

Danger Signals at London Meet

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Behind the Scenes
The United States in the meantime has again risked a crisis in the conference by insisting that the question of stabilizing currency be postponed until American prices had risen to a "satisfactory" level. This meant that only "economic" questions outside of currency could be taken up for a period of weeks or more likely, months. The French threatened to split away, but have remained in. Under American pressure, the British have come out in favor of higher prices and cheap, plentiful credit. America meanwhile keeps the key to monetary policy—to inflate or not to inflate, how and how much to inflate—in its own hands.

Talk and Action—a la American
In the currency committee itself it has stood for a policy of lowering the legal minimum gold reserves, using 20 percent silver to 80 percent gold in such reserves, and limiting the use of gold to international settlements and central banking reserves—in other words, making permanent and international at the present situation in the United States whereby a bank is not obliged to pay out gold against paper. The French with their affiliated gold standard satellites are fighting this proposal tooth and nail, as it will remove one of their strongest pieces from the chessboard—their powerful gold reserve position.

In the economic committee, the American contribution so far has been a proposal for a 10 percent tariff reduction all around—hastily withdrawn by the American delegation itself and labelled as simply a "suggestion by the experts." This showed the emphasis of the phrases of the American delegate Hull in his opening speech on the desirability of lowering tariffs and on the harm done by economic nationalism.

In fact, the whole Roosevelt policy, based on the manipulation through government agencies of American economy on strictly national lines, is in sharp contradiction to the effort to obtain international agreement on currency, tariffs and trade, as was implied in a speech by the president of the world bank, himself an American.

The battle behind the scenes continues, meanwhile. In the face of the palaver about international agreements on tariffs, France passed a law raising customs duties on American products 15 per cent before the conference opened, and a few days ago, before echoes from the speeches before the economic committee had died down, passed another bill raising the tariff on about a hundred products, mostly of German and American origin.

Meantime the whole proceedings are being held up while the head of Roosevelt's "brain trust", Moley, arrives—in other words, until America places its fist on the agenda sheet.

Behind the scenes also was the settlement of the question of June 15 payments on the war debts—France paying nothing, England and Italy making small "token" payments, the latter received with diplomatic irony as the "disappointment" which it might cause in certain circles because of its small amount.

Litvinoff at London
From the standpoint of the revolutionary workers, the outstanding development of the London economic conference so far has been Litvinoff's speech, which throws a glaring light on the extent to which the Menshevik degeneration of the Soviet regime has progressed. In the effort to adapt himself as closely as possible to the bourgeois diplomats by whom he was surrounded, the Soviet delegate deliberately blurred the lines between Soviet and bourgeois policy, did not refer to the interests of the working class, speaking as one diplomat to other diplomats, and tangled himself in hopeless contradictions while making the most impermissible concessions to the bourgeoisie.

Standing on the basis of "socialism in one country", he, according to the Associated Press report, "urged recognition of the peaceful coexistence of the two systems—capitalism and socialism." Even for an American Stalinist editor, this was too much to swallow, so the *Daily Worker* kept this sentence out of its report. The "peaceful coexistence of capitalism and socialism" means the abandonment of the world revolution, nothing less—and not only as an immediate but as a long-term perspective, and to shove it off into the distant future, out of the reach of "practical" politics. Was he trying to fool the diplomats, while keeping his own mental reservations? Or is he fooling the working class instead?

His conception of non-aggression goes far beyond the tariff truce initiated by the United States, he said. "Speaking of a truce acknowledges the existence of a state of war. An armistice means cessation of all fighting, not merely abstention from the beginning of fresh battles. The same should be true of economic warfare."

In other words, he claims to be even more of an economic pacifist than Roosevelt, by the degree that an "armistice" is more peaceful than a "truce". He is therefore in favor of removing the restrictions on international trade, just like his bourgeois colleagues.

