

THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE COMING WAR

(Towards the International Day of Struggle against Imperialist War).

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ACCORDING to all imperialist calculations and presuppositions, there ought to have been a war against the Soviet Union in 1929-30. The fact that this war did not take place was not the fault of the imperialists. It was prevented by the shattering economic crisis, the growth of the revolutionary working class movement, the internal friction between the imperialists, the peaceful policy manifest to all of the U.S.S.R., the revelations of the two trials of the Industrial Party and of the anti-Soviet conspiracy of the Mensheviks and finally the plain and unanimous disinclination of the wide masses of the workers to fight one another or yet more to fight against the U.S.S.R. The war miscarried. But does this mean that it has been postponed for long? Far from it. Although the events thrown on the international screen change with kinematic rapidity, although one government makes way for another and yesterday's heroes of prosperity become to-day's heroes of economic catastrophe, yet, more surely than ever, war remains on the order of the day. This is not only because war has never ceased in China and a large number of the colonial countries, but also because the contradictions between the imperialist Powers have not been in any way settled and the contradictions between the capitalist and Socialist worlds have become more and more manifest. Just now it would be especially silly to become doped by pacifist illusions and proceed on the hypothesis that, since the imperialists did not succeed in organising a war in 1929-30, this question may be postponed for a considerable period of time. So assuredly the International Day of Struggle against War, fixed for August 1st, has a special meaning. To estimate the significance of this day, let us stop and glance fleetingly at the setting of the international stage, at the groupings of the inter-governmental and inter-class forces which have taken place during the last few years.

A very marked and especially important factor determining the policy of all the capitalist countries is the world economic crisis. Although this crisis has affected the different countries in a varying degree of intensity, it has touched the organism of capitalism on its most sensitive parts. We have before us a partial paralysis of the nervous system of the capitalist order. This determines the policy of the capitalist governments towards one another and it also determines their policy in relation to the U.S.S.R. A particularly important consequence of the deepening

of the crisis is the catastrophic economic conditions in Germany and Poland, which have brought both those countries to the threshold of not only economic but also of political bankruptcy. So far as Germany is concerned, this is clearly the result of a combination of the consequences of the Young Plan and the world economic crisis. But the crisis is so intense that it causes a reflection of these catastrophic conditions even in those countries which have so far been profiting from the Young Plan. Thus before the capitalist world is posed the question of how to avert catastrophe in Central Europe. This concerns not only the German bourgeoisie, but also the English and American boss class. The French bosses are less worried about this question than all the others because they hope in this event to crush revolutionary Germany with the mailed fist, but then they have to reflect on how to avert catastrophe to the weakest links of European capitalism (Poland and the Balkan countries).

The numerous sessions at Geneva, deliberating there on the problem of the economic crisis, the agrarian conferences, the congress of chambers of commerce at Washington and the participation of the agents of the various governments in them, all have to do with the struggle against the crisis, wherefore this "struggle" bears the character of attempts to exorcise the evil and of optimistic hopes of the future. Every government agent, in consequence, has his own remedy for the salvation of capitalist Europe, but their prescriptions not only do not revive hope in the patients, but also do not raise their confidence in the governmental sorcerers who want to treat them.

Under cover of the din of speeches and moans, optimistic hopes and inauspicious forebodings, the principal partners in the international arena continue to rival one another in armaments and secure new positions on the world market. The external dissensions of England and the U.S.A. seem to have been somewhat softened, but as a matter of fact the crisis has already rather sharpened the reciprocal relations of these two creditors. England helps France to defeat the Customs Union between Germany and Austria, but, on the other hand, England, in concert with the U.S.A., tries to devise measures to save Germany from catastrophe. The U.S.A., whose people have heard from the lips of their own government agents a hundred times that European affairs do not concern them, are now ran-

sacking their brains to save Germany from social revolution. The governmental alchemists are seeking a panacea for all evils and, of course under various sauces, serve up one and the same conclusion, that there would be no crisis at all, or at least that it would be very much less serious if the Soviet Union did not exist! Thus from the intensification of the crisis and the vigorous growth of the U.S.S.R., resulting in tens of millions of unemployed in the capitalist countries and a deficit of man-power in the U.S.S.R., the threat of revolution in the capitalist countries and the danger of war against the U.S.S.R. are ever increasing. The successes of the Red Army in China, the growth of the revolutionary movement in India, all this persists in posing the same problem, *who will conquer whom*, "which will hold his own in the unequal fray?"

