

**THE UNITED FRONT
AGAINST WAR
AND FASCISM**

BY

GEORGI DIMITROFF

REPORT TO THE SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS

OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1935

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Why is it necessary to republish this work now in this form?

This pamphlet consists of the main report to the 7th Congress of the Communist International in 1935, delivered by Georgi Dimitroff. It dealt with the growth of fascism and reaction throughout the world, and the threat of a new imperialist world war.

Today the working people of the world are again face to face with a growing onslaught of reaction, repression, fascism, military dictatorships, and a frantic arms race between the two super-powers which is heading toward another criminal imperialist world war which would make World War 2 look like child's-play by comparison.

Especially in our own country, in the U.S.A. it is clear for all to see that Nixon has been steadily pushing forward on the road to one-man fascist-military rule, as the Watergate revelations come out more and more into the open.

The most urgent question before the American people today is how to stop this drive to fascism and to another world war before it is too late. In order to find the right answers to this vitally important question, we must study carefully the most significant and scientific works on the subject, starting with the post-World War I period in the twenties, with the victory of Italian fascism under Mussolini, the victory of German fascism under Hitler, the victory of Spanish fascism under Franco, the defeat of the fascist Axis (Berlin-Rome-Tokyo) in World War 2, the offensive of reaction during the cold-war period, the aggressive wars waged by U.S. imperialism, especially in Indo-China, the proliferation of military dictatorships around the world, the conversion of the Soviet Union from a socialist country into a social-imperialist, social-fascist country, and now the growing danger of aggression and war from the collusion and competition between the two super-powers.

During this whole time-span of about 40 years, the report of Dimitroff to the 7th Congress of the C.I. stands out as the keystone of the only correct policy that can make possible the defeat of fascism and fascist war. It is a milestone in the development of Marxist-Leninist theory. It marked a sharp turning point from the strategy and tactics which the world communist movement had followed previously, and made possible the crushing defeat of the fascist axis in World War 2.

Previously, in the twenties, the euphoria of the victory of the October Revolution in Russia kept a strong hold on the thinking of the movement, which confidently expected and called for more victories of the socialist revolution in a number of countries, especially in Europe, and particularly where the working class was strong, well-organized, and in the main had a socialist ideology.

This can be seen from examining the resolutions of the 6th Congress of the C.I. (1928) which called for the unity of the working class to overthrow the capitalist system and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the main task. Before the 7th Congress, while recognizing the growing danger of fascism, the solution offered was still the same, namely to defeat fascism by proceeding directly to the socialist revolution. This was clearly illustrated by the title of a book appearing just about that time, written by R. Palme Dutt, one of the leading writers of the communist movement of the time. It was called "Fascism and Social Revolution" and it clearly indicated that in the minds of many communists of that period the only alternative to the victory of fascism and the outbreak of another imperialist war was to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat without any further ado.

But the 7th Congress of the C.I. (1935) changed this policy decisively, in the process of raising sharp self-criticism of its sectarian and ultra-leftist mistakes of the past. Recognizing that the period of the immediate victories of more socialist revolutions had already

passed by, that the fascist reaction was on the offensive, that the working class was clearly on the defensive and was suffering terrible blows, the 7th Congress dropped the call for the *immediate* demand for the socialist revolution, and put in its place the new policy of the UNITED FRONT AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM. This policy, which was repeatedly referred to by Dimitroff as the "new tactics", set as the main task the defeat of fascism and reaction, the defense of the working people from intensified exploitation and oppression, and a halt to the fascist war drive.

The new United Front policy called for unity not only of the socialist and communist sectors of the working class, but also the peasantry, the urban middle class, the intellectuals, and even some sections of the capitalist class that opposed (for their own reasons) the policy of fascism and war.

Thus we saw that in the crucial struggle of World War 2, Stalin was able to form an alliance with imperialist countries, like England, headed by an arch-reactionary Winston Churchill, and the U.S.A. headed by a bourgeois liberal Franklin D. Roosevelt. Without such a united front, without being able to crack the solid front of *all* the imperialist powers that were before arrayed against the young Soviet Union, it would have been immensely more difficult, perhaps impossible, for the Soviet Union to defeat the fascist onslaught.