A Few Pointed Questions
We must ask a serious question. Is the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade a hindrance to the international movement of goods or is it not? Does Litvinoff (comrade Litvinoff) propose to liquidate the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade, one

of the pillars of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Stalin proposed in 1923, or does he propose to keep it? If he proposes to keep it, why does he not say so? Is it because that would compel him to point out that after all, there is a difference between the Soviet State and bourgeois states? And would not this raise a question in the minds of the conference about the "peaceful coexistence of capitalism and socialism"?

The part of his speech which interested the conference most was his plea for "lengthened credits and normal conditions for Soviet exports", with an offer to buy a billion dollars' worth of additional commodities under these conditions. To raise the demand for "long-term credits for the Soviet Union" is counter-revolutionary Trotskyism when addressed to the working class, and constitutes grounds for expulsion, as in the case of J. L. Murphy of the British C. P.; but it is perfectly all right as long as it is addressed to the bourgeoisie only.

But what is the purpose of these long-term credits? To relieve a critical situation in the U. S. S. R.? No—no such situation exists, according to the Foreign Commissar. On the contrary, prosperity prevails throughout the Soviet Union and it has not been touched by the world crisis (so that there is a difference after all between capitalism and socialism). The real reason for Litvinoff's proposal, in his own words, as quoted by the *New York Times*, is: "We merely wish to set this conference along the path which, in our opinion, is most likely to lead to effective results in alleviating the crisis." (Clearly the crisis which is to be alleviated is the crisis of capitalism.)

When the German social democracy at its Leipzig conference in 1933 proposed itself to the bourgeoisie as the "doctors of sick capitalism", Communists answered correctly that what capitalism needs is not a doctor but an undertaker. Which role is Litvinoff proposing for the Soviet Union?

The Left Opposition has for years been advocating long-term credits to the Soviet Union, and economic collaboration between the Soviet Union and advanced capitalist countries—but always on a revolutionary basis, always pointing out the value of these demands in mobilizing the masses. What Litvinoff says today as the Stalinist line was rejected a year and a half ago by Trotsky as—Stalinist slanders against the Left Opposition!

In *What Next?*, page 175, we read, "During the first stage of the crisis—more than two years ago—we posed this question (Soviet-German collaboration, B. J. F.) in print. And the Stalinists immediately set up a hue and cry that we believe in the peaceful coexistence of socialism and capitalism, that we want to save capitalism, etc." This was written by comrade Trotsky early in 1932.

However, if Litvinoff really presented the line which we have a right to expect from a Communist appearing in negotiations before bourgeois diplomats, if he talked to them as Trotsky talked to Kuehmann at Brest-Litovsk, or Chicherin to Lloyd George, or Rakovsky to the French concessionaires, and if his correct revolutionary line has been perverted by the bourgeois press, then the Stalinists owe it to the revolutionary movement to denounce the reports given by the Associated Press and the *New York Times* as distortions and forgeries, and to present an authentic and full report of Litvinoff's speech at the London Conference.

Hugenberg's "Foeler"
Two days after Litvinoff spoke, Hugenberg made an open demand for support for Germany in regaining its African colonies and "opening up territories for settlement and construction of great works of peace". Undoubtedly it is correct to see in this a declaration of intention to seize and exploit the Soviet Union.

Hitler, as comrade Trotsky points out, is playing for the gradual arming of Germany after the failure of disarmament and in the name of the defense of Europe against Bolshevism, against the desire of the German Nationalists for quick "results". He at once repudiated Hugenberg's statement as being purely personal, forced him to return to Berlin, and emphasized his repudiation by forcing the dissolution of the Nationalist "Battle Ring" and the integration of the Stahlhelm into the Nazi movement.

Pravda reacted to the Hugenberg statement with "the first Soviet editorial in denunciation of Hitlerite Germany", as the *New York Times* correspondent remarks. What a degeneration—the smashing of the German proletariat brought forward not a single word of protest from the Soviet Union; only when its elementary, "national" interests were involved did it raise its voice!