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In order to save Germany from catastrophe, the American bourgeoisie and their bankrupt prophet Hoover have come out with the scheme of a remission of reparations and other payments for one year. The English, Japanese and Italian Governments also pronounced in favour of this proposal. The French boss class is not against it on condition that it should lose nothing thereby, but receive a percentage for the sums due—but not paid—according to the Young Plan. But does the remission of payments for a year mean the solution of the developing crisis? Will unemployment be diminished thereby? Will it remove those very deep-seated causes which are shaking the capitalist world to its very foundations? On this score the governmental agents of the boss class have no vision. This "heroic" gesture which the international bourgeoisie is making to-day to have its wealth amassed during the ages weighs on the scales in comparison with this crisis like a grain of sand in relation to Mont Blanc. In the meanwhile it would have been possible to take in hand a series of radical measures to relieve the pressure on the masses of the workers, put an end to budgetary deficits, etc. These radical measures include the reduction of army and navy estimates and a considerable curtailment of the war industries. But in the meanwhile we see a continuous growth of expenditure in this direction while the governments of all countries are now drafting measures to economise expenditure on social insurance and all the social needs of the broad masses of the workers. The war industries expand: new strategical railways are being built, machines for the destruction of humanity are working at full speed and at full capacity. And this homicidal machine does not work for nothing. The milliards spent bring in profit to the capitalists and they hope to receive

yet greater tribute in the event of war, whether that war be against another capitalist country or against the Soviet Union.

In its pursuit of safe investment for its capital in the war industries, the bourgeoisie of the powerful imperialist countries is seeking allies. This year especially has been characterised by every sort of secret conference, attempts at groupings of the Powers, formations of new blocs, etc. If France has the solid support of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia, then Italy, securing the support of the U.S.A., establishes a united front with Hungary and has no objections to raise to the union of Austria and Germany in the name of the "protection of the interests of the Italian people." No less active than Mussolini and Briand, is the hero of the Second International, Ramsay MacDonald, who also slips into the Balkans and the Baltic Border States neighbouring on the U.S.S.R. to protect them against "Red Imperialism." So this year there have arisen a series of new secret alliances and a regrouping of forces has taken place. From time to time wordy controversies have been staged at Geneva before which everyone knew that behind the verbal controversies during which peace, freedom and the happiness of the peoples were hymned in every key, the mouths of the guns were gaping and the odour of poison gas was in the air. As they prepare their forces against one another, the imperialists are still considering the problem of how to unite to strike a blow at their common enemy, the U.S.S.R.

That the Five-Year-Plan is an enormous evil, is an elementary truth for the boss class in all lands. Not one of the exploiters would deny that the capitalists would be better off if the Five-Year-Plan were not in existence. But the question is not whether anyone likes or dislikes our Five-Year-Plan, but whether the imperialists have sufficient strength to bring it to nought. What is needed for this? United action by the strongest imperialist Powers with Germany among their number. But how can Germany join in the united front so long as the Young Plan continues with rectilinear inexorability beating out of the brains of the most hopeless German Francophiles the idea of orientation to the West against the East? The German boss class is not unwilling to enter a united front against the U.S.S.R., but it wants something substantial in return for this—the abolition of the Treaty of Versailles. On the other hand, the German bosses are afraid of their own workers. Can France and England, with the sole support of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania and the Baltic Border States, count on military success against the U.S.S.R. if, in the rear of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, lies a

