THE SOVIET UNION AND WORLD PEACE

by

ANNA LOUISE STRONG

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NON-AGGRESSION

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THE SOVIET UNION AND WORLD PEACE

By ANNA LOUISE STRONG

IN the eighteen years of its existence, the Soviet Union has become widely recognized even by capitalist nations as a champion of peace. The many proposals at Geneva for disarmament, the many pacts against aggression and for definition of the aggressor, the persistent refusal to respond in kind to the provocatory challenges of Japan in the East—all this has convinced the world that the Soviet Union desires peace and is doing her utmost to avoid war.

But suspicion is sometimes voiced lest this wish for peace be only temporary till the various Five-Year Plans are finished and the Soviet state grows strong. Capitalist and Trotskyist critics point to the pacts with France and Czechoslovakia which they call "military alliances"; they denounce the U.S.S.R. for entering the League of Nations—that "League of capitalist robbers." Pacifist critics shake their heads over the strength and popularity of the Red Army and the widespread training of the population in military preparedness. And finally, it is often argued that "the Communists who rule the U.S.S.R." must eventually desire war if only at some future undesignated date, in the hope that world war might usher in world revolution.

How permanent is the peace policy of the U.S.S.R.? On what is it based? How does it reconcile itself with the existence of a Red Army, and with the expectation of a world revolution brought about by "armed uprising"? What is the nature of the Soviet pacts with France and Czechoslovakia? What is a Socialist state doing in the League of Nations? These are questions which must be carefully studied by all persons whose desire for peace is more than an empty phrase, by all persons who are really ready to struggle against the

threatened danger of world war. Let us begin with a brief review of history.

"Peace, Land and Bread"

"Peace, land and bread" was the slogan of the October Revolution. The great hunger of a war-exhausted people for peace brought the Bolsheviks to power.

Their first official act on November 8, 1917, the day after the seizure of power, was to "propose to all warring peoples and their governments to begin immediately negotiations for a just and democratic peace . . . such a peace the Government considers to be an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.* without seizure of foreign territory, without the forcible annexation of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities. . . ."

In its desire not only to stop the war but to remove the causes of war, the new revolutionary government at once denounced the secret treaties by which England, France and Russia had agreed to redivide the world. A week later, on November 15, it annulled the unequal tsarist treaties which had been enforced on Persia (Iran) and Turkey and which had divided them into spheres of influence of the great imperial powers. This was done in accordance with another of the slogans of the October Revolution which called for "Self-determination of peoples even to secession." Following this, the Bolsheviks withdrew the Russian army from Persia and announced the end of the Anglo-Russian agreement which had divided Persia into spheres of influence.

The Entente Powers—England, France and the United States—denounced the Bolsheviks for daring to speak of peace; they flatly refused to discuss it. The Central Powers—Germany and Austria—already much weakened by war agreed to confer. These one-sided discussions left the war-exhausted Soviet state at the mercy of Germany which seized the opportunity to impose the peace of Brest-Litovsk. The position of the Soviet state was further weakened by the attempt of Trotsky to deal with ruthless advancing troops by clever phrases; refusing to sign the terms demanded by the Germans, he proposed the formula: "neither war nor peace." The German

General Staff cynically took him at his word and marched onward without opposition into a prostrate country. Lenin's insistence on negotiation eventually secured a peace treaty signed on March 16, 1918, on somewhat worse terms than the Germans originally intended. It was admitted by Lenin to be a "robbers' peace"; during its duration the Germans occupied most of the Ukraine and part of White Russia. A few months later in November 1918 the occurrence of the German Revolution made possible the annullment of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

Thus ended the first stage of the struggle for peace by the new revolutionary government, its determined exit from the World War, which was one of the mandates of the October Revolution.

Appealing for Peace Across Battle Fronts

The hope of the new Soviet Government for peace was thwarted not only by the imperialist aims of Germany in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, but by the equally imperialist aims of the Entente, which replied to those hopes with armed intervention and the incitement of civil war. On April 5, 1918, the Japanese landed in Vladivostok; following them English, American and French armies entered Siberia. At the end of June, the British landed on the Murmansk coast of the Arctic Ocean to seize the northern part of European Russia; in this occupation, Americans, French and Italians also took part. On August 4, a British army seized Baku—the oil capital in the far south of Russia on the Caspian Sea. Twenty-six commissars—leaders of the Baku Soviet Government—were taken into the desert by monarchist Russians and British officers and there shot down. Meantime, the agents of the Entente incited and participated in uprisings of the Czechoslovak prisoners of war along the Volga and led these armed forces against the Bolshevik government.

Thus from east and west and north and south, the armies of all the capitalist powers in the world—for in this the Entente cooperated even with their enemy Germany—surrounded the revolutionary government with an iron ring of political, economic and military blockade. Across this iron ring the starving people of the new state sent

appeal after appeal for peace, begging for terms that would not betray their revolution.

To Wilson especially they appealed—that Wilson whose beautiful phrases about peace had aroused among the peoples of the world high hopes which were soon to be disillusioned. Beginning on November 24, 1918, and repeating their appeal again and again to Wilson, to the American State Department and to the governments of the Entente, they said: "With what can we buy peace? With concessions? With territories, with iron mines or with gold mines?" All of these they offered in return for the right of their new government to exist in peace on even a limited territory.

To none of these appeals was there any answer. Rather than deal in any way with the Bolsheviks, President Wilson and the Allied governments sitting in Versailles attempted to form a coalition of all the Bolsheviks' foes. They issued a call to representatives of all "organized groups in Russia" to meet at the Principo Islands to discuss mutual peace terms and the establishment of a new government; this demand clearly presaged the dividing of Russia into spheres of influence of the various imperialist powers. This call was not addressed to the Soviet Government; the latter heard it on the radio and sent an answer agreeing to yield whatever financial or territorial concessions might be necessary for peace. The various "governments" of the "Whites," or anti-Soviet Russian forces, refused to come to Principo and the conference fell through.

