

S.P. Delegate Supports Pro-War "Silence" at Session of 2nd Int'l

Dan and Abramovich In Involved Dispute Over the Degree to Which They Want To See the Soviet Union Defeated

By JOSEPH HANSEN

On the front page of the March 30 issue of the Call, official organ of the Socialist party (the Norman Thomas group), there is a "report" of the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Labor and Socialist International since the outbreak of the war. Inasmuch as Devere Allen, a member of the Norman Thomas group, attended this meeting as an official representative, the Call is well acquainted with what happened there. The article reports, however, nothing beyond the following sketch: that the meeting was "exceptionally well attended," that it was held from "Feb. 23 to Feb. 25" at "Brussels," that there were "representatives" from various countries in addition to Devere Allen, among them being Leon Blum, that there was a discussion on Poland and on Finland, and that the meeting made some changes in the personnel of the Executive Committee.

The Call does not offer even the slightest comment on:

- (1) The failure of the Executive Committee to meet for five months after the war broke out.
- (2) The failure of the Executive Committee to condemn as traitors and renegades those of its members who accept posts in bourgeois governments.
- (3) The Executive Committee's support of the Allied camp of imperialists in the second World War, now raging in Europe.
- (4) The failure of the Executive Committee to pass a single resolution. Not one!

SOME THINGS THE "CALL" DIDN'T MENTION

In order to understand better why the Call chose the eloquence of silence rather than speech, let us outline briefly the main events at the conference. We use as our first source of information the "International Information" bulletin of the Second International, noting that under date of "end of December 1939" the LSI in its previous bulletin made the following announcement to its readers:

"We were forced at the beginning of the war to interrupt the publication of our 'International Information' and its supplements. As we do not yet know when we will be able to resume our publications, we cannot accept any subscriptions for the year 1940." The next bulletin is dated February 26, 1940, and reports the conference. Apparently the officials of the Second International consider that the sole action they have taken since the beginning of the second World War was such an outstanding service to the Allied imperialists that it deserved their breaking silence with a special report, even though they no longer have any subscribers.

"Camille Huysmans was unanimously elected President in place of J.W. Albarda who had entered the Dutch government on August 9." The unanimous vote indicates Devere Allen's approval of Huysmans and hence—in view of the eloquent silence of the Call—the approval of the Norman Thomas group. Huysmans was the secretary of the Second International up to 1914 and "during the war." He was one of those who helped lead the workers into the last World War as cannon fodder and hence is eminently qualified to act as a leading official of the Second International in the present imperialist slaughter.

J.W. Albarda, the former president, was not present at the conference. As an official member of the Dutch government, he was busy aiding the imperialist cabinet in repressing the workers and colonial slaves of Holland. Henri de Man, who also resigned from the Executive Committee to take a similar job with the Belgian government, was also absent. The silence of the Call on the actions of these two renegades is one of the hoary customs of the Second International: never attack any member who betrays the working class and takes a post in a bourgeois government—who knows, you may be the next to get an offer.

The agenda drawn up by the secretary, Friedrich Adler, was "abandoned" without any discussion whatsoever "in view of the complete modification of the circumstances brought about by the war" and the conference listened to a report by W. Keto on the situation in Finland and a report of the delegate of the Bund on the

situation in the occupied territories of Poland.

"This report," continues the bulletin, was followed by a very profound discussion on the international situation which took up most of the meeting." In the Call this "profound discussion" is not even mentioned!

THEY ALL ROOTED FOR BOURGEOIS FINLAND

Both the Call and the bulletin do mention, however, that Keto's report was a success, "every speech" expressing complete unanimity on aid and support for Finland. We are unable to check on this point, as there was no roll call vote on the Finnish question since there was no resolution on it, but no one would think of accusing the Call or any other organ of the Second International of inaccuracy on such a matter. Support of one bourgeois government or another has long been a condition of membership in the Second International.

While no resolutions whatsoever were passed by the conference, the comments of the Russian Mensheviks who had a delegate at the conference, like the silence of the Call, can be said to make up for this lack.

In a leading editorial of its March 5 issue, under the title "Socialist International Stands United," *Sotsialisticheski Vestnik*, edited by Abramovich, eulogizes the conference and then proceeds to analyze it. The conference met, exclaims the editorial, and exchanged "views on those grandiose events which have taken place in Europe for almost a half year and which may in the near future encompass the whole world and determine its destiny."

THEY ASK A VERY, VERY GOOD QUESTION!