despoiled and dismembered Germany? It is very hard to say. The very adroit English and French diplomats are putting their heads together to find a means of contenting the German bourgeoisie which is not detrimental in any way to their own interests. Each partner is willing to do all he can on the other's account, but so far they have not succeeded in solving the insoluble conundrum and, although the German Fascists are openly up for auction, they will not bid, for the price is too high even for the victors. But if Germany does not enter the united front, will that fact make war against the U.S.S.R. impossible? That is unlikely. The imperialists will first try to force Germany to make a united front with them, but finally they can risk beginning the war without Germany, leaving the question of drawing her into it in the future to depend on the course of the events of the war. The bosses are driven to the wall by the crisis and are searching an exit in desperation. All attempts to end the crisis have been of no avail, an effort to find an outlet through a military adventure is not only possible but exceedingly probable. The anti-Soviet position has its own logic. It is impossible to go on screaming year after year that the U.S.S.R. is the root of all evil, that Soviet dumping is ruining the whole civilised world, that "Red Imperialism" threatens humanity and do nothing resulting from these conclusions. Capitalism does not dream of leaving the historical arena of its own free will, it is struggling and will struggle yet more furiously for its life. What is driving on the imperialists to-day to war against the U.S.S.R.? More than anything unceasing contradictions in the economic life of the capitalist States, and, secondly, the quite exclusively revolutionary significance of the vigorous Socialist growth of the U.S.S.R. It is not in idleness that the exceptionally greedy American bosses observe with panic the successes of the Five-Year-Plan. Not in idleness do the capitalists of all lands reflect with terror on the thought that the U.S.S.R. may produce a second plan when the first is completed.

It follows therefore that war is not only possible and probable, but also inevitable. But why have not the treaties concluded between the Soviet Union and other countries removed the dangers of war? How many times have treaties been concluded between France and the U.S.S.R.? In Polish capitalist circles they are beginning to talk about the possibility of concluding a commercial treaty with the U.S.S.R. Is not this sufficient proof that war has been put away in a long box? Such a conclusion is radically incorrect. Why has France begun negotiations with the U.S.S.R.? Because he is driven to it by the intensification of the crisis. If it was impossible

to go to war in 1929-30, then it was essential to begin to trade while preparing for war at the same time. It is essential to bear in mind the furious competition between the capitalist Powers. However much the capitalist press might abuse the U.S.S.R., no one could deny that the orders of the U.S.S.R. were increasing daily. The Soviet Union, as a centralised purchaser, has a great effect on the world market. Individual capitalists, trusts, amalgamated industrial undertakings deem it necessary not only to take these orders but also to grant to the U.S.S.R. long-term and short-term credits. They do not do this from love of the Soviet Union, but because there is no other way out; they must close down their undertakings or work for the U.S.S.R. Of course every capitalist chooses the "lesser evil." A buyer with hundreds of millions at his disposal, able to switch his orders from one State to another, represents a serious economic force. If it is impossible to compel him to submit by force, then compromise must be resorted to, so as not to lose even part of the order. Hence negotiations with the U.S.S.R., hence invitations to all kinds of international conferences, hence these negotiations carried on with gnashings of teeth. But woe to the workers who trust in the peaceful assurance of the imperialist gentlemen, in their hypocritical conversations about peace and who take seriously the documents and treaties which they sign. Mistrust of the imperialists and their agents is a necessary precedent for a definition of a correct line in the struggle against war.

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Such is the position. What are the international reformists doing against the danger of war? In the first place the international reformists do not deny the danger of war. They constitute themselves very loyal agents of the League of Nations according to which the problem is how to pass off hypocritical speeches at Geneva as activity in the struggle against war. Every leader of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals feels it his duty from time to time to say a few bitter words about the terrors of war, besides which they usually introduce into their discourses a particularly venomous attack on the Comintern, the R.I.L.U. and the U.S.S.R., which these creatures exaggerate into war dangers. A very impudent and cynical game is played around the question of war. The reformists know well that war is being prepared, they know this is the first case because they are actually in power in some lands (England and Prussia), and in others they are taking a share in the government or are official members of very important parliamentary commissions (France). They received hundreds of thousands of francs (our reformists are up-to-

