. The latter face loss of power and prestige, with all that that implies, including danger of domestic revolt, while the former must furnish employment to, and keep employed, teeming millions of starving workers, lest these latter revolt. And apart from the purely economic motive leading to war, the ruling classes of the large industrial nations know that apprehension of, and eventual resort to, war, tends to keep the subject class from rebelling against the domestic yoke. Dean Swift sagely observed that “Wise princes find it necessary to have wars abroad, to keep peace at home,” while America’s fourth President, James Madison, shrewdly said: “Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite war whenever a revolt was apprehended It is perhaps questionable whether the best concerted system of absolute power in Europe could maintain itself in a situation where no alarms of external danger could tame the people to the domestic yoke.”

II.

When we say that capitalism is the basic cause of war and world anarchy, with attendant misery and poverty among the exploited masses of the world, and that with the elimination of the cause the effects will thereby cease, the questions are likely to be asked: “What of it? And what are you going to do about it?” The questions are apt to be followed with contentions to the effect that capitalism is a “natural” order, and that the best one can do is to check and limit the evil effects of the capitalist system, exactly as the evil effects of nature unharnessed are checked and limited as much as that is possible; and that it is as foolish to talk about abolishing capitalism as it would be to talk about abolishing nature. The answer to

Manifesto on War

these questions and contentions is that capitalism is not a “natural” order — that it is no more rooted in nature than were preceding social systems which persisted during centuries of slow development, eventually to yield place to the succeeding systems of society. In short, capitalism as a social system is no more eternal than was feudalism whence it sprang. And feudalism was as transitory as was the absolute slavery of antiquity which preceded feudalism. And none of these social systems compare in point of longevity with ancient communism, the designation given to social beginnings, which knew nothing of capital, slavery, political government, or private property in any form, but which did practice equality and fraternity, albeit on a low economic plane.

Capitalism grew out of feudalism. But it took centuries before capitalism, the origin of which may be dated roughly from the middle of the 15th century, could emerge as a functioning and dominant social system. The great struggles, the bloody and long wars that laid waste large areas of Europe, particularly since the 16th century, were the direct results of the slowly emerging capitalist system, struggling to establish itself, hemmed in on all sides as it was by feudal restrictions. Capitalism heralded the dawn of the modern age. Its entry into the world caused profound revolutions in ethical and religious concepts, in the arts, in political relations, and, of course, in economics. Rightly has the age which witnessed the initial beginnings of capitalism been called the *Age of the Renaissance*, i.e., the age of rebirth. That age was as turbulent as is the present age of turmoil and world — wide disorder and dislocations. And logical it is that this is so, seeing that the Renaissance witnessed the birth of the capitalist system, while our age witnesses the death of capitalism.

During the age-long struggle between the then nascent capitalism, and the decaying feudal system, there were “compromisers” who wished to benefit by the blessings of the new system aborning, without surrendering the rights and prerogatives of the old order. Men would speak, in one breath, in the terms of youthful capitalism, while in the next breath they would exult in what they acclaimed as the virtues and beauties of the old feudal order. And even many who realized that feudalism (that is to say, the obvious features and manifestations of feudalism) was corrupt, and that it ought to be destroyed, hesitated to take the plunge from the old to the new. But neither traditions, vested feudalic rights, nor all

Manifesto on War

the power of the crown and church could check the victorious march of capitalism, which found itself fairly established economically, and largely politically also, in all the Important countries by the end of the 18th century.

Having grown to maturity, having thereupon reached old age, capitalism is now in the final stages of decay and dissolution. The process is a natural one, an inevitable one, and yet there are those who imagine that the capitalist system can be rejuvenated! As well try to restore the lost youth of a senile person. And even were it possible, the question presents itself: "To what purpose?" The evolution of capitalism has taken place in conformity with those laws, peculiar to its inherent nature, which we have designated immutable — immutable, that is, within the sphere of capitalism. So long as capitalism exists, these laws will continue to operate, and manifest their effect precisely as we have witnessed during the 150 years that have passed since the American and French Revolutions, both of which world-shaking events signaled the definite establishment of capitalism on a world scale, as the successor of feudalism. That which gave early capitalism its glamour, that which caused it to work near-miracles in the world, that which brought into being the wealth, and the fabulous men of wealth so lovingly pointed to by present-day plutogogues as models of enterprise, as examples worthy of emulation, was precisely the fact that capitalism was growing — growing from lusty youth into powerful maturity. Capitalist spokesmen today lament the passing of liberalism, and assign that as the cause of the present state of international anarchy. It is as if one would ascribe old age to loss of vigor and virility in an old man, instead of ascribing the loss of vigor and virility to old age! Bourgeois liberalism, the reflex of growing capitalism, is dead or dying because capitalism is decaying and dying, and not the other way around, and the most desperate attempts by the wisest or best men of capitalist convictions cannot restore the reflex of the substance that has gone from the world forever.

