

# NEW BOSSES' WAR THREATENS EUROPE

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accelerated pace. War advances in seven-league boots. The question being asked is no longer "if—but when?"

The ruling class of Czechoslovakia, alive to the power of "Greater Germany," is driven to seek a compromise with Hitler which inevitably will include the rupture of the Czech-Soviet alliance.

### U.S.S.R. In Peril

Thus the Stalin government is about to lose its single "democratic" ally in Central Europe. When the French imperialists, too, desert Stalin—an event obviously not far distant—the stage will almost be set for the great holocaust of war which will be fought for redivision of the world and to settle the fate of the Soviet Union. Hitler hopes to have "democratic" France flanked by a fascist Spain before turning his bayonets eastward to the rich granaries of the Soviet Ukraine.

All the imperialist powers of Europe hope to settle their differences and difficulties at the expense of the Soviet Union. Britain, if an agreement can be reached with Hitler and with Mussolini will turn its attention to the Far East and endeavor to buy off the Japanese threat to British interests in South China, Malaya and Australia by giving Japan a free hand in Soviet Siberia.

Thanks to Stalin's policies, the Soviet Union stands in greater isolation and more imminent peril than ever before in its history. Its "democratic" capitalist allies are ready to desert it. The international working class movement, demoralized, disoriented and undermined by a decade of Stalinism, is less prepared than ever to defend the conquest of the October revolution.

### No Real Difference

Events themselves are proving in the most striking manner possible

## Spanish People's Front Leading To Fascist Precipice

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shed crocodile tears over the now inevitable fascist victory in Spain, ill-clothed, badly-equipped, hungry and desperate Loyalist Spain is forced steadily back toward the sea, to the grim tune of ruthless and unceasing aerial bombardments. The democracies, eager to appease their new fascist bed-fellows, have abandoned the Spanish pawn to defeat and reaction.

If one draws up a balance-sheet of the whole civil war a grim picture appears. It is one of steady and unrelenting fascist advance, clouded and obscured by the unflinching optimism of Stalinist spokesmen and their popular-front allies in the government.

### Only Defeats

Despite the heroic stand of the anti-fascist militants at Madrid, Brunete, Teruel—local and temporary successes at best—the war has seen Franco systematically extend the territory under his control and the scope of his offensive operations. Malaga, Bilbao, Gijon, Oviedo, and now Teruel and the whole Aragon advance—who but the corrupt hacks and wilful falsifiers of the Stalinist-reformist poison press dare read anti-fascist victory into this terrible procession of defeats!

What frightful irony that the anti-fascist workers and peasants have been brought to the brink of disaster by... "the government of victory!" It was in the name of "unity in the face of the common enemy" that the popular front took over the reins of government, progressively suppressing and murdering revolutionists, dissidents, workers of the P.O.U.M. and the anarchist rank-and-file. In this it had the expert assistance of the Stalinists and their ever-vigilant G.P.U., whose private prisons and torture-chambers supplemented those of the Loyalist government.

It was with the excuse of "military victory first, social reform afterwards," that the estates seized by the peasants were returned to the great land-holders, that the factories and mines expropriated by the workers were turned back to their owners and placed under "government control," that the masses were counseled at the point of the machine-gun to hold down their demands and respect the sanctity of private property and foreign investments.

By Leon Sedoff

## VOROSHILOV IS NEXT!

THE BEST OF FRIENDS MAY PART

(The following was the last article written by comrade Leon Sedoff for the issue of the Bulletin of the Opposition which appeared a few days before his tragic death on Feb. 16.)

A series of symptoms, as well as fragmentary reports from the Soviet Union, have already indicated for some time that in the leading stratum a conflict is developing between the military apparatus and the G.P.U. After the military reforms of 1935, which greatly increased the specific gravity of the officers corps and linked it closely to the summits of the bureaucracy, the Army command felt more stable, stronger, and somewhat less dependent. But the decimation of the party apparatus by Stalin in 1936 could not fail to arouse uneasiness among the leaders of the Army. This uneasiness was dictated not by political considerations but by concern for the defense of the country which was being so dangerously sapped by the Stalinist purge.