date people and not content with thirty pieces of silver) for representing their imperialist governments on commissions at Geneva on disarmament . . . of the proletariat. They are better informed than anyone about the designs of their masters and they go on shouting that nobody is thinking about war, that all are pacifically disposed and that the danger of war threatens from the East from the side of "Red Imperialism." In this respect special agility is shown by the scoundrelly secretary of the French Reformist Trade Union Confederation, Léon Jouhaux, who specialises in disarmament conferences. Citizen Jouhaux loses no opportunity of making an oration on the pacific endeavours of the rapacious and shameless French imperialists. Several times a year this object delivers one and the same speech, goes to the treasury and gets his reward for it and calls this a struggle against war! It is necessary to realise that Jouhaux is a very adroit person since he has succeeded in the course of twelve years in getting paid for one and the same speech. In truth, Léon Jouhaux is a very "expensive leader." In the reformist arena, struggles against war take place principally in Geneva and her environments where there are many most excellent restaurants. And these "leaders" do not go to the workers, for how could one speak to a simple "uneducated" worker on a question of such delicacy? Nothing consoling for the imperialists and their agents! "No one outside the U.S.S.R. is thinking about war," shout the reformists with one accord. But when the reformists consider war at their own congresses, they are not unwilling to expatiate on the terrors of war and strike an attitude and even threaten to take steps should war break out. But the boss class does not take threats of this nature seriously, for it knows that the authors of these resolutions are preparing for war in practice and will prepare for it with all the fervour that is left to them. The governments naturally do not pay any attention to such threats, knowing that such anti-war speeches and resolutions were designed not for them but for the workers who genuinely do not want war and whom it is possible to hold back by veiling the nakedness of imperialism and using anti-militarist phrases.

If we take the history of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals during the last two or three years we shall see by what means these "pacifist" Internationals have joined in the anti-Soviet policy of their governments, how armies, air forces and navies have been built up with their help and how they have attempted to popularise among the masses the idea of war against the "Red Imperialism" of the U.S.S.R. under the banner of the fight for democracy against

dictatorship. It is no secret to anyone that the Second International now is an instrument for the preparation for war. The value of their resolutions is considerably less than the value of the paper on which they are written. How many times in recent years have the workers who were doped with the hope that Social Democracy was the party of peace and pacifism been able to convince themselves many time over during recent years that this pacifism was only show and that the boss class had in the form of the Social Democrats a genuine help in the preparation of war; an anti-Soviet shock brigade! But why do the Second and Amsterdam Internationals deny their participation in the war preparations? Why do they repudiate this with "dignified" indignation? Why will they at the coming International Congress at Vienna pretend that they have been slandered? Because they know about the anti-militarist disposition of the workers. To step forward openly for war against the U.S.S.R. would mean to lose the workers to a man. They are not such fools as to say openly to the workers where they are going and where they are leading the masses. These politicians fear to pose the question openly as do Kautsky and the other open agents of the boss class. These reformist gentlemen do not say openly that they are for war against the U.S.S.R., but from time to time they even step forward apparently in defence of the Soviet Union only to keep the workers in their organisations. Struggling against war means in the first place struggling against that reformism which is rotting the working class movement, i.e., to destroy the influence of the lieutenants of capital in the midst of the workers, to detach the workers from the influence of Amsterdam, to reveal the gulf that lies between the masses and the Social Democrats. Apart from this, all struggle against war is mere empty and cheap declamation.

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War, as Clausewitz said and Lenin has more than once emphasised, is a continuation of policy by other methods. That means that the struggle against war is a continuation of policy. So far as reformism does not struggle against capitalism, it cannot struggle against war. So far as the revolutionary workers' movement leads a stubborn and systematic struggle against the capitalist system, it can lead a real struggle against war. I have purposely written "can lead" because in this sphere all is not well with the revolutionary trade union movement, all is not well because the struggle against war is not carried on with that verve and strength which the situation demands. Is, in actual fact, the struggle against the war danger a primary ques-