If it were possible to restore youth to capitalism, that is to say, if it were possible to restore small-scale production, scarcity and competition, nothing would be gained except a futile and useless repetition of the identical processes which have brought us to where we now are. We should witness the same painful, laborious struggle to enlarge the forces of production, and to increase enormously the capacity for producing the necessities of life. The visual demonstration of this (even were it

Manifesto on War

not so obvious) is seen in the difference between undeveloped nations and countries fully developed as capitalist units. For a country, industrially developed, is in its relation to an industrially backward country what the former is to its own earlier stage fifty or one hundred years ago.

The capitalist system had a definite mission to perform, namely, that of increasing the productiveness of the race to the point where leisure and culture for all might be compatible with abundance for all, thus forever ending the necessity for dividing the world, and keeping it divided, in classes, with a numerically large class to do the drudgery of the world to the end that a cultured minority might have leisure and opportunity to carry forward the arts and the sciences. Capitalism, at an enormous cost in human lives and human happiness, and to the tune of the agonized cries of the mass of humanity — the producing workers, its chief victims — has fulfilled that mission. Today it is economically possible to give leisure and abundance to all, without halting the onward march of the race in its quest for a higher intellectual and spiritual life. In the past the slave — ancient slave, serf and modern wage worker — toiled in order that the select few might think and explore. The machine of mass production, now operated exclusively by wage labor, and privately owned by or for the few, offers itself as the “slave,” and only the class-selfishness and class-blindness of the ruling class, as well as the workers’ lack of understanding of their class interests and class mission, stand in the way of putting into effect, but on an infinitely higher plane, the equality and fraternity of ancient communism, the “Golden Age” of man.

III.

The workers produce all social wealth. Under the system of capitalism they are inescapably reduced to the status of commodities. They are, in effect, bought and sold in the labor market, essentially as the chattel slave was bought and sold in the slave market, or as cotton and ‘ textiles are bought and sold in the cotton and textile markets. The worker under capitalism is, to be sure, nominally a free man, and the equal of men of wealth. His “freedom” and “equality” are of a quality similar to the nominal equality before the law, concerning which a famous Frenchman wrote: “The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under

Manifesto on War

bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal bread.” Paraphrasing this, we can say that capitalism, in its impersonal workings, permits the rich as well as the poor to sell their labor power in the labor market, at the prevailing rate! The rich need not, and do not, sell themselves in the market — the poor, that is, the workers, must, and do, sell themselves (that is, their labor power, or their ability to perform some productive task) in the labor market, provided they can find buyers. If they cannot find buyers they starve, and theoretical freedom thus becomes the freedom to starve to death. The fact of the existence of the labor market under capitalism constitutes conclusive answer to those sophists who assert that labor is not a commodity, or article of commerce. And, by way of contrast, let it be noted that no one has as yet advanced the claim that there is also a shoe manufacturer market, a textile or steel baron market, or a banker and stock broker market, where these gentlemen are bought and sold, as labor is bought and sold in the labor market!

The worker, then, sells his labor power (that is, in fact, himself) in the market at the highest price he can obtain. That price is at any given moment determined by the supply of, and demand for, the particular kind of worker. And since the supply tends to exceed the demand, the price invariably seeks its lowest level. Theoretically, however, the price coincides with the value of the commodity labor power, and the value in turn equals, in effect, the amount of food, shelter and clothing needed by the worker in order that he may live and rear another generation of wage slaves. Thus, through the operation of the immutable laws of capitalism, the workers, as a class, can never hope to receive more than a mere subsistence wage, and, under capitalism, as a class, can never rise above the status of wage slavery. And all the oratory of politicians, or all the shams of the labor fakers, can neither alter that fact, nor render other than inescapable the degradation and continued wretchedness and poverty of the workers. Whatever be the prospects or inducements dangled before the eyes of the exploited and starving workers, they will, and in the nature of things *must*, remain wage slaves so long as capitalism exists. For, despite the fact that this or that individual worker may succeed in raising himself above, and out of his wage slave status, the fact of *wage slavery* for the workers, *as a class*, is obviously not affected thereby, any more than the occasional escape from Negro slavery by this or that individual slave affected the fact of chattel slavery as an institution.

