
HOW THE BRITISH EMPIRE IS CONJURED AWAY

BY GIL GREEN

WHEN A. A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, compared "the theory of empire of nineteenth-century Britain" with "the later British thought which gradually transformed the empire into a commonwealth of nations,"* he was only giving expression to the current attempt of the imperialist apologists to "prove" that the British Empire is no longer an empire. Why has this become necessary? First, because the word "empire" has lost most of its former glamour. Secondly, because Berle, writing of Latin America, realizes full well that the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the world have cultivated a distaste for anything even remotely related to imperialism and empire.

Yet in the early years of this century the opposite was true. Paeans of praise were sung to the glory of the empire builders and the new imperialism. Rudyard Kipling, poet laureate of the rising imperialism, emphasized this accent on empire and put into rhyme the self-confidence and optimism which pervaded the bourgeoisie of that day. Of

course, the peoples of the colonial countries were not asked to express themselves on this score and had not yet taken that right for themselves.

Imperialism in those days was seen as a higher, more advanced and more progressive stage of capitalism, not its decaying and final stage, as Lenin taught. The very subjugation of the colonial millions was explained by imperialism and endorsed by the opportunists in the Socialist movement as a "civilizing mission."

The Theory of "Ultra-Imperialism"

This worship at the shrine of imperialism found its theoretical expression in the concept of "ultra-imperialism." First developed in 1902 by the British economist Hobson, under the name of "inter-imperialism," this theory was taken over bodily by the Social-Democrat Kautsky and became the opportunist justification for supporting the imperialist war. "Ultra-imperialism," according to these bourgeois economists and pseudo-Marxists, was

* *Survey Graphic*, March, 1941.

the final goal of imperialism, the stage at which the process of trustification would have eliminated all competition, contradictions and conflicts on a world scale, and replaced them with lasting peace and prosperity—with an “organized capitalism.”

Under imperialism the trend is toward a single world monopoly that will devour all competitors and all states. Lenin spoke of this as early as 1915, but pointed out that it was only a “direction,” not a realizable goal. He proved that monopoly capital had not eliminated either competition or the class struggle but had only raised them to a higher level—a world level. He therefore concluded that “the development in this direction is proceeding under such stress, with such tempo, with such contradictions, conflicts, and convulsions—not only economical, but also political, national, etc., etc.—that before a single world trust will be reached, before the respective national finance capitals will have formed a world union of ‘ultra-imperialism,’ imperialism will inevitably explode, capitalism will turn into its opposite.”

“Ultra-imperialism,” as propounded by the opportunists, served the strivings of each major imperialist power for an increasingly larger share of world booty. It helped glorify British colonial policy which, especially after the Boer War, was being questioned by the masses who had lost their sons in African fields and were paying for the war in increased taxation. German imperialism, entering late into the scramble for world empire and world power,

likewise found this theory a useful one. On the basis of this theory it therefore became possible for Social-Democracy, which, based on the bribed labor aristocracy, had become soft and corrupted during the period of the so-called peaceful development of capitalism (1871-1914), conveniently to support its own bourgeoisie in each imperialist country.

If prior to and during the first World War it was necessary to supply a theory to “prove” the civilizing and progressive mission of imperialism and empire, this is not quite the case today. True, the Axis partners, i.e., the erstwhile “have-not” imperialist powers, have succeeded in hypnotizing large sections of their populations with the mirage of empire as the cure-all for their economic ills. But the British Empire, which is the world’s greatest, and America, which is the richest and most powerful capitalist power, cannot so easily do this.

It is true that the more frank and open spokesmen of finance-capital, like Jordan and Luce, and like Lindbergh and Dennis, do not hesitate to praise anew the virtues of imperialism and empire, and that such voices are becoming more numerous and more vocal. Yet the main task of the imperialist apologists is to win over the laboring masses, who cannot today be so easily enamored of the glory of empire, to the support of their own imperialists.

