

*G. DEBORIN*

# THE SECOND WORLD WAR



**G. D E B O R I N**

# **THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

**A POLITICO-MILITARY SURVEY  
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*Part I*

**THE PRELUDE TO WAR**

*Chapter One*

**AGGRESSORS AND HELPMATES**

**1**

The guns of the First World War fell silent on November 11, 1918. The peoples of Europe breathed with relief. Bourgeois writers trumpeted far and wide about the commencement of a new historical era, the era of peace.

But there was no peace. The bloody war prosecuted by the imperialists against the newly established Soviet state which had put paid to capitalism and embarked upon socialism, continued unabated. Winston Churchill, eager to assume command of the anti-Soviet crusade, said Bolshevism had to be "strangled at its birth". At different points of the vast imperialist colonial rear, colonialists brutally suppressed the movement for national liberation.

The first quarter of the 20th century was running to a close when Europe's leading bourgeois statesmen proclaimed at the Locarno Conference (October 1925) that they had at last found the watershed between the years of war and the coming years of peace. It was, indeed, a watershed but an entirely different one. It marked the end of one series of wars, and ushered in a new series. The Locarno negotiators set the stage for new wars for the sake of monopoly enrichment. With one armed conflagration extinguished, fuel was expeditiously stocked for new holocausts.

The First World War had not broken out by accident. It had been a natural upshot of the deep-going contradictions of capitalism in its imperialist stage. It had been a reflection of capitalism's general crisis, of which the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and the split of the world into two diametrically opposite social systems—socialism and capitalism—was the most important and striking expression. The October Revolution abolished imperialism in but one-sixth of the world. The rest of the world still consisted of imperialist states, colonies and semi-colonies. Only a small fragment of the world was occupied by countries that had won freedom from colonial slavery and had embarked upon independent development.

Since imperialism continued to exist, so did the economic causes of imperialist wars. The First World War had not, and could not, eliminate the deep-going contradictions, the springs of war, inherent in the imperialist system. The war and its aftermaths only deepened these contradictions and gave rise to still keener antagonisms and conflicts. The seeds of fresh imperialist wars were sown plentifully all over the earth.

The contradiction between the social nature of production and private capitalist appropriation is the deepest, the most fundamental and the most insoluble of all the capitalist contradictions. It is this contradiction that lies at the root of all the economic crises which shake up the capitalist world from time to time. It saturates all facets of life in the capitalist countries, racked as they are by acute class conflicts. It is this contradiction, among others, that dooms capitalism to inevitable collapse.

The productive forces of modern capitalism have outgrown the trammels of the private ownership of means of production. They are ripe for socialism. Social production is bursting the frontiers of individual capitalist countries. It has established itself throughout the bourgeois world. The growth of capitalism into a world system, the

spreading of the capitalist international division of labour, serviced by a world market—it is these factors that mark the further development of the social nature of production. But the social nature of production is entrained by private capitalist appropriation—a conflict that leads to acute struggle in the world arena.

At the time of pre-monopoly capitalism the bourgeois exploiter countries encouraged the development of the productive forces. Now, at the time of imperialism, they act as a brake on man's further progress.

“Capitalism now finds the old national states, without the formation of which it could not have overthrown feudalism, too tight for it,” writes V. I. Lenin. “Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that whole branches of industry have been seized by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist billionaires, and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the ‘lords of capital’, either in the form of colonies, or by enmeshing other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation. Free trade and competition have been superseded by the striving for monopoly, for the seizure of territory for the investment of capital, for exporting from them raw materials, and so forth. From the liberator of nations that capitalism was in the struggle against feudalism, imperialist capitalism has become the greatest oppressor of nations.”<sup>1</sup>

It is an innate imperialist want to export capital and conquer markets for commodities unsaleable at home, to seize new colonies and sources of raw materials, to destroy rivals in trade and to seek world domination.

The great capitalist powers fight among themselves for all the territories within their reach. This division of land proceeds through bitter struggle and depends on the actually existing relation of strength. Yet this relation is in

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The National-Liberation Movement in the East*, Moscow, 1957, p. 98.

constant flux, for a marked unevenness of economic and political development from country to country is a distinct trait of modern capitalism. Thus arises the conflict between the distribution of markets and spheres of influence, on the one hand, and the continuously changing relation of strength among the capitalist powers, on the other. It is a conflict that inexorably culminates in war.

"Capitalism," wrote Lenin, "has concentrated the world's wealth in the hands of individual states, has divided up the earth to the last bit. Any further division, any further enrichment can only take place at the expense of others, by one state gaining at the expense of another. Force alone can decide the issue—hence war among the global vultures became inevitable."<sup>1</sup>

The imperialist First World War stemmed from a conflict between the group of capitalist states, Germany most of all, that had forged ahead in their development and claimed positions earlier seized by Britain and France, and the latter two powers, still mighty and eager to crush their ascendant competitors, but falling back in their rate of development. Germany lost the war and was, for a time, economically prostrate. But though defeated and hemmed in by the rigorous terms of the Versailles Treaty, it was still potentially stronger than its victors—Britain and France. The latter two were painfully conscious of the fact that their victory over Germany had been won through the joint effort of a numerous coalition, in which Russia's contribution had been especially prominent. If Russia had not pitched in, Britain and France would have been beaten. Though victors, the two countries could not help feeling insecure, for they were awake to the inevitable recovery of Germany as a first-class capitalist power.

It would seem that in the circumstances the British and French in ruling positions would do their utmost to prevent the rehabilitation of Germany's economic and, con-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *On Britain*, Moscow, p. 384.

sequently, military might. Yet they went off on a different tack, one contrary to their own capitalist and national interests, and lent a willing hand to the revival of the German war potential. This Western policy, which culminated in the Munich deal with Hitler Germany and fascist Italy, went back to 1924 and 1925.

The various bourgeois governments were bent on inflicting the maximum of harm to socialism. This was always at the back of their minds when shaping international solutions and framing policy vis-à-vis Germany.

The capitalist world would not abandon its plans of crushing socialism by force of arms after the defeat of the foreign armed intervention against the new-born Soviet state. Monopolists in the United States, Britain and France burned the midnight oil in devising fresh anti-Soviet military gambles. Needful of manpower to effect their schemes, they fixed their eyes on Germany. Reactionary Germany appealed to them by dint of its high war-industrial potential, its ability to engage considerable armies, its militarist traditions, and the brutality and blood-lust of its ruling class, inclined to terrorise its own population and the people in occupied territories.

Step by step, the policymakers of the United States, Britain and France worked out schemes to utilise Germany and Japan for their own ends. A war by Germany and Japan against the Soviet Union was to kill two birds with one stone—Germany and Japan would wipe out the U.S.S.R., while Soviet resistance would weaken Germany and Japan, their bitter rivals.

It was the American monopolists who initiated this project, for they looked upon the Soviet Union with hate-filled eyes and were eager to dispose of Germany and Japan. The doubts entertained on this score by the ruling groups in Britain and France were gradually forced into the background, though the struggle of the U.S.A., Britain and France among themselves for their respective imperialist interests remained at its usual high pitch. Between the

two world wars the imperialist contradictions of the United States and Britain were for years uppermost among the other antagonisms prevailing in the capitalist world.

The American imperialists launched their programme for employing Germany against the Soviet Union through the Dawes Plan, a plan for the rehabilitation of Germany's heavy industries and war potential with lavish U.S. credits.

What the rulers of the United States, Britain and France entirely overlooked in the pursuit of their anti-Soviet scheme were the interests of the German and Japanese imperialists. The German imperialists, for one, dreamed of revenge. The moment the First World War ended, they began preparing for a second one. Gustav Krupp, the German war industrialist, noted that no time was lost after the signing of the Versailles Treaty to lay a "scientific and basic groundwork in order to be ready again to work for the German Armed Forces at the appointed hour without loss of time or experience."<sup>1</sup>

German policy, explicitly formulated in 1925 by the then Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, aimed at making the most of the possibilities presented by Western policy and at furthering Germany's own capitalist interests. This, in itself, was a source of conflict between Germany and its Western helpmates.

The disposition of forces in the Western world was completed long before the outbreak of the Second World War. On the one hand, there was Germany, Italy and Japan. Seeking a re-division of the world, these powers were the immediate initiators of aggression. On the other hand, there were the United States, Britain and France, whose governments acted as helpmates of fascist aggression and as provocateurs of international conflicts.

For all the difference in their specific plans, the imperialist powers, drifting farther and farther apart into two

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<sup>1</sup> *The International Military Tribunal* (henceforth referred to as *IMT*), Nuremberg, 1947, Vol. II, p. 288.

military coalitions, were in the final analysis but one camp—the camp of imperialist reaction and aggression.

The other camp, that of peace, democracy and socialism, was at the time represented by the Soviet Union, and by the friends of peace and social progress in the capitalist countries, who supported the U.S.S.R.

In its peace efforts, the Soviet Union acted upon the premise that universal peace could be preserved through the concerted work of nations and governments. It called on the European peoples and their rulers to join hands in counteracting the drift towards a new war.

## 2

Grave complications arose in the capitalist world when the world-wide economic crisis broke out in 1929. This unprecedentedly acute and destructive crisis added sharpness to all the contradictions of capitalism. It accelerated the disintegration of the Versailles-Washington system and the build-up of a new world war.

It is one of the distinctive features of the past war that it did not at once assume a world-wide scale. It grew into a world war as late as 1939-41, when it involved one Great Power after another. This was preceded by a series of wars in the time span between 1931 and 1939.

Although each of these armed conflicts was, in a way, of a local nature, all of them combined to form the links of a single chain.

The chain begins with Japan's invasion of North-East China in 1931 and runs through the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-45 to its culmination in Japan's surrender in September 1945. Italy's rape of Ethiopia in 1935 is one of its links, and Italy's capitulation in 1943 is another. There is an equally distinct connection between 1936, when the Italo-German intervention began in Spain, and the instrument of unconditional surrender signed by Germany in 1945, which terminated the war in Europe.



The historical string of new wars covered 1931 to 1945, although the world-wide hostilities were a mere part of it, namely, the part covering 1939 to 1945.

The wars fought in the early stage of this period had features all their own, though, to be sure, when the war grew into a world-wide conflagration these features were further projected. To begin with, all the wars were begun by the fascist countries, who were bent on crushing the working-class and national-liberation movements, on enslaving the peoples and redividing the world in their own favour. The peoples fought gallantly in defence of their national independence and freedom, the interests of democracy and against the most reactionary detachment of imperialists—the fascists.

The policy of “non-interference” and “neutrality” followed by the governments of the United States, Britain and France was, in effect, aimed at encouraging aggression and destroying, with fascist hands, all the democratic, national-liberation and revolutionary forces, especially the Soviet Union. It was a policy that led to an armed conflict between the two groups of imperialist powers, because Germany, Italy and Japan were making the most of Western policy to assault the holdings of the U.S.A., Britain and France. The U.S., British and French monopolists were willing to suffer this so long as they still indulged themselves in the hope of employing the fascist powers for their own ends.

Up to a certain point, far from obstructing the aggressors, they gave them every comfort and support. This policy of theirs is reflected in many of the official and semi-official documents of that time. For example, when Japan overran North-East China (Manchuria) in 1931, Herbert Hoover, then President of the United States, saw fit to explain why he sided with the Japanese (though the invasion obviously prejudiced U.S. interests). “First,” he wrote in a memorandum to his Cabinet, “this is primarily a controversy between China and Japan. The U.S. has never set

out to preserve peace among other nations by force. . . . Suppose Japan had come out boldly and said: We can no longer endure these treaties and we must give notice that China has failed to establish the internal order these treaties contemplated. Half her area is Bolshevist and co-operating with Russia. . . . With Bolshevist Russia to the north and a possible Bolshevist China on our flank, our independence is in jeopardy. Either the signatories of the Nine-Power Pact must join with us to restore order in China or we must do it as an act of self-preservation. . . . America certainly would not join in such a proposal and we could not raise much objection."<sup>1</sup>

The fascist *Putsch* in Germany was a prominent milestone along the road to the Second World War. Yet the rulers of the United States, Britain and France were far removed from the idea of opposing Germany's development into a seat of war. On the contrary, they did their utmost to expedite it. U.S., British and French monopolists had given the Hitler gang moral and material support long before the nazis seized power, and they multiplied their support when Hitler became Chancellor and launched his brutal reign of terror against the country's progressives. American historians pointed out that U.S. and British statesmen were of a single mind that "Germany ought to become the master of the European Continent. . . . National Socialism was the only bulwark against Communism."<sup>2</sup>

But though Hitler came to power with the active assistance of the American and British monopolists, he did not by any means intend to make of Germany a mere tool of Anglo-American policy. German imperialism had its own goals. It wanted the world completely redivided. It wanted to crush Anglo-American competition. It wanted a grand

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<sup>1</sup> Sara R. Smith, *The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1948, pp. 149-50.

<sup>2</sup> Richard W. Van Alstyne, *American Diplomacy in Action*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1947, p. 399.

German colonial empire. It wanted world hegemony. The most important item on the aggressive adventurist programme of the nazis was to conquer and enslave the peoples of the Soviet Union and to destroy the Soviet state, the chief obstacle to world-wide imperialist domination.

Hitler, quite deliberately, did not disguise his anti-Soviet plans. His *Mein Kampf*, a kind of programme of the German fascists, said in just so many words:

"If it is a matter of land and soil in Europe, this could by and large be won solely at Russia's expense. The new Reich would then have to embark once more upon the road followed by the erstwhile Teutonic knights."<sup>1</sup>

The nazis broadcast their anti-Soviet designs to win the trust of the U.S. and British monopolists and to get more aid from them. In the close circle of his coadjutors, Hitler boasted:

"I've got to play ball with capitalism and keep the Versailles powers in line by holding aloft the bogey of Bolshevism—make them believe that a nazi Germany is the last bulwark against the Red flood. That's the only way to come through the danger period, to get rid of Versailles and re-arm."<sup>2</sup>

Hitler secured his object. The governments of the United States, Britain and France set out on a tricky political game. They expected to outwit Germany and use it for their ends. They thought they could hoodwink the fascist dictator easily enough. German diplomats reported to Berlin that the Western governments were firmly convinced Germany would confine her aggression to the East and would accept Western support. American and British generals gave Hitler friendly tips and suggested the order in which he should make his seizures. Top British military men, for example, recommended that Germany begin with

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<sup>1</sup> *Mein Kampf*, München, 1942, S. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Kurt G. W. Ludecke, *I Knew Hitler*, New York, 1938, p. 468.

Czechoslovakia, and then proceed to occupy Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

Hitler's programme of world conquest was based on the man-hating fascist "racial theory", which postulated the extermination and enslavement of other nations by the "elect" German race. The German fascists had a comprehensive plan for subjugating and wiping out the Slav peoples. They also preached racial hatred for the French nation and the other peoples of Western Europe and America.

Militarily the nazis laid an accent on surprise and mobility to ensure rapid invasion and occupation. If he were ever to attack an enemy, Hitler told his generals, he would never do it as Mussolini was doing it. He would not hold months-long talks and make drawn-out preparations. He would act as he had always acted—like lightning in the dark of night.<sup>2</sup>

The German imperialists and their loyal servants, the nazis, intended to use the traitors whom the German intelligence service planted in other countries. Hitler pinned great hopes on them. "We shall have friends who will help us in all enemy countries," he boasted. "We shall know how to obtain such friends. Mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecisiveness, panic: these are our weapons." Reflecting upon his plans of blitzkrieg and fifth column, he added with enthusiasm:

"Within a few minutes France, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia will be robbed of their leading men. An army without a general staff! All political leaders out of the way! The confusion will be beyond belief. But I shall long have had relations with the men who will form a new government—a government to suit me."<sup>3</sup>

Acting upon their plan of terror, the nazis proclaimed the slogan of "total war". It was not to be merely a war of

<sup>1</sup> Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg, *Erinnerungen eines Militärattachés*, London, 1933-1937, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> A. Müller, *Germany's War Machine*, 1936, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, London, 1942, pp. 17, 19.

world conquest, but one in which no distinction would be made between rear and battlefield, the army and the civilian population.

While Hitler Germany put its machinery of war preparation into full gear, the Western Powers blandly continued to bank on using that country for their own ends. From time to time, it is true, the imperialist contradictions burst to the surface. The British conservative journal, *The Fortnightly Review*, for example, said with alarm in 1933:

“Even today Germany is economically the most powerful nation in Europe; she has the best equipped and most efficient industries, and is ready to swamp the world with her cheap goods. . . . She is a serious competitor and an economic menace not only to Central Europe, but to all European nations alike, above all to her chief customer and industrial rival Great Britain.”<sup>1</sup>

But the voices of sober men drowned in the fairly well-organised chorus of U.S. and British ruling elements extolling “good relations” with Hitler Germany.

Indeed, the German imperialists had no reason to complain about a lack of human kindness on the part of the American and British monopolists. The financial and economic bonds between the German and American monopolies expanded considerably after the fascist coup in Germany. The American imperialists went to great pains to strengthen the war-industrial potential of fascist Germany and to revive its giant war establishment.

U.S. concerns in Germany were busily producing weapons of war, armaments and motors. A stream of arms and provisions flowed generously from the United States to Germany. American firms had the blessing of their government to sell the nazis patents and licences for the designing and manufacture of the latest types of arms, aircraft motors, warplanes and radio equipment. They made available to Germany patents for the manufacture

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<sup>1</sup> *The Fortnightly Review*, January 1, 1933, pp. 46, 47.

of synthetic rubber, synthetic gasoline and new explosives, and helped organise the production of aluminium, magnesium, beryllium and other important strategic materials.

The British monopolies did their best to keep pace with their United States counterparts. Their most serious and far-reaching step was the conclusion of a naval agreement with Germany in 1935. A bilateral violation of the Versailles Treaty, the agreement entitled Germany to build a navy, a submarine fleet included, and stipulated considerable British financial, economic, scientific and technical help. The French imperialists, too, did their bit in the rehabilitation of Germany's war potential.

Apart from financial and economic aid, U.S., British and French ruling circles gave Hitler Germany diplomatic and political support. By so doing, they aimed above all at isolating the Soviet Union on the international scene.

