

# Peace

## I

Abel lying meekly dead  
halo of blood about his head;  
Cain says "Earth hath peace."

Judas runs to Christ and stops;  
kissing, whistles in the cops,  
Says, "Jesus sold, buys peace."

"When discontent is loud at door  
peace needs war; find peace in war,"  
Says Cæsar planning "peace."

## II.

Cain on Wall Street, trades in peace,  
war by product, blood to be  
a depreciate currency.

Judas in Congress, kissing peace  
through a long AP release  
turns to vote war loan increase

And the Cæsars, promising peace  
after triumph, after war  
tensely watch the camouflaged door.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.



names of such treacherous, cruel people as Roosevelt and Churchill, Laval and Hitler. But for our history book, all these events were really not very important. The main thing was during all those years the workers everywhere in the world were finding out about socialism and organizing to bring it to their countries. For as soon as the Soviet Union finished its first Five-Year Plan and completed the collectivization of agriculture, socialism was a fact. And since socialism was the only possible rational way to use the machine, capitalism was doomed, even if the capitalists didn't admit it. [Laughter.]

"But of course you children must not think that bringing socialism to the other countries was an easy thing to do. The capitalists were desperate. They told the most outrageous lies about the first Soviet country, for in those days the workers did not own the press. Even worse, they persecuted and tortured the Communists who fought everywhere for socialism. You all know the great names of the Communist leaders of those days, Thorez and Thaelmann, Dimitrov and Palme Dutt, and in our own country, Earl Browder, William Z. Foster, and James Ford. And besides these famous men, there were countless, numberless Communists, obscure and modest, who suffered and sometimes died, so that you children, you who read this, could be free. None of us must ever forget the limitless courage, the cool, efficient work of those Communists of long ago.

"However, it must be understood that socialism for the world was just a matter of time, after the Russian Revolution—time and organization, time and the lives of brave men. For the main thing to remember is that the

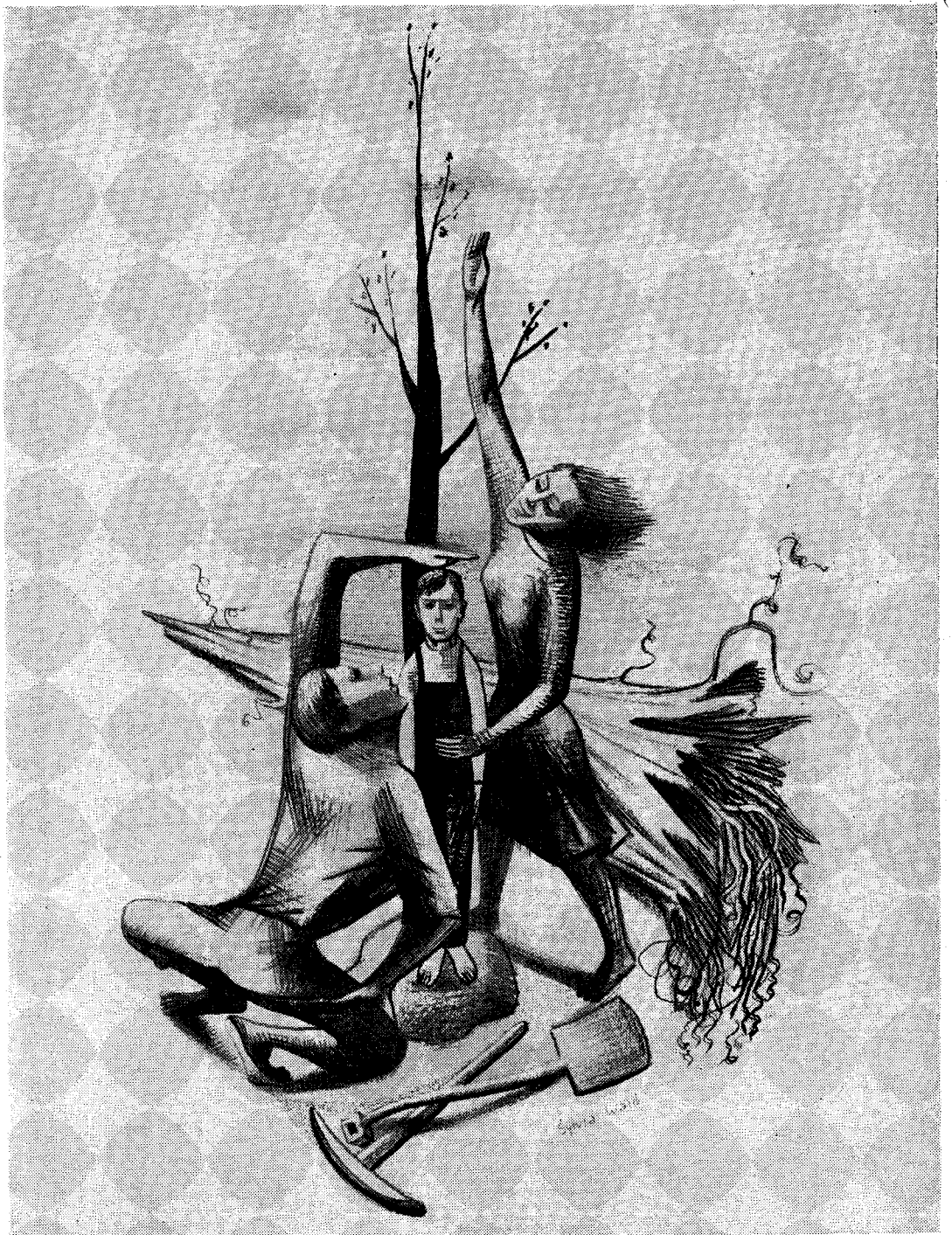
socialist era began Nov. 7, 1917, in what was then known as Petrograd, Russia. Human beings began, from that date on, to lead the rational life. It was the great triumph of men over nature, one of the few important landmarks of all written history. And although it took some years for socialism to become a fact throughout the world, we wish we could tell you children, you who have never known hunger or suffering, a cruel and mad social system, what the Russian Revolution meant to the people who lived then under capitalism. To your American forefathers, Nov. 7, 1917, was the declaration of freedom for all mankind. And for many years, men lived in the darkness of capitalism sustained by the bright, bright vision of socialism in that first of revolutionary countries, the Soviet Union."

