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Questions and Answers \*

final analysis, is whether it is worth while to fight for world peace with all the forces that can be united, whatever they may be. The isolationists frankly abandon the goal of maintaining peace, they accept the war as inevitable; they only hold out the illusory hope that, if we do not fight for peace, we may be allowed to stay out of the world war—at least for a short time!

*Q. Assuming that the fascist powers are restrained, and do not answer their quarantine by general war as a last desperate measure, would this not refute the Marxian prediction that capitalism in its death agonies is impelled to more and more desperate acts of self-preservation?*

A. No, successful curbing of the fascist war-makers would in no sense be a refutation of any conclusion of Marxism; on the contrary, it would be a supreme illustration of the truths of Marxism. Such a struggle, especially clearly if successful, would finally expose monopoly capital in every land, and all the reactionary forces under its leadership, as the force making for fascism and war, for the destruction of all civilization, for the betrayal of each nation from within to promote its own selfish interests, and would pose the necessity of socialism, the central point of Marxian thought, with full sharpness and clarity before the great masses of every land, especially of the industrialized countries. And precisely this, the taking control of their own destinies by the masses of the people, led by the industrial working class, is the conclusion and crowning point of Marxism; what better example could be given of this than successfully to bring the fascists to a halt?

*Q. Assuming that war between Japan and the United States arises out of the situation in China, as illustrated by the Panay incident, would the Communists support the Roosevelt administration in such a war?*

A. All of our proposals are directed toward creating such a relation of forces as to prevent war and to rectify wrongs

*Q. Is it not possible to agree with you thoroughly on the aim of collective security, and yet to have strong doubts as to whether collective security will achieve that aim?*

A. Yes, undoubtedly, and the great mass of supporters for concerted action have but recently passed through those doubts, and many more are only now in process of overcoming their doubts. Precisely that fact is what makes the national debate now going on of such supreme importance. Most people who hold to isolationist views are not conscious that these views lead to surrender to fascism; most of them are not conscious, also, that the active agents of fascism in America are the most zealous ideologists of isolationism. When we expose these roots and consequences of isolationism, we are by no means imputing a desire to help fascism or promote war to all those who are influenced by these ideas.

*Q. Granted that effective concerted action would gain the results hoped for, is it not possible to doubt the possibility of securing such concerted action?*

A. Yes, it is always possible to doubt, and the right to do so (at least in secret) is a right which even a fascist regime could not fully deprive one of. But such doubt, persisted in to the point of paralyzing action, on the part of enough people, could itself become the factor defeating the realizable program. Since concerted action is the only way proposed by anyone for maintaining world peace, the only question involved, in the

\* When the preceding articles originally appeared in the *New Masses*, readers were invited to submit questions regarding the points raised. From these questions the author culled the following and wrote the answers given below.

without resort to war. If in spite of all our efforts to this end, war between Japan and the United States arises out of the present world situation, it is our firm conviction that the cause of progress and democracy everywhere would demand the defeat of Japan. We would support the American government in such a war to the extent that its policies and methods contributed toward the national independence of China, and the protection of democracy and progressive policies at home and abroad. We reject the slogan of defeating "our own government" as the main orientation in the present world situation, in which the American government is clearly not aggressive nor moving to subject other peoples.

*Q. Does "collective security" or concerted action include military sanctions?*

A. Not necessarily, and we are not proposing military sanctions. Such military sanctions as might prove necessary could be undertaken by the nations most directly involved, without the United States, but with American moral and economic support.

*Q. Is advocacy of the Ludlow Amendment inconsistent with concerted action for peace and democracy?*

A. Yes it is inconsistent, but doubtless there are many people who still find it possible to combine these two positions.

*Q. Are you in sympathy with the effort to stir up hostility to Japan as a result of the Panay incident?*

A. I think it was absolutely correct for all progressives to use the *Panay* incident to arouse the American people to the criminal and bandit policy of Japan in China, to crystallize American sentiment against Japan, and to try thereby to cut off Japan from the enormous help she is receiving from the United States in murdering millions of people and crushing an independent friendly nation. I am only sorry we Communists did not make effective enough use of the incident for this purpose.

*Q. Are you primarily interested in the welfare of the people of the United States or the welfare of the proletariat of the world?*

A. Starting from my primary interest in the welfare of the workers and farmers of the United States, I have learned that this cannot be advanced by policies based upon *exclusively* national considerations, but must always be adjusted to the needs of international co-operation. Any departure from this viewpoint will always and inevitably lead to enthroning the most reactionary forces in power within the nation. All apparent conflicts between the interests of the American toilers and the toilers of other lands are only illusions, created by the reactionaries in order to break down international solidarity for their own reactionary purposes. The Communist Party always finds the common interests of the peoples as the determining factor in every major problem and situation.

*Q. Do you agree that the President's Chicago speech was motivated by vague moral humanitarian ideas, having nothing fundamentally in common with your realistic Communist (class struggle) ideas on the subject of fascist aggression?*

A. I realize that the President shares none of our understanding of the class struggle, nor of our objectives of the future society, but that does not change our opinion that the full execution of his Chicago speech by the United States government is in the interests of progress, and therefore in the last analysis of the future of socialist society.

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