How strongly anti-imperialist—in most cases unconsciously so—the sentiments of the people are, can be judged by the frantic endeavor of

the Social-Democrats and bourgeois liberals to disown (in words) everything pertaining to imperialism. According to one of this tribe, "If Hitler wins he will attempt to establish one master race in a world of subject races," but "if the English-speaking countries win, the results will not be imperialism; and in the nature of things, they cannot be." For the war, says he, "is a struggle between world slavery and world cooperation: nothing less." *

Turning the Lion into a Lamb

To hoodwink the people into believing this lie is not a simple matter; it taxes the ingenuity of these apologists to the utmost. How to convince the masses that the world's greatest empire, the power which enslaves 450,000,000 souls, is fighting a war against empire—that is their problem.

This paradoxical situation provides the background and inspiration for the new theories that have cropped up aiming to prove that the carnivorous British lion is but a gentle vegetarian lamb. These theories have many variations, but they can be classified under two main heads: (1) those that aim to prove with Berle that the British Empire is no longer an empire but a democratic commonwealth of nations; (2) those that accept the empire as a reality but view British imperialism as less virile and therefore less dangerous than Nazi imperialism.

The first variation is the more

prevalent and is propagated by the liberals of the *Nation* and *New Republic* variety as well as by the Social-Democrats of the *New Leader* stripe and the Hillman-Dubinsky type. Among its most consistent and most typical exponents are such bourgeois liberals as Lewis Mumford, currently a feature writer in the Social-Democratic press; and Sir Norman Angell, who wrote a book elaborating this theory of "de-imperialization." *

The main arguments put forth to prove this theory are: (1) Britain cannot be considered an imperialist power because she has given Dominion status to some of her possessions; (2) other possessions, such as India, are now "ripe" for self-rule, and Britain is preparing to grant it to them; (3) imperialism has brought about a rapid industrialization of the colonial countries and has thereby de-colonized them; (4) imperialism and empire have proved to be unprofitable, and British imperialism is only too glad to give up the "White Man's Burden"; (5) the insatiable appetite of German imperialism for world empire can therefore be explained only by its racial theory, its desire "to lord it over" all mankind.

This thesis is set forth by its outstanding proponent, Sir Norman Angell, as follows:

"There has gone on for three-quarters of a century a really amazing process of de-imperialization. Britain has done her best to unconquer conquests; dis-annex her

* Lewis Mumford, *New Leader*, March 15, 1941.

* *America's Dilemma: Alone or Allied?* Harper & Bros., New York, 226 pp., \$1.75.

annexations; turn what originally was an empire into a group of sovereign and independent nations." (p. 151.)*

If Britain has been unconquering conquests, how would Angell explain away the fact that from 1880 to 1932 the colonial possessions of Great Britain increased from 7,700,000 to 13,500,000 square miles, and from 267,900,000 to 466,500,000 inhabitants? He could only explain it by rewriting British history to read somewhat as follows: The Boer War? Nothing but a peaceful step to unconquer conquests! Easter Sunday, 1916? Nothing but a British pilgrimage to Ireland to kiss the blarney stone! India? Ireland? Gibraltar? Malta? Ceylon? Malay? Singapore? Borneo? Palestine? Sudan? Uganda? Tanganyika? Rhodesia? South West Africa? Nigeria? Guiana? Egypt? Iraq? An empire? Not at all! Only "sovereign and independent nations," part of one big happy family!

No thinking being can fall prey to this myth. Hence it is no wonder that Angell repeatedly laments that "the world simply does not *know* . . . or does not believe it to be a reality." (p. 152.)

Rejecting Sir Norman's unhistorical "history," we must now examine his "proof" of this "de-imperialization" process. First, as to the contention that Britain has granted Dominion status and a degree of in-

dependence to a number of colonies. Berating the Marxists for their "economic interpretation of imperialism," Sir Norman sums up this point:

"Much attention has been directed to exposing the capitalist roots of imperialism. Very little attempt seems to have been made to explain, in terms of economic motive, the capitalist retirement from imperialism, the process by which vast territories like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, . . . have ceased to be in matters of economic imperialist territory, and have become or are about to become economically independent states." (pp. 157-8.)