John Adams, second President of the United States, said: “When the workers

Manifesto on War

are paid in return for their labor only as much money as will buy the necessaries of life, their condition is identical with that of the slave.”¹ The Law of Value (with its corollaries, the Law of Supply and Demand and the Law of Wages) makes it certain that the working class will never receive more (but frequently less) than so much money “as will buy the necessaries of life.” The workers, under capitalism, are paid in wages at most as much as will enable them to buy merely these “necessaries of life,” that is, a slave’s pittance! And yet, the workers are told that they are fortunate if they secure “a living wage,” and they are enjoined, by capitalist exploiter, politician and labor faker alike, to expect no more. No less a personage than the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his speech delivered at Block Island, R.I., on September 4, said:

“There has been, and continues to be, urgent need to insure all able-bodied working men and women a living wage for a fair day’s work. I repeat what I said in my message to the workers of the United States last year: “The wage-earners of America do not ask for more. They will not be satisfied with less.”

There is a far cry between President Adams’s correct designation of a mere “living wage” as the badge of slavery, and President Roosevelt’s presumptuous acceptance, on behalf of labor, of that badge of slavery as something with which the workers ought to be (and as he claims, are) satisfied! So deeply has American democracy sunk into the morass of decadence and decay that what was denounced as slavery by the second President of the United States is extolled by the thirty-second President as the hope and salvation of the workers!

This is the prospect held out for the class in society which produces all the social wealth, and which carries the entire civilized world on its strong, but weary, shoulders!

IV.

With capitalism in the final stages of its decay, nationally and internationally, society has reached an impasse, a deadlock. It cannot, or should not, go backward, it

¹ Second Continental Congress, 1777.

Manifesto on War

cannot stand still, yet the outworn and now worse than useless, capitalist system will not permit it to go forward to industrial and complete social freedom. In the mad struggle for survival — as mad and desperate as the struggle of the shipwrecked to save themselves from drowning — individuals and nations resort to means and methods of hoped-for escape formerly denounced as violations of the laws of nations, or once condemned as acts of piracy and banditry. Those hardest-pressed — that is, the so-called “Have-Not” nations — are boldest and most ruthless in their demands. They are also the nations which have entered the stage which must logically follow capitalism when Socialism is rejected as the successor to capitalism. Capitalist apologists invariably blame the World War for the present world anarchy, forgetting that the World War was itself the logical result of capitalism, victors and vanquished being alike in desperate straits. It suffices to point out that Italy and Japan (two of the nations particularly afflicted with gangster governments) were on the side of the victorious allies, as against their present ally, fascist Germany. Caught in the coils of the struggling and dying social system, finding it impossible to live within the restricted conditions of their respective capitalist economies, and having failed (for whatever reason) to establish Socialism, the peoples of these countries had to accept the only other alternative, absolutism, or industrial feudalism. And wherever the Political State holds supreme sway, absolutism under whatever name (fascism, “Nazional-Sozialismus,” etc.) either *is* the only form of government, or will so become eventually. The resort to absolutism is an almost instinctive act, induced by the most primitive of promptings, the law of self-preservation. When ancient social bonds snap before new and superior integuments have been formed to insure cohesion and coordination, social nihilism takes unrestricted effect, transforming what was relative social disorder into absolute chaos and anarchy, and a major social cataclysm would be the final result, did not absolutism assert its ruthless power, restoring in a world of deadly disintegration and savage lawlessness a semblance of order and social re-integration. Loss of freedom is the price men pay for unpreparedness in major social crises.

There cannot, regardless of wishes of groups or individuals, indefinitely exist a state of half autocracy and half democracy. Either the mass of a people rise to a complete exercise of full democracy — social and economic democracy — or they abdicate their sovereign power to the topmost elements among the ruling class,