But "shouldn't the Second International be indicted," queries the Abramovich editorial, inasmuch as this session could be held only five months after the outbreak of the war and then adjourned without adopting or passing a single resolution? (The Mensheviks are at least capable, in distinction from the Call, of seeing that this question is bound to be asked by the class-conscious worker.) Isn't such a lapse, he asks, absolute proof of "the impotence and internal decomposition and the complete loss of any international solidarity," a demonstration of "its inability to play an active role in the actual events or the future development of mankind?"

We answer this question with a simple affirmative.

But the Mensheviks—and we presume the silence of the Call signifies solidarity with these bootlickers of the imperialist warmongers—maintain the contrary. Leon Blum in *Populaire* even hails the Brussels sessions as a major achievement on the road of consolidation of international socialism!

The fact that the outbreak of the second World War stunned the Second International into complete paralysis for five months is argued away by Leon Blum with an analogy. In 1914-18 the life of the International was completely disrupted for a whole number of years. Today it is disrupted only five months! "One can even say," declares Blum, "that the outbreak of the war and then the Bolshevik revolution in Russia so disintegrated all the living elements of world socialism that the re-establishment of the International became possible only in 1923." The smashing of the capitalist class in Russia by the oppressed peasants and workers meant nothing to Blum except an adverse influence on the power, prestige, and finances of the bureaucracy of the Second International.

Abramovich agrees with Blum. In comparison to "five years of complete paralysis and four years of barren efforts, internal dissension and split" a lapse of five months was not a real interruption at all.

Both Abramovich and Blum then join in chorus that after all, looked at in a certain light, there wasn't any interruption whatsoever. Contact between all the sections of the L.S.I. was "never for a moment broken" and the sessions of the Executive Committee at Brussels really constituted a genuine session of the International "if not in a formal sense then in substance." And if there was a little delay, such delay is accounted for by "war time difficulties."

As for the "unity" displayed at

MOLOTOV SPEECH SHOWS KREMLIN SEEKS TO REGAIN MIDDLE GROUND

SOFTER TONE ADOPTED TOWARD ALLIES AND A COOLER ONE TOWARD HITLER

By FELIX MORROW

A comparison of Molotov's March 29 speech on foreign policy to the Supreme Soviet with his speech on the same subject to the same body five months ago provides some significant contrasts.

The most significant changes are those in the tone employed toward Germany on the one hand and toward the Allies and the United States on the other.

In his Oct. 31, 1939 speech Molotov devoted a good third of his time to indicting the Allies as responsible for the war and whitewashing Germany; he cited the persecutions of the French Communists, "the curtailing of political liberties in England, the unremitting national oppression in India," the Allies' "profoundly material interests as mighty colonial powers . . . which make possible the exploitation of hundreds of millions of people," their "fear of losing world supremacy that dictates to the ruling circles of Great Britain and France the policy of fomenting war with Germany," etc. Roosevelt's intercession with Kalinin on behalf of Finland was answered with a sharp reference to the United States' oppression of the Philippines and Cuba. Turkey's treaties with the Allies were termed "entering the orbit of the developing European war," and there was more than a hint of threat in Molotov's query "whether Turkey will not come to regret it . . ."

Very different is the tone in the latest speech. It is true that it says the Allies "declared war on Germany under the pretext of fulfilling their obligations toward Poland" and calls it a war to dismember Germany; but this is done in a sentence or two and there are no more references to the dictatorial methods of the democratic-imperialists at home or in the colonies. Despite the rich proof at his disposal, Molotov's indictment of the anti-Soviet role of the Allies in Finland is couched in extremely calm, even defensive terms. There are no further tart remarks about American imperialism; instead, an offer to increase imports from the U.S. if American authorities do not put obstacles in the way. The tone toward Turkey does not repeat any note of reproach but instead points to the existing non-aggression pact. Rumania, unmentioned five months ago, is assured "there are no grounds for any deterioration in Soviet-Rumanian relations."

Even the gathering Anglo-French colonial armies under Weingand in the Near East, plainly a move unfriendly to the Soviet Union, and which if the Kremlin so desired could be the peg on which to hang an all-embracing indictment of the Allies, is merely the subject of a single paragraph in which, naturally enough, the Soviet Union is stated to be exercising vigilance and prepared for counter-measures. This is further softened by a declaration that "the fantastic plans attributed to the Soviet Union of a Red Army 'March on India,' 'March on the East' and the like . . . are such obvious absurdities that one must completely lose his senses to believe such absurd lies."