Tukachevsky, Voroshilov, Gamarnik could not look on indifferently as the G.P.U. upset industry, especially that of armaments, by wholesale arrests, from government Commissars to qualified foremen. The army command could not but offer resistance to this frenzied purge insofar as it began to affect the vital interest of defense. This resistance, probably quite strong from the beginning, necessarily became stronger as the G.P.U. began to decimate the Red Army itself. The arrests of generals as important as Schmidt, Kuzmitchov, Putna, Primakov, the heads of the political sections of the Caucasus, the Far East, etc., of their aides, their friends, were certainly regarded by the Army command as discrediting and disorganizing the army itself. The Army chiefs entered into conflict with the G.P.U. and this conflict was doubtless aggravated by various other issues where the interests of the Commissariat of War clashed with those of the G.P.U.

Conflict Really With Stalin Superficially, the struggle went on between the Army tops and G.P.U. Actually, it went on between the Army command and Stalin, although the generals probably did not realize this, at least at the outset. The subsequent course of events can only be explained, it seems to us, by the fact that Stalin held himself aloof in the first stages of the friction, giving an appearance of neutrality and that he even more probably, with his characteristic perfidy, egged the generals on. This attitude of Stalin's could only pour oil on the fire.

The struggle between the military and the G.P.U., i.e., the interests of the defense of the country as opposed to the arbitrary rule of the G.P.U., undoubtedly contributed to the cohesion of the former, the strengthening of their mutual confidence, and the resumption of their activity. Meanwhile Yagoda and several others among the most odious chiefs of the G.P.U. fell into disgrace. To Tukachevsky, Yakir, Gamarnik, perhaps even to Voroshilov, the victory of Yezhov-Stalin might have seemed like their own victory over Yagoda. But Stalin, having played neutral and set the trap, gave Yezhov the signal for action. The military apparatus was decimated, its leaders and thousands of officers linked to them were shot.

"German Orientation" (I do not stop here to consider the alleged German orientation of Tukachevsky and the others. This accusation, made out of whole cloth, has become a sort of ritual for Stalin when he suppresses his real or fancied enemies. In reality, to the extent that there exists a "German orientation" in the U.S.S.R., it is Stalin himself who embodies it. He is ready to support Hitler at any price in exchange for peace.)

If this explanation of the Tukachevsky affair, which seems to us to be only possible one, does not appear to offer anything essentially new, the most recent events shed new light on the personal role of Voroshilov. During the Tukachevsky affair, Voroshilov might have been supposed to be the accomplice of the Stalinist provocation, remaining for a time in the background and leaving the initiative to Tukachevsky, Gamarnik and the others. The whole past of Voroshilov, a mediocre man, lacking initiative and personally devoted to Stalin, offered support for this impression.

There was a serious fissure in 1929 in the relations between Stalin and Voroshilov, the latter (like Kailin) displaying strong sympathy for the Right (Buk-



STALIN AND VOROSHILOV

harin-Rykov). It was only to save his own neck that he joined Stalin against the Right.

### Got Out in Time

Today there is reason to believe that Voroshilov himself was at the head of the alleged Tukachevsky plot. But as a member of the Political Bureau and closer to the center of political intrigue, and more experienced at the game of double-cross, Voroshilov sensed before the others where Stalin was heading. He had time to make an about-face at the last minute and so to save his life and his post by betraying his comrades.

This was only a postponement, however. Stalin is suspicious, bitter and vindictive. No one has ever succeeded in regaining his confidence once lost. If Stalin is in no haste to finish with Voroshilov, it is because he understands the disastrous impression it would make in the U.S.S.R. and in the world generally. It is quite probable that it is this consideration which determined the "grace" accorded to Voroshilov last June during the Tukachevsky affair. Faithful to his methods—slowly and gradually to prepare the mortal blow—Stalin began "encircling" Voroshilov soon after the Tukachevsky affair.

### The Military Councils

The first step was the establishment of the Military Councils, i.e., of the collective principle in the Army command, a principle so harmful in the military sphere. This reform was dictated only by political considerations. The Military Councils provided Stalin with the means of reinforcing his control over the High Command of the Red Army and at the same time of decentralizing to some extent the over-powerful military apparatus by weakening the position of Voroshilov at its summit.