There now followed the now-famous trip of William Christian Bullitt to Moscow in March 1919 as the semi-official representative of President Wilson to discuss the possible basis of peace. In the proposed treaty worked out by Mr. Bullitt, the Soviet Government agreed to recognize the financial obligations of former Russian governments and to accept the division of the territory of Russia among those governments which should be in armed possession of it at the time the treaty should be finally signed. Even to this offer the governments sitting in Paris made no answer; President Wilson disowned and refused to receive the report of his own envoy.

In thus treating Soviet Russia as an outlaw, the powers of the Entente usually stressed the Soviet repudiation of slightly more than a billion dollars worth of debts incurred by the Tsar as justification

for their intervention. Estimates, however, of the amount of Russian property destroyed by the intervention run to 25 billion dollars, or 25 times the amount of the Russian debt. It is clear that the struggle was not over debts, but over the revolutionary nature of the new government.

Not by appeals for peace and not by offers of concessions, but by the desperate struggle and courage of the Revolutionary Red Army was peace finally won. In December of 1919, as a result of the obvious breakdown of intervention, Italy proposed to end the blockade. On January 16, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Entente finally permitted the business men of the allied countries to carry on commercial operations, not with the still unrecognized government, but with the "population of Soviet Russia through their cooperatives." This brought about a rapid signing of trade agreements first by England on March 16, 1921, then by Germany, Norway, Austria and Italy in the same year. It was the hunger for the profits of trade rather than any idealistic wish for peace which led the victorious imperialists of the world to deal at last with the Russians. Even while authorized trade was going on but before the signing of the trade agreements, the Entente incited and financed a war by Poland against the Soviet Union, which also was beaten back by the Red Army.

Meantime, long before the Civil War was over and the blockade lifted by the great imperial powers, the new Soviet Government made plain its policy toward smaller nations—the "policy of self-determination even to secession." As early as January 27, 1918, only two and one-half months after its establishment, it officially informed the newly created Finnish Republic that it would not interfere with her internal affairs.

Throughout the year of 1920, agreements were concluded by the Soviet Government with the new Baltic States—Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland—which with the help of British, French and German armies were being carved out of the body of the former tsarist Russia. Even before these young governments were recognized by the great European powers, whose armies and diplomats were so busily creating them, they were recognized by the Soviet Government in the interests of peace and the ending of civil strife. The Riga Peace

Treaty signed with Poland in March 1921 put an end to major wars of intervention in European Russia, though there was a minor invasion by the Finns in the winter of 1920-21, the borders of Soviet Central Asia were long under attack by British-inspired Asiatic forces and the Russian Far East was not finally evacuated by the Japanese until the spring of 1925.

Thus ended the second stage of the struggle for peace as carried on by the Soviet Union—the stage during which the new revolutionary government of a war-ruined country begged for peace on almost any terms and was refused peace, yet won at last both peace and independence by armed struggle against the armies of the world.

The Struggle for Stable Relations

The hopelessness of the post-war economic situation of Europe, which could not be ameliorated as long as a major country like Russia remained outside all discussions, at last induced the victor powers to invite both the Soviet Government and Germany to a conference at Genoa in April 1922, almost five years after the founding of the Soviet government. The purpose of this conference, in which 34 nations took part, was to stabilize the political and economic relations of Europe.

It was in Genoa that the Soviet Government, through its representative Chicherin, first appealed for the limitation of armaments, saying: "The forces directed towards restoration of world economy will be strangled as long as above Europe and above the world hangs the Damoclean sword of the threat of new wars.... The Russian delegation intends to propose a general limitation of armaments and to support any proposition which has the aims of lightening the burdens of militarism."

At the same time, the Soviet Government offered to recognize the debts and obligations of preceding Russian governments if there should also be recognized the right of compensation for the losses and destruction caused to Russia by intervention and blockade.

Failing to get any response to either proposal, Soviet Russia turned toward Germany, who like herself was at Genoa in the position of a semi-outlawed nation, and signed with her the famous Rapallo

Agreement on April 16, 1922. Both nations cancelled the debts of the other and renewed friendly relations on the basis of equality. This was the first gesture made by any nation to cure the wounds left by world war and to deal with the vanquished Germany on the basis which wiped out the past and set real foundations for peace. If the other nations, who at that time and for years thereafter continued to demand from Germany their pound of flesh in the shape of impossible and humiliating "reparations," had followed the example of Soviet Russia in establishing mutual relations of peace based on equality, the bitter history of Europe of the past thirteen years might have been different.

With its attendance at the Genoa Conference and the signing of the Rapallo Agreement, the Soviet Government entered the third stage of its struggle for peace—a stage marked by slow but steady reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the major powers of the world.

Within the Soviet state these years were marked by increasing stability, both politically and economically. The long exhaustion of Civil War which had ended in two years of famine gave place in 1923 to a good harvest. Under the stimulus of the New Economic Policy, the ruined industries of the country were rapidly rebuilt. On July 6, 1923, the political organization of the U.S.S.R. was finally established by the adoption of the Constitution which combined the various Soviet republics—Russia, Ukraine, White Russia, the Caucasus and so forth—into a formal union.

The Constitution itself contained a denunciation of the war-provoking tendencies of capitalism and a declaration of the peace-creating character of the Soviet state. In memorable phrases its first section stated:

> There—in the camp of capitalism—are national enmity and inequality, colonial slavery and chauvinism, national oppression and pogroms; imperialist brutalities and wars.
>
> Here—in the camp of socialism—are mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, a dwelling together in peace, national freedom and the brotherly collaboration of peoples....
>
> The attempts of the capitalist world over a number of decades to settle the question of nationality by the combination of the free development of peoples with the system of exploitation of man by man has proved

fruitless . . . the bourgeoisie has been incapable of organizing the collaboration of peoples.

Only in the camp of the Soviets . . . has it proved possible to destroy national oppression at the roots, to establish an atmosphere of mutual confidence and to lay the foundation of the brotherly collaboration of peoples.