tion for the sections of the R.I.L.U.? No. This question is one of secondary consideration, a question about which much is written, but which is not posed as an actual question of the day. Why is this? For two reasons: 1. We have doubts as to the nearness of war. 2. There is an opinion abroad that it is only possible and needful to fight war once it has begun. How do workers manage to dope themselves with unbelief in the nearness of a fresh imperialist war? By the influence of the bourgeois and Social Democratic press. There are comrades who in their heart of hearts believe that "they (meaning the imperialists) will not dare." This is a false, pernicious and dangerous outlook which will dare, especially if we are passive. The second dangerous and pernicious viewpoint is that the struggle against war can be postponed till the beginning of actual hostilities. This is a very dangerous manifestation of opportunism against which it is essential to conduct a determined struggle. To postpone the struggle against war till hostilities have begun is exactly the same as to put off sowing till the harvest on the excuse that up to the time of harvest everything grows up the same or to postpone the curing of a poisoned finger till the whole body is infected. The struggle against war in war time must be a continuation of our pre-war policy, and it will be fruitful and energetic then in proportion as it is the consequence of the struggle we were carrying on against war from day to day in the period of preparation. This question is one of primary importance and without overthrowing this opportunist policy, not one step forward is possible. *He who postpones the struggle against war till it breaks out helps to bring imperialist war nearer.*

Thus the struggle against war must become an organised part of our day-to-day work. How to begin? This is the invariable question asked us. First of all it is necessary to unveil before the workers the secrecy in which the preparations for war are made. Everything connected with diplomacy and the armed forces is hidden under a veil of mystery in the capitalist countries. We must pull off this mysterious covering and reveal in all their nakedness the dirty machinations of the diplomats, general staffs and war missions. We must unmask at once the governments and drag into the light all that they are trying to hide from the workers. "No diplomatic mysteries and secret treaties! Unmask the diplomats and general staffs!" Such must be our slogans at the start of the anti-war campaign.

It is essential to conduct a struggle against the doping of the workers by pacifist slogans and hypocritical phraseology. The boss class and Social Democratic press go on lying every day,

assuring the workers that war is not on the order of the day. Against this purposeful lulling of the vigilance of the proletariat, the best remedy is facts,—armaments, new war inventions in the sphere of chemistry, aviation, guns, tank construction and so on, and the secrets of the ins and outs of the international conferences. If it is true that the capitalist governments do not want war and are only thinking of disarmament, why did they not only not accept the Soviet Government's disarmament proposals, but also continue to arm? This is followed up by a particularly violent cannonade to expose the rôle of the Social Democrats in the preparation and hiding of the increasing danger of war. Every worker should understand that the imperialist war is not a *to-morrow* in distant perspective, but a *to-day* which is threatening to take place at once. Without this preliminary work, it is impossible to raise a present alarm and wave of anti-war feeling among the workers to a higher stage.

The next question which must be put to the workers is this: In the name of whom and in whose interests is war fought? Here it is essential to be as clear as possible. It will not do to fall into abstract and barren pacifism and shout against war in general. We are not against all war, we are for the war of the colonial peoples against the imperialists; we are for the war of the exploited against their oppressors. We oppose war not from the point of view of the blood spilt, not from the viewpoint of the destruction and victims sacrificed, but from the viewpoint of the name in which this blood was spilt and of the cause for the triumph of which the victims were sacrificed. Is the war for a new partition of the colonies for the consolidation of British or French imperialism? Is the war against the Soviets to bring to nought the Five-Year-Plan, for the destruction of the proletarian dictatorship and the restoration of the rule of the bourgeoisie? These are war aims contrary to the interests of the workers and the support of such a war is tantamount to support of imperialist brigandry and counter-revolution. Must we support the Chinese Red Army waging war on the Chinese militarists and imperialists? Obviously and with all our strength. Shall we support the Indo-Chinese and Indian peoples revolting against French and British imperialism? We must. He who does not support the masses of the people of China, Indo-China and India in their struggle, is supporting the imperialists. From this it follows that the question of the nature of a war and in whose name and interests it is being waged is of paramount importance. Let us emphasise this: *The struggle against war cannot be a question for the whole nation irrespective of*