But please don't misunderstand me. I think

the children will be reading about the birth of socialism in the United States long, long before 2041. But I can see in my mind's eye with perfect clarity, those happy children of tomorrow solemnly studying the history of man's long climb out of the slime of primeval life. I know this is not just a vision to blot out the misery of life in my country today; it is a fact, as sure as the earth, as sure as love. For the Soviet Union is the scientific demonstration of hope, the mathematical proof of the future.

The readers of NEW MASSES, who for thirty years have kept this magazine alive, need not be assured of the victory. For we all know that the fact, just the fact of the Soviet Union is the proof we can never fail. The future belongs to us.

RUTH MCKENNEY.



*After the Clearing*

Sylvia Wald



# From Dream to Nightmare

Imperialism "trades on the slogans of the democratic past to conceal the reality of the autocratic present." Joseph Starobin discusses the dynamic of American foreign policy.

THE United States took at least eighty-five years after the Declaration of Independence to realize its nationhood in the full sense of the word. It was not until the middle 1840's that the northern boundaries of the new state were fully defined. It was shortly before the Civil War that the southern border was clearly established and the claim to the Pacific Coast fully staked. And it was the Civil War itself which decided whether or not the fully defined territory of the Union would be developed on the basis of wage labor, that is, on the basis of modern capitalism.

In those years the relations of the American republic to the outward world bore a relatively simple character. Most issues in foreign policy involved the assertion of the sovereignty of the new nation, issues inherited from the birth struggle with the British empire. Some of these were territorial questions, as in Maine and Oregon. Others involved the right of the now independent merchants and emergent manufacturers to an uninhibited trade in Atlantic and Caribbean waters. In terms of abstract morality, many of the events in our early foreign policy are difficult to justify. The Indian tribes were eradicated in a bloody, relentless warfare. The negotiations for boundary settlements were characterized by guile and horsetrading. The annexation of Texas and the invasion of Mexico seemed to foreshadow the geopolitics of a subsequent century. It was a period of irrepressible expansion, and yet it differs fundamentally from the imperialism which sets in a half century later. The process whereby we became a nation will be truly appreciated only as the historically progressive and necessary advance of a higher system of social relations. The virginal forests and prairies were mastered and the pastoral economy of isolated tribes and settlements was supplanted to release creative and productive forces such as the world had never before seen.