The form of the new state was declared to be a voluntary union of equal peoples, in which "each republic is secured the right of freely withdrawing from the union" and in which "entry into the union is open to all Socialist Soviet Republics, both now existing and which may arise in the future." The new state announced itself as "a peaceful dwelling together and a brotherly collaboration of peoples" and a "new decisive step along the path of the union of workers of all countries in a World Socialist Soviet Republic."

Thus, to a post-war world, which was still in the turmoil of national rivalries and conflicts, the very Constitution of the Soviet Union served both as a challenge and as an example of the only sure road to international peace, through the abolition within each nation of the capitalist "exploitation of man by man," in which lies the seed of those conflicts which lead to wars. The Soviet Union itself, it must be remembered, is not one nation but a union of many nations in a form adapted to a future union of all peoples.

The capitalist governments of Europe, having found themselves unable to overthrow the new revolutionary state by force of arms, were pressed by their own economic need of foreign markets into making the best of what they considered a bad situation, *i.e.* the existence of the U.S.S.R. The situation was somewhat softened for them by the "New Economic Policy" of Soviet Russia, which, the wish being father to the thought, they hastened to assure themselves, marked the beginning of a return to capitalism.

Gradually and hesitantly, they therefore began to deal with the new government, at first through trade agreements and then full diplomatic recognition. England was technically the first of the victor countries to recognize the U.S.S.R. *de jure* on February 2, 1924, continued agitation by British workers having finally goaded the McDonald government into fulfilling its pre-election promise. Italy, which had actually announced its intentions somewhat earlier, fol-

lowed within five days. The same year saw establishment of diplomatic relations with Norway, Austria, Greece, China, Denmark and France. The recognition by France of the Soviet Union on October 28, 1924, completed the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the main countries of Europe. In January of 1925, Japan also established relations with Soviet Russia. The only important world power to stand aloof remained for eight years the United States of America, which waited until the end of 1933 to follow the example set by the major powers of the world.

Diplomatic recognition, however, gave only the form of normal relations. Actually the relations between the new Soviet state and the capitalist world were still far from stable or normal. Soviet embassies and trade delegations were subject to frequent raids and to forced closing. Diplomatic relations were broken and reestablished. Among the attacks will be remembered the raid on Arcos, the Soviet trading agency in London, on May 12, 1927, followed in two weeks by the breaking of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, by the then conservative government of England. A month earlier had occurred the attack upon the Soviet Embassy in China.

These attacks were conducted on the shallowest pretences; they were accompanied by forged letters and provocatory accusations unprecedented in diplomatic history. Similar attacks on nations in the past have counted as causes of war. Soviet Russia, however, responded to these attacks by a struggle for stable world relations which especially took the form of the signing of pacts of non-aggression.

The first of these non-aggression pacts was signed December 1925 with Turkey. The young national republic, arising through armed struggle out of the ruins of world war, was deeply indebted to the Soviet Union which acted as its sole champion in the Lausanne Conference where Turkey obtained recognition from the Powers. This fact and the continued Soviet policy of non-aggression and non-interference in the affairs of this young Asiatic nation—a policy strikingly different not only from the former Tsar's aggression, but also from the schemes of the rival imperialist nations of Europe—laid the foundations of a friendship which exists to this day.

The non-aggression pact thus signed with Turkey and later with

Germany, Lithuania, Persia, Latvia, Afghanistan and other countries differed sharply from all the previous alliances and ententes which had preceded the war. Each side agreed not to attack the other and not to join any political, military or economic coalition directed against the other. These pacts were not exclusive; they were offered to all nations, and in fact led later to the Kellogg-Briand Pact which the Soviet Union was the first to accept and to sign.

Relations with China had followed a complicated pattern due to the complex governmental history of China itself. Soviet Russia was the first great nation to approach the Chinese people on the basis of equality, voluntarily renouncing all special privileges, concessions and unequal treaties. Discussions with China on this basis began as early as 1919 and ended in 1924 with an agreement which gave China a half ownership in the Chinese Eastern Railway, a free gift by the Soviet Russia which China proved unable to hold. The following years were marked by the rise of the Kuomintang government in China, in whose early stages, while the Kuomintang was still revolutionary, Soviet advisors played a prominent part.

The dissensions of the Chinese civil conflict, however, under pressure of the world imperialists, led in April 1927 to an attack on the Soviet Embassy in Peking by Chang Tso-lin, who executed many Chinese employes of the Embassy. This was followed in autumn of the same year by the murder of the Soviet vice-consul and other citizens during the suppression of the Canton Commune. Attacks on Soviet representatives were so frequent in China, that the Soviet Union, rather than make these attacks causes of war, took initiative in breaking off diplomatic relations.

This act—the first indication that there were limits to the Soviet Union's patience, indicated an increasing confidence and independence and marked the end of the period in which she sought for "recognition." Already confident of growing economic and political power, she began to expect an equal place in the councils of nations which she was no longer ready to enter on sufferance and as a step-child.

When the "Preparatory Commission for Disarmament" of the League of Nations held its fourth session on November 30, 1927, the newly invited Soviet delegation startled the world by taking disarmament seriously and proposing actually to disarm. Five years earlier Chicherin had made a similar statement at the Genoa Conference, but Soviet Russia at that time had so little standing in world affairs, that his voice went unnoticed and had been practically forgotten. Litvinov's statement in 1927, however, came from a nation which had proved its economic and political stability and it came at a moment when the peoples were beginning to be disillusioned with that ever-repeated series of fruitless conferences by which the European governments sought to hide from themselves and their peoples the chaos which followed the World War. With Litvinov's advocacy of disarmament the Soviet Union entered the fourth stage of its struggle for peace.