The same purpose—decentralizing and weakening the war commissariat—was served by a recent innovation: Withdrawal of the naval forces from the war commissariat and the creation of an independent naval commissariat. The most privileged and qualified of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, the troops of the G.P.U. and the frontier guards, had already long since been removed from the sphere of authority of the war commissariat. Now the

## 2,000 March Behind Bier of Sedoff at Paris Rite

More than 2,000 workers marched through Paris on Feb. 20 behind the bier of Leon Sedoff, son and collaborator of Leon Trotsky, editor of the Bulletin of the Opposition, who died, a victim of Stalin's terror, on Feb. 16.

The Revolutionary Socialist Youth Guards, in uniform, formed a guard of honor around the bier. Besides the French organizations of the Fourth International (Workers International Party and Revolutionary Socialist Youth) there were delegations and representatives from the Russian, Belgian, German, Greek, Brazilian, Italian, and Lithuanian sections and groups. There were also special delegations from the International Aid, the Committee for Inquiry into the Moscow Trials, the Autonomous Socialist Youth, the Union Communiste, the Independent Labor Party, and several leading members of the Federation of Technicians and other unions of the General Confederation of Labor. The Seine Federation of the Socialist Party sent a special message of condolence and sympathy to the P.O.I. (Workers' Internationalist Party).

At the Pere Lachaise Cemetery, resting place of the heroes of the Paris Commune, the chorus of the Socialist Youth sang the Red funeral march and the sections of the P.O.I. massed their red flags around the burial vault while speakers paid their final tribute and re-dedicated themselves to the movement which Leon Sedoff served with such honor and for which he gave his life. Comrade Jean Rous spoke for the International Bureau of the movement for the Fourth International, Comrade Gerard for the Committee of Inquiry, Comrade Lesoff for the Belgian Revolutionary Socialist Party, and Comrade Prau for the P.O.I. and the French Youth.

After the profoundly stirring ceremony at the final resting place of Sedoff, the procession marched to the Mur des Federes to pay homage there to the heroes of the Commune. A wreath was also placed upon the grave of the Roselli brothers, Italian anti-Fascists murdered by Mussolini's assassins.

## Trial Causes New Fissures In C. P. Ranks

Stalin's Terror Repels Honest Proletarian Militants

(Continued from page 1)

Our "Open Letter" to members of the Communist Party, printed in last week's Socialist Appeal secured an immediate response. In one city we received an immediate request for 200 reprints of the "Open Letter" and the picture of the 1917 Leninist Central Committee of which Stalin now alone survives in power. These reprints are now available.

### Walls Cracking

Previously our special six-page issue on the Trial of the 21 elicited a lively response. From one important center we received a list of nearly 50 Stalinists to whom the paper was to be sent.

The monolithic walls of Stalinism are cracking! The real worker-revolutionists in the Stalinist ranks who want to fight against capitalist war, against the Stalinist reaction, against the deception of People's Frontism or the new, budding deception of the "Democratic Front" will find their way in increasing numbers into the ranks of the real revolutionary Marxist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and the real revolutionary International, the Fourth International!

### Decision Not New

As for the decision to increase the naval forces, (advised as a reason for the change), it is not new. This decision was made several years ago and has been energetically carried out. In 1935 the reporter of the military department to the Congress of Soviets, Tukachevsky, devoted a good part of his report to the necessity for creating a strong fleet. (Since then an important step forward has been taken, at least in connection with the submarine fleet.) But neither in 1935 nor later did anyone raise the question of forming a special, autonomous department.

It is not by chance that a Moscow observer reported that this decision was a surprise to everyone. One need only; to confirm this, thumb through the Soviet press, especially the organ of the Army. But even if this step was sound in itself, that would mean, we believe, only that in this particular instance objective interests coincided with Stalin's designs against Voroshilov. The flattering comments in the Red Star (organ of the Red Army) about Voroshilov approval of the new reform are only a smokescreen to cover Stalin's flanking movement.

