

Trotsky Writes on War and the Nazi-Soviet Pact

Above All Else Stalin Fears Internal Revolt

Leon Trotsky issued the following statement to the British press:

FOR twenty years the mainspring of German imperialism remained tightly wedged. When this spring began to expand, the diplomatic chancelleries were disconcerted. The prolonged and sterile negotiations between London-Paris and Moscow, following Munich, constituted the second stage of their discomposure. From 1933 on I declared continually in the world press that the fundamental aim of Stalin's foreign policy was the reaching of an agreement with Hitler. But my voice was too modest to convince the masters of fate. Stalin staged his low comedy, "the struggle for democracy," and this comedy was believed, at least in part. Almost until the last day, August, semi-official London correspondent of the *New York Times*, repeated his assurances that an agreement with Moscow would be reached. Painfully instructive is the fact that the Stalinist parliament ratified the German-Soviet pact on the very day that Germany invaded Poland!

The general cause of war lies in the irreconcilable contradictions of world imperialism. The particular percussion, however, which opened up military operations was the concluding of the Soviet-German pact. During the preceding months, Goebbels, Foerster, and the other German politicians persistently repeated that the "day" for decisive action would soon arrive. It is inescapably clear now that this day was the one on which Molotov affixed his signature to the German-Soviet pact. No power can erase this from the annals of history!

It is not at all that the Kremlin feels closer to the totalitarian states than to the democratic. This does not determine the choice of orientation in international affairs. Despite all his aversion for the Soviet regime, the conservative parliamentarian Chamberlain tried with all his might to gain an alliance with Stalin. The alliance was not realized because Stalin fears Hitler. And it is not by accident that he fears him. The Red Army is decapitated. This is not phraseology but a tragic fact. Voroshilov is a fabrication. His authority is created artificially through totalitarian propaganda. On his dizzy pinnacle he remains what he always was, a hide-bound backwoodsman, without vision, without culture, without military ability, and even without talent as an administrator. The whole country knows that. In the "purged" military staff not a single name remains in which the army could place confidence. The Kremlin

(Continued on Page 2)

Behind the Lines

By GEORGE STERN

So far the war has been fought more fiercely in the headlines than at the front. Batteries of four-inch type have been rolled out by the newspapers and they are keeping up a steady screech of lies. Denials come back at them in tiny paragraphs like the unheard clicks of a pop-gun.

Nevertheless, the reality is sufficiently there. Hitler's armies are approaching Warsaw. Franco-British troops are moving gingerly across the German frontier in the Saar where miles rather than yards separate the Siegfried and Maginot lines. British planes have carried out a number of tentative raids over German territory. The British fleet is in its blockade positions in the North Sea and eight merchant ships have been sunk by one side or the other. Only the pacifist liberals of yesterday—today the loudest of the warmongers—are beginning to screech hoarsely for more gore. Those who are conducting this war know it is going to be a long and bloody one and the Franco-British strategy is based entirely upon that perspective.

The present phase awaits the completion of the Nazi invasion of Poland. The French and British are quite fully aware that the defection of Russia from their side, with the consequent neutrality for the time being of Turkey and the Balkans, sealed the fate of Poland. Despite all the fanfare about "helping our ally" the French and British are content to hope that before expiring the Poles will at least make some dent in the German military machine. Their tactics will be determined in part by the speed with which the various neutrals are converted into belligerents and the principal attention centers now not on military efforts along the western front but upon diplomatic efforts in Italy and Southeastern Europe designed to win new allies for the Anglo-French coalition.

It is now generally expected that as soon as he regards Poland as subjugated, Hitler will

make a peace offer to the western powers on the basis of the status quo thus established. Anglo-French propaganda is already extending itself to discount in advance the prospective Anglo-French rejection of the expected proposals from Berlin. Hitler will utilize this refusal in justifying in his internal propaganda the continuation and extension of the war.

The conquest of Poland will create a brand new situation. Germany and Russia will be neighbors. Rumania and the Balkans will be at Hitler's mercy. Italy, which has always regarded the Balkans as its God-given sphere of influence, will be forced to take some kind of stand, either with Hitler or against him. The tremendous twin lines of fortifications along the western front would make an offensive there so costly that we may be sure the Western allies will look for another road to the Reich and the road through Italy and the Brenner Pass is the best of them all. That road we may be sure they mean to travel, either by breaking Mussolini from the axis or battering him down. That is why Mussolini will soon find his perch on the horns of a dilemma too uncomfortable to maintain. And the way he falls will determine how things go in the Balkans.

If Mussolini goes with Hitler, the Balkan states will have to choose between slow extinction as colonies of the axis or swift extinction as its enemies. If he completes the gory chain of diplomatic doublecrossing and moves into the Allied camp, southeastern Europe will become one of the principal battlefields of the war.

And while these decisions are in the making, artillery will roar with futile thunder on the western front and air fleets on both sides will take their ghastly toll in civilian lives. Russian goods and arms will be flowing in a thickening stream into Germany and American goods and arms will be filling the war chests of the Western powers.