It was a time which was later characterized by Litvinov as "the era of bourgeois pacifism." Peace was popular among the world's population which still remembered the horrors of war. The whole of the capitalist world became for the time pacifist—a pacifism of exhaustion. The vanquished countries were pacifist because they lacked all means of fighting. The victor states were pacifist because they had already seized more territory than they could quickly digest, and were not ready for fresh wars immediately. All statesmen, therefore, talked peace and disarmament at international conferences while, behind the polite façade of this talk, armaments in all the nations actually grew.

Litvinov broke this polite façade by stating that the way to disarm was to disarm, that there was no use of talking about "moral disarmament" while physical armaments grew, and that the Soviet Government was ready to agree immediately to total disarmament or to any percentage of partial disarmament which other powers would accept. This statement came to the world like a fresh wind of reality blowing away cobwebs of diplomatic evasion. The militarists of the world, unwilling to accept and unable to evade the challenge, tried to squirm out of it by claiming that the Soviet

proposal was "insincere," to which the immediate answer was that the sincerity could best be tested by accepting it. None of the great nations of the earth dared to make the test.

There followed several years during which the Soviet Union became increasingly recognized as a champion of disarmament. Internally these years were marked in the Soviet Union by the famous Five-Year Plan. These two facts were not unconnected. The Five-Year Plan itself was regarded by the Communists as part of the Soviet Union's struggle for peace.

One prolific cause of modern wars lies in the rivalry of imperialist nations for the loot of undeveloped lands. China, Manchuria, Ethiopia, etc. are the natural theaters of colonial wars out of which world war may grow. As long as the Soviet Union remained economically undeveloped, she offered a similar tempting arena for imperialist quarrels. For ten years after the World War, the powers of Europe continued to regard her undeveloped wealth and markets as loot which might be divided among the imperialist appetites. A backward nation lacks the power to struggle either for peace or for disarmament; it can only be a prey.

"The fundamental task of the Five-Year Plan," said Stalin, "was to transform the U.S.S.R. from an agrarian and weak country, dependent upon the caprices of the capitalist countries, into an industrial and powerful country, quite independent of the caprices of world capitalism.... We could not refrain from whipping up a country which was a hundred years behind and which, owing to its backwardness, was faced with mortal danger."

The Five-Year Plan was Soviet Russia's "war for independence" from the exploiting imperialist world. In four and one-quarter years, from October 1928 to December 1932 the plan was 96 per cent accomplished; the Soviet Union changed from a land of backward industry and mediæval farming, defended only by grim will, to a modern land of industry, farming and defense. New branches of industry arose; machine tool, locomotive, tractor, chemical, aviation, high grade steel, powerful turbines, nitrates, synthetic rubber, artificial fibers. Thousands of new industrial plants were built, thousands of old ones remodeled. Twenty million tiny peasant farms, tilled in the manner of the Middle Ages, were reorganized as 200,000 large

farms, collectively owned and partly mechanized. A country, once illiterate, became a land of compulsory education covered by a network of schools and universities.

In international conferences, the Soviet representatives steadily advocated disarmament, a disarmament which was discussed with more and more reluctance by the representatives of capitalist powers until finally they ceased to mention it at all. Even the so-called Disarmament Commission began to discuss not disarming, but the placing of some restrictions on the rapidly increasing armaments. The nature of these restrictions became at once a game of international politics in which each nation sought for military advantage; the Disarmament Conference remained little more than a mask for the old rearmament race.

The Soviet Union did not confine its struggle for peace to mere advocacy of disarmament. It steadily extended pacts of non-aggression; it began to press for an internationally accepted "definition of the aggressor" designed to fix a basis for determining "war guilt" and for mobilizing world opinion and the protests of foreign offices against aggressors.

The "definition of the aggressor" as proposed by Litvinov counted as acts of aggression the sending of any armed forces by land or sea or air into another nation and also the maintenance in any country of armed forces whose avowed aim was the overthrow of the government of another nation. Since most of the imperialist nations habitually indulge in such acts of aggression against backward countries, the Soviet definition was turned down by the Disarmament Conference under influence of Great Britain and France. It was, however, signed by a dozen or more of the smaller countries behind the backs of the larger powers, who were startled and annoyed by this success of the Soviet Union's policy. The signing took place in the World Economic Conference, held in June and July of 1933 in London.

The World Economic Conference was called to consider the catastrophic situation of the world in the prolonged economic crisis and to devise a "broad program of world reconstruction" and a "permanent peace treaty" for humanity in the economic sphere. Proposals were submitted from experts of seventeen nations on stabilization in

the world exchange, extension of credit, lifting financial restrictions, lowering tariffs, developing public works, coordination of production and exchange; but all these proposals were postponed or buried in commissions. The conference collapsed since the conflicts rending the capitalist world asunder were too serious for even temporary agreements.

The Soviet Union submitted a proposal for a world-wide pact of economic non-aggression, which met with the support of only three countries; and a proposal that all countries should seriously examine the possibility of increasing their imports in order to lessen the world crisis, which met with even less interest. Litvinov did however succeed in startling the world by stating that the U.S.S.R. would be able to combat the world crisis by placing a billion dollars' worth of orders if granted long term credits and normal conditions for Soviet export. Nothing came of this proposal either. However, the Soviet Union secured the one success attained during the conference by settling a serious dispute with Great Britain and by signing with 10 nations a convention defining an aggressor.

In all these international proposals, the growing strength of the Soviet Union that came through the Five-Year Plan increased the effectiveness of its struggle for peace. If the U.S.S.R. had remained a backward, undeveloped nation in the midst of increasing conflicts of the capitalist world, with Japan invading the continent of Asia and Nazi Germany beginning to drive toward an eastern empire in the Ukraine, the new Socialist state would have been deprived, said Stalin, "of the modern means of defense without which a country is transformed into a field of military operations of foreign enemies. Our position would then have been more or less analagous to the present position of China.... In a word, in that case we should have had military intervention, not pacts of non-aggression, but war."

No one in the Soviet Union doubts that it was the increased strength of the Soviet Union which prevented both an attack by Japan in the east and one by Germany in the west, and made the U.S.S.R. during these years of world crisis an important factor in world peace.

