Books of the Age

by Jim Cork

AFRICA AND WORLD PEACE, by George Padmore. Secker and Warburg, Ltd., London. 1937.

A COMPLETE understanding of pre-war and post-war rivalries between the major imperialist powers is impossible without a knowledge of the place Africa has held in their calculations. It is this valuable piece of work that Padmore accomplishes in this short but compact and meaty book. It provides an excellent summary of imperialist diplomacy around the African "question"—the whole cynical record of intrigue, treachery and double-cross, the normal state of diplomatic relations between the imperialist bandits, with Africa as the stakes. It indicates clearly how rivalry for African possessions played its great part in bringing about the World War of 1914.

The particularly perfidious role of England occupies the center of the stage in the story. Here, as elsewhere, England proved to be the main buttress of world reaction. I would remember this book for as scathing an indictment of England as I have ever seen penned (quoted by Padmore from a French journalist), yet no exaggeration:

"John Bull—the traditional principle of your policy, the sole motive of your conduct, the doctrine professed at all times by your publicists and orators and practised at all times by your statesmen, is your exclusive interests! It is impossible to remember all the notorious examples of violence, perfidy, implacable egotism and disloyalty with which your history is sullied. Disturbing nations, fomenting internal discord in order to exhaust them, arming the nations in the name of their independence, then abandoning them without pity, crushing, expropriating, decimating conquered peoples, you have never regarded them as anything but legitimate manifestations of your rights. You have always in all sincerity understood how to subordinate the principles of morality and right to the sacred deposit you call British interests. You treat humanity, justice, liberty, peace and war as business affairs. There is not a nation in the world which has not been the victim of your pride, your violence, your greed, your perfidy, your British honor. . . . !"

A very valuable part of Padmore's exposition related the history of the relations between Ethiopia and the western powers. Ethiopia has always been regarded as a pawn in their imperialist ambitions. England, France, Germany and Italy have dickered around with and against each other in every possible combination—and all against Ethiopia. England's moral outburst against Italy's rape of Ethiopia is especially hypocritical in view of the fact that on a number of occasions England and Italy together had a secret agreement between them for the partition of Ethiopia.

Today, with the provocative foreign policy of the fascist countries, the colonial question is coming again to the fore. Africa will again become, indeed it is already, a focal point for the sharpening of imperialist antagonisms. The similarity to 1914 is startling. The camps are beginning to form, the nations are arming to the teeth—for again the problem of "redistribution" of the colonial empire is on the order of the day. There is no possibility of peacefully achieving this "redistribution." The dissatisfied powers can only hope to find satisfaction by plunging the world into another blood-bath. In meeting this challenge, Padmore restates for the working class the communist position on war: no support to the bourgeoisie; for a revolutionary struggle against war; for support of the colonial masses against imperialism; mobilization for the overthrow of capitalism. He has a scathing and just indictment of the betrayal of the colonial masses by the Communist International and its Popular Front line: "There has been a complete betrayal of the fundamental principles of revolutionary internationalism. But how can it be otherwise when the blacks are expected again to defend bourgeois democracy, which brutally exploits them in peace and destroys them in war."

The issue today, he maintains, is not one between bourgeois democracy and fascism but socialism and capitalism. "At this decisive moment," he concludes, "when humanity stands at the cross-roads of history, all that we can do is to choose our side and stand firm to our principles: socialism or fascism, for progress or barbarism."

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cline of capitalism, has made its appearance—the contraction of agriculture. It is this contraction of output that is the decisive factor.

TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT

The relation of technology to employment may be thus briefly stated:

If increasing technological efficiency and higher productivity of labor are accompanied by a still greater increase in output, the displacement of labor is only relative, not absolute, and employment rises along with rising productivity.

But, if increasing technological efficiency and higher productivity of labor are accompanied by stationary or declining output (or if the increase in output is smaller than the increase in productivity), then the displacement of labor becomes absolute, and employment moves down-

where they kept air, sun and bread out of the regime, put a lot of humidity and lice in it, my bunk being in a hold several feet below water level. Barcelona's port was heavily air-raided several times a day and the ship hit seven times with more than 20 casualties.

My legs are still very bad, still full of ulcers and swollen, and I can only walk with help of a cane. I saw a doctor as soon as I landed here this morning and he finds I must immediately start a treatment with ultra-violet rays, baths and several other items included. He thinks my lungs have been affected, too, but wants me to see a specialist and have an X-ray photo made to confirm his impression.

GEORGE KOPP

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