To treat imperialism in this fashion is to put it in the category of a piece of wearing apparel which can be discarded according to whim. It is to ignore the fact that imperialism is the final stage of capitalist development, that stage in which the rule of monopoly and finance-capital has been established; in which the export of capital has acquired a new and added significance; in which the division of the markets of the world among the powerful cartels and trusts has in the main taken place; and in which all the territories of the earth have already been divided among the most powerful capitalist states.

Capitalism can therefore retire from imperialism no more than a man from his old age!

In the second place, both Angell and Mumford make the fatal error of confining the definition of imperialism to that of "colonial policy" or colonial possessions. Imperialism is that, but *more than that*. It dom-

* All citations from Angell, unless otherwise specified, are from his *America's Dilemma: Alone or Allied?*

** Varga and Mendelsohn, *New Data on Lenin's Imperialism*, International Publishers, pp. 172-173.

inates *every* phase of economic and political development of the modern capitalist world. A state may be nominally independent and yet economically and politically subordinated to one or another imperialist power. In fact, every small or weak state today, even if enjoying complete political independence, is subordinated in one degree or another to a larger imperialist power. Thus, even a power with no direct colonial possessions, or with few such possessions, like the United States today, can be a mighty imperialist power maintaining economic and political sway over huge areas of the earth and many peoples. If, therefore, all the smaller nations are under the imperialist influence of one or another of the large powers, for example, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, etc., this is even more true of the Dominions and possessions of the British Empire.

What is true, however, is that every imperialist state strives to establish its *monopoly* over markets, spheres of influence, and sources of raw materials, and that such monopolies can only be completely established and maintained by obtaining outright colonial possessions. Hence, if our apologists can prove that colonial possessions are being voluntarily given up, they have scored a not unimportant point—if they can prove.

As to Dominions

In treating of the colonial possessions of the British Empire these gentlemen fail to understand the distinction between colonies and colonies. They lump all colonies to-

gether, without regard to historical origin or development. It is therefore not surprising that they but expose their own ignorance of this most complicated of all questions.

To understand this question at all, one must make the distinction between the following types of colonies:

1. Those originally established over vast, sparsely populated areas, which served as colonizing territories for surplus populations, *e.g.*, Canada and Australia. Over a few generations, the transplanted white populations in these colonies reproduced the class structure of the British homeland and nearly exterminated the native population. These colonies in time became Dominions, which means that they became members of the British imperialist system with equal or nearly equal rights to that of the "mother" country.

2. The countries inhabited by large native populations, like India, on the other hand, are exploited as markets, as sources of raw materials and as spheres for the export of capital.

3. Between these two main types there is a third, a transitory type, in which, alongside of a vast native population, there developed a large population of white colonists, as in South Africa, whose bourgeoisie becomes a colonial extension of the bourgeoisie of the metropolis.

4. There is still another type of colony, that which is used mainly as a strategic military outpost and only secondarily as a point of exploitation.

These distinctions are of prime

importance,* but none of these learned scholars has even taken note of them. That is why they see Dominion status springing Minerva-like from the head of Jupiter. The truth is: (1) Dominion status was reserved in the main for the "White Colonies," where home imperialist class relations were reproduced; and (2) it was never *given*, but *forced from* British imperialism upon the threat of separation. In this respect Britain learned a lesson from the successful American Revolution of the 18th century, after which she made concessions and compromises in order to maintain her huge possessions within her own colonial system; (3) it should not be forgotten that these Dominions are still part of the Empire,** with England taking the bulk of their agricultural products, remaining their chief investor and creditor (except for Canada), and integrating their strategic geographic positions and economic strength with its own military might.

What Angell sees as a process of de-imperialization is really signs of the growing cracks and fissures in the structure of world imperialism due to an intensification of all external and internal contradictions.