Socialist Appeal

Official Organ of the Socialist Workers Party, Section of the Fourth International—Issued Tri-Weekly

VOL. III, NO. 68

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1939

3c a Copy

ISSUED THREE
TIMES A WEEK

ROOSEVELT DECREES STRIKE AT LIBERTIES OF AMERICAN PEOPLE

Who Is Guilty of Starting The Second World War?

By LEON TROTSKY

Yesterday I talked on the immediate responsibility for war. Hitler started bloody military operations, Stalin helped Hitler to start. This time the immediate, so to say "juridical" responsibility for beginning military activities shapes itself more clearly than in the last war. The question of responsibility plays, as it is known, a great role in the international propaganda of both warring camps. Everyone of the states participating in the war attempts to shift the responsibility onto the enemy.

From the historical and political point of view, however, this juridical (or diplomatic) criterion is of completely second rate importance. There are progressive, just wars and there are reactionary, unjust wars, independently of who "started" first. From the scientific historical point of view, progressive, just wars are those which serve the liberation of oppressed classes or oppressed nations and thus push human culture forward. On the contrary, those wars are reactionary which serve for the preservation of an antiquated social order, which serve for the enslavement of working classes and backward or weak nations. Consequently, of decisive importance is the question, not of who "started" first, who appeared as an "aggressor," but which class is leading the war and in behalf of what historical ends. If the oppressed class or an oppressed nation appears in the role of "aggressor" on behalf of its liberation, we will always welcome such aggression.

England Rearmed Germany

The attempts to picture the next war as a war between democracies and fascism, were shattered against the real march of events. The present war, which its participants started before they signed the treaty of Versailles, grew out of imperialist contradictions. It was inevitable as it inevitable the crash of trains which are let loose one toward the other on the same track.

The chief antagonists on the European continent are Germany and France. In the struggle for hegemony in Europe and its colonial possessions, France attempted to keep Germany (not the fascist but the democratic one) in a condition of division and weakness. In this sense French imperialism was the midwife of German national socialism. On the contrary England, which was interested in breaking the European hegemony of France and its international pretensions, began soon after Versailles to support Berlin against Paris. The re-arming of Nazi Germany would have been impossible without the direct help of England. Thus the masked but deep antagonisms

between the democracies was a spring-board for Hitler.

In Munich England supported Hitler in the hope that he would be satisfied with central Europe. But a couple of weeks later, England "finally discovered" that German imperialism strives toward world domination. In its role as the world colonial power, Great Britain could not fall to answer the unrestrained pretensions of Hitler with war.

The Real Nature of the War

Diplomatic machinations, juggling with the formula: democracy versus fascism, sophism concerning the responsibility, can not make us forget that the struggle is going on between the imperialist slave-holders of different camps for a new division of the world. According to its ends and methods the present war is a direct prolongation of the past great war, only with much greater rottenness of the capitalist economy, and with much more terrible methods of destruction and extermination.

Consequently, I don't see the slightest reason for changing those principles in relation to the war which were elaborated between 1914 and 1917 by the best representatives of the workers' movement under the leadership of Lenin. The present war has a reactionary character on both sides. Whichever camp is victorious, humanity will be thrown far behind.

The Task of the Workers

The task of the authentic representatives of the working class and oppressed nations does not consist in helping one imperialist camp against the other, but in teaching the laboring masses of all countries to understand the reactionary meaning of the present war, to raise their own program—the world socialist federation of nations—and to prepare themselves to replace the regime of robbery by the regime of general cooperation.

This is the program of the Fourth International. It appears utopian to the so-called realists who don't understand the logic of historical development. The Fourth International now comprises only a small minority. But the party of Lenin also represented only an insignificant minority at the beginning of the last war and received nothing but spite from the cheap heroes of the phrase. War is a severe school. In its fire the old prejudices and habits of slaves will be burned out! The nations will come out of this war different than they went into it, and will reconstruct our planet according to the laws of reason.

Coyoacan, D.F.
September 5, 1939

Leon Trotsky

SWP in Big Push on All SEAMEN WANT Anti-War Drive Fronts WAR BONUSES; TIE-UP SHIPS

Branches Work Hard to Come in Under
Wire in Fund Drive—Mass Meetings Held
All Over Nation In Fight Against War

By HAL DRAPER
Secretary, Campaign Committee

The "state of emergency" into which the Party has entered in its fight against the war continues with mass rallies, outdoor and indoor, attended by the largest crowds the Party has ever spoken to.

Six more branches came through during the past week on the Anti-War Fund, going over the top on the September 15 quotas.

The New York local is transforming its councilmanic election campaign into a city-wide anti-war drive, in order to utilize the opportunity afforded by the elections to bring its message to new thousands of workers. Under the slogan of "Vote for the Anti-War Party!" all New York branches and comrades are giving this drive first place in their activities, to insure that Comrades Shachtman and Paine get on the ballot.

Record Street Sales
The record runs of the Socialist Appeal which have been coming off the press three times a week are being sold out on the streets in all the main centers of the Party.