No More Boasts of German Alliance

What makes even clearer the contrast in the tone of the two speeches is to add to the differences enumerated above those concerning Germany. In the speech five months ago the Hitler-Stalin pact was declared "bound to have its effect on the entire international situation . . . Here development has proceeded along the line of strengthening our friendly relations, extending our practical cooperation and rendering Germany political support in her efforts for peace." Collaboration between the German and Red armies in Poland was boastfully described: "one swift blow to Poland, first by the German Army and then by the Red Army, and nothing was left of this ugly offspring of the Versailles treaty . . ."

Molotov even went so far then as to declare "that a strong Germany is an indispensable condition for a durable peace in Europe." Those who wish otherwise fail to see that their attempt "may end in disaster for them."

Nothing comparable to these statements is contained in Molotov's latest speech. There is a perfunctory reference to the "new, good relations" with Germany, which "have been tested in practice in connection with events in former Poland, and their strength has been sufficiently proved." But this is skillfully belittled by this significant passage:

"Attempts have been made to justify these hostile acts (of the Allies) toward our foreign trade on the grounds that by trading with Germany we are helping her in the war against England and France.

"It does not take much to see that these arguments are not

the Brussels meeting, the unanimous vote for the new president, unanimity of support for the Allied camp of imperialists, etc., Abramovich sighs with a slightly sour note. Don't let's fool ourselves, he says in effect, this unity "does not flow from the fact that the sections of the L.S.I. are permeated to a greater degree with international proletarian solidarity and class loyalty than the parties of the Second International in 1914-18." Why does the organization enjoy such unity, then? Abramovich confesses that this is due to the fact that there are no "socialist parties today standing on the other side" of the military barricades which divide Europe into two hostile camps.

No wonder the Call was completely silent about "the profound discussion" on the international situation. Reporting the views of this meeting, at which representative Devere Allen sat unan-

worth a brass farthing. One has only to compare the USSR with, say, Rumania. It is known that Rumania's trade with Germany makes up half of her total foreign trade and that moreover the share of her national production in Rumania's exports to Germany, for example, of such basic commodities as oil production and grain, far exceeds the share of its national production in the Soviet Union's exports to Germany."

It is a far cry, this belittling of Soviet-German trade, from the boastful declarations in the speech five months ago.

Unmentioned in the earlier speech, Italy comes in for some sharp blows now. In addition to a denunciation of Italy's support of Finland, the speech goes to considerable length, apropos of a contrast between Anglo-French policy in Finland and Albania, in denouncing "Italy's predatory action in forcibly subjugating Albania without the least regard for its population of over a million people." This, coming at the moment when the Nazi rulers of Germany are attempting to secure an agreement between Italy and the USSR, on policy in the Balkans to shut out the Allies, is a plain indication that the Nazis are not having success in getting Stalin harnessed in a tandem team with Mussolini.

Result of Finnish Events

It appears obvious that the change in tone is the result of the five months' test in Finland. The earlier speech had said, "We do not think that Finland will seek a pretext to frustrate the proposed agreement." Instead came war, with serious reverses for the Red Army, powerful support for Finland from the Anglo-French bloc; instead of occupying Finland as the Kremlin decided when the war began—the Kuusinen "Peoples Government" could have no other meaning—the Kremlin was more than glad to call a halt beyond Lake Ladoga and forget Kuusinen. Molotov had smiled skeptically when, the morning the Second World War began, the Polish ambassador had said he expected the Anglo-French declaration of war shortly; not until it felt the Anglo-French bloc in the Finnish events did it finally become clear to the bureaucrats in the Kremlin that the pact with Hitler was not going to save them from Allied blows!

Molotov's speech does not represent a definite shift in basic policy. Throughout, the Kremlin's policy has been based on the fixed desire to keep out of the major war; not because the Kremlin's inhabitants are pacifists—these fellows are no more pacifistic than Ivan the Terrible—but because they fear the consequences at home in the course of war: the rising tide of revolt. And unlike the imperialist powers, the Kremlin, however corrupt and bureaucratic, is not driven toward war by the contradictions of an imperialist economy.

A New Attempt to Veer and Tack

Molotov's speech indicates, however, this much of a change. Up to the Finnish events the Kremlin was extremely confident that its pact with Hitler had assured the USSR a position in between the warring camps; in grateful return for the pact, the Kremlin was emphasizing its political support of Hitler's policy, extension of economic collaboration, etc., and was doing so with cocksure conviction that the Allies were impotent to interfere with the Kremlin's plans for strengthening its defenses against any future moves of Hitler. The events in Finland rudely destroyed this illusion.