Manifesto on War

which *then* obviously proceeds in keeping with *its* class interests. Desperately pressed, the peoples of Germany, Italy, Japan, etc., have either willingly accepted, or helplessly suffer, the absolutism of their countries, since such a form of government alone is able to act, to strike, with all the power of a collective unit, without loss of valuable time. Bourgeois democracy necessitates debate and produces clashing of conflicting wills, and normally entails delay and induces doubts and uncertainty. Moreover, in fascist countries the workers do not feel they have, anything to lose through war, since they have become reduced to the lowest level possible under wage slavery, and perceive no escape from it except (as they are told) through conquest of foreign territory or markets. The chiefs of the gangster governments are confronted with the choice of going ahead on the road of savagery and ruthlessness, or forfeiting power, probably even their heads. Hence the boldness, the unashamed gangster tactics, of the German, Italian and Japanese ruling classes, and hence also their temporary and relative success. The ruling classes in the so-called democratic countries have little or nothing to gain through war (except as a last extreme resort), but, on the contrary, face the prospect of losing everything if a general war should break out. An outstanding representative of the House of Morgan, the plutocrat Thomas W. Lamont, expressed the fear of his fellow-plutocrats the world over when recently he said:

“They [the governments, in “democratic” countries — “their rulers” as Lamont correctly designates the plutocrats] are all realists, and they know how destructive modern war is, to victor as well as to vanquished. . . . The Continental governments understand, too, that when people have, with such sacrifice and loyalty [!!] already endured so much hardship for the benefit of *the state* [i.e., the ruling class], war, especially if it failed to end in early victory, MIGHT ITSELF LEAD TO SPEEDY CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, JUST AS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GREAT WAR SO CLEARLY SHOWED.”

As an international banker, as active head of the House of Morgan, with its finger in every capitalist-imperialist pie on earth, Mr. Lamont knows whereof he speaks.

Understandable, then, is the seeming weakness of the British and French plutocrats with respect to Italy’s bandit raid on Ethiopia; Italy’s and Germany’s brazen interference (on the side of the Fascist-Ultramontane adventurer, the thug and mass-murderer Franco) in the Spanish civil war, so-called. Understandable is

Manifesto on War

also the seeming acquiescence (though loudly protesting) of the United States, France and Great Britain in Japan's savage raid on China, with its unprecedented ruthlessness, its unparalleled mass slaughter of civilians, including women and children. Understandable, finally, is the brazen and impudent thumbing of noses by the fascist bandit chieftains at the most powerful countries on earth. The fascist bandits *know* that the threats of the "democratic" governments are sheer bluff and bluster — at this stage — and that these governments fear a world war at this time as they fear nothing else. Accordingly, Japan extends her marauding operations over ever wider areas in China; Nazi Germany virtually annexes Danzig and gradually prepares the ground for invasion of Czechoslovakia, which it covets for economic as well as political reasons, and also because through Czechoslovakia Germany can strike effectively at Soviet Russia, and to the south at Rumania, whose rich oil fields Germany needs, and desperately wants. Moreover, Italy is preparing for additional raids in Africa, especially on Egypt, and French Morocco and other French African colonies while Germany holds itself in readiness, with the aid of its Italian ally, to re-conquer its West African colonies. To these ends, and in a desperate attempt at wrecking the British Empire, Italy works toward exclusive and complete control of the Mediterranean, which, if accomplished, would cut the "life-line" of the British Empire, paralyze its power in India with the possibility of its loss to the empire, etc., etc. However, before all this happens Great Britain will fight, *must* fight, or go down and cease existence as a first-class power, becoming in time a second Spain, and when Great Britain fights, the whole capitalist world, willy-nilly, fights, UNLESS, before things reach this pass, the workers in the important capitalist countries take matters into their own hands, turning wars of imperialist conquest, or wars of defense of imperialist possessions and power, into the final struggle for world peace through establishment of Socialism, with its economy of abundance for all, and its social ideal (capable of realization) of peace for all, and fraternity among all the peoples on earth.

V.

For in all these struggles of imperialist-plutocratic powers, in this mad scramble for survival as capitalist nations, the workers have absolutely no interest except to put an end to them, and the system of capitalism, as speedily as possible, through their organized economic and political power. It is true today, as it was