If any practical proof is needed of the peaceful nature of the Soviet Union's intentions, it is furnished by the history of recent years in the Far East, where the U.S.S.R. has determinedly kept out of war under a series of amazing provocations. The Soviets inherited from the past a railroad which the Russians had built across Manchuria, and which served as the shortest route between two parts of their own country, making the trip to Vladivostok two days nearer than by the longer route in the north. The Tsar had protected the road by armed forces, as the Japanese similarly did with their railroad in southern Manchuria. The Soviets, however, believing that railroads should belong to the people through whose territory they operate, withdrew their troops and gave China equal rights in the Chinese Eastern.

In 1929, when, at the instigation of Russian White émigrés, the Chinese made an attack on the railroad, the Soviet government defended its property by a sharp and effective counteraction which was completely victorious. Instead of using the weak position of China, as any imperialist power would have done, to gain new advantages in Manchuria, the U.S.S.R. came to an immediate settlement of the conflict, again withdrew its troops, and offered to remove any possibility of future conflict by selling the railway to China, but the latter was not in a position to buy.

In 1931 the Japanese invaded Manchuria and marched steadily toward the Soviet borders. Japanese tactics consisted in giving diplomatic assurances that her troops would not advance beyond a given line, and then repeating these assurances as the troops proceeded even further. This was continued right up to the occupation of the whole of Manchuria, whose borders curve in a great circle northward into the heart of the Soviet Far East. These actions were characterized by the whole world, including the League of Nations to which Japan at the time belonged, as a violation of the League of Nations covenant, the Washington Nine Powers Pact and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, to all of which Japan was signatory.

Throughout this period the Soviet Union tried to obtain from Japan just one thing—the possibility of continued peaceful operation

of the Chinese Eastern Railway. It soon became evident that Japan had no intention of allowing this road to remain in the hands of the U.S.S.R. A constant series of attacks took place against it, in the form of alleged "bandits" whom the Japanese showed no energy in suppressing. On October 9, 1933, the U.S.S.R. was able to publish four Japanese secret documents, which made it plain that most of the attacks were actually inspired by the Japanese military forces, which was ordering "resolute measures for the suppression" of the trade unions and other organizations of the Chinese Eastern and was discussing the "great necessity for assimilating the railway." Even without these documents the public utterances of Japanese officials in Manchuria left little doubt of their intention to seize the road by armed force if they could not get it otherwise.

Meantime Soviet citizens working on the railroad in the capacity of station masters, telegraphers, and teachers found themselves in a peril hardly less than that of war. A report by the Soviet director of the road related over 3,000 cases of armed attack which had resulted in the murder of 56 people, the wounding of 825, the destruction of 4,000 meters of the main line track, of 50 locomotives, 958 passenger cars and 855 freight cars. Such incidents of provocation rank as causes of war with every nation in the world. Simultaneously the Japanese formed the puppet state of Manchukuo, and built in Manchuria more than 30 airdromes and ten new routes for military transport, many of which were clearly designed for eventual attack on the Soviet Union itself.

The answer of the U.S.S.R. to these provocations was neither that of the usual capitalist nation which would long since have "protected its interests and its citizens" in Manchuria by declaring war, nor was it the act of a defenseless colonial nation like China, which submitted to Japanese penetration and even made itself the agent of the Japanese in subjugating its own people. The Soviet Union, on the one hand, built strong fortifications on its Far Eastern border, which were obviously of a defensive nature; on the other hand, disregarding the usual capitalist standards of "prestige," it proceeded to avoid conflict by offering the railroad for sale to the "government" actually in possession of the soil. The railroad was sold to Manchukuo after long and exasperating negotiations with

the Japanese government, which hardly hid its intentions to seize by force rather than purchase; the price eventually agreed on was hardly one-fifth of the sum actually invested by the Russians in the road.

The result of this sale was a sharp even though temporary lessening of tension. I was present in Japan at the time and noted its effect in convincing the Japanese people of the peaceful intentions of the Soviets. "It will be difficult for the next few months for their militarists to inflame the people against us," said a Soviet representative to me. "However, the militarists are already actively beginning to lay a base for future quarrels by suggesting the purchase of the Russian half of Sakhalin." Japan has persistently refused to sign the pact of non-aggression which the Soviets have as persistently offered.

Entrance into the League of Nations

In September of 1934 the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations which it had previously denounced as an organization of imperialist exploiters, who, under the cloak of peace discussions, actually plotted aggressive war. This entrance, which opened the fifth stage of the struggle for peace of the Soviet Union, aroused such various comments and attacks, that the reasons for it require analysis.

Unlike those idealists who at first believed all the beautiful phrases which surrounded the establishment of the League of Nations, and later through disappointment swung to the other extreme of believing that nothing whatever could be done through the League, the Soviet Union views the League analytically and realistically. The League is not a territory nor a state nor a super-power; still less is it an ideal or a slogan which will somehow miraculously bring either peace or war. The League is a diplomatic instrument through which a group of powers can come to an agreement. Its policy is decided by the powers that are in it and by the relative strength and courage of those powers.

Behind the phrases with which at different stages each participating nation sought to convince its people of its own idealistic purposes

in the League, what has actually been the changing function of this organization?

President Wilson started it with a burst of idealistic words behind which lurked the purpose of American finance capital to gain control over the Europe which owed it money. Wilson's plan involved "freedom of the seas" to prevent the British fleet from cutting off America's access to her debtors, the division of Europe into small units on a "basis of nationality" in order to cut down the expenditures on armaments which prevented the payment of debts, and the union of these nations in a league of which America was to be the big-brother-creditor. Wilson's plan failed because England would not permit the "freedom of the seas" which meant handing the world over to the power of American gold; and France would not permit the organization of Europe on the basis of nationality, since there are twice as many Germans as Frenchmen in Europe, and the strategic needs of France demanded, not a state containing all the Germans, but a system of states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia which would keep the Germans split into minority groups under other nations.