It should be borne in mind too that in all those countries that did not join the side of the Axis, but fought in the Anti-Fascist Front, there were strong sections of the most reactionary monopolists who favored fascism, who wanted to turn the country around to follow Hitler, who wanted to achieve the victory of fascism in their own countries, to wipe out any elements of bourgeois democracy, and to guarantee the destruction of the Soviet Union, the only country of socialism in the world at that time.

This was particularly true of the U.S.A. and Britain, where the fascist movements were very strong. The struggle within our country between the forces of American fascism and our anti-fascist forces was sharp and bitter. The victory of the anti-fascist forces here was to a large extent due to the correct application (in the main—although with certain rightist errors) of the Dimitroff Policy of the United Front Against War and Fascism.

At that time, the left-wing movement was plagued as usual with strong ultra-leftist tendencies, the most outstanding of which were the Trotskyists, who belittled the extraordinary danger of fascism, who denounced any effort to defend bourgeois democracy as reformism, who sabotaged the war effort, and who persistently called for the socialist revolution at the very moment when the Hitler fascists and their axis allies were threatening to take power over the whole world.

We still have these ultra-leftist, sectarian tendencies with us today, perhaps in greater abundance than before. While most of the progressives and militants who lived through the period of the fascist offensive and World War 2 are now passed away, the younger generation, the new successors to the revolutionary cause, have very little basic material to study about this period. The report of Dimitroff was last printed in cheap pamphlet form in 1950, and it even difficult to get now in an expensive hard cover book imported from abroad and whose value is questionable, having been published by revisionists and containing a number of deletions.

Thus we find many young radicals in Marxist-Leninist study groups who are handicapped by a profound lack of knowledge of the question of fascism and World War 2. They ask such elementary questions as these:

What is fascism?

Is there fascism now in the U.S.A.?

Is there a danger of fascism in the U.S.A.?

Is it correct for revolutionaries to defend bourgeois democracy?
Is it correct for revolutionaries to make alliances at times with sections of the capitalist class, or is this reformism?

Is it correct to take part under certain conditions in bourgeois elections?

Is it correct to support some bourgeois candidates at certain times in elections?

Was it correct for the communists to support Roosevelt in 1936?

Should revolutionaries support bourgeois reforms, or will this not create illusions among the workers in the capitalist system?

Wouldn't it be better if fascism does take power, since that would "revolutionize" the workers much faster and bring the revolution that much closer?

Is it correct for revolutionaries to work now for a people's front against the growing danger of war and fascism, when the proletariat is weak and disunited, and when we do not yet have a vanguard party; so that at the beginning it will not be possible for the proletariat to lead this people's front, but it will probably be led by other elements, perhaps the petty bourgeoisie or the liberal bourgeoisie?

Why should the American monopolists want to resort to fascism now, since they are allegedly not in any great crisis, since there is no threat to their ability to rule, and since this is the main reason why the ruling class resorts to fascism?

Many of these questions are clearly and directly answered in the Dimitroff Report. The answers to others, regarding the situation in the U.S.A. today can be correctly deduced by grasping the spirit of the United Front policy and linking it to the concrete situation.

The scientific definition of fascism is given early on in the report as follows: "Fascism in power is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." But this simple definition by itself is not enough. We must remember its living translation into the murderous extermination of all the millions of communists, socialists, progressives, trade unionists; the concentration camps and death camps; the extermination of six million Jews; the devastation of World War 2, with over 50 million dead, 20 million alone in the Soviet Union; the extermination of whole villages, towns, and cities; the genocide of whole peoples; the degeneration and debauchery of culture and morality, the attempt to destroy all world culture; and much more.

It is important to note here that Dimitroff's definition of fascism speaks of "the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." He did not say *all* the elements of finance capital, as though they were all one homogeneous mass with no divisions and contradictions among them which could be used by a broad united front.

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Is there fascism in the U.S.A. now, and is there a danger of fascism? Wm. O. Douglass, retired Justice of the Supreme Court, said in a recent speech to a group of students: "The great struggle of your lifetime is to keep the Bill of Rights alive . . . At the world level, we are drifting more and more into an authoritarian regime."

A recent statement by Lord Franks, speaking for the big businessmen of England, warned that if the workers were not willing to accept voluntarily more sacrifices, "he would not rule out the possibility of an 'autocratic government' of the right within four or five years."