Manifesto on War

when Karl Marx first enunciated the truth, that the workers have nothing to lose but their chains; nothing to lose but their commodity status, their poverty and individual and social wretchedness; nothing to lose but the robber system that keeps them in economic bondage; nothing to lose but their exploiters — the master class — who in time of peace deal with them as they deal with other commodities, and in time of war handle them as they handle cattle destined for the shambles. The workers, under the capitalist system, do not own the country in which they dwell and slave. They have no stake in it under capitalism, whether in its normal stage, or under its degenerate form, fascism or industrial feudalism. Now, as before, the workers, though morally entitled to all the social wealth they have created, have no interest in defending capitalist countries against so-called “foreign aggression”; the “foreign aggression” is already long since launched against the workers on the domestic industrial battlefield, which presents such bloody examples as the “war” waged against them by the Republic Steel Corporation where last May the workers were killed like fleeing rabbits by the police and company thugs. The foreign foes of the workers are not their unfortunate and equally chained or misled fellow workers across the seas or across the border, but the foreign, as well as their native, exploiters — and particularly the latter, who, though speaking their own tongue, constitute the real alien menace, the enemy which must be defeated, conquered, and whose power must be broken and whose privileges must be forever abolished by the organized workers, in defense and furtherance of their class interests, which coincide with the interests of humanity at large. The only “war” in which the workers should engage is the “war” against the capitalist system, their capitalist masters, and their agents, retainers and apologists. And that war cannot be conducted successfully with bombs, machine — guns and all the other means of destruction. It can be conducted and carried to a successful conclusion solely through the industrially organized might of the workers — through integrated Socialist Industrial Unions — and on the basis of those civilized principles which constitute the conquest of man during his painful and slow rise from the brute’s estate to intellectual manhood, which principles have been, or are being rapidly, discarded and trampled underfoot by the madmen and ruling class gangsters who are determined to keep the working class in perpetual economic serfdom, in never ending wage slavery.

During the World War a score of years ago, the workers were told by their

Manifesto on War

respective governments that they were fighting for this or that ideal, this or that noble aim. The German workers were told that they were fighting against Russian autocracy and Slav barbarism, and in defense of their rich culture. On the other hand, the French, British and American workers were told that they were fighting against Prussian militarism. (than which there supposedly was nothing more dreadful!), and in defense of Western democratic institutions! To these slogans, equally fraudulent, the workers of the great nations proceeded to slaughter each other, while plutocrats, safe behind the lines, increased their wealth enormously, after the war dividing the loot among themselves, leaving the workers poorer than ever, and “Western democracy” in a more precarious state than before the great crusade to make the world safe for it! Those who mouthed Socialist phrases (the reform “Socialists”) on *both* sides of the great conflict, like well-trained poodles, came to the support of their respective capitalist or imperialist governments, aiding these in arousing the war madness and fury of their own workers against the workers on the other side, and vice versa.

Today the identical process may be observed. On the one side the cry is: Defend your material security, and your German (or Italian, etc.) fatherland against Bolshevism, the international Jewish bankers, against British, French and American capitalism! On the other side the cry is: Defend your democratic institutions, your system of free enterprise, your superior social standards, etc., against fascism, nazidom and Japanese savagery and barbarism. And now, as twenty years ago, those who mouth Socialist phrases (this time mostly the bankrupt Communist politicians) join the cry of Western capitalist imperialism, and urge the workers to join in the slaughter to the slogan of “War on Fascism,” and “Save the remnant of Bourgeois Democracy.” And now, as then, these fake Marxists urge a “united front” between exploiters and exploited (a “popular,” or “People’s,” front, they fraudulently call it!), thereby throwing aside the last pretense of accepting the class struggle as the logical basis for terminating the capitalist system, and establishing the Socialist Republic. In all countries, barring minority groups, the so-called Socialist and Communist fakers have embraced unreservedly capitalist ideology, capitalist economics and capitalist politics, thus betraying utterly the working class which they hitherto had pretended to lead to emancipation. And thus now, as twenty years ago, capitalist-plutocratic principles triumph, aided by those who had been solemnly pledged to their overthrow, while labor lies prostrate and

Manifesto on War

bleeding. Forgotten are the clear and strong words of Marx and Engels, who in 1879 wrote:

“As for ourselves, in view of our whole past there is only one path open to us. For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history, and in particular the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution; it is therefore impossible for us to cooperate with people who wish to expunge this class struggle from the movement. When the International was formed we expressly formulated the battle-cry: the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself.”

We repeat: “THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS MUST BE ACHIEVED BY THE WORKING CLASS ITSELF.” And we add: THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY THE WORKERS ORGANIZING INTO WORKING CLASS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNIONS, BASED SQUARELY ON REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES.

The struggle of the working class *must* be the struggle *against* capitalism, and this obviously translates itself into a struggle *against* definite capitalist principles, and against alliances with capitalist interests (whether on the domestic or the international field), and from this it follows that the struggle must simultaneously be directed toward concrete, positive objectives, relating to means and instruments of working class emancipation. The struggle is not, as the bourgeois liberals and Communists plead, against fascism *per se*, but against the author of fascism and all other forms of reaction, viz., *Capitalism*.

VI.