The imperialists of the United States, Britain and France flouted the interests of their peoples to spend billions of dollars on helping the German monopolists hand-feed Hitlerism and arm the fascist armies. It was they who encouraged the nazi aggressors in their claims to Austria and Czechoslovakia, prodding them closer and closer to the Soviet border and turning down out of hand all Soviet proposals for joint deterrence of the fascist invaders.

Not a single bourgeois state chose to safeguard the security of nations against the looming fascist aggressions by a consistent and firm policy.

The Soviet Union was alone in its efforts to bridle the fascists and uphold the peace.

But the forces of the Soviet Union alone, then the only socialist country in the world, albeit backed by friends of peace in other countries, were insufficient to thwart the military plans of the aggressive imperialist countries. If the governments and peoples of a few capitalist countries had joined the fight for peace, war could have been averted. The Soviet Union made the proposal of establishing a united front of nations and governments

against a new world war. That, in effect, was the purport of the Soviet proposals for a system of collective security in Europe.

But the aggressors and their abettors reacted to the idea of collective security with undisguised contempt. The Hitler Government announced officially that it did not approve the notion and opposed all agreements of mutual assistance against aggression. This was only to be expected. Its opposition to collective security stemmed from its aggressive intentions. But the United States and Britain, too, came out flatly against collective security.

Late in March 1935 Sir John Simon, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, visited Hitler in Berlin. His talks with the nazi chief culminated in a united Anglo-German front against collective security. On his return home, Sir John turned in an approving report of Hitler's opinion:

"Herr Hitler made it plain," he reported, "that Germany was not prepared to sign an Eastern Pact under which Germany would be bound to mutual assistance. In particular Germany is not prepared to enter into a pact of mutual assistance between herself and Russia. . . . In another connection, however, Herr Hitler dwelt on the difficulty of identifying the aggressor. Asked as to his view if some of the other parties to such a pact entered into an agreement of mutual assistance as among themselves, Herr Hitler stated that he considered this idea was dangerous."<sup>1</sup>

Joint German, British and United States pressure compelled one European country after another to turn down the Soviet collective security proposals. But popular pressure obliged the governments of France and Czechoslovakia to sign mutual aid treaties with the Soviet Union in 1935. If these governments had later treated their commitments in good faith, the treaties would have served as a barrier to nazi aggression. However, the government of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, April 10, 1935.

France, and that of Czechoslovakia, were faithless in their attitude to treaties with the Soviet Union from the very beginning.

The Soviet Union applied strenuous efforts to induce the League of Nations to act as a collective guardian of peace and to adopt effective measures against fascist aggression, which had already begun. But these efforts, too, were of no avail. The governments of Britain and France, which played first fiddle in the League of Nations, were more concerned with clearing the way for aggression, rather than curbing it. This was why the League of Nations displayed indifference to the Soviet proposals and deliberately demonstrated its impotence. It tainted itself for all time by having furthered aggression, a fact that ultimately sealed its fate.

Nor was it possible to achieve working-class unity. The working-class movement in the capitalist countries was split by the Right-wing leadership of the Social-Democratic parties, which unfailingly rejected all Communist offers of joint action against fascism and war. And that at a time when the workers clamoured insistently for unity. The help rendered by working people to Republican Spain was a model of international proletarian solidarity. Patriots of 54 countries—Communists, Socialists, Catholics, members of various petty-bourgeois parties and independents—fought shoulder to shoulder against the fascists in Spanish battlefields. They knew that by combating Italo-German fascism they were defending their own countries and peoples against the tyranny of imperialist conquest.

Consistent with their peace aims, the Soviet people rendered support to the peoples of Ethiopia, Spain and China.

The struggle of the Soviet Union for peace had an immense international impact. But for all the efforts in behalf of peace, utmost war preparedness to ward off a possible imperialist aggression was the order of the day for the Soviet Armed Forces and the Soviet people as a whole.



## *Chapter Two*

### THE MUNICH DEAL AND ITS AFTERMATH

#### 1

Bent on multiplying their acts of aggression and setting the stage for a world war, Germany and Italy established their warlike Berlin-Rome "Axis" arrangement on October 25, 1936. The two fascist powers agreed on a joint course of action against the European nations. A month later, on November 25, Germany signed a military compact with Japan, joined by Italy the following year.

To camouflage their true aims of world conquest, and wishful as yet to retain the favour of ruling elements in the United States, Britain and France, the fascists named their pact "anti-Comintern". The official text of their treaty committed the signatories to combating "Comintern activities" at home and abroad, while secret clauses provided for joint warfare against the Soviet Union.

Despite its crude "anti-Comintern" camouflage, the pact was essentially effective. It gave the fascist aggressors an opportunity of executing their warlike schemes and fanning the flames of war, which gradually involved fresh countries and regions of the globe.

Came 1938—the last of the pre-war years in Europe. War already raged on immense territories. The Chinese people were bravely resisting a Japanese imperialist invasion. The working people of Spain were battling heroically against

fascist aggression. But most of Europe was still at peace. The Great Powers had not yet come to grips.

The uneven economic and political development of capitalism added fuel to the rivalries of the imperialist powers. Again, as before the First World War, Germany forged ahead economically and was challenging British and French interests in the world with telling success. The threat to the United States was growing fast. Germany was ahead of its European imperialist rivals in all the key economic fields. The situation grew very acute after the autumn of 1937, when a new economic crisis broke out in the United States, Britain and France, sparing the most aggressive countries, Germany, Italy and Japan, which had put their economies on a military footing.

The economies of the European capitalist countries in 1937 are illustrated by the following figures:

1937 Output of Capitalist Countries<sup>1</sup>

	Iron (mn. t)	Steel (mn. t)	Aluminium (thous. t)	Automobiles (thous.)
Germany . . . . .	16.0	19.4	127.6	331
Britain . . . . .	8.6	13.2	19.3	504
France . . . . .	7.9	7.9	34.5	227
Italy . . . . .	0.8	2.1	22.9	72

Germany, as we see, was ahead of Britain and France in the output of iron, steel and aluminium. Its lead in aluminium production, that most important strategic item, was especially great. German exports had outstripped those of France and caught up those of Britain. The threat of war mounted rapidly for these economic reasons.

The U.S., British and French governments sought as before to resolve their imperialist contradictions with Ger-

<sup>1</sup> Data released by the respective countries.

many by channelling its aggressions eastward against the Soviet Union. But in spite of their overtures, Hitler was somewhat slow. So they decided to prod him on to fresh acts of aggression. A series of secret talks was held in November 1937 between spokesmen of the Western Powers and the nazi chiefs.

Lord Halifax, then Lord Privy Seal and later Foreign Secretary, conferred with Hitler in Obersalzberg. French ministers had conversations with Welzceck, the German Ambassador to Paris, and President Beneš of Czechoslovakia held talks with representatives of the Gestapo. Last but not least, seven prominent American industrialists and politicians—Du Pont, Vandenberg, Sloan and others—had a secret conference in San Francisco with Baron von Tiplerskirch and Baron von Killinger, two nazi spokesmen, in November 1937.

At all these conferences the Western democracies praised Hitler for his terroristic handling of Germany's foremost men and made his head swim from ornate talk about Germany's mission as a "bulwark against Bolshevism". They made broad hints to Hitler about an Eastern campaign and urged him to speed his plans of conquering Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland in order to reinforce his war potential and seize important bridgeheads for subsequent aggressions. The American monopolists went the farthest in their secret compact with the nazis.

At the San Francisco conference they and the German spokesmen adopted a joint decision to the effect that Germany and America should collaborate in order to "organise giant markets in Russia and China".<sup>1</sup> This was obviously a step towards a negotiated division of the world among the biggest imperialist claimants. But the situation prevailing at the time, marked by a sharpening of the imperialist contradictions, prevented these plans from being realised.

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<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record*, Aug. 20, 1942, pp. A-3364-3366.

The United States policymakers wanted to head an anti-Soviet bloc of imperialist powers, of which Hitler Germany was to have been the main assault force. This was the purpose behind the five-power conference which the U.S. Government suggested holding in Washington in January 1938, involving the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The U.S. Government thereby wished to take the matter of reaching a compact with the fascist aggressors into its own hands. But this did not suit the British ruling class, who had similar plans of their own. The idea of a Washington conference was not, therefore, fated to be realised. But the essentials of this plan were later translated into reality in a somewhat different composition at a conference in Munich.

Hitler Germany had certain qualms about seizing Austria. Its chiefs were not sure an aggressive act of such dimensions could be brought off with impunity. Their plan of a German invasion of Austria, known as Operation Otto, contained military provisions in case the European powers retaliated. U.S. and British spokesmen knew about these nazi fears and hastened to allay Hitler's doubts. Ex-President Herbert Hoover was dispatched to Europe. In Berlin he met Hitler and Göring, inquired into their intentions and approved their plans of aggression. On his return to the United States, Hoover said that neither Germany nor any of the other fascist states wished war with the Western democracies so long as the latter did not obstruct fascism's advance to the East.

Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador to Germany, visited Hitler as well. He told the Führer that Britain was willing to give him a free hand against Austria, Czechoslovakia and Danzig. Prime Minister Chamberlain said in Parliament that the League of Nations should not delude small and weak nations into thinking that they will be given an assurance of security against aggression.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, February 23, 1938.

In another public speech the British Prime Minister said nothing could help a small country if it were invaded, unless it had powerful friends willing to be its guardians and protectors.<sup>1</sup> Austria, he added, had no such friends.

On March 11, 1938, German troops overran Austria, and two days later annexed it to Germany as an eastern province. No capitalist country lodged so much as a formal protest against this act of aggression. Britain and France hastened to recognise the *Anschluss*. The United States shut down its embassy in Vienna and opened a consulate instead. State Secretary Cordell Hull had a friendly talk with Dieckhoff, the German Ambassador to Washington. The latter reported to Berlin that "from a few questions which he asked, it was apparent that he thoroughly understands our action".<sup>2</sup> The U.S. monopolies reacted to Austria's conquest by granting Germany a number of strategically important industrial licences. The Vatican, too, made no move against the seizure of Catholic Austria by fascist Germany.

By their support of the nazi annexation of Austria, the bourgeois rulers of Britain and France helped Germany entrench itself throughout Central Europe and betrayed the national interests of their own countries. There are countless facts and documents to prove the immense strategic value to the nazis of the conquest of Austria.

Suffice it to quote Jodl, Hitler's chief of operations, who said in a secret lecture to Gauleiters in November 1943: "The Austrian *Anschluss* brought with it not only fulfilment of an old national aim, but also had the effect both of reinforcing our fighting strength and of materially improving our strategic position. Whereas until then the terri-

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, March 7, 1938, p. 1565.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy (1918-1945)*. From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Series D, (1937-1945), Vol. I, from Neurath to Ribbentrop (Sept. 1937-Sept. 1938), London, 1949, p. 583.

tory of Czechoslovakia had projected in a menacing way right into Germany (a wasp waist in the direction of France and air base for the Allies, in particular Russia), Czechoslovakia herself was now enclosed by pincers. Her own strategic position had now become so unfavourable that she was bound to fall a victim to any vigorous attack before effective aid from the West could be expected to arrive.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Anschluss* of Austria did, indeed, greatly facilitate an aggressive nazi policy vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia, which was caught in the German “pincers” north and south. However, assistance from the Soviet Union could have improved Czechoslovakia’s plight very substantially. This was the reason why the Western Powers did their utmost after the Austrian *Anschluss* to hand Czechoslovakia over to Hitler without an armed conflict.

Austria was also strategically important because it was situated in the heart of Europe and served as a kind of bridge for Germany to Italy, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the other Balkan countries. All subsequent German moves in South-East Europe made the utmost use of this weighty telling strategic advantage.

Here is what two American historians, Haines and Hoffman, said about the bearing of the Austrian *Anschluss* on later developments:

“*Anschluss* was an event of primary significance in the history of these years of international anarchy. It placed Germany in a position to outflank Czechoslovakia and to dismember her when the time was ripe; it placed Germany on the frontier of the Balkans and enabled her to press the new *Drang nach Osten*; and by winning these two advantages it permitted the nazis greater latitude in prosecuting the war of nerves in which they had already shown themselves so adept. Moreover, *Anschluss* bound Italy inextricably to Germany. Mussolini’s freedom of action had evaporated; he was at Hitler’s mercy. . . . Finally, it must be

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<sup>1</sup> IMT, Vol IV, p. 419.

emphasised that *Anschluss* depreciated the strength and prestige of Britain and France."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government sounded a timely warning about the grave consequences of Austria's conquest by Hitler Germany. Unlike the bourgeois governments, it publicly condemned the German aggression and appealed for joint action against the invaders. In a statement to the press, later officially forwarded to all governments, the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Relations said:

"This time violence was committed in the heart of Europe, creating an unmistakable danger not only to the eleven countries now bordering on the aggressor, but to all European countries. More than that, to all countries. So far, it is the territorial integrity and, in any case, the political, economic and cultural independence of the smaller nations that are in peril. Their unavoidable enslavement, however, will pave the way for pressure, and even attack, upon the bigger countries as well."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Government suggested that the powers at once discuss in the League of Nations, or outside it, appropriate practical measures. It appealed to all countries, especially the Great Powers, to find a way for the "collective salvation of the peace".<sup>3</sup>

The British Foreign Office hastened to submit a reply signed by a low-ranking official. It said that discussion of collective measures against aggression were thought irrelevant by the British Government, because it was not likely to have a beneficial effect on the prospects of European peace.<sup>4</sup>

The British rejection did not come as a surprise. The British Government wanted no part of any collective meas-

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<sup>1</sup> C. Grove Haines and Ross J. S. Hoffman, *The Origins and Background of the Second World War*, Oxford University Press, 1943, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Документы и материалы кануна второй мировой войны*, Госполитиздат, Москва, 1948, т. I, стр. 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, стр. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, стр. 106.

ures, for, like the U.S. and French governments, it was bent on encouraging Hitler's aggressions. The fate of Czechoslovakia hung in the balance.

## 2

Reactionary groups in the United States, Britain and France egged Hitler on to fresh violence even before he had digested his first victim—Austria. The *Daily Express* declared the Austrian *Anschluss* had altered nothing. Austria, it said, was a German country even prior to Hitler's incursion. Britain, it said, should mind its own affairs, adding that Czechoslovakia was not one of them. The British press thus delivered Czechoslovakia to Hitler on a silver platter. But that was easier said than done. The peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union, the patriotism of the Czechoslovaks and democratic public opinion in the bourgeois countries constituted a strong obstacle to Czechoslovakia's seizure by Hitler. This is why the struggle over the Czechoslovakian question took all of several months.

At first the German imperialists thought they would have to make an armed attack on Czechoslovakia. "It is my unalterable decision," wrote Hitler in a directive, "to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the near future."<sup>1</sup> An operational plan named Plan Grün was drawn up. The assassination of the German Ambassador in Prague was to have been a pretext for the attack.

But the Czechoslovakian people were determined to defend their country. The Soviet Union declared its readiness to render Czechoslovakia due support under the mutual assistance treaty. This dampened the bellicose spirits of the fascist conquistadores. The prospect of a drawn-out armed conflict did not suit either the nazis or their protectors among the ruling elements in the United States, Britain and France. This is why Plan Grün was

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, p. 43.



scrapped and an intensive search began for a non-military "solution" of the Czechoslovakian problem.

United States, British and French diplomats had their hands full. Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles and the banker Bernard Baruch travelled to Europe. Both of them tried to prevail on Czechoslovakia to satisfy Hitler's demands. Welles warned the French ministers against getting involved in a conflict with Germany over Czechoslovakia. The U.S.A., he said, would not help them with a single soldier or a single sou of credit. The U.S. ambassadors in Europe—William Bullitt in Paris, Joseph Kennedy in London and Hugh Wilson in Berlin—were laying the ground for Czechoslovakia's surrender to Hitler Germany.

The British and French governments formed a joint mission and placed Lord Runciman, the prominent British pro-Hitler diplomat, at its head. The mission was authorised to work out recommendations for a Czechoslovakian solution. These were quickly announced. The Runciman mission insisted that the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia be handed over to Germany, that all anti-fascist propaganda be prohibited in Czechoslovakia, that the Czechs abrogate the Soviet-Czechoslovakian mutual assistance treaty, and that Czechoslovakia sign a highly unfavourable economic agreement with Germany.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met Hitler twice to discuss the Runciman proposals, and each time made far-reaching concessions. At about this time Hugh Wilson, the U.S. Ambassador in Berlin, went to Prague to induce the Czechoslovakian Government to capitulate. Under joint U.S., British and French diplomatic pressure the Czechoslovakian Government of President Beneš consented to deliver the country into nazi hands. The Czech bourgeois ruling elements shunned the prospect of a popular liberation struggle against the nazi invaders. Fearful for their class interests, they sacrificed their country and people, rejected the assistance offered by the Soviet Union, and preferred the disgrace of surrender. It was an act of national betrayal.

The Soviet Union came out staunchly in defence of Czechoslovakia's national integrity. It reiterated its readiness to render Czechoslovakia support in accordance with the treaty. The text of the treaty contained a reservation, inserted at the time of signing on Beneš's insistence. The reservation said that the undertakings stipulated in the Soviet-Czechoslovakian treaty were valid so long as France would honour its obligations vis-à-vis either the Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia. At the time of the greatest strain, when it developed that France was not going to honour its commitments, the Soviet Union said it would not take advantage of this reservation to withhold help. The Soviet Union officially declared that it was ready to render Czechoslovakia military assistance even if France did not do so and even if Boyar Rumania and the Beck regime in Poland refused passage to Soviet troops. However, the Soviet Government stressed, its country could help Czechoslovakia on the one condition that Czechoslovakia itself resisted, and requested Soviet assistance.

The imperialists tried to dampen the effect which the firm Soviet stand had on the friends of peace. World imperialist reaction prompted the rulers of Japan to stage a major anti-Soviet provocation. In the summer of 1938 the Japanese militarists mounted an armed attack on Soviet territory near Lake Hasan. The attack was to test the preparedness of the Soviet Armed Forces and weaken the Soviet effort in behalf of Czechoslovakia.

But the Hasan adventure backfired. The Soviet troops smashed the invading Japanese force and compelled the Japanese Government to sue for a cease-fire in a conflict they had themselves instigated.