* For further material on this matter we refer the reader to the resolution on the colonial question adopted at the 7th World Congress of the Communist International in 1935, as well as to Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, Vol. II, p. 665.

** How precarious even this Dominion status can be is evidenced by Newfoundland, which, in 1933, due to "financial difficulties," was "rescued" from Dominion status and taken back as a daughter colony into the tight embrace of her Britannic mother.

This is particularly true of British imperialism, which, especially since 1914, has been losing her former dominant position in world affairs.

India Spikes Sir Norman's Thesis

Sir Norman blissfully writes that "What is true of the Dominions will be true of India tomorrow." (p. 151.)

But India cannot be compared with the "White Dominions." Canada with a population of some 12,-000,000 is not only a child in age compared to India, but has been even a shorter period of time within the Empire. Yet Canada is today an autonomous imperialist state within the British imperialist system, while India with its 370,000,000 people is still a backward colony, struggling for independence. We have already shown that Canada, formerly a huge unpopulated wilderness, was used as a great colonizing region, thereby reproducing on its soil the class relations of imperialist Britain, with a strong bourgeoisie and a rapidly developing heavy industry. In India, however, it was not a matter of a large transplanted population which could reproduce British class relations. Here, British imperial rule was *superimposed* upon Asiatic feudal social relations and culture.

When, therefore, Angell and Mumford speak of British industrialization of India as proof of her growing independence, they have once again missed the mark by a mile. Mumford even adduces the argument that "the spread of the machine technology into the backward areas of the world, though still incomplete, has made the only

possible relation between peoples a reciprocal relation: *the backward area is passing away almost as fast as the American frontier was fifty years ago.*"* (My emphasis—G.G.)

But these gentlemen know not whereof they speak. It is true that vast amounts of British capital have been invested in India, the total investment approximating some one billion pounds or about \$5,000,000,000.** These investments, of course, to an extent, were and are being used for certain productive purposes, but the export of capital did not industrialize India—it chained her to her colonial status!

Finance-capital, in exporting capital to the colonies, does so with the objective of imposing its own economic and political domination. A considerable portion of exported capital either flows into the sphere of trade, functions as usurious loan capital, or goes to strengthen the imperialist state apparatus in the colonies.

While a portion of exported capital is invested in productive enterprises and helps develop capitalist economic relations, this does not take place in the direction of promoting economic *independence*, but of imposing economic *dependence* upon finance-capital. This is so be-

cause these investments in colonial production are in the main used: (1) for the extraction of raw materials; (2) for the extension of the system of transportation and communication for strategic military reasons or for more rapid movement of commodities and raw materials to and from the imperialist state; (3) for agriculture, to produce industrial crops and in order to obtain a monopoly over sources of raw material; (4) for light manufacture, where this entails a simple process of production and a low organic composition of capital, such as in cotton, sugar and tobacco, or where due to great distances it becomes unprofitable to transport certain raw materials to the imperialist state; (5) for heavy industry, *but only under special conditions*, such as in wartime, when this may be necessary for strategic military reasons or for the needs of a war economy.

Only a few pertinent facts need be cited to prove that what we have just described applies in full force to India: (1) Modern industry has developed so slowly and the decay of the old handicraft industry been so rapid, that the number of Indian industrial workers continues to decrease both absolutely and relatively. (2) The percentage of the Indian population dependent upon industry has decreased from 5.5 per cent in 1911 to 4.3 per cent in 1931!*

Instead of developing India economically and industrially, British rule has kept her in a backward colonial position; as a huge market for British factory-made goods; as

* *New Leader*, March 15, 1941.

** "This total of 1,000 million would represent no less than one-quarter of the estimated total of 4,000 million of British foreign investments throughout the world . . . in 1911 British capital investments in India represented 11 per cent of the total of British capital investments throughout the world. *The advance from one-ninth to one-quarter, from 11 per cent to 25 per cent, is a measure of the increasing importance of India to British finance-capital today.*" R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, London, 1940, pp. 147-148.

