

The MILITANT

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"It is necessary that every member of the Party should study calmly and with the greatest objectivity, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggle within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand."—Lenin

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War, Kellogg Pact and the Soviet Union

By Max Shachtman

THE foreign policy of a revolutionary Workers' State that is surrounded by imperialist powers was outlined a decade and more ago by the leaders Bolshevism, Lenin and Trotsky. Its course is directed to warding off all interventionist and counter-revolutionary movements no matter what their form may be, so that the Workers' State may be able to lengthen the period in which it strengthens the socialist forces in the country as against the forces of capitalism while the revolutionary proletariat in the imperialist countries gathers sufficient strength to overthrow their own bourgeoisie. The Soviet power must therefore aim to aid in every possible way the revolutionary movement in other countries, to help free the masses everywhere from the "democratic" and "pacifist" illusions cultivated by the bourgeoisie, to expose the imperialist machinations of the foreign bourgeoisie, to arouse the workers against them, and thereby become a rallying center for the workers and oppressed peoples of the world. Such a course, followed in the Brest-Litovsk period resulted in the overthrow of the German Kaiser. Some time later, this same policy resulted in the victorious ousting of Menshevism and imperialism from Georgia and the establishment of a Soviet Republic. In the struggle against the Black International of the League of Nations the Communist International was built.

The signing of the Kellogg Pact by the Soviet Union—the whole course of Soviet foreign policy in the recent period, in fact—marks a departure from this revolutionary path. Instead of destroying bourgeois illusions it strengthens them. Instead of strengthening the revolutionary movement in other countries, it weakens it. Instead of exposing the inherently reactionary and war-making character of imperialism it conceals it. To be sure, this is not the intention of the authors of this course, but it is its inevitable result. And the latter is the important question.

In the official reply of the Soviet Government, signing the Kellogg Pact, given out by Litvinov on August 31, 1928, is contained a series of the most astounding statements. Says the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs on the reservations made by Great Britain:

"This reservation the Soviet Government cannot but consider as an attempt to use the compact itself as an instrument of imperialist policy." (Current History, October 1928, page 6.)

An "attempt"! We must take it, therefore, that the "compact itself" is not an instrument of imperialist policy, but that the rascally British are making an "attempt" to use it for this purpose. If this analysis is advanced before the working class, with all the authority of the Soviet Union behind it, what becomes of the daily agitation in the press which continues to repeat—and correctly so—that "Versailles, Locarno, the Anglo-French agreement, the Kellogg 'Peace' Pact are all steps toward a war of all imperialist powers against Soviet Russia"? (See Daily Worker, March 6, 1929). Millions read the proclamations of the Soviet Union, where only a handful read the Communist press. Even if this were not so, the theory that the Workers' State can talk one way and the workers another way, is fundamentally false.

But this is not the worst. The Soviet note says further:

"Nevertheless, inasmuch as the Pact of Paris objectively imposes certain obligations on the powers before public opinion and gives the Soviet Government a new chance to put before all the participants of the compact a question of disarmament, the solution of which is the only guarantee of prevention of war—the Soviet Government expresses its willingness to sign the Pact of Paris." (Current History, October 1928, page 6.)

This amazing nonsense is repeated by Litvinov in the Soviet note to the Polish government of December 29, 1928:

"In so far, however, as the Soviet Government has considered that the Paris Agreement (Kellogg Pact) im-

poses upon its participants certain obligations of a peaceful character, it has without delay adhered to it." (Soviet Union Review, Feb. 1929, page 31.)

And this is not meant as polite diplomatic rigmarole, for Litvinov repeats it in worse form to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union on December 10, 1928:

"Our government took into consideration the fact that the states signing the Kellogg Pact thereby placed themselves under a certain moral (so!) obligation to public opinion with respect to non-aggression." (Inprecor, December 20, 1928, page 1703.)

If this is not enough to make a cat laugh, as Stalin would say, it is at least enough to throw Messrs. Briand, Chamberlain, Stresemann, Mussolini and Hoover into convulsive fits. The Kellogg Pact is supposed to "impose upon its participants certain obligations of a peaceful character", yes, "moral obligations"! Why doesn't the Soviet Union sign the Locarno Pact, or join the World Court, or the League of Nations? Don't they all "impose moral obligations of a peaceful character on their participants"? Or perhaps Litvinov (read: Stalin-Rykov) would have us believe that the Kellogg Pact is less the instrument of the imperialist bandits and war mongers than the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations?