It was a time of crisis for Czechoslovakia. Its abandonment to Hitler's tender mercies was a foregone conclusion. But few knew about it yet, and the monopolists were apprehensive of the possible consequences, because they knew how great the public anger would be. Furthermore, the deal had not yet been consummated. They did not have

it in mind simply to surrender Czechoslovakia to Hitler. What they intended to do was to sell it. In other words, the governments of the United States, Britain and France wanted to be compensated for abandoning Czechoslovakia. Hitler was to promise he would not undertake aggression in the West and would concentrate on the East.

The American imperialists again tried to assume leadership in the Western deal with Hitler. A series of letters by the President was devoted to this objective. But the initiative of dealing with Germany was securely in British hands, and it was farthest from the mind of the British Government to yield it to anyone. The United States was left out in the cold when Britain and France conferred with the nazis in Munich.

To squash popular resistance to the criminal deal with Hitler, the British and French governments performed a far-reaching act of political distraction: they intimidated their nations with the spectre of war. The Munich Conference was preceded by a show of military preparation in Britain and France, involving call-up of reservists, distribution of gas masks to the population, building of air-raid shelters in the main streets of the bigger cities, black-out exercises, etc. These preparations were meant to persuade the people that it was better to bow to Hitler at Czechoslovakia's expense than go to war. Yet no such dilemma really existed at the time, because Germany was not as yet prepared for a big war and was itself anxious to avoid an armed conflict.

### 3

The Munich Conference of September 29-30 was attended by Chamberlain and Halifax, Daladier and Bonnet, Hitler and Ribbentrop, Mussolini and Ciano. Hitler recalled in his opening address that he had said in a recent Sportpalast speech that German troops would enter Czechoslovakia not later than October 1. He said the purpose of the

conference was to settle the Czechoslovakian problem without resort to arms by either side. He did not bother to conceal his anxiety, and called for immediate action.

Hitler's reference to his Sportpalast statement of September 26 was not accidental. He had said that Germany's claims to Czechoslovakia were the "last claims" his country would make. Once they were met, he said, he would turn eastward. After the Sudeten-German question was settled, Hitler said, he would have no further territorial claims in Europe. He gave to understand that by "Europe" he meant only the western part of the continent. The governments of the United States, Britain and France had commented favourably on the Sportpalast speech before the Munich Conference. That was evident from the tenor of Prime Minister Chamberlain's speech in Parliament on September 28.

Hitler's reference to the Sportpalast speech at the Munich Conference was also favourably received. Chamberlain, Mussolini, and Daladier hastened to acquiesce, thanked Hitler for his frankness and agreed that it was necessary to act with the maximum speed. French Premier Daladier confessed that he had given his consent to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia without consulting the Czech Government and in disregard of the Franco-Czechoslovakian treaty of alliance. Chamberlain spoke several times. He intimated that the Czechoslovakian arrangement was viewed by Britain as a step towards Anglo-German rapprochement and that it would have a bearing on the further development of European politics.

The text of the Munich agreement was quickly discussed and signed by the Four Powers. Nominally, it gave Germany title only to that part of Czechoslovakian territory which had a German national minority. But transfer of this territory meant that Germany would control the natural frontiers of Czechoslovakia and the permanent fortifications that country had built in that area. Czechoslovakia was not to destroy these fortifications and was barred from evac-

uating available equipment. The agreement envisaged a plebiscite in the rest of Czechoslovakia, and satisfaction of Polish and Hungarian territorial claims. Once it met these terms, Czechoslovakia would receive due international guarantees for its "new frontiers". In effect, Munich completely destroyed the Czechoslovakian state and engineered the take-over of all Czech land by Germany, Poland and Hungary.

When the conference was over and its participants left the conference hall, the Czechoslovakian delegation was summoned and shown the concluded agreement. The French spokesman declared bluntly that final sentence had been passed and could not be appealed or modified. Czechoslovakia's fate was sealed.

Next day Hitler and Chamberlain met again and issued a declaration stating that their two countries would never go to war against each other. A similar Franco-German declaration was discussed, but signed somewhat later, on December 6, 1938.

There were thus two distinct elements in the Munich deal. On the one hand, the Western Powers were eager to channel German aggression eastwards, and decided to abandon Czechoslovakia to Germany's tender mercies by way of compensation for its undertaking to fight the Soviet Union, rather than Britain and France. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia was to reinforce Germany's war potential.

Hitler's top spy in France, Otto Abetz, who was preparing the ground for a Nazi invasion of the Western countries, wrote in his diary that Germany guaranteed the *status quo* on the Rhine in compensation for the free hand it was given in the East.<sup>1</sup>

The American imperialists were frankly delighted over the Munich betrayal. William Hudson, head of General Motors, sent Hitler a telegram of congratulation. State

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<sup>1</sup> Otto Abetz, *Das offene Problem*, Köln, Greven Verlag, 1951, S. 94.

Secretary Cordell Hull said that its results afforded a "universal sense of relief".<sup>1</sup> He sent congratulations to Kennedy, Bullitt and Carr for their "able" work.<sup>2</sup> U.S. Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles described the attitude of the U.S. ruling quarters as follows:

"In those pre-war years, great financial and commercial interests of the Western democracies, including many in the United States, were firm in the belief that war between the Soviet Union and Hitlerite Germany could only be favourable to their own interests. They maintained that Russia would necessarily be defeated, and with this defeat communism would be destroyed; also that Germany would be so weakened as a result of the conflict that for many years thereafter she would be incapable of any real threat to the rest of the world."<sup>3</sup>

The disgraceful Munich deal was presented to the people as a supreme act of peace. British and French war preparations were halted, and the press extolled the Munich "peacemakers". Yet the shameful betrayal was not at all designed to instil peace. It was the prelude to a new world war.

"The Munich agreement," writes Herbert Feis, the U.S. historian, "had allowed Hitler to tear Czechoslovakia apart, leaving Poland and the Soviet Union exposed to German assault."<sup>4</sup> The West-German historian Michael Freund admits in his *Deutsche Geschichte* that "the whole world toppled when the soil of Bohemia trembled under the boots of marching German battalions. The cornerstone of the arrangement erected by the Versailles Treaty tumbled to the ground. The road to the East was open for the German Reich".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs*, New York, 1948, Vol. I, p. 595.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 596.

<sup>3</sup> Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision*, New York and London, 1945, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Feis, *Churchill—Roosevelt—Stalin. The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, London, 1957, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Freund, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Gütersloh, 1960, S. 623.

The rulers of the United States, Britain and France still hoped to use Germany for their own ends. The Munich pact was the culmination in their policy of encouraging fascist aggression. The Czechoslovakian people were no more than a coin of exchange.

The Communist Parties in all countries condemned the Munich deal. They called on the peoples to combat the rising danger of a world war.

In March 1939 Hitler Germany completed its seizure of Czechoslovakia. The governments of the United States, Britain and France hastened to sanction this fresh act of nazi aggression. Chamberlain said in Parliament that he refused to consider the take-over of Czechoslovakia as an aggression.<sup>1</sup>

The capture of Czechoslovakia bettered the strategic position of Hitler Germany and added to its war potential. Göring spoke about it at length to Mussolini a month later. He stressed that the acquisition of Czechoslovakia was creating highly favourable conditions for an attack on Poland. "The heavy armament of Czechoslovakia shows, in any case," he said, "how dangerous this could have been, even after Munich, in the event of a serious conflict. The situation of both Axis countries was ameliorated—among other reasons—because of the economic possibilities which resulted from the transfer to Germany of the great productive capacity of Czechoslovakia. That contributes toward a considerable strengthening of the Axis against the Western Powers. Furthermore, Germany now need not keep ready a single division for protection against that country in case of a bigger conflict."<sup>2</sup>

Soviet moves in defence of Czechoslovakia were moves in behalf of world peace and the national independence of all the European countries. The Soviet Government was the only government to refuse to recognise Germany's

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 15, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, pp. 170-71.

seizure of Czechoslovakia. In a note to Germany on March 18, 1939, the Soviet Government said it refused to recognise as legal and consistent with the principles of self-determination the inclusion of Bohemia in the German Reich, and, in one way or another, also of Slovakia. It qualified the occupation of Czechoslovakia by German troops as an arbitrary act of violence and aggression.

The seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia altered the relation of strength among the capitalist countries. Hitler Germany's superiority over Britain and France in all the key economic fields became more pronounced. This may be seen from the following table:

Production of European Capitalist Countries in 1939<sup>1</sup>

	Iron (mn. t)	Steel (mn. t)	Aluminium (thous. t)	Automobiles (thous.)
Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia . . . . .	20.1	23.2	200.0	420
Britain . . . . .	8.3	13.8	25.0	493
France . . . . .	7.4	7.9	50.0	230
Italy . . . . .	1.1	2.3	34.2	77

It is only natural that in the circumstances the imperialist contradictions between Germany and its Western abettors increased rapidly. Yet the United States, Britain and France sought as before to resolve them at the expense of the Soviet Union. The policy of encouraging fascist aggression continued.

Since a section of the German and Italian armed forces was bogged down in Spain, where the struggle of liberation against the fascists was still in progress, the U.S., British and French governments decided to assist Germany in terminating the Spanish war. British and American

<sup>1</sup> Industrial statistics issued by the respective countries.



agents organised a plot in Madrid against the lawful Republican Government, stabbing the people of Spain in the back and helping Franco establish a bloody fascist regime throughout the country. Still earlier, the cruiser *Devonshire* of the British Navy took part in a rebel operation against the Republicans off the island of Minorca.

Hitler Germany took advantage of the favourable situation created by Western abettment, seized Lithuania's Klaipeda area and saddled Rumania with an unequal economic agreement that made it an appendage of Hitler's war economy.

On April 6, 1939, fascist Italy invaded Albania. The Albanians fought back tenaciously and did not cease resistance after the Italian troops occupied the whole country. Once more the Soviet Union was the only country to condemn the aggression, which it described as a new step towards world war.

After overrunning Czechoslovakia, Germany annexed Bohemia and Moravia and set up a puppet government in Slovakia. Germany's intentions with regard to the Transcarpathian Ukraine, which was part of Czechoslovakia, were unclear for a few days. American, British and French reactionary newspapers urged Hitler to "add" the Soviet Ukraine to the Transcarpathian Ukraine, thus prompting him to start a war against the Soviet Union and formulating the motive for one.

The U.S. Ambassador in Paris, William Bullitt, wrote that in due course Germany "will try to take the Ukraine, which is the richest wheat area of the Soviet Union. In the process Germany will extend herself to such a degree that she cannot stand the strain. She will break under it in the end. Similarly, Japan will conquer or attempt to conquer, Siberia, and she in time will break under that strain. But by leaving Russia to her fate England and France will be diverting the threat of Germany from their own lands."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, New York, 1954, Vol. II, p. 519.

The Eighteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party exposed the designs of the warmongers and expressed the determination of the Party and the people to repel a German aggression. Hitler Germany was sensible enough at the time to heed this warning. The German Government conceded the Transcarpathian Ukraine to Hungary, thus disposing of its pretext for a conflict with the Soviet Union, and, at the same time, whetting the appetite of the Hungarian fascists, which paved the way for a closer German-Hungarian alliance.

The German General Staff was completing the plan of an attack on Poland, known as Operation Fall Weiss. On April 11, 1939, this plan was endorsed by Hitler. It envisaged a sudden attack, in which the Polish armed forces would be totally annihilated. In a conversation with Ciano, Hitler said that Poland must be struck down and put out of action for many years.<sup>1</sup>

"In order to forestall an orderly Polish mobilisation", Operation Fall Weiss was to be opened "by surprise with forces which are for the most part armoured and motorised, placed on alert in the neighbourhood of the border. The initial superiority over the Polish frontier guards and surprise, both of which can be expected with certainty, are to be maintained by quickly bringing up other parts of the army as well as by counteracting the marching up of the Polish Army. Accordingly, all units have to keep the initiative against the foe by quick action and ruthless attacks."<sup>2</sup>

The attack on Poland, which was the immediate aim of their aggressive policy, was for the rulers of Germany a step towards world conquest. It was to be followed by an attack on the Western countries. A directive issued by the German High Command on April 11, 1939, said that "the great objectives in the building up of the German Armed Forces will continue to be determined by the antagonism

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 426.

of the Western democracies. Fall Weiss constitutes only a precautionary complement to these preparations.”<sup>1</sup> As we see, the Hitlerites had decided as far back as April 1939 that the attack on Poland would be no more than a “precautionary complement” to a war against the Western Powers.

For a long time a controversy raged among the ruling circles in Germany over where to strike first in the struggle for world power. Monopoly capital and the militarists were of like mind that the Soviet Union was the main obstacle to Germany’s ambitious plans of conquest. It was only natural that the German nazis made the Soviet Union, the world’s first socialist country, an object of savage hatred. But they knew that a war against the Soviet Union would tax the strength of their armed forces and the German rear. Most of the nazi policymakers believed, therefore, that it was advisable first to crush the weaker opponents of the bourgeois camp and, then, having added to their strength through conquests in the West, to fall on their main adversary, the Soviet Union.

The sequence of the acts of aggression contemplated by the German Government depended on how well it could organise the security of the Ruhr, the industrial hub of Germany. Hitler said to a conference of army commanders:

“We have an Achilles heel: the Ruhr. The progress of the war depends on the possession of the Ruhr. If England and France push through Belgium and Holland into the Ruhr, we shall be in the greatest danger. That could lead to the paralysing of the German power of resistance.”<sup>2</sup> The Western policy of abettment epitomised at Munich was thought by the German military leaders to be a sign of Western weakness and a factor favouring an easy victory. This is confirmed by Hitler’s decision to attack Poland and

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, p. 424.

<sup>2</sup> *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. III. Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Washington, 1946, p. 578.

then strike at the West, which was taken after Munich and was one of its upshots.

But the contradictions between Germany and its imperialist rivals, as well as Germany's military plans, were affected by the still greater contradiction between imperialist Germany and the Soviet Union. The Hitlerites viewed defeat of their Western adversaries as an overture to an attack on the Soviet Union. Their assault on Poland was intended, first, to deprive Britain and France of their only ally in Europe and avoid a war with Poland at the time of Germany's westward attack, and, secondly, to emerge on the Soviet border in the proximity of some of the country's most important centres. The nazis wanted to dig in along the Soviet border well in advance, to build up bridgeheads and a staging area for the subsequent attack on the U.S.S.R.

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Britain and France sensed the threat implicit in Germany's transfer of the Transcarpathian Ukraine to Hungary, which removed the pretext the nazis had proposed to use for an attack on the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the Germans denounced the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 and the 1934 non-aggression pact with Poland. Top politicians in the United States, Britain and France were spurred to action. Hitler had to be persuaded to change his plans, now clear, and to adopt a new plan of aggression against the Soviet Union. The Western imperialists were deeply determined on settling their contradictions with their capitalist rivals, Germany and Japan, and with the socialist Soviet Union, by means of a Soviet-German war.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in sitting from April 5 to May 10, 1939, discussed what the United States attitude should be towards the likelihood of a world war. Most of the Committee members were inclined to think that a world war would yield the United

States tremendous advantages. Speakers emphasised that the impending war would not involve the territory of the United States. International affairs expert Professor Stilwell said that no matter what the exigencies of the war would be in Europe and Asia, the United States was totally out of danger.

The Foreign Relations Committee debate was followed by Japanese-American negotiations. On May 23, 1939, these produced the idea of a conference along the lines of Munich, but with the inclusion of the United States and Japan.<sup>1</sup> United States and Japanese diplomats did hard spadework for this conference all through the summer of 1939, but U.S. policymakers also kept their eye on Europe, where they sent the prominent pro-Hitler politicians, Vandenberg and Hamilton Fish, to tour the West European capitals, London included. Hamilton Fish told a press conference it was the purpose of his trip to arrange "that during the truce the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Italy, France and Britain should meet and see if there is a way out".<sup>2</sup> A new Munich deal was in the offing to hand Poland over to Germany, provided the latter promised to begin an aggressive war against the Soviet Union.

In the meantime, Japan committed a new act of aggression in the interests of its own ruling clique and those of all international reaction. Japanese troops attacked the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, with which the U.S.S.R. had an understanding for mutual assistance, at Halkhin-Gol. The objective was to seize Mongolia and emerge on the Soviet border in the Lake Baikal area. Japan's rulers believed that a Hitler attack on the Soviet Union was sure to come, and intended to capture favourable positions for a lunge at the Soviet Far East and Siberia. The operational direction which was to bring the

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<sup>1</sup> *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, Washington, 1946, Part 20, p. 4132.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, August 16, 1939.

Japanese to the Lake Baikal area was considered in the Japanese war plan as the main thrust. It would create an immediate threat to the communications between the European part of the Soviet Union and the Far East.

The rulers of the United States, Britain and France were elated over the Japanese attack on the Mongolian People's Republic. Plans for a new Munich in Europe were supplemented by plans for a Munich in Asia. The war architects meant to convene a Pacific conference and to invite Chiang Kai-shek, head of the Kuomintang Government of China.

But the idea of a Pacific conference fell through. It was wrecked by Japanese-American imperialist contradictions. A deal, a real "eastern Munich", was struck between Britain and Japan instead. Signed in Tokyo on July 23, 1939, it is known as the Arita-Craigie agreement by the names of the Japanese Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador in Tokyo. The agreement abandoned China to Japan in compensation for Japan's preparing a war against the Soviet Union. The British Government undertook to recognise the *status quo* in China and the special needs of the Japanese armed forces operating in that country.

Hachiro Arita mentioned the Anglo-French-Soviet talks proceeding in Moscow. He deplored British efforts to draw "Russia into a military alliance". To which Craigie replied that the idea of an Anglo-Soviet alliance would in no case "be applicable to the Far East".<sup>1</sup> This was said at the time of the tense battles at Halkhin-Gol, a fact that reveals the hidden meaning behind the British assurances.

In the East, we see, the Munich supporters did thus achieve certain results in their efforts to provoke a war against the Soviet Union. But in Europe their attempts to set fascist Germany on the Soviet Union did not proceed as swimmingly as the British and French statesmen would like. In the circumstances, they decided to negotiate with

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<sup>1</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941*, Washington, 1943, Vol. II, p. 2.

the U.S.S.R. This was to appease public opinion, which advocated an alliance with that country to bridle the increasingly impudent fascist aggressors. Besides, the talks were meant to frighten Hitler with the prospect of an Anglo-French-Soviet coalition and, concurrently, to demonstrate the Soviet Union's isolation in face of a fascist aggression. The objective was to goad Germany into war against the Soviet Union. Britain and France expected to saddle the U.S.S.R. with commitments that would inevitably involve it in a war against Germany, while withholding dependable pledges of support. On the other hand, in the event of a German move westward, the British and French would have secured Soviet help.