For the coming period, therefore, the Kremlin, having burnt its fingers in Finland, will attempt to move more cautiously between the two camps. It will seek to edge away a little from Hitler in order not to sustain further blows from the Allies. But, having placed its fate entirely on maneuvers between the imperialist camps, which is simply another way of saying that it pursues a course of supporting one imperialist camp against another, the Kremlin's attempt to steer clear of the war will bring upon it more and more pressure from both camps, and first and most pressing will be Hitler's pressure.

(A second article on Molotov's speech will appear next week.)

Behind the Lines

By GEORGE STERN

Signs of a new British deal with Japan are beginning to appear. If it is actually signed, sealed, and delivered, the results will be of the utmost importance in the further development of the war.

It is a notable fact that although Washington came out with a declaration of non-recognition within a few hours after the launching of the new puppet government of Wang Ching-wei in Nanking, neither London nor Paris have as yet followed suit. In Tokyo there is already quiet rejoicing on what is taken as a virtual split among Japan's three principal imperialist rivals for the exclusive rights to plunder China.

Other signs of a British diplomatic shift are not lacking. On March 28 in Tokyo the British ambassador, Sir Robert Craigie, declared in a speech to delighted Japanese dignitaries that Japan and Britain are "ultimately striving for the same objective—namely, lasting peace and the preservation of our institutions from extraneous and subversive influences." He saw no insuperable obstacle to the establishment of "full harmony" in the national policies of the two countries.

On March 31, the financial pages of the New York Times carried a report unpublished elsewhere of a remarkable deal between the British and Japanese governments involving the sale of about 1,000,000 barrels of crude oil produced by British companies in Iran to Japan. One cargo of 100,000 barrels is already enroute, the Times said. Since up until now Japan has done most of its oil buying in California, news of the transaction has produced angry mutterings in Washington.

It seems very definitely to suggest that the British and the Japanese are striking a new bargain,

Russian Mensheviks In Split Over Attitude Toward Soviet Union

Allen Attends First Session of Executive Since Outbreak of War; Socialist Call Maintains Eloquent Silence Too

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

The "Foreign Delegation" of the Russian Mensheviks, that is, their leading center, has split on the question of the attitude toward Stalin's regime. Theodore Dan has resigned as chairman and left his post as one of the two editors of *Sotsialisticheski Vestnik* (Socialist Courier), the Menshevik organ published in Paris. Yugov has resigned as secretary. Abramovich is now provisional chairman and sole editor, B. Dvinov the new secretary. Abramovich and his friends are "principled defeatists" in relation to Stalin and the Soviet Union. They refuse to draw any distinction whatever between their "defeatist" policy toward Hitler and their policy toward Stalin. Dan, on the other hand, seeks to establish "subtle" distinctions between his attitude toward Hitler as "against Stalin and the Soviet Union."

Dan and Abramovich, who remained defensible under the Czar and under Kerensky, have finally become "defeatists." Abramovich wants to go the whole hog. Dan apparently has reservations. As we shall presently see, Dan's reservations do not at all flow from any deep desire on his part to defend the remaining conquests of the October revolution, but rather from his hopes that a possibility still remains of bringing the Soviet Union back into the orbit of the democratic imperialists. Abramovich thinks the only way to attain this is by "unconditional defeatism." Dan believes the more realistic policy to be that of "conditional defeatism."

Formerly speaking, in recent years, the Mensheviks have recognized in Russia "elements of socialism." Insofar as Stalin marched shoulder to shoulder with "democracy," they were "defeatists." In other words, they were "defeatists" yesterday for the self-same reason that they are "defeatists" today.

THEY CHANGED THEIR STAND AFTER HITLER-STALIN PACT

When Stalin signed his pact with Hitler on August 30, 1939, Dan and Abramovich concluded it was necessary to reevaluate their attitude toward Stalin whom they have always identified with the Soviet Union. There were no disputes among them as to what was involved in this reevaluation. As Abramovich writes: There was complete harmony in appraising Stalin's rule as the "rule of a nationalist-imperialist clique, which has completely broken with the proletariat and with socialism and has degraded itself to the level of Hitlerite Nazism."

"All of us," complains Abramovich, "have unanimously recognized that the (Stalin's) regime has completely broken with revolution and socialism; that his regime is the greatest enemy of the working class and has become transformed into the rule of a nationalist-imperialist Bonapartist clique, on the same plane as Hitlerism, with its fate tied irrevocably to Hitlerism." (Sots. Vestnik, March 5.)

Unanimity was preserved when the second world war actually broke out. Dan and Abramovich lined up solidly on the side of the "democracies," where they still remain despite their differences. And the invasion of Finland found both of them unconditional supporters of Mannerheim's "democracy" and "independence." Abramovich reminds Dan that Dan himself "wants with all his heart a debacle and a defeat for Stalin in his brutal assault on Finland."