class, but it is doubly a class question. In fact, for a real struggle against war, not one waged on paper, it is necessary to operate in the holy of holies of capitalist society, in the armed forces and diplomatic service. And the class which must do this must be one that is not interested in the preservation of this mystic secrecy and not slavishly inclined before boss-class institution. Running off the class lines, the question of the struggle against war becomes abstract and entirely inoffensive to war and the warmongers. War "in general" is an abstraction behind which all sorts of elements hostile to the working-class may shelter. More than this, there is not a single banker, industrialist, stockbroker or minister—and in many cases one individual may incarnate all these trades—who is not against war in general. Therefore our struggle must be as concrete as possible. *Beware abstractions, they are the coffin of revolutionary tactics.* Thus to introduce the necessary concreteness, it is essential to enlighten the workers on the preparation, beginning and outcome of the "Great War for Freedom," from 1914 to 1918. This war is instructive in all its aspects, especially from the point of view of the methods used to deceive the workers by the social imperialists. The lessons of the war from 1914 to 1918 must be the pivot of our anti-war campaign since, from the "war to end war," all the workers have been able to realise how much the cry of a war against militarism, a war for democracy, a war for the self-determination of the peoples, etc., means on the lips of the imperialists and their allies. As a contrast there must be introduced the most equitable of all wars, the war of the workers and peasants of Russia against the bourgeoisie, the landlords and interventionists of Europe, Asia and America. Thus is it possible and essential to bring out the class character and class origin of all wars.

Just as the struggle against war cannot and must not bear an abstract character, so we must ask ourselves this question: Among which strata of the workers must we primarily carry on our work for the unveiling of the true character of the coming imperialist war? War to-day is primarily a war of machines, a war of industry and transport, and so our forces must be directed on to those workers in those branches of industry which are found to be continually "booming." It is not only a question of those workers who are directly engaged in the manufacture of rifles, big guns, bullets and powder, but, to a greater extent, among the broad strata of those employed in the key industries. The mining, metal, chemical, automobile, aeroplane, arms, small arms and tank construction industries and also sea and rail transport, all these are branches of industry on which

we must primarily concentrate our attention. This does not mean that the textile, leather and food-producing workers play no rôle in contemporary warfare; not at all, without them the armies could not play their part. It simply means that *we must concentrate our attention on the key industries* in order to be able to press on that lever to lessen the danger of war and, if it does break out, to be able to reduce it to chaos more quickly. Intensive work among the war and transport industries is the more necessary because there are intentionally employed in these industries consciously reactionary and specially backward workers. Workers in these industries are weaker in organisation than in any others. Assuredly then it is essential to treat this question concretely, at all costs to win over the workers in the transport and munition industries. It is true that the task is a hard one, but it is a possible one, if we apply ourselves to the work and make it not an improvised raid as it were, but mobilise for this work perseveringly and systematically the fundamental strength and resources of the revolutionary trades unions.

However fast and furious the growth of military technique, the decisive rôle in the immediate future will still belong to the human mass. Of course, inventions will bring about changes in the relations between the different kinds of tools. Aviation will play a very much larger rôle in war and generally the mechanisation of the army will bring the machine into a position of primary importance, but it would be a mistake to conclude that in this war of machines men will play a secondary rôle. The part of the engineers and workmen will be more important, for without the workers the army of to-day will not be able to advance. This means that the army of to-day will absorb for a shorter or longer period skilled workers both organised and unorganised. Must the trade unions know where each member has been taken or what he is doing and when he has been accepted for military service? Must the trade unions keep in touch with the soldiers and sailors who are not excluded from the trade union during their period of military service? Obviously they must. Otherwise this would mean automatic exclusion from the trade union. And it is not enough to keep in touch; it is necessary to give the member who finds himself in the barrack real help, to help him both morally and materially. First of all, moral help must include enlightenment as to the rôle of the army and navy, as to how they defend private property and exploitation. Every soldier and sailor must know this, as the sharper become class relations the more frequently the boss-class will resort to the use of armed force to crush the working-class movement. In some