The editorial in *Pravda* said, "Hitlerism is being forced by economic and financial difficulties to adopt a policy of military adventure by which Germany hopes to redress her own affairs and re-establish her shattered prestige."

This is precisely what comrade Trotsky said—a year before Hitler took power, in the April 1932 issue of the American liberal magazine, the *Forum*. The difference is that the Left Opposition foresaw, while the Stalinists run after the tail-end of events; that we distinguished between the policies of the Nationalists and those of Hitler, and above all, proposed a policy of initiative and preparation for action instead of the "khvoztism",

passivity and empty threats of the Stalinists.

In view of the growing danger of war graphically illustrated both by the actions and the failures of the London economic conference, it is necessary to warn the revolutionary workers of the world again, and with all the emphasis in our power, against the dangers which result from the spineless, compromising, capitulationist policies of the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet Union and the Comintern. This leadership, forced by the iron logic of facts to follow out to the bitter practical consequences the fundamentally false and petty-bourgeois theory of "socialism in one country", has lost faith in its own working class and in the world proletariat. It supports itself on the bureaucracy at home, and on diplomacy and negotiations with the bourgeoisie, reactionary, liberal and radical according to circumstances, abroad. Confronted with the ravages of an internal crisis, the dangers of intervention from Hitler and the threat of Japan, with the ominous lack of recognition from the United States, its only answer has been to retreat.

The possibility of a gigantic catastrophe lies before the workers, movement of the world unless its forces are reassembled under the leadership of the Communist International and rearmed with a Marxist policy. As the immediate steps to this end we call upon the workers to demand the reinstatement of the International Left Opposition within the Communist International and the immediate convocation of the long-overdue Seventh Congress of the C. I.

—B. J. FIELD.

Exclude L.O. at Anti-Fascist Meet

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A possibility that in time to come not even a penny would be offered for their most obliging "toleration" was inconceivable. And not only the social democratic apparatus, but also the bureaucracy of the Stalinist faction, dominating the Comintern, arrived at the same conclusion:

"Even in the case the Nazis are taken into the government there will be no question of the bourgeoisie not desiring to get along without the cooperation of the social democracy in the solidification of the Fascist dictatorship."—*Die International*, January 1932.)

The thought rings very absurd today. The fact remains, however, that the Stalinist bureaucracy lent support to the illusions and wish-thinking of the sister social democratic bureaucracy. And all of this could not fail to have an influence on a great section of the social democratic workers. The unexpected became a fact: exactly a year after the famous Stalinist prophecy of January 1932, Hitler actually repudiated the "cooperation of the social democracy in the carrying out of the Fascist dictatorship."

"Germany Is Not Italy"
A damnable and blighting catch phrase ran through the ranks of the German proletariat, wandering through all the organizations of the working class. They consulted each other with it. It was thought up and set in circulation by frightened, helpless bureaucrats, at their wits' end. "Germany is not Italy," "Germany is not Italy"—in pompous and heroic speeches and numberless newspaper articles, the incantation was thrown again and again at the masses. "Germany is not Italy." This mystical dictum, not good enough to hypnotize rabbits, was considered sufficiently potent to put to sleep the best organized working class of the capitalist world. "Germany is not Italy" blabbered the degenerate social democratic bureaucrats out the windows of their offices. "Germany is not Italy" echoed in the high places of the Stalinist Comintern, in the Communist Party of Germany, in all other sections of the C. I.

The Twelfth Plenum has... shown that there is not—and there cannot be—such a thing as a so-called "classical" Fascism, and that all theories derived from the history of Italian Fascism, regarding the necessity of first striking down the working class, are bloodless abstractions. (Communist International, January 10, 1933, page 19.)