What the British want is clear enough. They are ready to forego, TEMPORARILY, their resistance to Japan's continental policy in return for aligning Japan with Britain's more immediate war concerns. This would involve, mainly, Japanese compliance in the extension of the blockade to the Pacific, aimed primarily against Soviet ports which have become the trans-shipment point for goods bought in the United States and destined, the British believe, for Germany.

The Japanese, for their part, have much to gain and little to lose. They will be able to continue unseating Britain from strategic positions in China and at the same time play off the British against the Americans, and the Russians against both the others. For the Japanese it is a break in the almost total diplomatic isolation in which they have been languishing since the Stalin-Hitler pact was signed.

For the American war-planners, it is another dose of the British double-cross which they had to swallow in 1932, when the British supported the Japanese invasion of China for the same reason that they helped nourish Hitler—as a weapon against the Soviet Union.

In these circumstances, the spring maneuvers of the U.S. Pacific fleet may constitute a warning to Britain no less than to Japan, a warning that American imperialism this time intends to play its own hand in its own way.

Union as such, i.e., as countries, but that this difference has no bearing on the question of defeatism.

Abramovich's argument in summary form is as follows:

- (1) If war is the continuation of politics by other means, then "totalitarian war is the continuation of totalitarian politics";
- (2) A preliminary condition for the violent overthrow of a totalitarian regime is military defeat; therefore,
- (3) "We must strive for the most complete and ruthless military defeat of the Stalinist regime."

"From this it does not, of course, follow at all," continues Abramovich, "that we want the atomization, dismemberment, bankruptcy or enslavement of our country or any of its various sections. On the contrary, we will fight might and main against this."

Lest some innocent reader faint with surprise at Abramovich's conversion to violence and lest he conclude that therein lies the crux of the differences between Abramovich and Dan, we hasten to add that Dan, too, supports the thesis of "violent overthrow" (totalitarian regimes cannot be overthrown in peace-time or peacefully, they both agree).

THEY BOTH WANT A "PALACE REVOLUTION"

Further, this "revolution" so ardently supported now by Mensheviks is a "palace revolution." Or, as Abramovich so aptly puts it: ". . . Of all the forms of violent overthrow of totalitarian dictatorship the most probable appears to be that which bears in our literature the highly qualified label of 'palace revolution.'" And Abramovich swears that Dan himself acknowledges that "history, sad to say, has apparently left no other way out save for a palace revolution." A Menshevik sheds tears even when confronted by "history" with such a revolution!

Dan, however, is a pessimist. He warns against any illusions. It would only mean that "another Bolshevik clique will come to power." That is why a different "defeatist" approach is necessary. He does not want to wait for a military defeat but seeks rather to liquidate Stalin's regime "by means of inner forces" and make the "revolution" a lever for the defeat of Stalin's "criminal war policies."

Despite his tears, Abramovich is very optimistic. He lists various "palace candidates" to replace Stalin, and concludes that all of them (including Voroshilov) would be compelled to be very, very progressive. Why? Because a palace revolution, even with Voroshilov at the head, he argues, must unavoidably catapult Russia from the present coalition with Hitler into an alliance with the Allies. And what could be more "progressive" than this to a Menshevik?

Dan does not contest the "progressive" character of such a change. He simply refuses to cherish any illusions that a Voroshilov will behave better than a Stalin. After all, they are both "Bolsheviks"—in Dan's eyes.

A SAMPLE OF THEIR POLEMIC

P. Garvey, a "principled defeatist" argues as follows against Dan's position:

"What we need is clarity! The instrument of the Marxist method must serve us but so as not vainly to obscure controversial issues; so as not to cover up semi-assertions, immediately accompanied by qualifications; so as not to linger and temporize, which only paralyzes action . . . Our times demand forthright answers to the accursed questions. It is impermissible under the cloak of 'dialectics' to cover up lapses and irreconcilable contradictions in one's own position . . . It is impermissible to see in Soviet Russia a totalitarian state . . . and at the same time to seek in this social order of state slavery 'elements of Socialism' which must be 'sustained' until the world social revolution. It is impermissible to want the defeat of the Soviet Union in the war against Finland—and at the same time, with glaring inconsistency, to insist on a subtle distinction between the two aggressors . . . advocating towards one of them, the Third Reich, principled defeatism, and towards the other, the Soviet Union, a restricted, temporary and conditional defeatism."

What style! What thought!

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