(Continued on Page 3)

SEAMEN WANT WAR BONUSES; TIE-UP SHIPS

But Union Officials
Find 'Escape Clause'
For Companies

BOSTON, Sept. 7—Twenty-seven of the thirty-six crew members of the government-owned freighter Challenge, cargoed for England, were paid off today because they refused to sail last night without a "guaranteed" \$250 bonus and \$25,000 war-risk insurance for each man.

The men were discharged by U. S. Shipping Agent Leo F. O'Brien of Boston on orders from the U. S. Maritime Commission. O'Brien said that he already had hired half the number of new men required to re-man the ship and that he expected to have a full crew ready for sailing by tonight or tomorrow morning.

The Maritime Commission informed O'Brien that it could not guarantee bonuses nor could it

(Continued on Page 2)

War Deal Moves to End Democracy by Attack on "Subversive Activities"

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8: This morning President Roosevelt told his press conference that he had proclaimed a state of limited "national emergency" throughout the country. The main point about this proclamation, for labor groups, is its threat of action by the Department of Justice against "subversive activity."

The War Deal has finally come out in the open with its red-baiting, labor-muzzling campaign—an essential, if not the most essential, part of its program to lead the country into the war abroad. Using as a pretext a war in which the United States is not even a belligerent, the White House is moving to crush and silence all opposition from the ranks of labor. This is the first time in our history that such a move has been made before the United States entered a war.

Later in the day, Attorney General Murphy issued executive orders authorizing the following four steps under the proclamation:

Bucking the War Censors

"The plain people of Germany," reports a foreign correspondent of the N. Y. Post, "men and women one can see in the streets of Vienna, Berlin and in the lanes of villages, face the prospect of war as a man exhausted from a nightmare might look forward to a day of physical and emotional trial. It is really startling to observe the number of pale, drawn, peaked faces among the soldiers as well as the civilians. Weeping women are everywhere. In Berlin one feels dangerous explosive forces close to the surface."

And in Paris and London? Are the plain people there feeling any differently than those in Berlin? No—but ironically enough, foreign correspondents in Berlin are far freer to write so far than those in Paris and London, where no dispatch can be transmitted until first stamped by the censor. The *New York Times* is constrained to report that "In Rome and Berlin more favorable conditions exist at this writing, since there is as yet no prior censorship of outgoing news dispatches."

Where are the "democracies"?
The League of Nations, which the fat-headed liberals for twenty years told us was going to make a peaceful world, has just had the crowning indignity inflicted upon it. The Swiss Government has banned further League of Nations broadcasts.

How ducky! Lady Astor has a gas mask case which contains compartments for purse, lipstick and compact. As she walked into the House of Commons to vote for the war, she had this lovely accessory all ready with her.

Hitler has joined his soldiers "at the front." The official German news agency reports his walking through a hospital train talking with each wounded soldier. That certainly is sharing the dangers of war with the boys. They say Adolf just hates the sight of blood. His will be shed, you may be sure, not by the Allied soldiers but by German workers.

Britain's rival political parties have agreed upon a truce in which they will not contest pending by-elections, since such contests are considered undesirable in time of war. They all agreed wholeheartedly on the war, Conservatives and "Laborites" alike.

What Your Dollar Can Do

A dollar puts a Socialist Appeal salesman on an important street corner for one day.

Five dollars permits free distribution of two hundred Socialist Appeals.

Ten dollars puts a full-time field organizer to work for one week in the anti-war campaign.

Anti-War Campaign Committee
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place, N.Y.C.

Dear Friends:

I enclose . . . as a contribution to the anti-war work of the Socialist Workers Party.

Name
Address

(1) Increases in the strength of the Army and in the tempo of recruiting.

(2) Increases in the personnel of the Navy, National Guard, and Marine Corps.

(3) Authorization for the State Department to spend \$500,000 to help stranded Americans get back from Europe.

(4) "Increase the personnel of Federal investigating agencies to protect the United States against sabotage, propaganda and other subversive activities such as this nation experienced between 1914 and 1917."

The President has still many emergency powers up his sleeve which he can use when and as he sees fit. This is just the beginning.

SPECIAL SESSION OF RUBBER-STAMP CONGRESS DUE

The day before this emergency proclamation, it became known that the President had tentatively settled on September 18 as the date on which he will call a special session of Congress to repeal the Neutrality Act. He has already discussed the question on the phone with Senators Barkley and McNary, Democratic and Republican floor leaders respectively, and also with other Congressional whips.

A special session, the White House made clear, will be called only if repeal of the Act is certain.

"Underlying the President's conversations with Congressional leaders," reports the N. Y. Times of September 8, "is his desire that protracted debate on the neutrality issue shall be avoided at all costs, lest the impression get abroad among nations that do not understand the democratic process that the United States was divided on the foreign policy of the Administration."

In other words, in order to avoid any "misunderstanding" by the totalitarian Third Reich, our President proposes to make the American Congress into a totalitarian rubber-stamp itself. "You are, I believe, the most enlightened and best-informed people in all the world at this moment," said the President in his "neutrality" radio speech last Sunday evening. "You are subjected to no censorship. . . . But this enlightened democracy need expect no public debate on the issue which now means life or death to millions of its citizens: the question of neutrality."

The War Deal's plan is not (Continued on Page 3)