Since America refused this league, the League of Nations next became the organ within which Britain and France struggled for the control of Europe. Germany especially formed the bone of contention. Britain, following her usual policy to support the opponent of her own potential rival, now supported Germany against the desire of France to crush the latter forever. Britain was helped in this by American finance capital, which feared that Germany would be driven by the unbearable reparations to revolution, and that this would bring down so much of Europe that America's investments would be gone. Thus Dawes began to scale down absurdly impossible reparations to an amount adjusted to Germany's "capacity to pay," in other words, to the amount German capitalists could squeeze from German workers over a period of several generations without actually causing revolt.

When Britain finally succeeded in getting Germany into the League of Nations under her protection, a third stage began in the history of the League, which became the organ through which the imperialist nations planned to settle their difficulties at the expense of the

U.S.S.R. From the very beginning the League had had to some extent this function; the "United States of Europe" of which it often spoke was always contemplated as an anti-Soviet bloc. Briand openly stated this idea in his Pan-European program which hoped to reconcile Germany with the Versailles system, by giving her a chance to expand toward the east. When Germany entered the League, this project appeared more hopeful; Germany was to be the tool by which the greater imperialist powers should invade, divide and exploit the U.S.S.R.

This project was broken by the world economic crisis, which intensified in all nations the desperate need for foreign markets. Germany and Japan were economically the weakest links in the great system of capitalist nations; unable to wait any longer for the crumbs of comfort which a united bloc might give them, they broke loose from the League of Nations and began to take for themselves what they needed. Japan, hampered by remnants of feudalism and needing control of raw materials and markets, sought these by territorial conquest. Germany had big industry, working one-third for foreign markets, which she was losing to the nations that could give big loans. The crisis was, therefore, a powerful factor in bringing to power the Nazis, who for 10 years have proclaimed seizure by war of territory both from France and the countries to the east, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

All this created the situation which made Stalin say that "under certain conditions the League of Nations might become a hindrance to the development of war tendencies." Not because of the beautiful phrases about peace, with which one statesman after another, from Wilson down has beclouded his real purpose in the League, but because with the exit of Germany and Japan (the two nations which could realize their needed expansion only through war) the League became an instrument of those nations which at the present moment want peace. However willing France might have been to use Germany as the spearhead of a united bloc of Europe against the U.S.S.R., she was alarmed by this savage Nazi Germany which summoned the Germanic populations in all the lesser countries to struggle against France as well. The minor countries also fear the purpose of Germany from which they have everything to lose. The situation in

Italy and in Britain is more complicated, but in both these nations there are strong tendencies against the change of the European map by Germany.

How then, is peace to be maintained in such a situation? Clearly, by isolating and hampering those particular nations which feel desperately the need of war—Germany, Japan and now Italy. The League is an organ which can be used for this. It is still an organization of robber powers which exploit colonial peoples. But it is an organization of those robbers who have nothing to gain at the present moment from fighting, and who are therefore willing to use the League as a drag against the intent of Germany and Japan and Italy to throw a torch into the powder magazine of the world.

To strengthen this "drag against war," the U.S.S.R. enters the League of Nations where its influence is in direct ratio to its growing power. Diplomacy plays only a secondary role in world events; the chief role is played by the factors of power, for which diplomacy forms a polite expression. The strength of Soviet industry and the Red Army make it possible for the Soviet Union to enter the League, not as one of the minor nations but as one of the major factors in determining League policy.

Is not then the Soviet Union using its power to perpetuate the injustices which the Versailles Treaty imposed on Germany? The Soviet position on this is very clear and has been stated several times by Litvinov. It is true that obvious injustices were committed by the Versailles Treaty against Germany, Austria, and the Germanic peoples of Europe but it is equally true that these injustices cannot be rectified by war.

"Any war," said Litvinov, "sooner or later, will bring distress to all countries, both to the combatants and the non-participants. We must never forget the lesson of the World War, the consequences of which are felt to this day by combatants and neutral countries alike. The impoverishment of the whole world, the lowering of the living standards of all categories of labor, both physical and mental, unemployment when no one is sure of tomorrow, to say nothing of the collapse of cultural values, the reversion of certain countries to mediæval ideas—these are the consequences of the World War which are clearly felt even sixteen years after its end."

Similar considerations led the Soviet Union to sign with France and Czechoslovakia the pacts "for mutual assistance" and to press through the League of Nations for the widening of such pacts to include more and more nations in a scheme of "collective security." Unlike the pre-war military alliances with which enemies of the Soviet Union have sought to compare these pacts, and unlike the secret bi-lateral pact which is assumed to exist today between Poland and Germany, these "pacts of mutual assistance" are openly announced to the world and are offered not merely to one or two chosen allies, but to all neighboring nations. These pacts, moreover, do not offer to give mutual assistance in any aggressive action, but merely joint defense against aggression. Such pacts, therefore, do not threaten anyone except nations which intend war; if Germany and Japan are unwilling to join these pacts, it is because they have economic and political needs which they wish to satisfy by force or "grievances" which they hope to redress by war. It is the theory of the Soviet Union that the rallying of many nations in a pact of "collective security" will deter these would-be aggressors.

In thus protecting peace, does not the Soviet Union help to maintain the "status quo" in Europe, *i.e.* the territorial gains of robber nations like France and Britain secured by the World War and the Treaty of Versailles? She does; but to secure peace and to protect the interests and the lives of tens of millions of toiling peoples on whom falls the major burden of every war. The real solution of these past robberies, in the view of the Soviet Union, lies not in renewed war by one robber nation against another, but in revolutionary seizure of power by the toilers within each nation. Social revolution, rather than world war, is the hopeful way out of the present world crisis.