Appointment of Mekhlis The "encirclement" of Voroshilov is shown much more clearly in the appointment of Mekhlis, the probable successor to Voroshilov at the Defense Commissariat. By naming his horse a senator, Caligula wanted to humiliate the Senate. By appointing his lackey Mekhlis to the High Command, Stalin pursued less platonic aims. Former private secretary to Stalin, careerist without talent, specialist in lobby intrigues, executor of the basest designs of his master, Mekhlis' strength derives solely from Sta-

lin's support. Mekhlis assistant Defense Commissar! Who would have thought it possible only six months ago? The more "enemies of the people" Stalin executes, the emptier grows the void around him. The reserves of the faithful are today limited to men of the type of Mekhlis. Having lost last June his entire High Command, Voroshilov has remained suspended in mid-air. He subsequently submitted without protest to the disorganization of the Red Army, not even moving a finger when his last two assistants, Admiral Orlov and Gen. Alksnis were arrested when their turn came. (Both were "judges" of Tukachevsky. They did not survive their victim for long.) Today he accepts everything. He not only confirms automatically all the orders of his new assistant, but he does not even shrink from being photographed with this chief spy at his side.

In conclusion we mention a bit of interesting and wholly credible information provided by our murdered comrade Reiss—that the entire correspondence of Voroshilov is under the strict surveillance of the G.P.U. Stalin is methodically preparing the "liquidation" of Voroshilov. It is obviously impossible to fix a time limit for it. Stalin himself does not yet know when it will come. Unforeseen circumstances may slow down or speed up this liquidation or even change the order in which the future victims will fall. We have already seen how Molotov, suspended for a long time by a hair, has succeeded in maintaining his position. For how long? However that may be, neither Voroshilov, nor Molotov, nor Litvinov—nor many others—will escape their fate.

## Fund For Chinese Comrades Goes Up

Chicago came through with a sum of \$25 last week to boost to well over \$100 the fund being raised by the Socialist Workers Party to aid the Communist League of China. Bravo Chicago! The fund now stands as follows: Previously acknowledged \$87.71 Chicago Branch 25.00 West Bronx Branch .85 Boston Branch 3.25 Toledo Branch .50

TOTAL: \$117.31 Branches are requested to speed up the collection. It is imperative that a sum of at least \$200 be raised to assist the Fourth Internationalists in China, who are being vilified, hounded and framed up by the Stalinists,

## SOVIET UNION NOTES

Monstrousness Of Trials Matched By Acuteness Of Soviet Economic Crisis; Pravda Gives Picture Showing Scope of Breakdown

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

### Stalin Frame-ups Mask Bankruptcy of Regime

The inseparable connection between the Moscow frame-up trials and the external and internal difficulties of the Stalin regime stand fully revealed. Especially so with respect to the economic difficulties. When Stalin became the unquestioned ruler in the country (after he had smashed all opposition), and with the inception of planned economy under his direction, Soviet society entered into the phase of sensational trials. When Stalin's regime encountered difficulties, it found from the outset only one solution: ever more repressive measures, ever more monstrous trials whose primary intention is to supply scapegoats for the crimes and failures of the ruling clique, thus aiming to discredit any opposition in order better to destroy it. As the difficulties of the regime increased the trials became more and more monstrous.

Never before has Soviet economy been in such straits. For the third time in less than two months, the official "plan" figures for coal production have been slashed. In December, 1937 the control figures for coal production were set at 403.5 thousand tons per day. For the current month of March they have been fixed at 379.5 thousand tons as against 384.2 thousand tons for the end of February.

### Statistics Carefully Doctored

On the surface, this latest cut appears so slight as hardly to merit attention. We should bear in mind, however, that Stalin's statistics are carefully doctored to exaggerate all successes while minimizing all the failures. To understand the true significance of the cut one need only refer to the actual output of coal as officially reported in the press. The figures released for the first days in March admit a production below 350,000 tons a day as against a reported average daily output of some 360,000 tons for the previous month. This shows a drop of more than 10,000 tons, i.e., more than three times the drop in the control figures. If this figure is multiplied by the number of days in a month—not to mention the months in a year—it is obvious that there is a discrepancy of millions of tons between the current output and the requirements of the plan, as well as the current needs of industry as a whole. We need hardly comment on the disastrous effects on industry resulting from this continued drop in coal production.