The Anglo-French consent to negotiate with the Soviet Union was thus no more than a move in a dual game, a projection, in new guise, of the Munich policy. By dangling the prospect of an agreement with the Soviet Government before the Germans, the British and French hoped to induce them to sign a far-reaching agreement, one that would not tread on the toes of the British and French monopolies in the world markets and at once ensure a German assault on the Soviet Union.

In contrast, the Soviet Union was sincerely eager to establish a united front of governments and peoples against German aggression. It wished to conclude an effective agreement with Britain and France, guaranteeing the security of Central and Eastern Europe and stipulating the form and extent of mutual and immediate assistance in the event of aggression.

This Soviet policy was quite clear to all who took the trouble to examine the course of events. The British and French line was also clear enough. The Western Powers, writes Michael Freund sarcastically, wanted to square the circle—the Soviet Union was to wage war against Germany suspended from the stratosphere, not moving its army against Germany through Polish territory, that is, by the only possible route! This is why, Freund writes on,

the negotiations between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union foundered, as they were bound to founder.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government insisted that the tripartite agreement should be based on the principle of reciprocity and equal commitments. The Anglo-French proposals did not, however, contain any trace of this elementary and all-important principle, essential in any equal treaty.

The conduct of the British and French governments during their talks with the Soviet Union was obviously two-faced. A far-reaching agreement with the U.S.S.R. was farthest from their minds. Chamberlain said so in just so many words in his diary. The Moscow negotiations had no other purpose, he wrote, than to pressure Germany and induce it to negotiate a new agreement.<sup>2</sup> The same point was made in all the directives supplied to the British and French diplomatic and military spokesmen involved in the Moscow negotiations. A secret Foreign Office memorandum to France of May 22, 1939, said:

"It would seem desirable to conclude some agreement whereby the Soviet Union would come to our assistance if we were attacked in the West, not only in order to ensure that Germany would have to fight a war on two fronts, but also perhaps for the reason . . . that it was essential, if there must be a war, to try to involve the Soviet Union in it."<sup>3</sup>

To begin with, the British and French diplomats said that the objections of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were an obstacle to agreement with the U.S.S.R. Later they added the objections of Rumania and Poland, whose governments refused to accept Soviet assistance against aggression. Grégoire Gafenco, then Foreign Minister of Rumania, wrote in his diary on this score that "the British Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> See *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Dokumenten*, Bd. III, München, 1956, S. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, pp. 409-10.

<sup>3</sup> *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Ed. by E. L. Woodward and R. Butler, Vol. V, London, 1952, p. 646.



ment was indeed obliged to consider the Polish and, to a lesser degree, the Rumanian objections". But that was not the crux of the matter. "The Western Powers," he wrote on, "demanded quite another thing: they wanted the U.S.S.R. to join the guarantees they had given to Poland and Rumania."<sup>1</sup> Such a Soviet move, however, would have been one-sided, because unaccompanied by reciprocal commitments on the part of Britain and France.

The Vatican, too, was solidly behind the provocative policy of the British and French. Pope Pius XII favoured new Western talks with Germany, a new Munich, this time at the expense of Poland. In June 1939 he sent a special message to the Polish President, urging him to back down in face of the German demands. According to one investigator, "Pius was concerned over the possibility of an Anglo-French-Soviet pact being negotiated in Moscow. . . . The Holy See feared that the planned alliance with the two Western democracies would enable the Soviet to play an important part in European diplomacy."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Government, quite naturally, was unwilling to accept the part in which the British and French governments wanted to cast it. Its standpoint was well set out in *Pravda* of June 29, 1939.

"All this shows that the British and French do not want a treaty with the Soviet Union based on the principle of equality and reciprocity," the paper said, "although they vow each day that they, too, favour 'equality'. What they want is an agreement in which the U.S.S.R. would be the navvy shouldering the full weight of the obligations. No self-respecting country will consent to that kind of agreement unless it wants to be a toy in the hands of people who like others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. The Soviet Union, whose strength, power and dignity

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<sup>1</sup> Grégoire Gafenco, *Derniers jours de l'Europe*, Paris, 1946, pp. 171, 172.

<sup>2</sup> Camille M. Cianfarra, *The Vatican and the War*, New York, 1945, pp. 170-71.

are known to the whole world, cannot conclude that sort of treaty."

However, moved by its concern for peace, the Soviet Union continued its negotiations with Britain and France, hoping their attitude would change, until the day when the two Western governments led the talks into a blind alley.

The fact that Britain and Germany were at the time holding secret talks, to which the British Government attached far greater importance than to the Moscow negotiations, had a distinctly adverse effect on the proceedings in the Soviet capital.

The secret Anglo-German talks proceeded in London in June-August 1939. Britain was represented by Robert Hudson, Minister for Overseas Trade, and Hugh Wilson, Neville Chamberlain's adviser and confidential agent. Germany sent the prominent nazi trade expert and special emissary, Helmut Wohlthat. The discussions centred on a series of projected agreements. There was to be an amicable demarcation of "living space" for Britain and Germany. This was tantamount to a division of the world, an understanding for the seizure of new markets and the exploitation of existing ones, including the "markets" of Russia and China, and an Anglo-German non-aggression treaty. The latter would connote Britain's renunciation of its commitments to Poland taken but a few months before, in March 1939, when Britain gave Poland unilateral guarantees, and in April 1939, when Britain and Poland concluded a mutual assistance treaty. Last but not least, the Anglo-German negotiations touched on the economic and financial assistance Britain would render Hitler Germany, in particular a loan of £1,000 million.

The tenor of the talks was clearly anti-Soviet. Herbert von Dirksen, then German Ambassador to Britain, wrote in his memoirs that Hudson developed far-reaching plans for a joint Anglo-German working arrangement in three large territories—the British Empire, China and Russia. He laid an accent on the "possibility for Germany to take part

in vast economic activities"<sup>1</sup> also in Russia. Thereby Hudson added fuel to nazi expansionist ambitions focussed on the conquest of the Soviet economy.

Right-wing Labour leaders backed the policy of connivance with the nazis. Late in July 1939 secret conversations took place between Theodor Kordt, Councillor of the German Embassy in London, and Labour leader Charles Buxton, who approved the scheme of demarcating spheres of influence. He told Kordt that if Germany promised to stay out of Empire affairs, Britain would be willing to respect German interests in East and South-East Europe, to abandon the guarantees it had given certain countries, to induce France to break its mutual assistance treaty with the U.S.S.R., and to break off negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Some other Labour leaders were solidly behind Buxton. Bevin made the proposal at a Labour Party conference to "pool the great resources of the world" and offer Germany, Italy and Japan "a place in the sun".<sup>2</sup> In substance this was a proposal to redive the world at the expense of Eastern Europe and by means of war against the Soviet Union.

In August 1939 Dirksen met Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary, who said he conceived the post-Munich world as one in which Germany dominated Europe with priority rights in the South-East of that continent, and Britain dominated its imperial possessions and the sea routes from Europe to the Pacific and the Far East.

It was clear that the peoples of Britain and France would not countenance this sort of deal. French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet gave Welzceck, the German Ambassador to Paris, assurances to the effect that his government would ban public gatherings in France, suspend democratic freedoms, and outlaw the Communist Party.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert von Dirksen, *Moscow. Tokyo. London. Twenty Years of German Foreign Policy*, London, 1951, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Pollitt, "After Southport", *Labour Monthly*, Vol. 21, No. 7, 1939.

Far from seeking to safeguard the peace jointly with the Soviet Union, the British and French governments were really directing German aggression eastward. Their plan of scuttling their negotiations with the Soviet Union had been laid well in advance. They hoped to reach an understanding with Germany. But their hopes were dashed. The razor-sharp imperialist contradictions that flared up with added force every time the parties tackled specific questions of territorial distribution, were too great an obstacle to surmount.

The German imperialists wanted to repossess the colonies Britain and France had taken from them after the First World War. They also wanted new possessions. The British and French imperialists, on the other hand, would not think of conceding any of their possessions, those seized from Germany included. They suggested a variety of deals at the expense of other countries and possessions. At one point, for example, Britain suggested that Germany and Britain share the Portuguese possessions in Africa. But Germany's nazi rulers were not going to be bought off with small hand-outs at the expense of third parties. They looked covetously towards the British and French colonies and dominions.

These imperialist contradictions were an insuperable obstacle for an Anglo-French compact with Hitler Germany.

## 5

The Anglo-French refusal to conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union added to the political tension in Europe. The world moved to the brink of a major military disaster. The only question still unanswered was where Germany would strike next. Much depended on the further alignment of forces in the world arena.

The Soviet Union had to make a difficult choice. It could either attempt afresh to reach agreement with Britain

and France, which it knew would fail, or accept Germany's offer of a non-aggression treaty. In the first case the provocative policy of the United States, British and French governments would inescapably involve the Soviet Union in an early war in a most unfavourable international environment. The attack on the U.S.S.R. could be made either by Germany or Japan. The conflict at Halkhin-Gol was a warning of this. Though the Japanese attackers were smashed there, Japan refused to conclude any sort of settlement with the U.S.S.R. and the Mongolian People's Republic. It was waiting for further developments in the hope of bearing down on the Soviet Union in concert with Germany. A German-Japanese assault on the Soviet Union could, moreover, be supported in one way or another by the reactionaries of the United States, Britain and France. This, after all, was the plan nurtured by international imperialist reaction from Munich onward.

Furthermore, Britain and France were making war preparations against the Soviet Union. They were massing troops in the Middle East and hotting up their anti-Soviet policy in the north of Europe. In June 1939 General Walter Kirke, Commander-in-Chief of the British Home Forces, visited Finland and toasted Finland's refusal to accept what he called "a Russian guarantee". On his heels came Admiral Plunkett, who said in a speech, "turn all the guns on Kronstadt".<sup>1</sup>

The only thing the Soviet Union could do was to conclude a non-aggression treaty with Germany. This would give it a certain gain in time, spiking the unfair game played by the governments of the United States, Britain and France. The gain in time was extremely desirable, for it gave the country a fresh opportunity to reinforce its defences and to avoid being drawn into a war on two fronts. The treaty would restrict Germany's plan of attacking the Soviet Union. This could now be only a perfidious attack,

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<sup>1</sup> H. B. Elliston, *Finland Fights*, Boston, 1940, p. 162.

one that would expose Germany as a blood-thirsty aggressor flaunting recognised standards of international law.

The anti-Soviet slander heaped upon the Soviet-German treaty was based on the contention that after signing the treaty the Soviet Union had allegedly altered its foreign policy and rejected collective security measures to combat fascist aggression. This was untrue. Soviet foreign policy did not change. It was aimed at splitting the anti-Soviet front built in Munich, something that was in the interests of peace. The Soviet Government had tried to do so by concluding an appropriate agreement with Britain and France. And it was only after the governments of these two countries sabotaged a favourable outcome that the Soviet Government tackled the task from the other end—through an agreement with Germany.

As concerns the German Government, its proposal of a Soviet-German non-aggression treaty was prompted by the desire to delay an armed conflict with the Soviet Union, which the rulers of the United States, Britain and France were in such great haste to provoke. The German imperialists thought their country was not yet ready for a war against the Soviet Union. Their fear of that war equalled their wish of it.

The Soviet-German ten-year non-aggression treaty was concluded in Moscow on August 23, 1939.

World reaction responded to the Soviet-German treaty with an unbridled anti-Soviet smear campaign, joined by Right-wing Socialist leaders. But it may be useful to recall what Sumner Welles, a former U.S. Under-Secretary of State, said on this score. "From a practical standpoint," wrote Welles, "it is important to observe how it enabled the Soviet Government to achieve advantages which proved to be of inestimable value to her two years later when the anticipated German aggression finally took place."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet-German treaty frustrated the aggressive plans of the Japanese imperialists. The Japanese Government

<sup>1</sup> Sumner Welles, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

made a formal protest to Germany, qualifying the treaty as an act which "contradicted the Anti-Comintern Pact in letter and spirit". Japanese-German relations deteriorated. Kensuke Horinouchi, Japanese Ambassador to the United States, informed State Secretary Hull that Japan "would find it important to adopt new foreign policy in more or less respects".<sup>1</sup> The Hiranuma Cabinet resigned. The government declaration to this effect said:

"A complicated and unexpected situation has arisen in Europe after the conclusion of the German-Soviet Pact. In connection with these changes the government has abandoned its previous policy. It is necessary to establish a new policy, based on new principles."

On September 15 the Soviet Union and the Mongolian Peoples' Republic signed an agreement with Japan settling the conflict at Halkhin-Gol.

As we see, the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty had favourable effects, some of them right after its conclusion. Yet the shrewd and perfidious designs of the nazi chieftains should not be overlooked. The nazis had no intention of living up to the treaty for any length of time. They needed it merely for the time in which they thought themselves unprepared for a war against the Soviet Union.

This is why the non-aggression treaty should not have detracted from the vigilance and war preparedness of the Soviet people and their armed forces. It was by no means dependable.

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<sup>1</sup> *Peace and War, United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941*, Department of State, Washington, 1943, p. 481.

*Part II*

**THE PHONEY WAR**

*Chapter Three*

**POLAND'S MILITARY DEBACLE.**

**THE SOVIET UNION BLOCKS GERMANY'S  
"DRANG NACH OSTEN"**

**I**

The Anglo-French Munich policy, which was meant to divert the German-fascist thrust from West to East at the Soviet Union, added to Hitler's determination to start the war by assaulting the Western Powers.

The German imperialist programme of world conquest envisaged a military victory over Britain and France. In a speech on May 23, 1939, Hitler said, "England is . . . our enemy and the conflict with England will be a life-and-death struggle. . . . England is the driving force against Germany."<sup>1</sup> But for a start Hitler's commanders decided to settle accounts with Poland.

Again, Munich was largely responsible for Germany's decision to attack that country. "Britain and France have undertaken commitments," Hitler told his associates, "but neither of them wants to fulfil them. . . . We saw Chamberlain and Daladier, those wretched worms, in Munich. They will not dare to attack. If worse comes to the worst, they will go no farther than a blockade."<sup>2</sup>

On August 22, 1939, at an army conference in Obersalzberg, Hitler issued final instructions for the Polish assault.

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<sup>1</sup> R. W. Cooper, *The Nuremberg Trial*, New York, 1947, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Agressia na Polskę w swieciele dokumentów*, t. II, s. 133.



"Destruction of Poland is in the foreground," he said. "The aim is the elimination of living forces, not the arrival at a certain line. . . . I shall give a propagandistic cause for starting the war, never mind whether it be plausible or not. The victor shall not be asked later on whether he told the truth or not. In starting and making a war, not the right is what matters but victory."<sup>1</sup>

Germany began its diplomatic spadework for the Polish assault in the spring of 1939. On March 22 Hitler demanded that Poland hand over Danzig (Gdansk) and furnish an extra-territorial German corridor across the Polish corridor for a German motor road and railway line to East Prussia. This was a feeler, made at a time when the Anglo-French-Soviet talks in Moscow obscured the general situation.

Then, seeing that Chamberlain and Daladier were reluctant to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, the German imperialists became bolder. A malicious anti-Polish campaign was launched in the German press.

On the night of August 30, 1939, Germany issued a note on Danzig and the Polish corridor. This was tantamount to an ultimatum. The Polish Government instructed its Ambassador in Berlin, Jozef Lipski, to negotiate, but he was unable to get in touch with any of the German government leaders. They refused to receive him, and at once declared that Germany was awaiting the arrival of Polish spokesmen, whose failure to show up meant that Poland was unwilling to settle the Polish-German issues peacefully.

This was followed up with a provocation. Criminals were picked in German prisons and dressed in Polish army uniforms. They were ordered to stage an "attack" on the German border town of Gleiwitz.<sup>2</sup> That was the

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, pp. 232-33.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Görnitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg, 1939-1945*, Steingrüben-Verlag, Stuttgart, 1951, Bd. I, S. 51.

“propagandistic cause” for war Hitler had mentioned on August 22.

On September 1, 1939, at 04.45 hours the German army fell upon Poland. In a proclamation to his fighting men Hitler said:

“The Polish Government wants to force the issue by way of arms. . . . Poland is no longer prepared to respect the Reich’s frontiers. . . . To put an end to these mad acts, I can see no other way but from now onwards to meet force with force.”<sup>1</sup>

By then the German war machine was sufficiently prepared and equipped. Forty-four crack divisions, including five panzer and six motorised divisions, were flung against Poland. Ten more divisions were moved up as a strategic reserve.<sup>2</sup> The ground troops had the support of a powerful air force of more than two thousand warplanes.

On the day of the attack Poland had not yet begun its mobilisation and had a peacetime force only. This consisted of 30 divisions, 12 cavalry brigades and 400 antiquated warplanes. A big section of the Polish armed forces were stationed on the Eastern frontier. Poland did not have reliable fortifications on its Western borders, though most of its industries were west of Warsaw, in the so-called strategic triangle adjoining the Polish-German frontier. The “western orientation” of the Polish ruling class, which treated its eastern neighbour, the Soviet Union, with undisguised hostility, was producing a disastrous effect. Polish industry lay open to the German assault.

The German air force wiped out its Polish counterpart in a few days and played havoc with Poland’s railway system, impeding guidance of the Polish troops. The German offensive developed strictly according to plan. By

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> The numerical strength of the German assault force has been checked with Müller-Hillebrand B., *Das Heer. 1939-1945*, Darmstadt, Mitler, 1956.

September 7 the nazis broke through the Polish border defences, crushed the Polish cover troops, and compelled what was left of the Polish army to retire in confusion. The German divisions pressed into Poland from three directions at once—East Prussia in the north, East Germany in the west and Slovakia in the south. They converged, and soon closed the ring round the Polish forces in Warsaw. On September 8 a German panzer division seized a Warsaw suburb, and by September 19 all of Poland, save a few isolated regions, was occupied by German troops. Poland was crushed.