The Red Army

But what about the growth and strengthening of the Red Army, say many sincere and bewildered pacifists. What about the very obvious pride taken by Soviet citizens in their army? What about the training of the whole Soviet population in the methods of defense? What about the lack, and in fact the discrediting, of any

specific "pacifist organization" on the territory of the U.S.S.R.? Is there really anything different at bottom from the Soviet Union's "struggle for peace" and the fine words of other nations, all of which claim to desire peace while all of them arm? Do not all nations seek certain selfish ends, which they obtain peacefully if they can, and by force if they must? Will not the Soviet Union's desire for peace be temporary until her industries are established and her army is strong?

Even the most confirmed pacifist must admit that the experiences of the last eighteen years in the wars of intervention and the many provocatory acts initiated by other nations against the U.S.S.R. are sufficient to convince Soviet citizens of the need of maintaining a strong army as a defense. Granted an army at all, the Soviets have been remarkably successful in avoiding that type of militarized mind which usually accompanies an army.

Any person at all acquainted with the Red Army knows that at the same time that it is politically intelligent, well-disciplined and highly equipped, it is neither aggressive nor militaristic in its mentality. Red Army men are not even spoken of as "soldiers"; throughout their period of service they remain citizens with voting power. Their training consists not only of military knowledge, but gives them a very thorough education in their duties as citizens of the socialist state and in the various skilled trades which will later enable them to take constructive part in industry or farming.

No persons in the Red Army feel that their careers depend on war; the Red Army itself has continuous and interesting occupation in the time of peace. It constantly assists the civilian population in various emergencies. I remember, for instance, the "grasshopper war" in Central Asia, in which the army organized the native peasants in a heroic struggle against great clouds of grasshoppers which threatened their crops. The army frequently helps peasants get in the harvest by supplying men and horsepower when these are insufficient. When the Kharkhov Tractor Plant needed a pipe line several kilometers in length and lacked sufficient manpower to dig the trench, a detachment of the Red Army took a position single file along the whole line and did the job in a single day.

Such tasks are part of the routine assignments of the Red Army

which is in close and harmonious relation with the toiling population.

Every detachment of the army has its "patron" factory with which it maintains social and mutually helpful relations. The workers of the factory assist in equipping summer camp facilities for the army group under their patronage; and the army in turn entertains the workers and their children in its camps. In every way, the Red Army man remains a citizen with a non-militarized point of view.

The Soviet population itself has been taught by its Communist leaders to approach international problems from the scientific and analytic, rather than from the emotionally patriotic standpoint. In all the popular demonstrations on May Day, and on other revolutionary holidays, even those which occurred when the Soviet Union was under threat of intervention by this or that foreign power, the placards and floats have never attacked another nation, but only the capitalists and militarists within the nation. They have denounced Poincaré, Curzon, Hitler but never Britain, Germany, France. They have always recognized the workers of all nations as their natural allies in the cause of peace.

An example of this non-emotional approach to war may be found in the books and pamphlets which circulate in the Soviet Far East, where the people live under constant threat of Japanese aggression. When I traveled in that region I found not a single phrase about "the yellow peril" and none of the scarehead articles which are used so lavishly by American yellow journals. There were, however, technical manuals of strategy on tanks, airplanes; on the tactics of the Japanese army in the field; on all aspects of the science of war as carried on by various nations. Thick volumes, worthy of a West Point library, were being bought and studied in quantities not merely by Red Army men, but by the civilian population. In contrast to the militaristic propaganda of capitalist lands, whose purpose is to inflame the population into a war spirit, thus putting them at the mercy of whatever policy the war mongers may decree, the Soviet literature combines a hatred for war with a recognition of the necessity of military knowledge under certain eventualities.

Such a population and such an army does not incite war, but if war comes it is well prepared to meet it. The Soviet Union does not believe that peace can be secured by expecting it and by remain-

ing defenseless in a world of foes. It believes that granted a Socialist state, which has nothing to gain from war, and whose entire population supports its government in a struggle for peace, the economic and also the military strength of such a government are factors for peace. This answers the question why no particular "pacifist" organization exists in the U.S.S.R. The function of a pacifist organization is to agitate against the militaristic tendencies of its government. But the whole government and population of the U.S.S.R. is pacifist in the sense that it constantly promotes peace; none of it is pacifist or would be permitted to be pacifist in the sense of wishing to disarm Soviet territory in the face of armed invaders. Every Red soldier and every citizen is fully in accord with the statement enunciated by Stalin—"We do not want one foot of foreign soil, but will not yield an inch of our own!"

During one of the periods of tension in the Far East, I well remember a discussion I had in Moscow with a Soviet official. It was at that time clear to the whole world that the Soviet air fleet in the East was far superior to that of the Japanese and was within easy reach of Tokyo. Our talk turned on the possibilities of war.

"A good, industrious folk,—the Japanese," he said slowly. "It would be a pity to bomb them. Do you think any Communist likes to set aflame whole towns of toiling folks for the actions of their rulers? . . .

"If war should come in the East between us and Japan," he continued, "we have not the slightest doubt that it would be the end of capitalist Japan. Revolution would start in Manchukuo and spread southward through China, until all Asia was Communist. A goal to be desired? Yes, but it would cost the lives of tens of millions of toiling Asiatic folk; it would mean famine and pestilence sweeping vast areas. A Communist Asia will be attained in any event—and with much less suffering—if peace can be maintained."

Why Socialism Promotes Peace

This leads to the whole question of the nature of the Soviet Union and its fundamental difference from other nations of the world.

Various views exist in the world regarding the cause and the

prevention of war. Militarists claim that war is inherent in human nature; fascist militarists even proclaim that war is good in itself and that the savage martial virtues are the highest virtues in man. Idealistic pacifists, on the other hand, believe that war is caused by "bad rulers" or by "misunderstandings" and can be prevented by expecting peace and talking goodwill in the manner of a Christian Science cure. Some pacifists have progressed to the point of believing the partial truth that war is caused by armaments through the desire of army officers for promotion and of armament makers for profits.