“Revolutionary conditions,” said Daniel De Leon, “are not ripe until the respective ruling class and candidate for overthrow has acquired so ingrained a contempt for the class below that it considers the same not only unfit for aught but slavery, but also incapable of aught but submission.” That this revolutionary condition is being rapidly created is undeniable. In the out-and-out autocratic countries the workers are treated with less consideration than beasts of burden. The gangster Mussolini ships his Italian peasants and wage slaves to Ethiopia and to Spain, there to be slaughtered; and theirs, less than ever, to reason why, but,

Manifesto on War

more than ever, just to do the bidding of the ruling class bandits, and to die. The vulgar lout Hitler does the same to the workers in Germany, and one needs but to look to Japan to find proof of the contention that the proletariat is deemed less important to consider or consult than horses, or cattle, for in the bloody war in China they are being consumed, “used up,” by their imperialist masters with complete disregard of their status as human beings. There, truly, we find the workers estimated as being “incapable of aught but submission.” And the ruling class in the so-called democratic countries view their subject class in precisely the same light, as will become clear when the workers in these countries will be conscripted and sent on to kill, and to be killed. It is sheer hypocrisy on the part of the “democratic” countries to pretend indignation at the atrocities committed by Japan, Italy and the Spanish fascists, for in the same circumstances they would do the same thing. Moreover, if war breaks out, the “democratic” powers will themselves establish, and maintain, the identical form of autocratic governments, which ostensibly they would be fighting against, including the United States of America — all the protestations of the President, and other bourgeois liberals, to the contrary notwithstanding. They will, and *must*, do this, for essentially they subscribe to the same principles acclaimed by the fascist governments. And regardless of their wishes or professions, industrial feudalism, or fascism, must follow capitalism proper, unless the workers establish Socialism. There are no *three* choices in the matter, as bourgeois liberals claim, viz., capitalism, fascism, Socialism (or Communism, as they prefer to call it). Capitalism proper is doomed — whatever happens it will pass. The choice lies only between fascism (industrial feudalism, or degenerate capitalism) and Socialism. And once again let it be emphasized that fascism, or industrial feudalism, is the illegitimate, or bastard, offspring of capitalism, and not, as capitalist apologists contend, the child of Marxian Socialism (or “Communism”). Only the most vulgar of capitalist thinking could so pervert logic as to blame Socialism for the absolutist degeneracy of capitalism which *must* result from the momentary success of dying capitalism in obstructing the logical processes of social evolution — that is, the logical step from fully developed capitalism to its legitimate heir, Socialism.

VII.

The world is unmistakably moving toward war. Not only are the countries

Manifesto on War

driven to this extremity because of their needs for outlets, foreign markets, new territory, but also because on the ruling classes the world over the fear of working class revolution is growing stronger and stronger. However real the desire for foreign markets and territory may be, however much the quest for markets constitutes the basic motive for wars, however powerful the armaments industry is as an inciter to war, the fear of Socialism is at least as strong and important as a war motive as either of these. Though the cry of Bolshevism on the lips of the Hitlers and Mussolinis (echoed by plutocrats and politicians in all countries, including the Ultramontane Roman Catholic machine) is often a pretense for raiding another country, there can be no doubt that the cry is also prompted by terror of working class revolt. The domestic situations in most countries are becoming intolerable. The unemployment problem remains unsolved, and must so remain under capitalism, and the question "What to do with the unemployed" presses ever more insistently for an answer. A writer in the plutocratic *Magazine of Wall Street*, on March 16, 1935, suggested this seemingly effective and noble expedient:

"Ten million potential workers and a total of possibly 30,000,000 people are outside the circle of work, production and income. They are not only a burden — they are an economic loss — to speak with grim realism, the country would be relatively prosperous, if they were annihilated."

But the plutocratic spokesman deceives himself. Killing off the workers (as was actually done during the World War to the number of millions) will not help him and his bloody robber class. As Daniel De Leon so graphically put it: "If you drown all the superfluous workers, as fast as they are displaced by machinery, you simply would be removing an aggravating incident; the original cause [capitalism, and specifically labor-displacing machinery, etc.] would continue and, with it, the steady decline of the earnings of the worker, which is equivalent to the steady increase of his misery and dependence."

However fatuous one may regard the realistic "remedy" proposed by the writer in plutocracy's journal, it is revealing as certifying once again to the supreme contempt entertained by the ruling class of the proletariat which alone produces the social wealth that (privately or state owned — and whether "privately" or "state" owned — it remains anti-social and anti-working class) *alone* enables the ruling class and their vast number of retainers to maintain themselves in luxury, or ease

Manifesto on War

and comfort, as the case might be.