The reasons for the disaster that befell Poland lie in the very nature of Poland's anti-popular, essentially fascist and corrupt regime. The extreme poverty of the working people in town and country, and their political subjection, were coupled with the unrestricted dominance of landlords and capitalists, foreign ones included, and persecution of the national minorities—the Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The army had no bonds with the people. It was a guardian of the interests of the ruling class. Poland's foreign policy boiled down to the encouragement of any and all anti-Soviet schemes and the persistent desire to participate in them. It amounted to a betrayal of Poland's national interests and was embodied in criminal deals with the nazis and the Munich negotiators. Colonel Beck, known for his pro-Hitler sentiments, aimed his foreign policy at isolating the Soviet Union and refused out of hand to co-operate with it in any joint act of peace.

Léon Noël, the French Ambassador to Poland, wrote that "in effect, Beck gave precious support at the time to the Führer's policy. 'Common efforts' between them continued. Polish diplomats, on all occasions, seconded the Reich's manoeuvres against the League of Nations, collective security and multilateral mutual assistance pacts."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Léon Noël, *L'aggression Allemande contre la Pologne*, Paris, 1946, p. 167.

The tragic isolation of Poland in those fatal September days was an upshot of this policy. The Polish Government ignored the national interests of its people. The ruling clique was politically and morally decayed, sunk up to its ears in corruption and profiteering. It clung to power by means of a savage reign of terror, and fled the country after the first series of Polish military reverses. The people and the armed forces were abandoned to their fate.

The treasonous flight of the Polish Government and High Command caused confusion in the army and the people. Yet some Polish units and the civilian population fought on with genuine heroism. Take the battles of Kutno and Radom. The Modlin fortress held out until September 30, and the naval units in Poland's only port, Gdynia, resisted until October 2. The Warsaw population headed by Communists and progressive workers destroyed a German panzer division that broke into the capital. Encircled and half-demolished, Warsaw fought on gallantly until September 30.

The Polish people displayed tenacity and stamina in extremely adverse circumstances.

After seizing Poland, the German imperialists deprived its people of all elementary human rights and raped its national culture. Their ultimate aim was to exterminate the active section of the Polish nation. Hitler-appointed Polish Governor-General Hans Frank issued the criminal directive of exterminating the nation's leading nucleus surviving in the country, and to do the same in due course with the rising generation. He did not wish to over-tax the police and advised against detention of "Polish elements" in German concentration camps, "which would create a lot of bother and needless correspondence with their families". He instructed his inferiors to destroy them in the country, and "in the simplest manner". The total loss of life in Poland caused by the Nazi aggression was 6,000,000.

Western and Northern Poland were made part of Germany, and the rest, the south, was named a German governor-generalship with its seat in Kraków.

But the Polish people's spirit was not broken. Polish patriots responded with contempt and hatred to the Nazi atrocities. The population resisted the orders of the occupation authorities. Partisans appeared in the Polish forests and mountain areas.

## 2

How did Poland's "allies", the Western Powers, react to the Nazi assault on Poland?

The United States was not formally an ally, although its influence on Polish politics was perceptible. In particular, the U.S. Administration was largely to blame for the Polish Government's rejecting the Soviet proposals for collective security, made on the eve of the war. U.S. policy-makers received word of the war in Europe with ill-disguised joy. Ever since 1937 U.S. economy was exposed to a grave economic crisis. The American monopolists welcomed the war essentially for the business opportunities it was sure to present. The U.S. press did not mince words to say that the impact of a general European conflagration on the U.S. economy would be manifold. Industries producing commodities needed in the war, it said, would naturally gain from it. What worried the American businessmen most was how long the war would last. If the olive branch were to attract the Great Powers, wrote the *New York Herald Tribune*, economists feel that U.S. business would suffer a loss. The U.S. economy, the paper added, was adapting itself to a drawn-out war.

Plied with war orders, the American economy did, indeed, begin to rise. William Z. Foster, the late Chairman of the U.S. Communist Party, described the situation thus:

"The 'perfect' capitalist system was paralysed. . . . It was only when the deadly shadow of World War II crept over

the horizon in 1939 that the American industries, nourished once more on boundless war orders, began to show life again."<sup>1</sup>

The other no less salient reason for jubilation among the American monopolists was their firm belief that, as in the First World War, they would maintain a profitable neutrality and join the fray at a later date to participate in the final issues of the war and in the post-war arrangement. After the First World War, they recalled, their plans had not all succeeded, and they hoped that this time they would seize world domination. John Foster Dulles said as much in a speech on October 28, 1939, before the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association.<sup>2</sup> Senator Borah<sup>3</sup> said so, too, and the *New York Times* correspondent Anne O'Hare McCormick wrote that "but a word from Washington would go far to swing the balance one way or the other".<sup>4</sup>

On September 3, 1939, the United States Government officially proclaimed its neutrality.

There was only one thing to mar the elation of the imperialist rulers. They were visibly annoyed that Germany had not at once gone on to attack the Soviet Union. It was not just the newspapers that deplored this, but also the leaflets dropped over Germany by Anglo-French airmen. One such leaflet, headed "Down with Bolshevism!", extolled Hitler for having been "the knight of the crusade against Communism". "Today," the leaflet added, "what remains of the crusader is a man reconciled with Moscow."<sup>5</sup> Churchill charged that Hitler had betrayed the anti-Bolshevik cause.

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<sup>1</sup> William Z. Foster, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, New York, 1949, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See *New York Times*, October 29, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, December 2, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, October 9, 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Authentic copies of these leaflets are available in Soviet archives. See История Великой Отечественной Войны Советского Союза, 1941—1945 гг., т. I, стр. 215.

But the position of the British and French governments was more complicated than America's, for they were tied to Poland by "guarantees" of Poland's security in face of the Nazi menace. No longer could they go back on their obligations, as they had done in Czechoslovakia's case. Public opinion at home would never have forgiven them.

Furthermore, they were conscious that Hitler's Polish aggression was also aimed against their own countries, and that the Germans were likely to turn west once they had settled with Poland. They did their utmost, in concert with the U.S. Government, to impel Hitler eastward, against the Soviet Union.

The British and French demanded that Germany cease its hostilities against Poland. In so doing, they gave to understand that no obstacles would be placed in the way of the German troops if they wished to cross Polish territory to the east.

On September 2 Mussolini suggested a new conference of the Munich type to settle the Polish issue, and a similar suggestion came from Franco Spain. But the Nazi government had by then made up its mind to strike at the Western Powers, and ignored the proposals. Germany's refusal compelled Britain and France to declare war on September 3. But it was not part of their intentions to wage the war in the field. They thought their declaration of war would be enough to deter Hitler.

This was also the reason why the two Western Powers did not render any help to Poland, breaking their solemn pledges. They looked on in cold blood while Poland was being ravaged, and ignored the appeals of Poland's military mission in London.

The Anglo-French manoeuvre was a subtle, but a disastrous one. After declaring war on the Nazis, the British and French rulers did not launch an offensive against Germany and made no war preparations to speak of. There was a "phony war", marked by complete military inactivity. The quiet on the Western front was to show the

German fascists that they had nothing to fear in the west and had their hands free to attack the Soviet Union.

The "phoney war" was a war without combat. Jean Ybarnégaray, a French fascist, described it thus:

"Bombers in the skies that did not drop bombs; guns with mountains of shells that did not fire; immense armies face to face which, save for occasional skirmishes, observed each other from afar and, to all appearances, did not spoil for a fight; and important persons coming to the frontlines where they were welcomed, not by gunfire, but by notices of 'welcome' and, I believe, even their national anthems."<sup>1</sup>

The French Command made no more than a symbolic gesture—a few half-hearted attacks of local importance, whereby it occupied two wedges in the German border area without any appreciable nazi resistance. Then, somewhat later, the French troops were withdrawn without German pressure on the pretext of returning to the well-equipped winter quarters along the original frontline.

British and French air operations were confined to reconnaissance flights and "leaflet raids" that took Hitler to task for breaking his promises. The German air force took part in a few sea operations, but was not too active.

The naval operations were somewhat more extensive. They opened very unfavourably for Britain. German submarines sank many unarmed British merchantmen hastening back to British shores after the declaration of war. A German submarine, the U-47, penetrated the anchorage of the main fleet, Scapa Flow, and sank the British battleship *Royal Oak*. Another German submarine sank the aircraft carrier *Courageous* in the Bristol Channel. The cruisers *Belfast* and *Nelson* struck mines, but limped home and were repaired. A German surface raider, the pocket battleship *Graf Spee*, was intercepted and damaged

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<sup>1</sup> Florimond Bonte, *Le Chemin de l'Honneur*, Moscow, 1951, p. 112.



in the South Atlantic by a British naval patrol and scuttled by its crew on orders from Berlin.

By the end of 1939 the total losses suffered by the French armed forces added up to 1,433 men and officers. The British expeditionary force in France lost three men.<sup>1</sup>

The British war industries were being put into gear very slowly. In France, war production dropped because a large number of skilled workers was called to the colours. The mobilisation was, in a way, deliberate. The French Government hoped thereby to curb working-class political activities. While the French war industries struggled to cope with the modest demands of the armed forces, the French imperialists continued to trade with the enemy. Iron ore, machines, instruments and other equipment were shipped to Germany via Belgium and Luxembourg. French business held its own interests uppermost, and regarded the war as a profitable enterprise.

But the national betrayal of the French bourgeoisie lies chiefly in the fact that, helped by the leaders of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, it smashed the Popular Front, which was the political spine of French resistance. France entered the war in a state of confusion and divided against itself. The French Government concentrated not on the war against the German militarists, the bitter enemies of the French nation, but on the war against the French people, particularly the French Communist Party, which had the support of 1,500,000 voters. The Communists were seized by the throat, while the pro-Hitler element, the Abetz and the de Brinon people, were allowed to carry on their foul anti-French activities unmolested.<sup>2</sup>

French Foreign Minister Bonnet told the German Ambassador to Paris shortly before the outbreak of war that elections would be suspended, public assemblies banned,

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<sup>1</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War, 1939-1945*, London, 1948, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Florimond Bonte, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

foreign propaganda suppressed, and the Communists "brought to their senses".<sup>1</sup> Hitler had good cause to rejoice. The French Government was fighting the French patriotic forces and setting the stage for surrender to the nazis. The Communist Party was the only French political party that showed firm determination to defend the country and people from the German fascist peril. On August 25, 1939, Maurice Thorez said:

"But if, in spite of everything, Hitler starts a war, let him know that he will face a united French people, the Communists in the first ranks, to defend the security and the freedom and independence of the nations."<sup>2</sup>

The French authorities responded with repressive actions against this patriotic stand of the French Communists. On September 26, 1939, the Daladier Government banned the Communist Party, following this up with a series of similar reactionary, pro-fascist laws: suspension of municipalities headed by Communists, arrests of Communist deputies, and dispossession of Communists of all statutory protection.

The Communist Party and its press were banned and the Communist deputies were deprived of their parliamentary mandates. In April 1940 the French rulers decreed the death penalty for Frenchmen suspected of Communist propaganda. All democratic organisations opposing the government policy of national betrayal were outlawed. People who spoke in behalf of national rights, against reaction, were flung into prisons and concentration camps. In the first six months of the war the French Government dispossessed 2,778 Communists, M.P.s and municipal councillors, of their seats, and shut down 161 periodicals and 629 trade unions.

"In 1939," wrote Florimond Bonte, a prominent French Communist, "there was no longer in France any republic or

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<sup>1</sup> Florimond Bonte, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

democracy. There was a dictatorship of the reactionaries, a government in the service of the enemies of the people, a government destroying all the democratic liberties gained in stubborn struggle by generations of republicans. There was no parliament any longer, but a chamber of menials ready to lick the boots of the sinister old man of Vichy and offer the Hitlerite monster the odious services of collaboration and treason."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, while the French Government was pre-occupied with its anti-Soviet campaign and persecution of Communists, Germany prepared a full-scale offensive on France. Hitler's directive, ordering preparations for an attack across Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands, was issued on October 9, 1939.

The German General Staff under Wilhelm Keitel worked out a thorough plan of operations. The scale of the war was expanding inexorably. Within weeks it involved most of the Great Powers.

The Second World War was unleashed by the German fascists, but they were no more than the most savage and predacious detachment of world imperialism, which, as a social system, bears the responsibility for the death in the war of tens of millions of people, for their tears and blood, for the destruction of vast material and cultural wealth created by the labour of many generations.

In the early period of the war, that is, from September 1939 to the day Hitler Germany fell upon the U.S.S.R., the Second World War was a war between two imperialist coalitions. The coalition of Germany, Italy and Japan was opposed by the coalition of Britain, France and the United States. The original cause of the conflict, as in the First World War, was the struggle for markets and raw materials, for spheres of investment and world domination. It started as an imperialist war, but the threat to the national independence of the peoples and popular anti-fascist pres-

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<sup>1</sup> Florimond Bonte, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

sure gradually changed the war against Germany from an imperialist conflict into an anti-fascist one. The involvement in the war of the Soviet Union after it was attacked by Hitler Germany was the main and final factor that turned the Second World War into an anti-fascist war of liberation.

A conflict was also brewing in the Pacific between the United States and Japan, although the two countries were still, for the time being, abstaining from direct military action.

The official U.S. declaration of neutrality vis-à-vis the war in Europe did not, by any stretch of the imagination, represent the true substance of America's policy. The U.S. rulers had, from the first, joined the struggle for world supremacy. Seeing that the Soviet Union was the chief obstacle to that end, the U.S. Government joined the British and French governments in an anti-Soviet smear campaign. At the same time, the United States was busily working on an "absolute" weapon that would enable it to seize the initiative. An atomic energy commission was instituted by a special presidential order, which, at its first sitting on October 21, 1939, discussed the chances of developing atomic weapons. The War Department allotted considerable funds for the project, and soon the President ordered the building of atomic plants in Oak Ridge.

The war aims of Hitler Germany and, no less, of the U.S., British and French governments, were predaceous and imperialist in character. Communist Parties in all countries condemned the aggressive war.

A deep-going contradiction prevailed in the United States, Britain and France between the wishes of the peoples and the imperialist objectives of the bourgeois governments. The progressives called for a mobilisation of manpower and material resources to ward off aggression, while the governments looked round for new anti-Soviet deals with Hitler. The masses wanted vigorous action, while the governments procrastinated. Last but not least, the rul-

ing groups in the United States, Britain and France persecuted the Communists, while it was the Communists who formulated the most realistic measures for joint retaliation to fascism. This was the contradiction that dominated the scene at the time, predicating the nature of the *phoney war*.

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The German invasion of Poland and the rapid eastward drive of the nazi troops indicated that the Hitler Government was out to occupy suitable positions on the Soviet border for a subsequent attack. There was no guaranteeing that Hitler, intoxicated by his successes in Poland and prodded on by the Western Powers, would postpone the assault on the Soviet Union. The Polish developments constituted an extreme danger for the U.S.S.R. The situation called for rapid and vigorous action.

In September 1939 the Soviet Union took the due preventive measures—reservists in some military areas were called to arms, troops were redислоcated, etc. But this was obviously insufficient. The German drive eastward had to be blocked. The nazis could not be allowed to reach the Soviet border. Nor could the Soviet people be indifferent to the lot of their brothers—the oppressed West Ukrainian and Byelorussian minorities in Poland, who were abandoned to their fate by the Polish rulers.

This was why, in pursuance of its liberation mission, the Soviet Army marched into the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, where it was enthusiastically welcomed by the population.

Hitler's road eastward was blocked. He had to call a halt.

Throughout October 1939 democratic elections were held in the newly-liberated areas to people's assemblies. Acting on the will of the people, these assemblies proclaimed Soviet power in the territories under their jurisdic-

tion and requested the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to admit Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia into the fraternal family of Soviet nations. The Supreme Soviet complied. Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia were reunified with the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics respectively.

The German invasion of Poland also added to the danger of a nazi attack on the Soviet Union from the Baltic shore. The bourgeois Baltic republics did not have the resources to offer Hitler any resistance. What was more, the success of German arms in Poland had stimulated pro-Hitler elements in those republics. There was the danger that they would become German vassal states and bridgeheads for an attack on the Soviet Union. In view of this, the Soviet Government approached the Baltic governments with the offer of mutual assistance treaties.

The Soviet proposals were met favourably by the peoples of those countries, and their governments gave their consent. Estonia was the first to sign, on September 28, 1939, followed by Latvia on October 5, and Lithuania on October 10. Under the terms of these treaties the Soviet Union and the Baltic republics undertook to render each other aid, military aid included, in the event of an attack or threat of attack by any great European power. Estonia and Latvia leased bases to the Soviet navy, air force and artillery, and Lithuania assigned areas where a stipulated strength of Soviet ground troops and air units could be stationed.

The treaties fortified the defences of the Soviet Union and the Baltic republics. The danger of the latter's conversion into imperialist anti-Soviet bridgeheads was averted. The Soviet defences were moved far to the west, and the Soviet Navy acquired a number of important bases in the ice-free part of the Baltic Sea.

Now the Soviet Union had to consider the safety of its border with Finland, where the German fascists and Anglo-French imperialists were assiduously making war prepara-

tions against the Soviet Union. Finland was being built up as a staging area for an attack on Leningrad and the Murmansk railway. The Finns had erected a powerful and deep system of long-term fortifications known as the Mannerheim Line. At many points in South and East Finland strategic railways and motor roads had been built to the Soviet border. The security of Leningrad, just 32 kilometres from the Finnish border, was in jeopardy.

The Finnish reactionaries were working on far-reaching plans of attack. It was their ambition to seize Soviet land from Leningrad to the Urals. The trend of the 1939 Finnish budget was obviously military.

The Soviet Government initiated negotiations with the Finns on October 12, 1939. The talks proceeded with direct and unprecedented U.S. interference. This was in evidence throughout the negotiations, beginning with the instructions worked out in Helsinki for the Finnish delegation. While in Moscow, the Finnish delegation briefed the U.S. Embassy on the progress of the negotiations and was furnished appropriate "advice". On the day the talks began, the U.S. President sent the Soviet Union and Finland a telegram in which he voiced the "hope" that the negotiations would not culminate in an agreement curtailing the independence and sovereignty of Finland. In his reply to Roosevelt, M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, stated that the Soviet Government, which had declared Finnish independence in 1917, had no other aim but to consolidate Soviet-Finnish co-operation in matters of security. Hitler Germany acted much like the U.S., British and French governments. Its Minister to Helsinki insisted that the Finnish Government reject agreement with the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup>

At first, the Soviet Union offered Finland a mutual assistance treaty. When the Finnish rulers declined, it suggested moving the Finnish border north of the Karelian

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, London, 1953, Series D, Vol. V, p. 629.