The Marxist view which is becoming more and more widely accepted is that wars in the present epoch grow out of the competition of capitalist nations for foreign markets, for colonies, for the expansion which capitalism needs if it is to survive. In any capitalistic state, the workers do not receive the full fruits of their labors and are, therefore, unable to buy back all that they produce. This surplus piles up, constantly demanding new markets though the development of backward regions and the exploitation of backward peoples. In the search for these new markets, which inevitably leads to a struggle for a redivision of colonies and other possessions, the major nations engage either in small wars of colonial oppression, *i.e.*, the forcing of their goods upon a backward nation, or in wars with other imperialist nations over the territories which both sides wish to exploit.

It follows from this that a socialist nation ruled by its working masses, who own all means of production jointly and receive all the fruits of their toil, has no need for expanding foreign markets, but only for that amount of interchange of goods which will give its own products in return for products that other lands more easily produce. The constant policy of the U.S.S.R. in its foreign trade has been to balance its exports and its imports, rather than constantly to increase exports above imports, which is the capitalist urge. This is not a temporary but a permanent policy, inherent in the character of the Soviet Union as a socialist state.

Having no need to invest profits in foreign markets and having no need for any land or natural resources other than its own, the Soviet government is consequently free to respond to the demands

of its toiling masses, who everywhere and in all countries are in favor of peace. The workers of the world, in fact, crave peace so deeply, that if on the one hand the need of economic expansion felt by capitalist governments make it difficult for them to keep the peace, on the other hand, the opposition of their own workers makes it difficult for them to declare war. Only by systematic deceit of its own population and by systematically inflaming them with lies and patriotic slogans can a modern nation drive its people into an aggressive war. Ever since the October Revolution the Soviet state has been a stronghold of the world's workers, *i.e.,* of those elements who want peace and who are the first to suffer in any war.

A Socialist country can redress heroic national grievances in the only just and permanent way by giving the toilers of every nationality free opportunity to associate in commonly owned production and in common enjoyment of the fruits of toil. Such was the solution which brought harmony among the ~~many scores of nations~~ associated today in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, where each develops freely its own forms of culture, "national in form but socialist in content." Such is the only permanent solution open to all the nations in the future Union of Socialist Soviet Republics of the world.

World War and World Revolution

The peace policy of the Soviet Union, as we have seen, is no temporary slogan. It arises out of the essential nature of the Soviet power as a government of toilers building socialism; it is expressed in its whole history. The call to all nations to discontinue the World War on terms of a just, democratic peace; the appeal for peace terms across the iron ring of armed blockade; the long struggle for normal diplomatic relations which would ease world tension; the fight for disarmament and for non-aggression pacts; the entry into the League of Nations at a particular stage in the League's own development; the mutual aid pacts with France and Czechoslovakia to check a particular war danger,—were all of them steps in a struggle to make peace and to extend it. The concrete forms of this struggle change as the world situation changes.

Capitalism as a system, constantly gives rise to war. But every particular war arises out of concrete conditions and may be in concrete ways delayed, checked and perhaps prevented. To study the concrete conditions giving rise to particular wars, and attempt in each case to prevent those wars is the struggle of Soviet diplomacy, aided by the growing strength of the Soviet state.

None of the causes for war which afflict capitalism exist in the socialist state; neither the hunger for land and natural resources nor the desire to exploit foreign markets. But if capitalism "inevitably" produces war and if, as the Communists believe, world war will bring world revolution, why should Communists seek to avoid world war?

The answer has been given by many Communist authorities. The socialist revolution may indeed be achieved in and through a world war, but it may also be achieved with much less destruction of life and of all human values if peace can be maintained. The terrible destruction involved in a world war with modern military technique might, even if the war finally ended in world-wide socialism, so destroy the productive mechanism of the world that the whole of the war generation could never hope for a good life and a decent standard of living.

Meantime the very struggle for peace is today a struggle against capitalism, which has reached a stage of decay where it drives ever more frantically toward war. Fascism especially, which is the last desperate stand of a savage capitalism, cannot long survive the disillusion of its own people unless it can distract them by inflaming the mad passions of war. And while those passions of war will be in their turn disillusioned, enabling the revolutionary forces at last to turn the guns of revolt against the war-inciting capitalist rulers, a revolution may also be attained, and with much less bloodshed by steadily thwarting the wars which fascism tries to provoke, and thus compelling the fascist state to face its internal problems which are insoluble under capitalism.

For this reason not only the Soviet Union, as a state, but all organized Communists throughout the world are opposed to war and struggle steadily for peace. The Communist International meeting in Moscow in July 1935 declared in formal resolution "the central

slogan of the Communist Party must be 'struggle for peace'," to which Ercoli, the reporter on the war question added, "by keeping the struggle for peace in the foreground of our action, we refute the impudent slander that the Communists are setting their hopes on war."

"Why do the Communists want peace?" asked a leading speaker at the Congress. "Peace insures the further success of socialism in the Soviet Union—the success which will convince all toilers of the necessity of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the power of the toiling masses. Peace guarantees the growth of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat in all capitalist countries, including Germany, Italy, Japan. If peace is maintained, then the international relation of forces in the class struggle shifts daily in favor of the proletariat and to the disadvantage of capitalism."

By arousing all anti-war forces to check one particular war after another, it may prove possible to postpone world war long enough so that a succession of revolutions in the war-preparing countries may bring in socialism on a sufficiently wide scale to eliminate world war altogether. Even if this does not occur, the longer war can be postponed, the more will the developing socialism of the U.S.S.R. rally to its standard the peoples of the world, and the greater will be the possibility that world war, when it comes, can be swiftly checked by the rising of the masses within the warring nations, who out of their hate for war and their struggle for peace, will turn an imperialist war into revolution.

The struggle of the U.S.S.R. for peace, its struggle to build a socialist nation, strong economically and in defense, and the struggle of Communists throughout the world for the seizure of power by the workers in all lands are not contradictory aims. They are one united program for the expropriation of exploiters and the building of socialism in the world. Only a socialist world can finally establish peace and make the lives of the world's people prosperous, happy and secure. This is the final aim of the struggle for peace carried on by the Soviet Union.

Pg 31
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