* R. Palme Dutt, *cited work*, p. 186.

an immense agricultural domain; as a hinterland for raw materials; and as a sphere for the profitable export of capital.

These are reasons that India, with immense human and natural resources, is today a country of archaic social relations, of untold poverty and misery.

Is Colonial Rule Profitable?

Nor will British imperialism relinquish its grip upon India, despite all the asinine predictions which the Angells and Mumfords base upon the assumption that colonial rule "is unprofitable." When Angell tells us that it would make no difference whatsoever "if the United States were to annex the whole of the British Empire," (p. 134) and when Mumford says that the British imperialists "have lost some of their appetite for the White Man's Burden," that colonies serve the main purpose of enabling the aristocracy to send "their surplus sons abroad to serve as soldiers, pro-consuls, or administrators,"* these two brilliant analysts simply overwhelm us.

Is colonial rule profitable for finance-capital? Those who say it is not base themselves on some of the difficulties and reverses suffered by imperialism during the decade of 1929-39. It is true that during this period it was unprofitable to export *new* capital to the colonial countries. At the same time the catastrophic drop in world prices resulting from the economic crisis, plus the large number of defaults on loans to governments, reduced the value of im-

perialist foreign investments considerably. Furthermore, colonial rule has become far more precarious and costly as a result of the growing, awakening mass movements of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

Yet it would be foolhardy to draw conclusions such as those of Angell and Mumford. Imperialism bases itself on the most ruthless colonial exploitation. First, it derives super-profits from the sale of its own industrial goods, taking advantage of monopoly prices and the unequal rate of exchange. Secondly, it makes immense profits by obtaining cheaper raw materials for the use of its home industry. Thirdly, it establishes the most inhuman rate of exploitation of colonial labor, and through this means once again extracts super-profits.

How increasingly profitable colonial rule has been to Britain in the most recent period is proved by the example of India which: "in the three-quarters of a century of British rule up to the taking over by the Crown, the total of tribute withdrawn from India had amounted to 150 million [pounds]. In the modern period, during the last two decades, it is estimated that the total *annual* tribute from India to England is in the neighborhood of 135 million to 150 million. This intensified exploitation of India under the conditions of finance-capitalism underlies the present gathering crisis and intensified revolt against imperialism in India."*

But more than that. The world

* *New Leader*, March 15, 1941.

* R. Palme Dutt, *cited work*, p. 149.

position of British finance-capital is entirely dependent upon its empire, for England is only a small highly industrialized island territory, which under modern capitalist relations demands an ever greater *monopoly* over foreign markets, food growing regions and sources of raw materials. The very fact that Britain, in its struggle for world power, is so hard pressed by rival imperialist systems, makes absolutely essential her continued grip upon those colonial regions over which she does today exercise a monopoly, the most important of which is India. But even if British imperialism won the war, and imposed its power over its vanquished imperialist rival, she would then face another powerful antagonist in American imperialism. Hence, for British finance-capital the empire is not a "burden," but a life-and-death necessity.

British rule over India, however, cannot continue in the old way. The tide of the Indian struggle for national liberation mounts higher and higher. The British imperialists must therefore make concessions, hoping that through *minor* reforms "they will still retain in their hands the decisive citadels of power, with a trained subordinate Indian leadership to protect their interests and hold the people in order, while the smooth flow of imperialist tribute from exploitation continues unimpeded." *

Not in the false theory of "de-imperialization," therefore, is to be found the answer to Mother India's prayer, but in the revolutionary and

uncompromising struggle of her awakening millions!

Shadow and Substance

Nor does Angell make sense when he argues that the capitalists have agreed "peacefully to surrender the substance" of empire as long as they are permitted to retain the symbol, the shadow (p. 161). We are afraid that such explanations answer nothing in this debate, despite Angell's assertion, "It is vanity which makes the world go around" (p. 162).