In the U.S.A. the intensified robbery and exploitation of the workers, the galloping inflation, the erosion of our civil liberties and rights, the arrogant one-man gangster rule of President Nixon backed up by the reactionary generals of the army, the illegal downgrading of the elected Congress by the White House, the innumerable crimes of the President and his staff that are being slowly revealed by the Watergate investigations and trials, the illegal conduct of murderous warfare in Laos and Cambodia by orders of the White House and the

Pentagon, and kept secret from the people and even from the Congress, the outright murder of the Black Panther leaders, the Kent State murders, the racist policy of genocide against the Afro-American people, prove that not only is there a danger of fascism in the U.S.A., but that the Nixon administration has fast been moving in that direction.

Dimitroff in his report points out that fascism will take many different forms in different countries, depending on the concrete situation and developments of time and place. Fascism in the USA does not have to take on the same outward appearance as the fascism of Hitler in Germany or Tojo in Japan.

Dimitroff also points out that fascism does not come about all at once, in one instant, overnight as it were. It comes about in gradual stages, winning more and more positions of strength over a period of time, eroding the remnants of bourgeois democracy, until such time as it feels strong enough to take power completely. He who does not fight to defeat these advances of the fascist forces in this preliminary stage, also bears a responsibility for the victory of fascism when it finally comes.

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This report by Dimitroff was only the first step in the evolution of the policy of the People's Front Against War and Fascism. This speech came *before* the epic struggle of the Spanish people against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini; it came *before* the historic experiences of the People's Front Governments of France and Spain; it came *before* the gigantic battles of World War 2; which finally broke the back of the fascist axis (and it was this victory of the Soviet Union in alliance with other anti-fascist powers that provided the most convincing proof of the correctness of the United Front policy); it came *before* the victory of the National Liberation Front led by the young Communist Party of Albania, which drove out the fascist invaders single-handedly and established People's Power; it came *before* the defeat of the Japanese invaders by the united Chinese people, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao.

All these historic events have enriched the living theory of the United Front strategy. In studying this pamphlet by Dimitroff, the serious student will go further into a study of the speeches of Stalin during the Great Anti-Fascist War (World War 2), the works of Mao Tse-tung that have been published so far covering the period of the Anti-Japanese War and the National Liberation War, the History of the Albanian Party of Labor and other works of Enver Hoxha.

It is interesting to note that in Albania, the armed guerrilla struggles against the fascists by small groups of patriots, some led by communists, some led by non-communists, began immediately upon the Italian invasion in 1939, and long before the Albanian Communist Party was formed (in 1941). They did not wait to complete the formalities of the official formation of the Party, but threw themselves individually, in groups, and with the masses, directly into the struggle, uniting with all the groups that were ready to take part in the struggle. It was this united action from below which speeded up, in fact compelled the various Marxist groups to overcome their differences and arrive at a common policy and program which made possible the formation of the Party.

It is also interesting to note, that as a result of the correct application of this United Front policy, the proletariat led by the Party played the leading role in the National Liberation Front, set up People's Power under the National Liberation Councils, and then after the complete liberation of the country, led the Albanian people into the next and higher stage, the socialist revolution.

The experience of the Chinese Revolution, under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, also greatly enriched the theory of People's Front of struggle. During the course of the Anti-Japanese War, Chairman Mao formed a united front of struggle against the Japanese invaders not only with the landlords and national bourgeoisie, but even with

Chiang Kai-shek, the chief representative of the comprador bourgeoisie. In fact, the Chinese communists had to use considerable pressure to force Chiang Kai-shek into such an alliance, even against his will.

As a result of the correct application of the United Front policy to the concrete situation in China, the Chinese Communists were able to win the trust, confidence and leadership of the widest masses of the people, so that they too were able to lead the Chinese people forward to the next higher stage of the revolution. In fact, after the victory over Japanese fascism, there were two more stages to the Chinese Revolution: 1) the New Democratic Revolution, with the main enemy the imperialists, feudalists, and comprador bourgeoisie; and 2) the Socialist Revolution, with the main enemy the national bourgeoisie and all remnants of the capitalist system in the economy and in the superstructure. This revolution is still going on, in the form of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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In reading the works of Mao, we would strongly urge a careful study of one of his most important philosophical essays, *On Contradiction*. There is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding on the part of many Marxist-Leninist study groups on the difference between the fundamental contradiction in a given epoch, and the principal contradiction at any given stage of the people's struggle.