Suffice it to say that proportionate drops for the first days of March have been reported in all key branches of industry (iron production—below 40,000 tons a day; steel—below 50,000, and so on).

Stalin finds it necessary to falsify his statistics just as he must continue with his efforts to frame-up the October revolution. As production drops, the control figures are slashed just the amount necessary to keep the ratio between the actual output and the "plan" figures in the neighborhood of 90 percent. The Soviet citizen, if he scans the official reports, can see for himself that the plan is still being fulfilled "90 percent" if not more, while in reality it is not being fulfilled at all. In point of fact, for at least the last two years, which cover precisely the period of the latest Moscow frame-ups, the plan has been "fulfilled" in reverse. Instead of making progress, industry has been sliding backwards at ever-increasing speed despite the enormous sums of money poured into equipment, new plants, etc. and despite the inhuman speed-up of the workers.

### Stalin Regime Wrecks Soviet Economy

This appalling condition only reflects how inimical to the existence of the Soviet Union the Stalinist regime has become. Stalinist methods have well-nigh wrecked the country's basic industrial equipment. In the reckless drive for records, under the monstrous bureaucratic regime, machines and workers have been driven to the breaking point. The result—a crisis, an ever-deepening crisis.

Stalin issues no direct information as to the condition of things in the sphere of goods for mass production. However, if only from his trials, sufficient "indirect" data can be obtained concerning the real living conditions of the masses, just how "merry and joyous" life really is; wages remain at very low levels and are often unpaid for long periods; the purchasing power of the ruble is extremely low, reflecting the scarcity of such necessities as butter, vegetable oil, salt, sugar, and even bread, to say nothing of tobacco. Among the masses—widespread discontent, ever sharpening, ever-aggravated by the looming reality of the war. Are we perhaps exaggerating the picture? That is the picture drawn by Pravda itself, in a leading article of March 6. It is well worth reprinting in full, but we confine ourselves only to the following three paragraphs:

### Pravda Paints A Revealing Picture

"The party and the Soviet government are improving, incessantly and from year to year, the material welfare of the toilers in the city and country. The filthy scum of the 'Right Trotskyite' bloc has done everything to worsen the material condition, if only of isolated layers of the toilers. The wrecker, spy and diversionist Grinko, has cynically testified in court that he and his henchmen tried to weaken the Soviet ruble; and that they held back the payment of wages to workers and employees. A practice was made of holding back wages in order to arouse dissatisfaction among the toilers. Today, in the light of the testimony of the defendants at the trial, both the lumber-worker in Archangel as well as the Sovkhoz worker in the Azov-Black Sea area—all those whose wages were frequently not paid in time during the past years but instead were maliciously held back, today they can all see for themselves who is responsible for it and why it was done. Holding back the wages of certain groups of workers and employees was a link in the chain of provocations of the Right-Trotskyite conspirators, sowing dissatisfaction among the toilers....

"The production of goods essential to the toilers is increasing without interruption in our country. Zelensky and his criminal gang, in pursuance of directives of the 'Right Trotskyite Bloc' strained with all their might to keep the shelves of the village cooperatives empty. They did everything to prevent and retard the flood of goods intended for the village to satisfy the wants of the peasants. Thus, in the first quarter of 1936 many regions in the Kursk province received no sugar for weeks. Regions in the Leningrad province were left for a long time without makhorka (low grade tobacco). In the summer of 1936 a number of rural border regions of White Russia received no bread for a long time....

### Everyone Can Now See

"Today when the masks have been torn off the Fascist degenerates who sit in the prisoner's dock, every man and woman in the collective farms, every working man and woman can see for themselves just who is responsible for the unsatisfactory functioning of the rural cooperatives, just who held back supplying the toilers with such goods as sugar, salt, makhorka which are available in surplus quantities in our country. There they are—these beasts in human form, sitting in the prisoners' dock, who wanted to deprive the population of these necessities of life." (Pravda, March 6, 1938.)

allies once again of the infamous nations directly to the National Chiang Kai-shek. Non-party sympathizers are invited to send do-