Isthmus, offering to compensate Finland with a section of Soviet Karelia twice as large in area. Also, the Soviet Government wanted to lease a small section of Finnish land at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland for a naval base. These proposals did not in any way infringe on Finland's independence or sovereignty. But the reactionary Finnish Government scuttled the negotiations.

The Finnish reactionaries headed by Mannerheim, Tanner and Ryti chose a policy of anti-Soviet provocations. Large Finnish forces were deployed to the Soviet border and bombarded Soviet units near Leningrad. They did not pull their punches for the simple reason that they expected outside help. Mannerheim wrote in his memoirs that he was sure the United States and Britain would intervene on Finland's behalf. The same is noted by many other well-informed politicians and journalists. U.S. Congressman Emanuel Celler said: "We have led Finland on."<sup>1</sup> A country with a population of less than four million would never have undertaken anything against the Soviet Union, which had a population of 183 million, unless she were encouraged to do so by the Great Powers, such as Britain, France and the United States.

The Soviet-Finnish war was a hard war for the Soviet Union. The theatre of operations ruled out massive manoeuvres and flanking movements owing to the large number of lakes and the dense forests.

The situation was made more complicated still by the assistance lavished on Finland from abroad. It was not confined to arms and war materiel.

Having provoked the Soviet-Finnish war, the imperialists of the United States, Britain and France sought to fan it into a general anti-Soviet crusade. American historians write that the prospect of such a crusade "loomed as a god-given opportunity".<sup>2</sup> The imperialists decided to make use of the League of Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 86, Part 13, pp. 522-23.

<sup>2</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 377.



On December 9, the Anglo-French spokesmen who dominated the League, called an emergency sitting of the Council. The General Assembly was scheduled to convene on December 11.

But in view of the war it was impossible to assemble the body at such short notice. Only part of the League of Nations membership attended. The composition of the Council was altered at the Assembly, with three more members who had consented to vote as the British and French governments bid them, being elected to it. The natural sequel was that the Soviet Government was compelled to recall its representatives from the Assembly and the League Council.

On December 14 the Council declared the Soviet Union an "aggressor" and "expelled" it from the League of Nations. Only seven of the 15 Council members, including the three deliberately elected for the purpose, voted for the "expulsion".

"Britain and France," TASS news agency commented, "with a population of 89 million, backed by Belgium, Bolivia, Egypt, the South African Union and the Dominican Republic, with a total population of just 38 million, 'expelled' the Soviet Union, which has a population of 183 million."<sup>1</sup>

The United States was not a member of the League of Nations, but American diplomats were quite prominent in the manoeuvring that led up to the "expulsion" of the Soviet Union. It was through U.S. efforts that Bolivia and the Dominican Republic performed what they had been bid.

The League of Nations, tainted by connivance with, and abettment of, the Japanese, Italian and German aggressors, completed its own destruction by publicly approving and supporting the war provoked by the Finnish ruling class against the Soviet Union. It thereby signed its own death

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<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, December 16, 1939.

warrant. The U.S. press observed sadly that the League of Nations was dead, and that a ghost inhabited the magnificent palace in Geneva.

The Soviet expulsion from the League of Nations was a manoeuvre that helped the reactionaries, under cover of the League resolution, to multiply their assistance to the Finns and redouble their effort of turning the Second World War into an anti-Soviet crusade. The reactionary press hoped that Hitler Germany would now turn its arms against the U.S.S.R. and that events would lead up to a united front against the Soviet Union. The American military commentator, Hanson Baldwin, spoke of surprises to be sprung by Hitler, who would want to use the opportunity of attacking the U.S.S.R.

The flow of U.S., British and French arms to Finland increased. A Finland committee, headed by Herbert Hoover, was organised. The U.S. Government granted a \$10,000,000 loan to Finland, against which that country was supplied arms at give-away prices. The American banks also gave Finland a few loans.<sup>1</sup> Volunteers flocked to enrolment centres in the U.S.A. and other capitalist countries for shipment to Finland.

A group of British Labour leaders toured Finland with Chamberlain's blessing, promising the Finns more aid and calling on them to fight the Soviet Union "until victory is won".

Britain and France hastened to use the League of Nations resolution to prepare a direct aggression against the Soviet Union. An attack was planned for March 15, 1940, simultaneously in the Middle East against Baku, and in Finland. British and French troops were being massed for the assault in Syria and Iraq. On instructions of the French Government, General Gamelin worked out a detailed plan of operations, involving Turkey, Iraq, Rumania, Greece and

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations. July 1939-June 1940*, Ed. by S. Shepard Jones and Denys P. Myers, World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1940, Vol. II, pp. 391-92.

Yugoslavia. General Weygand, who was in command of preparations on the spot, wrote:

“For my part, I consider it cardinal to twist the Soviet Union’s neck in Finland . . . or elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup>

Preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union from the Middle East began in the summer of 1939, that is, at the time when Britain and France were still negotiating with the Soviet Union. Weygand arrived at his headquarters in Beirut on August 31, 1939.

The British and French governments also formed a special expeditionary corps for the northern attack against the U.S.S.R. The corps was to be brought up via Sweden and Norway. Early in March the British Government requested Sweden and Norway to let the Anglo-French force cross their territory.

Early in January the Soviet Government issued statements to the Swedish and Norwegian governments, pointing out that their conduct was in gross violation of their declared neutrality and “may lead to undesirable complications and upset normal relations”<sup>2</sup> with the Soviet Union. The People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs published its correspondence with Sweden and Norway, and stressed that the “attitude of the Swedish and Norwegian governments is a dangerous one. It shows that the Swedish and Norwegian governments are not putting up due resistance to the pressure of the powers that seek to draw Sweden and Norway into a war against the U.S.S.R.”<sup>3</sup> These warnings induced the Swedes and Norwegians to hold up their reply to the British and French demands for right of passage.

Some well-informed British and French newspapers wrote in just so many words about plans for a war against the Soviet Union. The French *Le Temps*, for example, suggested that “at first an Anglo-French fleet should

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<sup>1</sup> Général Gamelin, *Servir. La guerre. Septembre 1939-19 Mai, 1940*. Vol. III, Paris, 1947, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Внешняя политика СССР*, сборник документов, т. IV, стр. 486.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 487.

steam to the Arctic and blockade Murmansk. . . . Then the Anglo-French ground forces should disembark near Petsamo and operate jointly with the Finnish troops. . . . The intervention in Finland should be coupled with a powerful offensive operation against some other part of the immense Soviet empire. The region best indicated for an operation of that sort is the Black Sea, which is accessible to warships of the Allied navies".<sup>1</sup>

The American ruling groups were intervening more and more in the affairs of the European countries. A series of new loans to Finland followed the first. Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles was sent to Rome, Berlin, Paris and London on a special mission. In his conversations with the top statesmen of the two coalitions, Welles sought on the instructions of the U.S. Government to reconcile the belligerents on an anti-Soviet platform.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Government showed a desire to head a new imperialist compact. But the deep-going imperialist contradictions that rent the Western Powers stood in its way. Apart from the contradictions between the two imperialist coalitions, there were still the Anglo-American contradictions. As at the time of the Munich deal, the British did not want any compact in which the United States would play first fiddle.

The U.S., British and French governments opposed the conclusion of peace between Finland and the Soviet Union. On December 28, the Finnish Government requested the United States to mediate an armistice. The American reply denounced the Finnish *démarche* and the very idea of a negotiated settlement.<sup>3</sup>

In February 1940 the Soviet Army breached the Man-nerheim Line. In early March the Soviet troops swung round Viipuri across the ice-locked Gulf of Finland, enveloped the city, emerged on the coast between Viipuri and

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<sup>1</sup> *Le Temps*, January 10, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich von Hassell, *Vom anderen Deutschland. Aus den nachgelassenen Tagebüchern, 1938-1944*, Zürich, 1946, S. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

Helsinki, and marched on the Finnish capital. The Finnish Government was compelled to plead for an armistice, which it did through Sweden. The U.S., British and French governments demanded that Finland fight on. Churchill, who came to Paris as Lord of the Admiralty on instructions of the British Government, joined Daladier in telling a representative of the Finnish Government that there was no point in an armistice because Western action was about to begin. Norway and Sweden, he said, would not be requested this time, but ordered.<sup>1</sup> Daladier informed Helsinki that Britain and France insisted on Finland's declining the Soviet peace proposals. "I assure you once more," he wrote, "we are ready to give our help immediately. The airplanes are ready to take off. The operational force is ready."<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Government declared that it would be glad "to do what it could, short of mediation or actual involvement in the dispute."<sup>3</sup>

The Finnish War Council studied the statements on March 7 and decided to accept the Soviet peace terms. The Soviet-Finnish peace treaty was signed on March 12, 1940. The policymakers of the United States, Britain and France received word of it with obvious displeasure. The *New York Herald Tribune* wrote:

"The report of the signing of an agreement between the Soviet Union and Finland . . . caused a profound shock in official circles."<sup>4</sup>

Military operations ceased. The signatories undertook to refrain from the use of arms against each other and from entering into any alliances and coalitions aimed against the other party. Finland pledged, as provided for in the 1920 peace treaty, to keep no submarines and no air forces in its waters along the Arctic coast, and to maintain only

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<sup>1</sup> E. Maseng, *1905 og 1940. En leksjon i maktpolitikk*, Oslo, 1953, s. 214.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Wuorinen, *Finland and World War II, 1939-1944*, New York, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Herald Tribune*, March 13, 1940.

surface warships of limited tonnage. The Soviet-Finnish boarder was moved 150 kilometres away from Leningrad, and the Karelian Isthmus with Viipuri (Vyborg), the Bay of Viipuri and the islands in that bay were ceded to the Soviet Union. The western and northern shore of Lake Ladoga also became part of the Soviet Union. The safety of Murmansk and the Murmansk railway was secured by the transfer to the U.S.S.R. of an area east of Merkjärvi, the town of Kuolajärvi and the formerly Finnish parts of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas. Lastly, Finland granted a thirty-year lease of the Hankö Peninsula with the adjoining islands and waters at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland for a Soviet naval base.

The Soviet-Finnish war was over. The threat of a Hitler attack on the Western Powers loomed larger each day. But the latter did not bother to alter their policy.

Churchill says in his memoirs that on January 10, 1940, a German warplane made a forced landing in Belgium. The German staff major on board the plane was arrested and his papers were impounded. These contained the entire and actual scheme for the invasion of Belgium, the Netherlands and France.<sup>1</sup> But this fact, a rare windfall in the history of wars, did not affect the conduct of the Western rulers either.

Germany's adversaries also obtained important information from its Italian ally, who was playing a double game at the time. On January 2, 1940, Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, secretly informed the Belgian Ambassador to Rome, Kerchove de Denterghem, that Germany was preparing an attack on Belgium.<sup>2</sup>

But the British and French leadership did not react to these facts. The reactionary U.S., British and French press persisted in its hope that "Hitler . . . might decide to turn

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<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. I, London, 1949, p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue d'Histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale*, October 1955, No. 20, pp. 10-11.

his army eastward against Russia".<sup>1</sup> The British and French governments did not abandon their war preparations against the Soviet Union. U.S. sources indicate that the Allies "were not disposed to shelve the plans which appeared so promising. They simply revamped them to fit the new situation".<sup>2</sup>

Charles de Gaulle wrote in his memoirs:

"Certain quarters . . . wondered how to strike at Russia . . . to bombard Baku or disembark in Istanbul, rather than look for ways and means of combating the Reich."<sup>3</sup>

The British military leaders did not give up their plan of an air assault on Baku until mid-June 1941.

U.S. policy did not change either. In spring 1940 a special State Department emissary, Stallforths, came to Berlin to continue the talks begun by Welles. Stallforths said in Berlin that he had come to "press for peace with the leading German statesmen".<sup>4</sup>

The U.S., British and French governments, and the official bourgeois historians, refuse to this day to appreciate the true and objective purport of the events. It is beyond question that the conduct of the Soviet Union was consistent with the basic national interests of the peoples involved. The Soviet Union blocked the path eastward to the German troops and compelled them to pull up. If its actions had been understood and supported by the U.S., British and French governments, the nazi aggression—both east and west—could have been frustrated by collective effort even in the early months of the war in Europe.

But this did not fit in with the plans of a world-wide anti-Soviet crusade entertained by Western politicians.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Republic*, May 20, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. L'Appel, 1940-1942*, Paris, 1954, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ulrich von Hassell, *Vom anderen Deutschland*, Zürich, 1947, 3 Auflage, S. 203.

*Chapter Four*  
**THE FRENCH TRAGEDY**

**1**

The war in Europe was seven months old. Britain and France could have done much in the interim to fortify their defences against the imminent German-fascist invasion. But their rulers were too deeply engrossed in anti-Soviet intrigues. Their war industries did not increase output, while much of what was produced in the way of arms and war materiel was shipped to Finland.

Germany made hay while the sun shone. The nazis devoted the winter of 1939-40 to training reserves, building up new formations, and equipping troops—especially with panzers and aircraft. They activated a fifth column in the countries booked for invasion, and their staffs burned the midnight oil working on operational invasion plans.

The German General Staff had been working on a war plan against France, involving the invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands, since August 1938 under the cover-name of Fall Gelb (Operation Yellow). On October 9, 1939, the German High Command issued orders to prepare "for offensive action on the northern flank of the Western Front crossing the area of Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands". This attack, the directive said, must be "carried out as soon and as forcefully as possible".<sup>1</sup> On November 23,

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<sup>1</sup> *IMT*, Vol. III, pp. 298-99.



1939, Hitler told a conference of top nazi commanders that "violation of Belgian and Dutch neutrality does not matter, for no one will ask any questions after we will have won."<sup>1</sup>

Admiral Raeder, who headed Hitler's navy, suggested capturing Denmark and Norway before opening Operation Yellow. These countries, he said, were located on the right flank of the German armies and were likely to play a part in the sea war. Furthermore, he added, Germany wanted Scandinavia's iron ore.

Raeder's proposal was seized upon. A new plan was born—the Weserübung, or Weser games. The German Land Forces High Command ordered the crossing of the Danish border and the landing in Norway to proceed simultaneously. The operation, its directive said, should be worked out as quickly as possible and with the maximum strength. If the enemy were to seize the initiative in Norway, counter-measures should be taken at once. It was most important, the directive added, that the German moves should be a surprise for the northern countries and the Western foe.<sup>2</sup>

Operation Weserübung was begun on April 9, 1940. German troops invaded Denmark. The Danish king and his government decided against resistance and ordered their army to lay down its arms. In the meantime, German transports landed troops in all the big Norwegian ports. The Norwegians put up a stout resistance. Oslo shore batteries sank the 10,000-ton armoured cruiser *Blücher*. Bitter fighting raged at many points along the coastline. But Hitler's agents in Norway paralysed the people's war effort.

Major Vidkun Quisling, Norway's War Minister, whose name is now a synonym for treachery, was Hitler's chief agent. He helped Germany flood Norway with spies, who arrived in the guise of German businessmen. General Falkenhorst, who later assumed command of the German

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<sup>1</sup> IMT, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Kurt Tippelskirch, *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, Bonn, 1956, p. 55.

troops in Norway, came to Oslo in advance masquerading as a garments salesman.

The British Government made a try at frustrating Germany's capture of Norway. It landed troops in the northern part of the country, but they were smashed and the Germans soon were in complete control of Norway. This was a major gain. The flank and rear of the German armed forces was now secure, Germany's communication lines to Norway and Sweden well protected, and the nazi air force and navy in possession of new bases for operations against Britain and France.

Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway was fresh evidence that the nazis were bent on world domination. It demonstrated their utter contempt for the rights of nations and for international law. The gross stupidity of the Munich policy revealed itself glaringly. All hopes that Hitler's promises to spare Western Europe would be kept, were dashed to the ground.

A political crisis, sparked by the failure of the Munich policy, broke out in Britain. Neville Chamberlain, its chief exponent, was forced to resign. On May 10 a new government was formed under Winston Churchill. By then the German troops had crashed into Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Yet Churchill wrote in his diary:

"I cannot conceal from the reader of this truthful account that as I went to bed at about 3 a.m., I was conscious of a profound sense of relief. At last I had the authority to give directions over the whole scene... Therefore, although impatient for the morning, I slept soundly and had no need for cheering dreams. Facts are better than dreams."<sup>1</sup>

The facts that seemed better than dreams to Churchill were, however, grim, inexorable and tainted with blood. A nazi invasion of Britain loomed large.

In France, too, a keen controversy raged over who was

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 667.

responsible for the Munich policy and the Norwegian defeat. A conflict broke out between Premier Reynaud and Daladier, who stayed on as War Minister, although both were equally to blame for the Munich disgrace. The French Government faced the German offensive in a state of extreme confusion.

The German invasion of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg began at 5.30 a.m. on May 10, followed up by a thrust at France. Hitler trampled all his non-aggression agreements in the dust. It was not Germany that became a toy in the hands of the U.S., British and French imperialists. On the contrary, Britain and France fell prey to German policy. The imperialist contradictions told in full measure. By isolating the Soviet Union, the governments of Britain and France had wrecked the unity of the peace-loving nations, and were ultimately themselves isolated in face of a fierce German-fascist assault.

The Nazi command flung 72 divisions into battle, keeping another 47 in reserve. Seventeen divisions more were stationed along the Siegfried Line. This total of 136 German divisions was opposed by 133 Allied divisions—91 of them French, 10 British, 22 Belgian, 9 Dutch and 1 Polish.<sup>1</sup> The numerical strength was thus nearly equal. Neither did Germany have any marked superiority in armour. What it did have was a big advantage in the air.

The German operational plan was based on surprise, the psychological unpreparedness of the enemy, and rapidity of advance. It also made the most of the poor co-ordination between troops of the various nations opposing Germany.