Of course, everyone agrees that the fundamental contradiction under capitalism is that between capital and labor, just as under feudalism it is between the landlords and the peasantry, or under slavery between the slaves and the slave-owners. But there is a strong ultra-left tendency which denies that the principal contradiction can be different from the fundamental one, at any stage. Thus they say that the principal contradiction today, everywhere, is between the capitalists and the workers, and all other contradictions forever remain secondary in importance, even the danger of fascism and war. There are some who say that even when fascism takes power, the principal contradiction is still between capital and labor, and not between the fascists and all the rest of the people.

Obviously, this position is identical to that of the Trotskyists during the anti-fascist World War 2, and is diametrically opposed to the spirit of Dimitroff's United Front policy, to the brilliant strategy and tactics of Stalin, Mao, and Enver Hoxha.

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Regarding the danger of war, there has been a sharp let-down in the anti-war activities in the U.S.A. since the signing of the Paris agreements last year. Among many militants there is the feeling that the war is over, and the war-danger also is over.

With the phony propaganda of the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. about detente, disarmament, world without war, etc. many of the American militants are being lulled to sleep.

But the fact remains that the fighting in South Vietnam has not ceased for a day, that Nixon, Kissinger and Thieu have no intention of living up to the spirit of the Paris agreement, that the Nixon administration has no intention of abandoning their hold over South Vietnam and the rest of Indochina.

The war in Cambodia is still carried on by the U.S. militarists, and a new war has broken out in the Middle East, which is not over yet. Since World War 2, not a day has gone by without a shooting war going on in some part of the world, instigated by the imperialists, usually with U.S. imperialism in the main role.

Today the world diplomatic scene is highlighted by the collusion and competition between the super-powers. While they talk about

SALT and disarmament, they are feverishly engaged in an arms race, with their armaments constantly increasing in quantity and technology.

Chairman Mao warned us that as long as imperialism exists, there will be the danger of war, and we must get prepared. And the main danger of war today comes not from the small countries that are trying to protect themselves, but from the two giant super-powers that are competing frantically to out-do each other and dominate the world.

Mao Tse-tung has also said that as regards the possibility of war breaking out there are only two alternatives: either revolution will occur and prevent the imperialists from launching the war, or the war will be unleashed and will then have to end in revolution. Which will it be? In either case, the policy that must be followed by the people to prevent the war or to stop it, must be based on the United Front Against War and Fascism, spelled out by Dimitroff in this report.

It is important to remember that Mao also pointed out that while the danger of war still exists, "the main trend in the world today is revolution."

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In studying the Dimitroff Report, one should remember that it is a document of history, written almost forty years ago. Consequently, many references to current events and relationships at the time will sound strange and perhaps mysterious to the young student who is not a specialist in the history of those times. The reader should not be distracted by these references, since they are not material to the main theme of the report which shines out like a beacon in the confusion of the many differing trends in the left-wing, Marxist-Leninist movements and groups which abound today.

One last point should be raised in this connection. In Chapter II, Dimitroff discusses briefly the growing fascist menace in the U.S.A. Then he advocated the creation of a "Workers' and Farmers' Party" as a possible specific form of a mass people's front in America. This may sound like a fantasy to the younger generation, but a reading of history will show that at that time the prospects for a real Farmer-Labor Party were very good. In fact, elementary units of such a party did exist, such as the American Labor Party, and they even elected some candidates to office. For a further insight into this period, we would suggest a reading of William Z. Foster, *History of the C.P.U.S.A.* Another book by Foster that would shed some light on the world situation in that period is the *History of the Three Internationals*.

At present in the U.S.A. we have a multitude of groups, study groups, parties, quasi-parties, and what-have-you, all claiming to be seeking, and some even claiming to have found, the Marxist-Leninist formula that will bring the socialist revolution to this country. One thing that is quite obvious to the objective observer, is that we still do not have a Marxist-Leninist Party that is deserving of the name, that has a correct policy and program, and that is capable of leading the masses of the American people in struggle. It seems to us that the greatest shortcoming of the moment in the effort to unite all these various groups is a correct line that will be clearly understood and followed by all. As Chairman Mao has stated, once we have the correct line, we can accomplish everything.

The publication of this pamphlet is a small contribution to the necessary study of the treasury of our theory, which we are confident will eventually result in the formation of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the U.S.A.

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