If the British ruling class has surrendered the "reality of privilege," the "substance," in order merely "to retain the symbol, the shadow," we have seen no visible signs of this magnanimity as yet. Let us look at this "shadow" in terms of long-term foreign investments alone.*

Estimated Long-Term Foreign Investments of the United Kingdom Outside the United States (Figures in million pounds)

IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Country	Total
Canada	481
Australia	503
New Zealand	146
India	550
British Africa	438
Malaya	84
Other	31
Total	2,233

* Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau's Estimate of British long-term foreign investments, *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1941. If these figures err at all, they err on the conservative side.

* R. Palme Dutt, *cited work*, p. 496.

IN LATIN AMERICA

Argentina	390
Brazil	160
Chile	105
Uruguay	42
Mexico	173
Peru	28
Cuba	28
Venezuela	20
Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Central America	50
International	6
Total	1,002

IN ASIA

China	200
Japan	50
Netherlands East Indies	50
Philippines	8
Total	308

OTHER AREAS

In Europe	250
In other areas	75
Total	325

Total Long-Term Investments Outside U.S.A.—

Nominal Value 3,868

Need more be said about the "substance" being surrendered for the "shadow"? A "shadow" upon which the sun never sets!

What is the reason for Angell's performance in shadow-boxing? It is this: if the British Empire is no longer an empire why does not the British ruling class demonstrate this fact to the satisfaction of even the most sceptical by publicly surrendering its colonial possessions to their inhabitants? But such convincing evidence of "de-imperialization" British imperialism will not give and our apologist does not

even request. His job is to keep Britain's rulers from being embarrassed, and to keep the masses from putting such embarrassing demands to them. What then is nicer than to picture these rulers as being ready to give up the "reality of privilege" to "retain the symbol"?

As economic and material considerations are relatively unimportant to Sir Norman, what then explains the desire of German imperialism under Nazi leadership to carve out an empire of its own? Angell explains it by "the non-rational or sub-rational in men; the deliberate cultivation of the human tendency to 'think with your blood,' to prefer guns to butter because guns mean powers over other men, power to dominate, to retaliate for real or imagined humiliations, 'to lord it over the earth.'" (pp. 134-5.)

Thus, refusing to admit that this is a war for empire and spoils on both sides, Sir Norman, who attacks the Nazis for their racial theories, proceeds to create one himself. Speaking of the German people, he refers to the "German mind," and says that "harsh discipline has always come natural [!] to Germans." (p. 140.)

What is the purpose of this if not to smear the entire German people with the brush of Nazism? And what will that accomplish, if not to represent the German people as dull barbarians, who like to be oppressed, and who therefore are an inferior species, especially in comparison with the English speaking "democratic" man? (!)

With great indignation, Sir Norman says: "It is a punishable offense for German settlers in Poland using

Polish laborers," "to sit at table with the Poles or treat them as equals." (p. 139.) And he asks: "If that is the German attitude to Poles, what is it likely to be to the inhabitants of India, or of Africa?" (p. 139.)

Yes, it is a dastardly thing, an unmitigated act of barbarism. But, first of all, why turn it into a racial characteristic of the German people? Secondly, why do you, Sir Norman, take for granted that colonials would be treated worse (if that were possible) than conquered Europeans? Is it not because you yourself think in terms of white supremacy—the right of imperialist powers to subjugate the colored races?

That is why you become incensed at this outrageous treatment of a European white nation, but say not a word about the caste system promoted by British imperialism in India, about the bloody tradition of Amritsar, about the treatment of Natives in South Africa, or about the lot of the Negro people in the United States. Is not the lynching of Negroes in the Southern States of this country even more reprehensible? Are not Negroes forbidden from eating in the same restaurants, riding in the same cars and living in the same neighborhoods as white people in hundreds of communities of America? Have you forgotten the signs which read, "Chinese and Dogs Not Allowed!" that British consulates kept over their parks in China's cities but a few years back? Wax indignant over these outrages as well, and more than that, do something about them,

and then you will have the moral right to separate yourself from the barbarism of the Nazis! Until such time we can only make the following distinction between you and them: they are crude and vulgar in their theories of "superiority"; you, as is befitting an English gentleman, wear over your brutish vulgarity the raiment of finesse.