*

Despite the obvious fact that the world is virtually in a state of conflagration (not primarily because of social incendiaries, but because of the natural decay and dry rot of the capitalist system), we find reformers of all stripes vying with each other in proposing means for saving the system and its political and juridical superstructures. Nero, fiddling while Rome was burning, presented no more insane or pathetic spectacle than is presented through the fatuousness and blindness of the reformers (from plutogogue to sincere or quack reformers, including labor lieutenants, Social-Democrats and Anarcho-Communists) who direct their efforts exclusively toward combatting the logical effects of an outworn social system. It is as if a person, witnessing the burning of a house, would discuss whether the living room in the burning building ought to be redecorated before the house is finally consumed by the flames. *But*, such a person might also argue, we must save the people trapped in the burning house! True, of course. But the way to save them would be, not to make the burning house comfortable for them, but to get them out of the blazing house. And so the way to save the working class now being destroyed, and increasingly so as the capitalist conflagration increases in intensity the world over, is not by making the capitalist system comfortable for them (even if that were possible, which it is not), but by getting them out of the blazing inferno of the body- and soul-destroying system of capitalism, and into the body- and mind-redeeming Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth.

The petty bourgeois reformers vie with the plutocratic spokesmen in upholding the false and fraudulent notions that there are three or more economic classes in society, and that the working class pays the taxes. When confronted with the undeniable fact that the workers *as a class* pay no taxes, they fall back on the equally fraudulent claim that the working class pays *indirect* taxes. There are but two classes in society: the capitalist class, with its various layers of upper, middle and lower sections, and shades in between; and the working class, or the class bereft of property, the mark of whose economic, or working class, status is that it is paid a *wage* — a “living,” a “starving” or “dying wage,” as the case may be. There is no “middle class” today — the historic “middle class” is as much a thing of the past as the Middle Ages. Yet, the reformers of all shades, from upper, middling and

Manifesto on War

lower capitalist (including pseudo-Socialist and Anarcho-Communist), appeal for the support of the “middle class,” or lament the fate of the “middle class,” and join the howl about taxing the plutocracy instead of having the tax burden placed (as they falsely aver) on the shoulders of the “poor middle class,” and on the working class. We cannot too strongly re-emphasize the Marx-Engels pronouncement in the *Communist Manifesto* nearly 100 years ago: “Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”² The 100 years or so that have passed have definitely completed the “splitting up” process and wiped out the remaining vestiges of what in 1847 still lingered as the middle class. And as to taxes, we can do no better than once again quote the well known dictum of Frederick Engels: “Taxes! — A matter, to the bourgeoisie of deep, to the workingmen, however, of very slight concern. That which the workingman pays in taxes goes, in the long run, into the value of labor power, and, accordingly, must be borne by the capitalist.”

Despite these clear utterances we find individuals who, in the name of Marx and Engels, contend that there is a “middle class,” and that the working class pays the taxes; and they do this in order to be able to use the workers in their unscrupulous game of capitalist politics, and in order to lend a semblance of justification to their reactionary reform propaganda. They have forgotten, if they ever knew and understood, that when a social revolution is pending, reforms *inevitably* become aids to the reaction. Moreover, if that pending revolution, for whatever reason, is prevented from being realized, ultra-reaction will follow as logically as disease-breeding vapors will result from leaving uncleared a poisonous swamp. The Upas tree of capitalism can bear poison fruit only.

As eagerly as the political reformers, the labor lieutenants of capitalism seek to postpone the ultimate destruction of capitalism, making strenuous efforts to save it. The American Federation of Labor for more than half a century has striven, with might and main, to narcotize the workers, to render them helpless victims of capitalist aggrandizement, to keep them in a mental state where they would become easy and fit subjects for ruthless exploitation, and become reduced to a state of

² “By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor. By Proletariat, the class of modern wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor-power in order to live.” — Marx-Engels.