Army Group "A" under Colonel-General von Rundstedt was to strike the main blow near the Ardennes, across Luxembourg at the Franco-Belgian border between Dinant and Sedan. The offensive was then to continue north-

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<sup>1</sup> These and subsequent figures are taken from archive documents of the German General Staff and from Müller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, Band II, *Die Blitzfeldzüge 1939-1941*, Darmstadt, Mittler, 1956.

westward towards the Channel coast, in order to cut off and destroy all enemy forces in Belgium. The Germans planned to break through the front, outflank and surround the enemy left wing and, at once, emerge in the rear of his right wing.

Army Group "A" had 52 divisions, including nine panzer divisions. General von Kleist's armoured fist of five panzer and five motorised divisions was the main assault force.

Army Group "B" under Colonel-General von Bock was to thrust into the Netherlands and Belgium and pin down the maximum enemy force. It consisted of 27 divisions, including 3 panzer divisions.

On the very first day, May 10, Bock's armies made a force crossing of the Maas and the Albert Canal and captured key points in the Belgian fortifications at Liège. Considerable French forces and the British Expeditionary Corps advanced against the Nazi armies. In the meantime, Rundstedt crossed Luxembourg and bore down on the French army at Sedan.

On May 15 the Dutch army surrendered. On the same day the Germans crushed the 9th French Army under General Corap and breached the front along a 90-kilometre stretch between Sedan and Namur.

General Kleist's group streamed into the breach. At first it raced south-westward, towards Paris. The French authorities were in a frenzy. Speaking at a special Cabinet meeting in the presence of the corps of generals and the chairmen of the two chambers of the French Parliament, Supreme Commander Maurice Gamelin declared he could not guarantee German troops would not enter Paris that night (May 16).

By then the French rulers were already toying with the idea of surrender. Undisguised defeatists and advocates of surrender were appointed to the government one by one—Jean Ybarnégaray and Louis Marin on May 10, and Marshal Philippe Pétain, who was made Vice-Premier, on

May 18. Gamelin was dismissed and replaced by General Weygand. Gamelin's dismissal was accompanied by a massive reshuffle of the top generals. On May 14 the British Government, anticipating the evacuation of its troops from Northern France, ordered shipowners to place all motor vessels 30 to 100 feet long at the disposal of the military authorities.

The German south-west offensive jeopardised the Nazi mobile group. Kleist's relatively small unit had lunged forward into the narrow corridor it had cleared for itself between enemy armies one million strong in the north and two million strong in the south. They only needed to move inwards, and the German wedge would be caught between hammer and anvil. This made Kleist alter his direction. On May 16 his troops, which had reached Laon, veered sharply north-westward towards the Channel coast, and reached it on May 21. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel commented later:

"Ten of our panzer divisions won the 1940 campaign in France. Their success was facilitated by the sluggishness of the Anglo-French Command."<sup>1</sup>

The giant horseshoe of Nazi troops drove 49 Allied divisions—22 Belgian, 9 British and 18 French—to the coast. The Belgian army surrendered on King Leopold's orders on May 25. The German horseshoe contracted markedly. In the east, the Germans seized Ostend and Zeebrugge, and in the west Boulogne and Calais. The Anglo-French forces were compressed into the Dunkirk area and threatened with total annihilation. The final blow was to have been struck by Kleist's and Guderian's armour.

But at the eleventh hour the lunge was cancelled. Hitler, who visited Rundstedt's headquarters in Charlesville on May 24, ordered Kleist to hold his hand. He intimated that he wished to talk peace with Britain after France will have

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<sup>1</sup> *Revue de défense nationale*, 1954.

capitulated. The manoeuvre was part of a diplomatic build-up for war against the Soviet Union.

At a later date Rundstedt said:

"If I had had my way the English would not have got off so lightly at Dunkirk. But my hands were tied by direct orders from Hitler himself. While the English were clambering into the ships off the beaches, I was kept uselessly outside the port unable to move. I recommended to the Supreme Command that my five panzer divisions be immediately sent into the town and thereby completely destroy the retreating English. But I received definite orders from the Führer that under no circumstances was I to attack, and I was expressly forbidden to send any of my troops closer than ten kilometres from Dunkirk... At this distance I sat outside the town, watching the English escape, while my tanks and infantry were prohibited from moving."<sup>1</sup>

The British Government ordered the evacuation of the troops pressed against the sea, but had to abandon arms and equipment, for which tonnage was lacking. The bulk of the men were thus saved. The nazis reaped a rich booty.

By June 2 something like 338,000 men and officers, including 90,000 Frenchmen, were shipped across the Channel.

The first stage of the nazi offensive against France was thus over. An interval of a few days ensued between the first and second stages. It could have been used to bolster French defences. The French people were quite capable of withstanding the German invasion. What they needed was a clear-cut purpose, ending the "phoney war". They had to be rallied to the defence of their country. The French Communist Party offered the government a programme of salvation, based on the following demands: turn the war into a people's war for freedom and independence; release the Communist M.P.'s and Communist Party functionaries, and

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<sup>1</sup> Milton Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, London, 1947, pp. 42-43.

the tens of thousands of workers held in prisons and concentration camps; arrest at once all foreign agents, and punish them severely; form a people's volunteer army, give arms to the people, and turn Paris into an impregnable fortress.

The Communist Party was the only party in France to formulate a programme of this sort. It expressed the will of the nation, which was prepared to defend its freedom and national independence. But the government, composed of traitors, defeatists and German agents, scorned it.

The first stage of the German offensive changed the relation of forces radically. Now the German armies, which had suffered relatively small losses, were faced by a mere 66 French divisions.

The second stage of the German offensive opened on June 5. The French soldiers fought bravely. But treachery at top level, the sluggishness of the generals in command, and shortages of arms and munitions were tilting the scales against them. On June 9 the Germans again breached the front, and rolled westward.

In the meantime, the French Government took in new protagonists of surrender. On June 10 it abandoned Paris and fled to Tours. Its defeatist intentions were obvious.

Fascist Italy had long coveted part of French territory and some of the French colonies. This had been one of the motives behind its entry into the notorious Berlin-Rome Axis. When the war broke out in Europe, Italy decided to wait and see. But as the Germans cut into France, the attitude of the Italian rulers grew increasingly bellicose.

The Italian press was conditioning the country's public opinion for war against Britain and France. The papers bragged stridently about Italy's military power. On May 4, 1940, the *Tevere*, of Rome, wrote:

"The Adriatic is not going to be a battle scene for the enemy navy, because it can be easily bottled up near the Strait of Otranto, just as at Pas-de-Calais and Skagerrak. The other seas of Italy, from the French border at the

Ligurian coast to Libya, along a stretch of 1,500 kilometres, including Corsica, Sardinia, Pantelleria and Sicily, can be blocked off by 121 Italian submarines. The Tyrrhenian Sea is but an inland sea. There, the Italian navy can easily concentrate 6 battleships, 33 cruisers, 118 destroyers and 62 minesweepers for a decisive attack on the enemy, wherever he may try to go. Furthermore, there are the numerous support stations of the powerful Italian air force with its free rear, which is protected by the fortifications in the Alps and the 8,000,000 bayonets that Italy can put into the field in wartime."

The Italian imperialists believed the Anglo-French bloc to be in a desperate plight and expected France's downfall to alter the relation of forces in the Mediterranean. This prompted them to enter the war. They were enthralled by the prospect of quick and easy booty. Speaking to the Turkish Ambassador on the eve of Italy's entry into the war, Italian Foreign Minister Ciano said that an opportunity of this sort arose just once in 5,000 years, and that Italy would not let it escape. The war, Ciano declared, would end within forty days. The Italian imperialists were absolutely certain that the war would not last long. Mussolini proclaimed a "six-week war".

The intemperate boasting of the Italian fascist rulers covered up the technical deficiencies of the Italian army and the low morale of its soldiers, who were none too eager to pull chestnuts out of the fire for the Fascia. "The Italian armed forces," Italy's allies observed, "were in all respects an inept instrument, which had so far served merely as a tool of political bluff."<sup>4</sup>

But, naturally, Italy's entry into the war on June 10 added to France's difficulties. The Italian army launched an offensive from Mont Blanc to the Mediterranean. All the French could put into the field against the 32 Italian divisions was an alpine army of six divisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 98.



The Italians had an understanding with the Nazi Command that their forces would reach the city of Chambery in south-east France and effect a junction with the German troops. But the rendezvous did not take place. The French stood their ground tenaciously against the numerically superior enemy. It was with great difficulty that the Italians managed to occupy the French summer resort, Mentone, a bordertown on the Mediterranean coast.

Ensnconced in a castle ten miles from Tours, the French Government on June 12 debated the developments. General Weygand, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armed Forces, reported on the war situation. He described it as hopeless, and urged hasty surrender, warning against possible "social repercussions" if it were delayed. The general said he had a report of disorders breaking out in Paris and of Maurice Thorez, head of the Communist Party, moving into the Palais de l'Elysée.

Georges Mandel, Minister of the Interior, telephoned Langeron, the Prefect of Paris, who denied Weygand's falsehoods and said the capital was quiet.

But Weygand's threats had their effect. Fearing that the war would develop into a national resistance effort headed by Parisian workers and Communists, the government decided to abandon Paris without a fight. It also resolved to approach the British Government concerning France's capitulation.

On the next day Paris was declared an open city. The German Command was informed that French troops would not defend their capital. The French Government explained that "there were no strategic reasons for defending Paris". General Dentz, known for his pro-fascist views, was in command of the Paris garrison. He was empowered to shoot on the spot citizens and soldiers who attempted to organise resistance.

The French Government contention that Paris was of no strategic value smelled to high heaven of outright trea-

son. Paris had always been of utmost strategic importance. This is illustrated by the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, and the First World War. The capital and its adjoining districts have a population of 12,000,000, of which more than 3,000,000 are workers. It is the centre of the French engineering and war industries. Furthermore, it is the hub of most of France's communication lines. As far back as the 19th century, Frederick Engels wrote that the "centre of gravity in France is not in the centre, on the Loire, near Orléans, but in the north, on the Seine, in Paris, and double experience shows that all of France falls when Paris falls. The military significance of France's border conformation, therefore, depends most of all on the protection afforded to Paris."<sup>1</sup>

The French Communist Party leadership told the government it would regard as treason the abandonment of Paris to the fascist invaders, and proposed to raise a popular force to defend the capital, the brain and heart of France.<sup>2</sup>

Paris being declared an open city presaged the surrender of France. If the capital had resisted, the nation would have risen against the fascist invaders. The courage, heroism and dedication of the French soldiers, and of many of the officers, showed that the people were quite capable of blocking the enemy's path. But the rulers of France did not want this. An American correspondent observed in a report from France that the big French capitalists preferred to see Paris ruled by Hitler than by the Popular Front. "They were probably more afraid of victory," he wrote, "than of defeat."

Bullitt, the U.S. Ambassador to France, mediated the surrender of Paris to the nazis, who entered the French capital on June 14.

In Tours, meanwhile, the French Government conferred

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Po und Rhein, Savoyen, Nizza und der Rhein*, Stuttgart, 1915, S. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Florimond Bonte, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

with the visiting members of the British Cabinet—Winston Churchill, Halifax and Beaverbrook.

The British Government saw an opportunity of exploiting France's difficulties. It wanted to gain control of all its resources, its colonies and navy, and reduce France to the status of a British province. On June 16, 1940, Britain submitted to the French Government the project of a Franco-British Union.

Formally, the project provided for the equality of the two members of the union. But in the circumstances leadership would certainly have been Britain's.

The Franco-British Union idea was based on the premise that France was finished as a Great Power. The British Government did not want the French "legacy" to slip out of its fingers.

Paul Reynaud was in favour of the British proposal. But the majority of the French Cabinet, and Pétain most of all, preferred surrender to the German fascists. Their motto was, "better a nazi province than a British dominion".<sup>1</sup>

The French Government split into two factions—one willing to give the country to the British imperialists, the other ready to serve German fascism. It had no third faction—one favouring struggle for French freedom and independence. This was graphic evidence that the country's governing class had plunged into the abyss of national betrayal.

The majority voted for surrender. The following day, June 17, Reynaud resigned, and was succeeded by Marshal Philippe Pétain, who hastened to announce over the radio that the country had to "cease the battle" and that he had already "applied to our opponent to ask him whether he was ready to sign with us". His radio statement robbed the French army, then still resisting the fascist invaders, of the remnants of its morale.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tippleskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 90.

On June 18 Hitler and Mussolini met in Munich to discuss the French surrender terms, revealing serious differences between the Axis partners. The U.S. Government, too, stretched out its hand for the fruits of the Franco-German war. It approached the German and Italian governments for information about their terms of surrender.<sup>1</sup> The Axis partners turned down the U.S. request, adding fuel to the antagonism between themselves and the United States.

On June 21, 1940, the nazis delivered the armistice terms to French spokesmen in a carefully rehearsed ceremony. The terms were tendered to the French delegation by Wilhelm Keitel in Hitler's presence in the railway car in which Marshal Foch had dealt with a German delegation on November 8, 1918. The car was placed on its original site at Compiègne.

The armistice terms, accepted by the Pétain government without reservations, provided that hostilities cease at once and all French armies lay down their arms. All military, naval and air forces, save forces required by the French Government to maintain "order", were subject to immediate disbandment. Germany retained the right to requisition in good order all artillery, tanks, anti-tank weapons, warplanes, infantry equipment, tractors and munitions. Ground and shore fortifications and armaments, their plans, and information concerning minefields and naval defences were to be handed over to Germany forthwith.

The armistice terms envisaged the occupation by German troops of a substantial section of France, with the French paying the costs of the occupation. The occupation zone would stretch east of a line through Geneva, Dôle, Châlons, Paray-le-Monial, Moulins, Bourges and Viersen,

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. 2, Boston, 1940, p. 90.

then through a point 20 km east of Tours, and south parallel to the railway from Angoulême to Mont-de-Marsan and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

This meant that all of France's industrial areas would be occupied. The nazis left the question of their territorial claims to France until a later day, confining themselves to the incorporation of Alsace-Lorraine in the Reich. As for the French industries, they needed them for their projected military ventures. Sixty-five per cent of the French manufacturing industry was in the occupied zone, yielding 98 per cent of the country's total pre-war iron and steel output.

One might ask why the nazis did not occupy all of France, as they did later on? By setting up a French puppet government, Germany hoped to retain control of the French Navy and the French colonies, for in the absence of such a government these would have been instantly seized by the opponents of fascist Germany. Article 8 of the armistice terms said:

"The French war fleet is to collect in parts to be designated more particularly and under German and/or Italian control, to demobilise and lay up—with the exception of those units released to the French Government for protection of French interests in its colonial empire."<sup>1</sup>

The armistice had no fixed duration. There was the provision that it would be "valid until conclusion of a peace treaty. The German Government may terminate this agreement at any time with immediate effect if the French Government fails to fulfil the obligations it assumes under the agreement."<sup>2</sup>

The whole arrangement would come into force after France accepted Italy's armistice terms.

On June 22 the French delegates signed the agreement with Germany on these humiliating conditions.

The leaders of fascist Italy waited impatiently for the

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 26, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

hour when they could submit their demands to France. The Italian newspapers, like their German counterparts, called for severity in dealing with the French nation. The *Tevere* wrote on June 23:

"No mercy to France. Has she not done her best to deserve our heel on the back of her head? Let her stay on her knees for centuries."

The Italo-French armistice terms went a step farther than the Franco-German armistice. They provided for a cease-fire in all French colonies and mandated territories. There were to be demilitarised zones, to be occupied by Italian troops—in France 50 kilometres beyond the line held by the Italian armies at the hour of the cease-fire, and in Tunisia and Algeria 250 km from their border with Libya. France undertook to demilitarise the coastline of French Somaliland and to vacate its naval fortifications, including the naval bases in Toulon, Bizerta and Oran. Italy gained the complete and unqualified right to use the ports and harbour installations in Djibouti and to exploit the French section of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway.<sup>1</sup>

The armistice did not contain Italy's territorial claims to France proper. Hitler objected to Mussolini's demand that France cede Savoy, Corsica, Nice, and Tunisia. The German imperialists were not in the least inclined to let Mussolini have these savoury morsels. Furthermore, the Germans needed a puppet government in France, which meant that its dismemberment would have to wait.

Count Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, wrote on this score in his diary:

"I find Mussolini dissatisfied. . . . The Duce is an extremist. He would like to go so far as the total occupation of French territory and demands the surrender of the French fleet. But he is aware that his opinion has only a consultative value,"<sup>2</sup> that Hitler has no intention to comply with it.

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 26, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, edited by Hugh Gibson, New York, 1946, p. 265.

The French Government accepted Italy's armistice terms, and signed the instrument on June 24. The German armistice thus came into force the following day. The hostilities were over.

The armistice terms represented a monstrous rape of the French people. France was humiliated and its national rights were desecrated. The French people were to tolerate nazi rule in German-occupied territory for an indefinite time and to pay the cost of the German occupation by their labour. The French war prisoners remained in Germany to work for their conquerors. French arms fell into enemy hands.

What was worse, the armistice terms did not reflect all the implications of France's plight. Pétain undertook to supply food, raw materials and fuel to Germany from France and its colonies. The French people were to suffer hunger and cold, while an endless stream of trains transported their national wealth to Germany. Germany won the unrestricted right to use French factories for the manufacture of war materiel, and the French workers had to add to the military power of their conquerors. Millions of Frenchmen were transported to Germany for slave labour at nazi war plants.

The progressive section of Germany's working class censured the armistice terms. In early July 1940 the Communist Party of Germany, operating underground, passed the following resolution:

"The German working class *condemns the Compiègne diktat and will never recognise it*. The German workers realise that this *diktat* strikes at the vital interests of the German nation. They express fraternal solidarity with the French proletariat and declare their determination to fight shoulder to shoulder with it against the Compiègne peace, that foul act of violence against the great French nation."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Otto Winzer, *Zwölf Jahre Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg*, Dietz-Verlag, Berlin, 1955, S. 175.

This resolution is one of the finest tokens of proletarian internationalism.