If today Angell resorts to his own racial explanation for Germany's quest for empire, this was not always the case. In 1921, his work, *The Fruits of Victory*, refuted this very thesis, saying that "Germany's aggression was not due to inherent wickedness, but that any nation [he should have said: capitalist nation] placed in her position would behave in just the same way." (p. 330.)

It seems that the Sir Norman Angell of 1941 could certainly learn something from the untitled Norman Angell of 1921.

Why was Mr. Angell's position—at least in the above-cited statement—closer to the truth in 1921? Because international relations are not determined by "good" and "bad" people but by production relationships, by economic and military strength. But this the Norman Angell of 1941 refuses to admit. His solution for the ills of the world is simple enough. It is his old standby, "Federalism," resuscitated from the days of World War I. He says that "what has made peace possible between the States of the Union is not something economic, the abolition of capitalism, but something political, the introduction of Federalism." (pp. 183-4.)

In 1915, expressing the same thought, he said: "America is no more a 'rival' dangerous or otherwise to Great Britain or Germany, than Virginia is a rival of Missouri." (!) If this were only true, it would be good indeed, but it is not true, and because it is a deception, it is dangerous and must be fought.

Is "Federal Union" the Way Out?

Here, too, the error of Norman Angell stems from his refusal to understand (or admit) the true nature of the imperialist world. In drawing the comparison between the United States and a theoretical European or World Union, he forgets a few rather elementary considerations: (1) The United States is an integrated nation, Federal union having taken place in the formative and ascendant stages of capitalism, before separate nations evolved with their own economic, social and cultural ties and their own ruling classes. (2) If it is "Federalism that made peace possible" all by itself, how does Angell account for the fact that when the interests of the rising industrial class of the North clashed with those of the feudal slavocracy of the South, the conflict was finally resolved by the sword—four years of civil war? (3) In the United States today there is but *one* dominant ruling class, the class of finance-capital, which is complete master in its house of forty-eight states.

How do these facts stack up to those in Europe, or the world? Angell speaks of Federal Union for

dozens of different nations not only with separate economic ties, cultures, and traditions, but with separate and conflicting imperialist ruling classes. Would this be Federalism based on the principle of equality? Not at all, and Sir Norman is fully aware of this, for he admits:

"The victors on this occasion will consist of the United States, with Britain dependent upon her, the British dominions and certain states just liberated from Nazi control, dependent in their turn upon Britain, Britain being herself in a position of dependence." (p. 214.)

In the good old tradition, this polished emissary of perfidious Albion is throwing out a bait to the American people who are to be netted into supporting and fighting British imperialism's war, that, with the war ended, Britain will turn herself into a dependency of a victorious Wall Street!

Discounting this obvious bait inserted for Wall Street's benefit, what remains? A new pyramid of oppression with its victors and its vanquished, its overlords and dependents! Europe is not to be simply "liberated," but only "liberated from Nazi control" in order to be placed under British-U.S. control! And this is called "Federalism"!

How does this projected "wave of the future" differ from the Nazi one? Only in respect to which powers are to be the victors and which the vanquished, who are to be "liberated," and who the "liberators."

Sir Norman essentially admits

this: "There can be no such thing as a permanent settlement 'once for all.' For what is just today [just! for whom?] will not be just tomorrow; or someone will not consider it just, . . ." (p. 216.) Why is this so? Because what is "just" and "unjust" under capitalism is determined, not by moral considerations, but by brute strength, by economic, political, and, in the last analysis, military force. Nor does the relative strength of nations remain always the same. It constantly changes. This is an economic law under capitalism, greatly accentuated in its imperialist stage, the law of the uneven development of capitalism. Lenin, in his monumental work *Imperialism*, gave concrete illustrations of this law in operation:

"Half a century ago, Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, as far as its capitalist strength was concerned, compared with the strength of England at that time. Japan was similarly insignificant compared with Russia. Is it 'conceivable' that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remain unchanged? Absolutely inconceivable."