Didn't the Stalinists give unashamed heuchman's service to the Social Democracy in that way? Did that not amount to actually facilitating Hitler's accession to power? The Left Opposition raised its voice in warning:

"The coming of the German Nazis to power would mean, first of all, the destruction of the flower of the German proletariat, the annihilation of its organizations, the eradication of its belief in itself and in its future. In accordance with the greater maturity and acuteness of the social contradictions prevalent in Germany, the hellish work of the Italian Fascism will probably appear as a pale, almost humane, experiment, in comparison with the work of the German National Socialists." (Trotsky, *Shall Fascism Really Be Victorious?*, Nov. 1931.)

The bureaucrats, left without any plausible arguments, maligned and persecuted us and attempted to hide their panicky helplessness behind the phrase: "Germany is not Italy". This they still chanted when the boots of the Nazi storm troopers were already trampling to the ground the most active proletarian forces of Germany. And even today the bureaucracy, which events have already proved bankrupt, cannot separate itself from the slogan grown dear to its heart. They hope, and say so, that the economic crisis will by itself finish off Hitler.

Socialist Hopes For Mercy Shattered
Hitler came to power, and there was not even the slightest talk regarding cooperation with the Social Democrats. All the secret hopes of the treacherous bureaucracy had vanished. The theories, and the practice, that Stalinism derived therefrom, also vanished. The first blow of Fascism was meant for the revolutionary proletariat as embodied in C. P. G. But the accusation levelled against the S. P. G. on the occasion of the Reichstag fire already suggested that the Socialists would be the next victims. The Welles and Breitscheldts tried to win a reprieve. They moved away from the Marxism that they never belonged to. They "tolerated" the persecutions of C. P. G. They "tolerated" the bloody deeds perpetrated by the Fascists on the social democratic workers and the members of the free trade unions. Welles, too, protested (though he knew better) against the so-called exaggerations of German excesses abroad. He even went so far as to resign his post in the administrative circle of the Second International. True as it was absurd,—the S. P. G. hoped for mercy; it hoped to be granted a sort of role as his Nazi Majesty's most obedient opposition. But Fascism, which had thrived on social democratic toleration, never thought of tolerating the S. P. G. in its turn.

The First of May came. Zeor-giebel, who on his way was quite ready to murder 35 workers, was

Hitler Clashes with Hugenberg

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thru his remarks Minor snarled "get away from here, your time is up."

Then Minor and following him, Alexander started harranguing those present in a fashion to make a Holy Roller preacher blush with envy. No answers to our arguments. No comradely discussion. Instead—vituperation, slander and hysteria. Minor almost outdid himself in trying to create a lynch spirit in the audience. But Minor's demagogic and vituperation was answered subtly by the workers present. When the appeal came for workers in the audience to join the party—not a single worker responded. The chairman hastily adjourned the meeting. —M. G.

August 4, 1914 and May 17, 1933

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kicked out to the devil, and Hitler arranged the miserable comedy of the "National Holiday". Hardly had Leipart returned from marching behind the Swastika banner when he was called back to be incarcerated in the famous "sick-house". The free trade unions became Fascist. A week later, the S. P. G., too, was done away with.

"Fascism, nourished by the Social Democracy, will be obliged to break the head of the Social Democracy in order to arrive at power." (Trotsky, November 1929.)

Where were now the speculations of the social democratic bureaucracy? Where were the fancy theories of Stalinism?

III.
The odor of the decay of the beheaded social democracy contaminated the air. The vote for Hitler at the recent "great statement on foreign affairs"—temporarily—the last link in the chain of treason. It was the consequence and crowning of the eight 20 year old policy of coalition and toleration. This crime threatened to pull down the entire Second International.

The pure instinct of self-preservation has led the leading spirits of the Second International to move away from the latest acts in Germany. But they are moving away only from one section of the social democratic fraction. They are not moving away from the policy, the natural result of which was the vote for Hitler.

On May 18, 1933, the bureau of the Labor and Socialist International assembled in Paris under the chairmanship of Vandervelde for a "thorough consideration of the most recent events in Germany". It drafted the following resolution to be presented in the Reichstag: "The Labor-Socialist International is convinced that the consent of a number of the social democratic deputies of the German Reichstag to a resolution expressing unreserved solidarity with the recent declaration of the German government, does not express the true convictions of the German working class. It declares that the support of that declaration contradicts the principles of the Labor-Socialist International..."

