

The Peril of Militarism

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IN THE BUILDING of this country's present gigantic military machine, the major argument used among the people to get their sanction, or toleration, for this great armed force is the double-pronged contention; first, that the more immense the American military establishment is, the better the chances are for maintaining world peace, and, second, that military men, knowing at first hand the horrors of war, are the strongest guardians of world peace. This general argument, trotted out whenever any big increase in war preparations appropriation is being considered, is now being used afresh in the current attempt of the Eisenhower Administration to put across hated universal military training under the swindling pretext that it is only creating a larger military reserve force.



The truth is, of course, just the contrary to the argument of the militarists. That is, military men, far from being the advocates of peace, are, by definition, the most blatant of warmongers, and the piling up of enormous masses of armaments, instead of being a guarantee of peace, is directly provocative of war. Imperialistic militarism in itself constitutes a grave war danger.

THE WARLIKE character of the American military men is well exemplified by the long-term policies of the American Legion, the main organization of retired soldiers and military officers. Ever since this body was formed, at the conclusion of World War I, it has been the most consistently reactionary and sabre-rattling organization in this coun-

try. If it has ever stood for a real policy of peace, this has not been visible to the naked eye. Nor is the Veterans of Foreign Wars one whit better.

In the recent attempt to save Sen. McCarthy from a triply deserved censure, we have seen typically a whole flock of fire-eating retired Admirals and Generals come rushing to this reactionary's defense. To speak of such pro-fascists and warmongers as a force for peace is the most dangerous nonsense.

The professional military men in active service are no less warlike than their retired brethren in the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and elsewhere. The Pentagon contains, in the General Staffs, the most confirmed and dangerous war elements in this country. They are not only continually making the most extravagant demands for funds for the already vastly swollen military establishment, but obviously they are, as a group, trigger-happy to use the enormous atomic military machine of which they are the controllers. Their whole pressure is in the direction of war, and hardly a week goes by but what one or another of them sounds off with a wild, warlike statement that shocks the peace masses of the world.

THE PRO-WAR majority of the Pentagon big brass is led by Admiral Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Robert Carney, Chief of Naval Operations, and General Nathan Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff. According to Stewart Alsop (Herald Tribune, Nov. 29, 1954), Radford and his military pals, on two recent occasions, presented to the Administration majority proposals of the General Staff, calling for the beginning of direct military action. The first of these was, last spring, to use American air and sea

power to "save" Indochina—a proposal which the Administration could not put into effect because Great Britain opposed it.

The second war proposal of the Pentagon clique was to use American air power, last September, in order to "defend" the Nationalist-held offshore Chinese islands—a plan which is still in the works. The Pentagon military warmongers are the same elements who, in the spirit of General McArthur, have repeatedly urged that atomic bombs be used against People's China.

The Pentagon Generals and Admirals, who exercise a growing influence in the shaping of American foreign policy, are a real menace to the peace of the world. It is a grave danger to allow such dangerous sabre-rattlers and cultivators of McCarthyite fascism to hide behind idiotic pretensions that they are defenders of peace and democracy. Nor is the situation helped any by the fact that the President himself is a lifetime military figure.

MALIGNANT militarism, with all its evils and dangers, has now become an established political disease in the United States. The labor movement and the peace forces in general should make a far sharper struggle against this menace than has hitherto been the case. The political influence of the Pentagon must be curbed and its back-of-the-curtain war moves exposed and combatted. The people should demand drastic reductions in the enormous military machine, and the Government appropriations for it, with which the country is now loaded down. Especially they should not allow the Pentagon military clique to put across their latest version of universal military training, many times rejected by the American people.