Manifesto on War

supine submissiveness. Having grown senile with the increasing senility of the capitalist System, the American Federation of Labor has become less useful to the plutocracy as a bulwark against Socialism, to use the apt designation of the *Wall Street Journal*. Contesting for the place and role of the American Federation of Labor as such a bulwark, the so-called C.I.O. (“Committee for Industrial Organization”) has appeared on the stage, under the “auspices” and joint leadership of the Rooseveltian “New Deal” reformers, the Social-Democratic and Anarcho-Communist quacks, and the crafty, yet brutal and unscrupulous, capitalist labor lieutenant, John L. Lewis, whose long record as labor *mis*-leader eminently qualifies him for the office of “manager” of their “labor trouble” department. Surely no better proof of the recognition of Lewis’s efficiency as such a “manager” could be found than in the praise bestowed upon him by representatives of the House of Morgan, including the ultra-plutocratic head of the United States Steel Corporation, Mr. Myron Taylor. Recently, once again, the plutocracy testified to its complete satisfaction with the services rendered by its faithful servant and labor lieutenant, Lewis. In the *New York Times* of October 27, 1937, “a prominent member” of the board of directors of the United States Steel Corporation stated: “All of us are heart and soul behind Mr. [Myron] Taylor in his agreement with the C.I.O., WHICH ACTUALLY SAVED THE CORPORATION A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY AND RESULTED IN UNITED STATES STEEL GETTING A MUCH BETTER DEAL WITH LAROR THAN THE INDEPENDENTS.” Capitalists (and particularly plutocrats) can benefit by a “bargain” with the workers only at the added expense of the workers. The betrayer of labor’s interests, John L. Lewis, is earning the bounty and favors bestowed upon him — earning them, that is, as a loyal servitor of the plutocracy! Yet, despite the full and complete evidence at hand, proving Lewis the recognized Man Friday of plutocratic interests, the workers, in great numbers, blindly follow him, even assailing those who seek to open their eyes to the true character of this supreme misleader, exactly as the slaves of old turned upon, and assailed, those who worked for their emancipation. But this, too, will pass.

*

Two bright stars have been sending forth light and hope in the dark night of capitalism to the exploited workers, in the course of the last fifty years or so. In Russia the proletarian star of emancipation rose twenty years ago. That star, however, has dimmed in the course of the years, until it is but a flickering spark at

Manifesto on War

this crucial hour. With the causes for this dimming of a star once so brilliant, we are not concerned here. Suffice it to say that among the important factors may be mentioned the anomaly of attempting to build a self-sufficient Socialist economy in the midst of an increasingly reactionary, capitalist-imperialist world, leading Soviet Russia into all sorts of unholy alliances with imperialist powers on the one hand, and anarchistic and reformistic elements on the other. Yet, even for the feeble flickering of that Eastern star, one might be grateful in this dark hour, much as that erstwhile Morning Star of Proletarian hope threatens to become the evening star of despair. The other bright star is that of the Socialist Labor Party of America, which for half a century or so has preached the message of Proletarian Emancipation; which during these many years has exposed the true character of capitalism; which has exposed and denounced, year in and year out, the treachery and infamy of labor fakers and pseudo-Socialist reformers; and which more than once has taken the lead in organizing the correct means and instruments of working class emancipation from the thralldom of capitalism, even to the actual establishment of the framework of Socialist Industrial Unions. And, as in the past, so in the future, the Socialist Labor Party will continue its arduous task of teaching, directing and inspiring the workers, and to aid them in fashioning their revolutionary unions — unions that will serve them as effectively as that is possible even now, but also to serve as their machinery of government when the old order finally crashes and collapses all around us. And that star in the West, the Socialist Labor Party, which rose in the corrupt and complacent capitalism of half a century ago, will continue to shine, with increasing brilliance and luster, as the Morning Star of Hope for the exploited world proletariat — but, above all, for the exploited workers of America.

Not in the spirit of “We told you so,” but in the spirit of eagerness to serve, unselfishly, the workers’ true cause, and with no concern for our own ultimate fate, the Socialist Labor Party appeals to all who claim to speak in the name of Marx, in the name of the Social Revolution, and in behalf of the proletariat, to come to our aid in the important task of organizing the workers for their emancipation — a task which must be completed, and which can only be brought to completion on the basis of the principles laid down by Marx and De Leon. We call upon all sincere workers, who really mean what they say when they speak of emancipating the workers, to help us to reach the workers, to help us to organize the workers in revolutionary,

Manifesto on War

i.e., Socialist Industrial Unions. We urge upon all the real enemies of capitalism, of fascism (industrial feudalism), to rally under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party, to join us in that Herculean task, the achievement of which (as we shall never tire of repeating) requires as an indispensable condition that

CAPITALISM MUST BE DESTROYED!

Long live the Socialist Revolution!

Forward to Working Class Emancipation!

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA,

ARNOLD (PETERSEN),

National Secretary