In a late issue of the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung*, Oda Oldberg "examines" editorially the last Reichstag vote of the German social democracy and asks the following questions: "Do these people really believe that the German workers will understand this attitude, that they will be able to make out this pattern of lies and facts in which formal justice and cunning injustice are so cleverly intertwined? The workers will not understand; the sacrifice has been in vain. The workers will consider themselves betrayed... With Hitler no pact should have ever been attempted." This is actually said: "they will consider themselves betrayed." Here is the true face of the Second International. They—the workers—will only "consider" themselves betrayed. Haven't they been betrayed? Olberg and the *Arbeiter Zeitung* are silent on this count.

Leon Blum, shedding some light on the history of the Reichstag vote, declares: "The question of participation of the social democratic delegates in the last session of the Reichstag was the theme of the conference of the newly elected party presidium. This conference expressed itself unanimously against the participation of the social democratic delegates in the Reichstag vote. There was for the social democratic delegates only one attitude possible—and that dictated by the conscience of the Socialist International—to declare the Hitler comedy null and void by their absence,—to unmask the Reichstag assembly as the front

and miserable parody that the German workers refuse to participate in....

"I do not care whether these delegates have placed themselves outside of the German social democratic party, but I do declare that by their attitude they have broken the last faith with the spirit and solidarity of the International of Socialism."

That sounds radical, but it is only Leon Blum, who throws out his chest now and then and speaks of the "International of Socialism". Le Peuple, the central organ of the Belgian Social Democracy goes a step farther: "Finally there appeared at the Reichstag session a greatly reduced part of the social democratic fraction... and completed the sad capitulation before Hitler's terror and demagoguery."

"Completed" the capitulation, says Le Peuple. "Completed", however, was what had already long before been begun. It was—and is—the line of the entire Second International which the Reichstag scapegoats "completed with such consistency on May 17, 1933.

In the meanwhile, Stampfer went abroad, and there appeared in the social democratic press an article of his entitled "Do Not Strike Them!" Not even he dares to defend the shameless treachery of the last remnant of the once proud social democratic Reichstag fraction. He tries to explain by alluding to such influences as the "compulsion of conscience", the fear of physical terror, "the consciousness of responsibility to the workers who were thus to be protected against further terrorism." Herein the role of the social democracy shows itself in complete clarity. It did its heuchman's service against the working class. It is not even taken back by the most gruesome crimes. And then it calls all of that "service to the people". This service was Hitler's most fertile ground.

IV.
"The workers will consider themselves betrayed", writes Olberg. They have been betrayed. Betrayed for decades, and not merely by the last Reichstag vote, which was merely the crowning of the betrayal.

The S. P. G. Is Dead
The S. P. G. is no more. Their past "work" has had the good effect of making itself superfluous. The S. P. G. has finished its work. Its members are leaderless. For the degenerated bureaucracy shrinks from illegal work, being, indeed, completely unsuited for it. Members and party functionaries who want to do such work are frowned on. The bureaucrats die, as they have lived, as cynical scoundrel. An S. P. G. leader in Leipzig, from whom the party members demanded the issue of information material in regards to the crisis, replied to them: "Clever, aren't you? But we don't care to go to jail. If you want to publish something attend to it yourselves."

Only very rarely can a more courageous word be heard. In Bremen, the S. P. G. exhorted: "Remain true to the idea of Socialism." Too late for the leaders to think of loyalty to Socialism. At any rate, it is a unique case, which, however, can restore nothing and hold back nothing. The rank and file of the former S. P. G. are without leaders. A strong wave of depression and a wave of renegacy will not fail to sweep the masses. The best elements, however, will look for new ways. To stand by them is our task. We are sure that the greater section of the social democratic workers will help in the creation of the new Communist party. In this task the Left Opposition will stand in the front line.

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