This is the period which gave birth to what we call the "American Dream." The outstanding characteristics of American life at that time were its self-confidence, its pride in revolutionary origins, its conviction that America was not only a refuge for the oppressed of Europe but an example of democracy for the rest of the world. When Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, landed in New York harbor in December 1851, he was greeted with the cry, "Welcome to the American republic which demonstrates successfully to the world man's capacity for self-government. Thrice welcome to our infant country, the hope and trust of friends of liberty in every nation and clime."

America was promises. Each free citizen was keenly aware of the economy of abun-



dance which lay beyond the Alleghenies, awaiting only the application of science and work. The American mind was illuminated with a fierce faith in the unlimited opportunities for the individual, a sense of high mission for the nation.

It so happens that in this period also will be found the origins of every *motif* in American foreign policy until our time. Back in 1825, Henry Clay warmly espoused the Panama Congress, convened by the South American liberator, Simon Bolivar. Cuba was considered a likely candidate for admission to the North American Union. From 1812 through 1867, it was believed only a matter of time (and a brief heroic campaign) until Canada would cut loose from John Bull and join up with Brother Jonathan. The Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850 merely acknowledges the current expectation of a canal across the isthmus of what is now Panama. In the early forties, says one historian, Honolulu looked very much like another New England town. In 1844 Caleb Cushing, our first commissioner to China, brought back a treaty with the celestial empire which anticipates by fifty years the diplomacy of the "Open Door."

Today, Walter Lippmann would have us believe that the Monroe Doctrine was a joint product of Anglo-American diplomacy, based on a mutual trust in the British Navy in the face of a coalition of tyrants in Europe. Actually, however, while Monroe's declaration was certainly directed against the Holy Alliance it was equally applicable to the British colonial position in Central America. There is a fifty-year history in which the declaration was invoked in the struggle with Britain below the Rio Grande.

All of these policies can be explained, narrowly, in terms of the needs of a rising merchant and agricultural capitalism. But the point is that in their origin and early application, they had a progressive and liberating significance. Like the Declaration of Independence, they were couched in the most idealistic and democratic terms. These *motifs* in foreign policy were contemporaries of the American Dream.

Superficially, the subsequent development of American foreign policy appears to be a logical continuation of that same sense of mission, that expansive self-confidence and dedication to democracy which characterized

the earlier era. But by 1890, a fundamental historical change has taken place, and continues to take place in the inner character of American society—the change from an emergent agricultural and manufacturing democracy to a monopoly-dominated, aggressive, imperialist power.

In 1825, Henry Clay was hailing "the glorious spectacle of eighteen millions of people struggling to burst their chains and be free." But no sooner has Cuba been freed from Castilian tyranny in 1898 than she is bound by the Platt amendment to the colossus of the north. Like the other central American states, Cuba is staked out as the object of exploitation by American sugar, tobacco, banana, banking, and oil interests, who have the armed forces and the navy of the United States at their command. When Colombia balks at the terms of a treaty for a canal across the isthmus, American imperialists, among them Theodore Roosevelt, do not hesitate to engineer fake revolutions and fashion new republics to get rights of way. Hawaii becomes a bridge to the occupation of the Philippines, whose annexation brings the American flag into the territorial waters of Asia. Whatever Caleb Cushing's pious hopes, the Open Door becomes the distinctive technique whereby American bankers and merchants break down China's walls. John Hay and Philander Knox emphasize the territorial integrity of China, not out of abstract reverence for her sovereignty, but because this is the only way American bankers can participate on an equal footing with their French, British, German, Japanese, and czarist counterparts.

The issue of "freedom of the seas" had a progressive significance a century earlier. But by 1900, the struggle with the British empire is no longer a question of the birth of a new nation. It is the struggle of a rising imperialism, capitalizing on the fact that it arrives later on the scene and is situated in a fortunate geographic situation, to stake out its claim against Britain for world power. The expansion in our century cannot be represented as a simple continuation of the great population movement of fifty years earlier. It is something quite different. There is no emigration of people; there is an emigration of capital, the concentrated expression of the imperialist social relations which have conquered at home. The American republic, once the haven for Europe's oppressed and itself a melting-pot, is now launched on a career of oppressing alien peoples outside its borders.

The change which comes over American policy is not a "great aberration" as Prof. Samuel Bemis believes. It is historically dictated by the emergence of a new banking and industrial oligarchy in the United States,