Does not this babble fly in the face of all Bolshevik teachings, of the whole tradition of Soviet policy? Lenin said that the Soviet power, on the question of peace,

"Would declare that it expects nothing good from the bourgeois governments and proposes to the workers of all countries to overthrow them and transfer all political power to Soviets of workers deputies." (Lenin, How to Attain Peace, March 25, 1917.)

It is true that the Soviet Union has a reservation on the Pact. Its note says further:

"Summarizing what has been said above, one must state the absence in the compact of obligations concerning disarmaments, which is the only (!) essential element of peace guarantee." (Current History, October 1928, page 6.)

We suppose that this unbelievable clap-trap (we will not use a harsher term) is accepted as very "clever" Soviet diplomacy in some quarter, a type of Machiavellian stroke that outwits everybody—except the bourgeoisie for whom it is apparently intended.

The Communists have persistently striven to permeate the proletariat with the idea that disarmament talk under capitalism is the worst crime of the bourgeois pacifists. That capitalism, armaments, war and militarism are synonymous and in-

separable. That the demand for disarmament always results in actually disarming the working class before its class enemy, because capitalism will not and cannot disarm. That those who create the impression that capitalism can disarm "as the only essential element of peace guarantee," are drugging the working class. That the only real road to peace is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism. That the appeal for disarmament is reactionary utopianism. Lenin said a thousand times:

"The Kautskyan preaching of 'disarmament', which is addressed chiefly to the present governments of the imperialist great powers, is a vulgar piece of opportunism, of bourgeois pacifism, actually calculated—in spite of the good intentions of the gentle Kautskyans—to divert the workers from the class struggle. For such a propaganda is calculated to inspire the workers with the thought that the present bourgeois governments of the imperialist powers are NOT bound by thousands of threads of finance capital and tens or hundreds of corresponding (i. e., predatory, greedy, preparatory to imperialist aggression) SECRET TREATIES between themselves." (Lenin, The Disarmament Cry, Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrat, December 1916.)

If the Workers' State does not constantly expose the inherent counter-revolutionary nature of the imperialist powers, but, on the contrary, creates the impression that these powers can be made to disarm and establish peace, who is deceived? Certainly not the Hoovers, the Briands, the Chamberlains, and the Stresemanns. They laugh in their sleeves at the very idea of disarmament or peace and at all the pitiful talk of Litvinov. They are secretly or openly preparing for the next imperialist war as they must by their very nature, as well as for a war to crush the workers' republic. All their pacts, conferences and treaties are window-dressing to hypnotize the workers while they themselves work feverishly for the proper moment. But the workers, to whom the authority of the Soviet Union is great, are deceived by the disarmament palaver. Their illusions about peace under capitalism, about the possibilities of disarmament, are deepened when the Soviet Union signs the Kellogg Pact. And the Communist Parties are disarmed. It becomes almost impossible for them to denounce effectively the Kellogg Pact as an imperialist, war-mongering document, when the bourgeoisie can easily reply: "Dear friends, your own Soviet Union has signed it and hailed it as a step towards peace".

For when the Soviet Union praises the imperialists as "our friendly neighbors" how can the Communists in other countries expose their bourgeoisie as enemies of the Soviet Union who are preparing to crush it? When the Communist member of Reichstag, Stoecker, denounces German imperialism's war preparations against the Soviet Union, the social-democratic Chancellor, Mueller, triumphantly replies with

"The words of M. I. Kalinin, president of the Soviet Union, who on his recent reception to the new German Ambassador to Moscow, Dr. Herbert von Dirksen, asserted that the relations between the Soviet Union and the German Republic were thoroughly peaceful and friendly." (New York Herald-Tribune, February 27, 1929.)

The Communist deputy was unable to reply to this. Mueller could also have quoted Litvinov's speech (Inprecor, December 20, 1928, page 1706) in which the German bourgeoisie is praised as the friend of Russia. Mussolini, in reply to the Italian Communists, can also quote Litvinov's speech:

"An example of the possibility of maintaining normal and perfectly correct (!) relations to another state, in spite of different social political systems, is offered by our relations to Italy, which give rise to practically no mutual complaints." (Inprecor, ibid., page 1706.)

And Herbert Hoover, who is denounced very properly in the Communist press here as an arch-enemy of the Soviet Union and the working class, can also reply to these attacks by quoting Litvinov:

"We must openly admit that up to the present we have

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR

Protest TROTSKY'S Deportation

Come and hear the truth about the present situation in Russia and the reasons for the exile of Trotsky, the defender of the Workers' Rule.

SPEAKERS:

JAMES P. CANNON

MARTIN ABERN

MAX SHACHTMAN

at

LABOR TEMPLE, 242 E. 14th St.

Tuesday, March 19th, 7:30 P. M.

ADMISSION

25 CENTS

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