countries (France) the boss-class avoids disquieting the army and makes shift with the police and gendarmerie, but the army is the last and highest trump in the hands of the boss-class and one it does not hesitate to play. It is essential to take this trump from the hands of our class enemies, and the best means of doing this is the establishment of close fraternal relations between the workers and the soldiers, the merchant service and the sailors of the fleet. The fundamental mass of the army and navy are workers, and we must win them to our side, to the working class, in the first place, that the soldiers and sailors may not take part in the fight against the strikers, and in the second place, that they may take their place with the working class against war. It is impossible to explain the particular forms of contact between the trade unions and the soldiers. Where the trade unions are legal, such relations may be formed openly so as to correspond to the pre-war traditions of the French trade unions. In those countries where the trade unions are illegal, driven underground, all work and forms of contact must be organised in another way. It is important that this work should not be considered of secondary importance and that the partisans of the R.I.L.U. should not forget for a moment that not only the trade union members in the army and navy should not be allowed to be cut off from their unions but should remain trade unionists, but we must also have close contact with those workers who are not in our trade unions before their war service, so that at the end of their term they will be able to join up in the revolutionary trade unions.

A very serious problem for the trade unions is their relations with the coloured forces which are recruited and trained in some countries not only for a future war against an external foe, but for use against the internal enemy. Such a coloured army, attaining considerable dimensions, exists in France and presents no small problem to the revolutionary trade unions. In fact the capitalists organise these coloured armies expressly because they have begun to lose hope in the possibility of utilising white soldiers and sailors for crushing the working-class movement. The revolutionary trade unions have not usually the slightest conception of the living conditions, life, pleasures or language of these soldiers. To get into contact with them is a very difficult task but one whose difficulties must at all costs be overcome. First of all there must be workers in France of the same race as the coloured soldiers. Contact must be established by means of these workers with this army called into being for anti-working-class ends. We must learn how to enlighten the soldiers as to why and wherefore they have been taken for military service. If the

trade unions pay attention to this coloured army they may succeed in enlightening at any rate a part of the troops as to the rôle they are designed to play. In the meanwhile the trade unions of the imperialist countries must carry on broad mass work in the colonies from which the coloured soldiers have come. The trade unions which do not pay attention to the coloured forces will pay dearly for their neglect of this exceedingly important work.

We see that all the work of the trade unions in the sphere of the struggle against war is mass work to-day, but are the tasks of the trade unions exhausted by this in this domain? Is it possible to forge serious anti-war militants if all our work results in mere agitation and propaganda? If the trade unions were only to busy themselves with these aspects, they would be doing a very small part of their work. The struggle against war is a very serious business and requires serious training and moulding. Where can the worker receive this moulding? Where and when will the steadfastness of our cadres be tested and the capacity for militancy of the whole workers' army be tested? The testing will be done in the day-to-day struggle for the immediate economic demands of the proletariat. But does there exist any direct connection between the struggle against wage reductions and the struggle against a fresh imperialist war? The connection is much closer than can be seen at first view. Contemporary economic struggles, more than at any other period, have a profoundly political character, since they bring the strikers into opposition to the owners, reformists and bourgeois governments. A worker exposed to most cruel capitalist rationalisation, finding himself in the Damocles grip of unemployment, with a 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. cut in his miserable wage, and who receives "help" from the government in the form of compulsory arbitration, bayonets and tear-gas bombs, will be a very bad defender of the privileges of the boss-class and imperial brigandry. Under the strokes of the crisis, hunger and unemployment will spread rapidly and form a class-conscious proletariat. And when a strike breaks out in such a situation of increasing poverty and hunger, then every worker will estimate for himself that all is at stake which he has struggled for over the course of many long years, and therefore he will struggle with great bitterness (e.g., the strike of 40,000 miners in the U.S.A., the strike of 125,000 textile workers in France, etc.). When in the course of a struggle for his elementary needs the worker is met with the armed forces by the government, a wave of class hatred rises in him and he becomes a poor defender of the bourgeois fatherland. The strike is ever the best school of