In face of these facts, how can one explain the position of those imperialist apologists that see in British victory a "lesser evil"? It can only be explained as a wily attempt to mislead those masses who know too much of life and history to be taken in by the more blatant school of "de-imperialization."

There is no "lesser evil" in this war because both imperialist camps represent a rotten and decaying

social structure. Both camps seek to impose their power and their will upon subject peoples. Both are reactionary to the core, and both must give way to the historic onward sweep of the forces of socialism and world peace.

That British imperialism is slipping from its former position of world dominance, and that the German and American imperialisms wish to occupy that vantage point, do not make the first any the less reactionary. To salve one's conscience by supporting the "less virile" as against the "more virile" imperialist power is only a subterfuge for supporting the imperialist war and the system which inherently breeds conflicts and wars.

There can be no lasting peace in this stage, the imperialist stage, of capitalism. A lasting peace under imperialism is only a theoretical possibility, the mirage of "ultra-imperialism."

The conscious or unconscious goal of every imperialist power is to become the nucleus of that "single world trust" of which Lenin spoke in 1915. This is what the German imperialists mean when they speak of the "New Order." This is what the British and American imperialists mean when they speak of "Federalism" and "Commonwealth."

Like God, who made man in his own image, each imperialism strives to remake the world in its own image. Sir Norman Angell, for example, sees "the transition from imperialism to internationalism" taking place "within the confines of the British Commonwealth." (!) (p. 166.) That is why the apologists

for Anglo-American imperialism can envision the world only in the shape of a "Commonwealth of Nations" modeled after the British Empire, "Federalism" modeled after the United States, or both combined—Clarence Streit's "Union Now."

This is the meaning of the emphasis on "Anglo-Saxon civilization." This is the meaning of the new rights that U.S. imperialism has taken for itself in the Western Hemisphere, rights differing in no essential from those claimed by Germany and Italy in Europe or by Japan in the Far East. This too is the meaning of the thesis produced by Mr. Luce, editor of *Life*, and hailed as a new Declaration of Independence, a thesis which no longer calls for the defense of "Western civilization" or even "Anglo-Saxon civilization," but for good old "American civilization," because the 20th Century is destined to be the first "American Century"!

As Lenin pointed out a quarter of a century ago in his classic article, "The 'United States of Europe' Slogan," Federalism as a *progressive* concept is impossible of realization under capitalism today; it can be realized only as a *reactionary* and counter-revolutionary attempt to band the capitalist world together for a last ditch fight against the revolutionary strivings of the masses and for the destruction of the rising socialist world. This is as true of the "Federal Union" proposed by Angell as of Hitler's "New Order."

These terms are demagogically

bandied about by both imperialist camps for an additional reason: they are designed to play on the sentiments of the masses whose perspectives have broadened, who recognize that with the development of world commerce, with the vast centralization of production and distribution on an international scale, with the national economy of every state intertwined with and dependent on world economy—that with these factors obtaining, organization, peace and order must be established on a world scale.

But this cannot be achieved by a decadent capitalist system which is being rent asunder by its own contradictions. This cannot be achieved by an aggressive imperialism, even when masquerading as "de-imperialization." There is but one real alternative to the reactionary strivings of imperialism: the socialist reorganization of society.

Only under the leadership of the proletariat can humanity emancipate itself from recurring imperialist wars; only under socialism can a progressive Federalism become a reality, a Federalism based on the equality of nations and the abolition of exploitation of man by man, a Federalism exemplified in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—harbinger of the World Union of Socialist Republics of tomorrow.

[*This is the first of three articles dealing with the "theory of de-imperialization" now being advanced by pro-imperialist spokesmen in England and in the United States. The concluding articles by Gil Green will appear in the forthcoming issues of THE COMMUNIST.*]