solidarity. Not in vain did Engels call the strike a school of militancy. To-day, every strike, every unemployment riot detaches fresh and further strata of the workers from the boss-class and their reformist agents. A strike is a school of militancy in this respect, that during it the proletarian mould is formed, the workers learn to act together and make sacrifices to attain a given goal. A worker who has not taken part in a strike is still raw; that is why those who have played their part in economic battles have a special knowledge of how to convert backward, unorganised workers and those still under the influence of the reformists into a strongly knit united militant class army. Finally, the worker who has not strike experience cannot be a serious fighter on the anti-war front, since the struggle against war demands much greater tension and sacrifice than the economic struggle.

But the economic struggle in itself does not play such a big rôle if it is divorced from the general class problems of the proletariat. Hence arises the necessity to raise every strike to a higher level, linking up economic and political demands. Only from such tactics does the worker on strike extract the maximum material and political profit from every strike. But if every economic struggle is a step forward on the path leading to the knitting together of the masses of the workers against capital, then the political strike, which openly and directly brings the working class into collision with the bourgeoisie and bourgeois government plays a still more important rôle. The political strike is undoubtedly a school for militancy of the highest type for every worker, and accordingly the preparation of the proletariat for the struggle against war also includes this trenchant weapon. The fundamental tactical task consists in not divorcing the struggle against war from the day-to-day struggle of the working class; only thus shall we be able to augment our anti-war forces from day to day and be sure that the outbreak of war will not find us unprepared for it.

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But can the trade unions, these proletarian economic organisations concern themselves with these questions? Is it impossible so to arrange the division of labour that the Communist parties busy themselves with the struggle against war, since this is a political question and the trades unions only concern themselves with the immediate, i.e., the economic demands of the proletariat? We would ruin the trade union movement by accepting this point of view, since this would mean adopting the viewpoint of the non-political unions. A trade union unites the mass of the workers and therefore it cannot remain unconcerned about the struggle against war. It

goes without saying that the Communist parties and the trade unions have special tasks in this domain, but to say that the anti-war work of the Communist parties makes anti-war work by the revolutionary trade unions unnecessary means putting the trade unions back many years. The revolutionary trade union movement must struggle decisively against lesser attempts to weaken the struggle against war under whatsoever pretexts they may be made. The trade union which does not make a clear stand on this point is in actual fact helping the imperialist warmongers. Not only neutrality but also passivity in this connection is a violation of the most elementary principles of the class trade union movement. A trade union, as a mass organisation, has the task of rousing and organising the workers of all tendencies against war. That is why the trades unions cannot and must not stand aside on August the 1st, the Day of International Struggle against War. This is not *somebody's else's day*, but *our day*, that is, the day of the mobilisation of all the revolutionary forces of the proletariat against imperialist war and its incendiaries. In what way must the trades unions participate? To lay down a single hard and fast rule for all countries would not answer the purpose and would be incorrect. Everything depends on what place the boss-class of the given country occupies in the war preparations, what is the relative strength of the working class and the boss class, what is the proportionate strength of our forces to the working class itself, whether the revolutionary forces are legal, semi-legal or illegal, etc. The methods of participation must be and should be various, ranging from meetings and demonstrations to political mass strikes, but all participation must have a mass character, and it must be compulsory for all sections of the revolutionary trades unions to take part in it. This means that *the fundamental principle in the preparation for the International Day of Struggle against Imperialist War is the formation of a united front from below*, a united working class front for the struggle against the imperialist warmongers and their reformist allies. The successfulness of this day will be measured by the number of workers belonging to the reformist parties and unions whom we succeed in bringing on to the streets. We must prove by action that the working class does not want imperialist war and war against the Soviet Union and to prove this is possible by hard work put into the preparation for August the first, by mass participation on this day and persevering and systematic work for the organisation and consolidation of the masses of the workers on the basis of the class struggle after this day. Other methods of struggle against war there are not and cannot be. Comrades, to work!