A similar declaration was issued by the Communist Party of Italy. The Italian Communists said:

“Our nation does not want to be either the slave of the Italian fascist bourgeoisie or a vassal of foreign imperialism, either a prison guard or a slave-driver of other peoples. It does not want to enslave the fraternal people of France. We Communists declare that the Italian people do not, and will never recognise the disgraceful ‘armistice’ terms imposed on the French people by the German and Italian imperialists.”<sup>4</sup>

What were the causes of France’s national tragedy? The main reason for it lay in the policy of betrayal pursued by the country’s ruling circles before and during the war. The French surrender was a natural sequel to the Munich policy and all the anti-Soviet actions of the French rulers. France, whose patriotic forces were hunted and outlawed by the government, misinformed and divided against itself, left without allies and friends, was abandoned to its traditional enemy. The tragedy of France is the tragedy of its people. Its national interests were scorned by its bankers and its Big Business, for whom a deal with Hitler was welcome so long as it yielded profit. France’s “200 families” did not hesitate for a moment to betray their nation in the hope of keeping the people in check. They chose to deliver their land to the imperialist foe, rather than entrust its fate to their own people.

The French capitalists helped Hitler Germany exploit French industry. In the occupied part of France “co-operation” reigned between the industrialists and the occupation forces. Thomas Kernan, a prominent American businessman, who was in France at the time, wrote that the nazis were “cleverly kneading all occupied France into one great

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<sup>4</sup> “Trenta Anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.”, Documenti, *Rinascita*, No. 2, 1954, p. 191.



industrial, commercial and agricultural plantation".<sup>1</sup> And they succeeded. "They have done," Kernan wrote, "what economists before the war said was impossible: to make military conquest immediately profitable."<sup>2</sup>

In unoccupied France the nazis leaned for support on the Pétain government. Marshal Pétain chose Vichy, a small holiday resort, for his seat. Here, on July 10, 1940, the deputies of the French Parliament, from which Communists and all other patriots had been providently ousted, acted obediently as the grave-diggers of French statehood and adopted a decision on the abolition of the French Republic. A military dictatorship with Pétain at its head was ushered in to replace the republican system. It did not take Pétain long to enter into his part. He made the following address:

"We, Philippe Pétain, Marshal of France, in consideration of the Constitutional Law of July 10, 1940, declare that we have assumed the functions of Chief of the French State. Therefore we decree: Article 2 of the Constitutional Law of February 25, 1875, is abrogated."<sup>3</sup> This put paid to the Constitution of France and to the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

The terrorist Vichy dictatorship was designed to break the resistance of the working class and to furnish the German fascists every possible comfort in the unoccupied zone of France.

The French bourgeoisie was engrossed in an intricate political game. It put its stake on Hitler, but also sought support from the ruling circles of the United States and Britain. The Pétain government sent its representative, Louis Rougier, to London in October 1940 in secret from the Germans. Rougier called on Sir William Cadogan, Lord Halifax and Winston Churchill. The talks culminated in a

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kernan, *Report on France*, London, 1942, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Raphaël Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Washington, 1944, p. 405.

gentleman's agreement on October 28, 1940, that Britain would relax its naval blockade of unoccupied France, delay the seizure by de Gaulle of the colonies still loyal to the Vichy Government, and tone down its propaganda against the Pétain government. The latter, for its part, promised to withhold assistance to Hitler in his war against Britain, to keep the French Navy out of Germany's reach, to do likewise with regard to its war bases in Africa, to make no immediate claim on colonies held by de Gaulle, and to join the war against Germany the moment the British were able to land large forces in France.<sup>1</sup>

President Roosevelt sent his close adviser, Admiral William Leahy, as ambassador to Pétain. Leahy's diplomacy was crowned by the conclusion on February 26, 1941, of a secret agreement between General Weygand and the American diplomat Murphy. Under the terms of this agreement economic facilities were made available to the United States in the French colonies of North Africa. For its part, the U.S. Government undertook to supply these colonies and unoccupied France with strategic raw materials, manufactured goods and foodstuffs.

After France capitulated, General de Gaulle founded the French National Committee of Liberation in London. On July 7, 1940, he and Churchill concluded an agreement whereby he was granted the right to form an armed French volunteer force in Britain. The British Government promised to supply his troops with all due materiel. De Gaulle was appointed High Commander, but was to operate under British directives. He was also allowed to form a civil administration. The British Government undertook to pay the cost of his civil and military establishments. This made de Gaulle's movement dependent on the top British governing group.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Rougier, *Les accords secrets franco-britanniques de l'automne 1940*, Grasset, Paris, 1954, pp. 30-31.

Acting on its own behalf, and on behalf of de Gaulle, the British Government tried to take possession of the French fleet in Oran on July 3, 1940, and a few days later in Alexandria. Some of the French vessels yielded. Others were bombarded, and a few were sunk. In September 1940 the British Government and de Gaulle's Committee jointly attempted to seize Dakar, an important French naval base, and to gain control of the ships stationed there. The attempt failed. But in due course many of the French colonies joined de Gaulle's movement.

The French people, betrayed by defeatists and traitors, fought for genuine French national independence. The Communist Party of France stood in the van of the struggle. On July 10, 1940, its Central Committee issued a manifesto signed by Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos. "France," the manifesto read, "has tasted defeat, occupation and humiliation. War-ravaged France wants to be free and independent. Never will a great people like ours be a nation of slaves. France will never be a variety of colony. France, with its glorious past, will not bow before a handful of menials ready to perform all services. Not defeated generals, businessmen and politicians with tarnished reputations will resuscitate France. It is the people on whom great hopes of national and social liberation are pinned. And it is the working class, ardent, generous, confident and courageous, that will form the nucleus of the front of freedom, independence and French revival."<sup>1</sup>

The manifesto called on the French people to fight for freedom. The French were not deaf to this high-minded appeal. They heeded it as they would the voice of their conscience and honour, and as a programme of action.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Paris, 1960, Editions Sociales, p. 196.

*Chapter Five*

**AFTER FRANCE SURRENDERED**

**I**

The French surrender put Britain in a position of difficulty. It stood alone against Germany and had to wage the war with its own resources contrary to the age-old traditions of its governing class. It was obvious that it could not withstand Germany without outside help. In these circumstances, Churchill and his government sought to win time and to delay developments.

Britain's predicament was a logical upshot of the policy its rulers had conducted on the eve and in the early months of the Second World War. Harold L. Ickes, the prominent U.S. politician, described its policy thus:

"She kept hoping against hope that she could embroil Russia and Germany with each other and thus escape scot-free herself. She got caught in her own toils and in so doing has lost the respect and the sympathy of the world generally."<sup>1</sup>

The nazis expected the British to lay down their arms after the French collapse, or at least to sue for peace. But no such steps were forthcoming from Britain. So the German Command deliberated an invasion of the British Isles.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, Vol. 2, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1954, p. 705.

The invasion plan was ready in good time, and was christened Operation Seelöwe (Sea Lion). It was supplemented by joint Spanish-German plans: Isabelle, for the capture of Gibraltar, and Felix for the capture of Portugal.

The military situation was highly favourable to the Germans. After Dunkirk, Britain was virtually defenceless. The country did not have enough arms to replace the materiel abandoned to the enemy in Northern France. Production, in the meantime, lagged behind wartime needs. The only advantage Britain had was its powerful navy. Germany expected to make up the difference in sea power by a massive air force and long-range shore artillery.

The nazis took up excellent strategic positions along the northern and western coasts of France. The nazi warplanes operating against Britain were based on airfields and landing strips along the Channel. The French ports were turned into bases for German submarines, naval planes and surface raiders harassing British shipping. Churchill did not think too highly of Britain's defensive capabilities. He confessed at a closed sitting of the House of Commons on April 23, 1942, that "in 1940 an invading force of perhaps 150,000 picked men might have created havoc in our midst".<sup>1</sup>

Britain would then have had her own Pétains. De Gaulle writes in his memoirs that well-informed quarters in Britain "whispered the names of politicians, bishops, writers, and businessmen who would have negotiated with the Germans to administer the country under their control".<sup>2</sup>

On July 16, 1940, the German High Command issued directive No. 16, signed by Hitler, which read:

"As England, in spite of the hopelessness of her military position has so far shown herself unwilling to come to any compromise, I have therefore decided to begin to prepare for, and if necessary to carry out, an invasion of England.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 28, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. L'Appel, 1940-1942*, p. 87.

This operation is dictated by the necessity of eliminating Great Britain as a base from which the war against Germany can be fought and, if necessary, the island will be occupied."<sup>1</sup> Operation Seelöwe envisaged a three-pronged invasion and subsequent operations in Britain proper.

Acting upon this directive, the nazis began building up an invasion flotilla. Within a month 168 transports, 1,910 barges, 419 tugs and 1,600 motor boats were concentrated along the northern shore of Europe.<sup>2</sup> In the next directive, No. 17, of August 1, Hitler ordered an all-out air war against Britain and called for intensive operations on the seas. The plan for Britain's occupation was designed to turn the country into a German colony, to enslave its population and to exterminate all persons capable of resistance. The wealth of the country was to be shipped out. Under the projected system of coercive and punitive measures part of the population was to be deported and the rest greatly reduced by diverse methods of extermination.

In the meantime, Germany's governing clique and its military commanders began preparing the transfer of the main offensive from West to East.

The French breakdown had greatly augmented Germany's economic war potential. Easy victories fired the confidence of the German rulers. They were certain that they could chew whatever they bit off. They had postponed their war plans against the Soviet Union, but now these plans won pride of place, although, beyond all doubt, the nazis knew that the Soviet Union possessed vast, continuously growing resources.

It was the existence of the Soviet Union that saved Britain from a Hitler invasion. "The dread that Hitler had of the Red Army," wrote William Z. Foster, "alone saved Britain from a conquering nazi assault."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louis L. Snyder, *The War, A Concise History, 1939-1945*, New York, Julian Messner, 1960, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> K. Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> William Z. Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

At this time, bent on reinforcing its defences, the Soviet Government successfully resolved a series of vital international problems.

In spite of the mutual aid treaties which Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had signed with the Soviet Union (of unquestionable benefit to the international situation), the three Baltic countries governed by the pro-fascist cliques of Antanas Smetona, Karlis Ulmanis and Pāts did not abandon their anti-Soviet intrigues.

Under the mutual aid treaties the Baltic states had pledged to stay out of coalitions hostile to the Soviet Union. But they violated their commitment by reviving the anti-Soviet military Baltic Entente.

The war between the Soviet Union and Finland breathed hope into the Baltic fascists, who had long been dreaming of a Soviet-German war. In December 1939 and March 1940 the rulers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania held two secret anti-Soviet conferences. At the same time, they began inciting public opinion against the Soviet Union. On February 10, 1940, Ulmanis, President of bourgeois Latvia, called on the army in a radio speech to fittingly meet the imminent "hour of decision". In March the Lithuanian Šaulys, members of a fascist organisation, convened a congress at which Smetona, President of bourgeois Lithuania, appealed for action against the Soviet Union. His derisive references to the Slavs revealed that he was being inspired and backed by the nazis.

A series of provocations was organised in Lithuania against the Soviet military units stationed there under the mutual assistance treaty. The Lithuanian Government persecuted and arrested many Lithuanians who had had contact with Soviet servicemen.

On June 14-16 the Soviet Government, in notes to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, listed the series of gross violations of the mutual aid treaties, and presented perti-

nent demands. One such demand was that sufficient Soviet forces be stationed in the three Baltic states to carry out the provisions of the mutual aid treaties. The Soviet demands were accepted, and on June 15-17 Soviet Armed Forces entered the Baltic republics.

On June 26, 1940, the Soviet Government approached the Rumanian Government concerning Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The Soviet note pointed out that "the existing international situation calls for the urgent solution of unsettled issues left over from the past".<sup>1</sup> Bessarabia, treacherously seized by the Rumanian rulers, was one such issue, hanging fire since 1918. The question of Bessarabia's reinstatement was "organically associated with the question of surrendering to the Soviet Union that part of Bukovina, the bulk of whose population was connected with the Soviet Ukraine by its common history, common language and common national composition".<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the population of Bukovina had voted for reunification with the Soviet Ukraine as far back as 1918, but its will had not been executed due to interference by the Entente.

The Rumanian Government was compelled to comply with the just Soviet demands. On June 28 Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were liberated from the rule of boyar Rumania and reunified with the Soviet Union.

The presence of Soviet troops in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania restrained the pro-fascist bourgeois rulers of these three countries. It gave their peoples the freedom to express their will. Their respective parliaments proclaimed the reinstatement of Soviet power and requested the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to admit them into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In early August 1940 the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. met this request.

The governments of the United States and Britain were annoyed by the developments in the East. They showered

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<sup>1</sup> *Внешняя политика СССР, Сборник документов, т. IV, стр. 515.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



slander upon the Soviet Union and hastened to seize all ships of the Baltic countries in U.S. and British ports under the pretext of "protecting" Baltic interests. The U.S. Government froze the gold reserves of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania deposited in American banks.

Yet it should be said in all faith that events were proceeding in full accord with the will of the people and with their national and social interests. The fact that Soviet defence lines were moved westwards was an imperative factor in the struggle against Hitler aggression. In July 1941 Winston Churchill admitted in a message to the Soviet Government that he fully realised "the military advantage you have gained by forcing the enemy to deploy and engage on forward Western fronts, thus exhausting some of the force of his initial effort".<sup>1</sup> Last but not least, the Soviet moves helped to save Britain. In view of the Soviet defensive measures, the nazis decided to abandon the plan of invading the British Isles. Going back to the events of that time, General Jodl said in 1933:

"We did not dare to make the landing in Britain, though it was prepared to the last detail. No one wished to assume the responsibility and to allow the German armed forces to bleed to death in the struggle against Britain while the war against the Soviet Union was still pending."<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union, against which Germany massed its armies, was the decisive force that prevented Hitler Germany from invading Britain.

The course of events showed once more that the Soviet Union was a consistent champion of peace. Britain's policy was as hostile to the Soviet Union as ever. British progressives censured this suicidal anti-national attitude.

Bernard Shaw had this to say:

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the President of the U.S.A. and the Prime Minister of Great Britain During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 13. (Hereinafter referred to as *Correspondence*.)

<sup>2</sup> IMT.

"We have spent the last twenty years largely in heaping on Russia and her rulers every extremity of vilification and slander. Our own rulers have been mostly capitalists who would ask nothing better than to join Germany in partitioning Russia among the capitalist powers, and exterminating the Soviets as Bismarck combined with Thiers, to exterminate the Commune in Paris in 1871. It is impossible for the Russian Government to trust us as long as we have Cabinets of this complexion. And, most unfortunately, our Prime Minister, who financed the White generals in 1920, is the most conspicuous of the British enemies of Russia."<sup>1</sup>

### 3

Having decided to attack the Soviet Union before invading Britain, the nazi chiefs prolonged the preparations for invasion as camouflage. But there was now a new purpose to their actions. Firstly, these were to be a screen for the attack on the Soviet Union. Admiral Raeder said at the Nuremberg trial that the nazis performed the "greatest deception in the history of war".<sup>2</sup> Official American and British propaganda augmented the deception by the cry they raised about the Battle for Britain. Winston Churchill kindled this myth assiduously. He claimed that the nazi invasion of the British Isles was called off because the Royal Air Force had frustrated the German air assault and thereby foiled the German landing. But later on, Churchill rightly remarked in his memoirs that "to Hitler the continuance of the air attack on Great Britain was a necessary and convenient cover to the concentration against Russia".<sup>3</sup>

The other purpose of the German air attack on the British Isles was to terrorise the people of Britain and thereby set the stage for an understanding with the British ruling

<sup>1</sup> *Time and Tide*, June 29, 1940, p. 683.

<sup>2</sup> R. W. Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 37.

class. The German imperialists hoped the British monopolists would band together with them if they suggested a mutually advantageous march eastward. Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy in the fascist party, made a short visit to Madrid with that purpose in July 1940. While there, he negotiated with the British Ambassador and the Duke of Windsor, who promptly wrote to his elder brother, the King of England, and to Winston Churchill to urge them to sue for peace.<sup>1</sup>

But the British people would have no talks and no deals with Hitler Germany.

In the meantime, Germany kept massing transports in the Channel. The land forces, however, were being sent eastward to Poland and deliberately stationed some distance from the Soviet frontier. Von Bock's Army Group was deployed to Poznan at the end of July. According to Tippelskirch this "was the first step in the general course of events towards a strategic concentration of troops against the Soviet Union, to be carried through at long intervals and as inconspicuously as possible".<sup>2</sup> Germany also formed new divisions, and drew up operational war plans against the Soviet Union.

On August 9, the eve of the first big German raid on Britain, the nazi Command issued a directive titled Aufbau-Ost. This was a scheme for the development of the military rear—the repair and building of railways, motorroads, bridges, troop barracks, hospitals, airfields, depots, etc.

From August 9, 1940, to May 11, 1941, the German air force raided British cities. London, Coventry and Birmingham were subjected to a vicious pounding. There were very large civilian losses. Fascist brutality inflamed the British people and steeled their determination to fight to the end. It was impossible to break the spirit of Britain's

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<sup>1</sup> Waverley Root, *The Secret History of the War*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945, Vol. 1, pp. 631-32.

<sup>2</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

man in the street. He showed great tenacity. Germany suffered a resounding setback in its attempts to terrorise the people of Britain. All it managed to do was to steel them for the war effort. Their hatred of fascism, their indomitable resolve to defend their independence, and their unbending determination to fight on, had a decisive bearing on the developments.

Coupled with the air raids, the German Command blockaded Britain from the sea with submarines and surface raiders. The nazis had five cruisers to do the job at first, then added the pocket cruiser *Admiral Scheer* and the battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. In the spring of 1941 the blockade force was reinforced with a new heavy cruiser, *Prinz Eugen*, and the biggest German battleship, *Bismarck*. British shipping was taking a severe beating. The joint assault of the German submarines and surface ships took a heavy toll. The nazis claimed their submarines sank some 3,000,000 tons of British shipping and that another 1,000,000 tons was accounted for by the surface raiders and the air force, and all in the twelve months of June 1940 to June 1941.

But Britain struck back. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were blocked off in the French port of Brest by the R.A.F., and on May 24 the cruiser *Hood* irreparably damaged the *Bismarck* before being sunk by the German Navy. On May 27, the British Navy sank the *Bismarck* 400 miles west of Brest, which was a painful loss for the German Navy.

The United States was deeply alarmed over the possibility of Britain's defeat. Its surrender would create a grave threat to the United States. What troubled the U.S. Government most was the fate of the British Navy. President Roosevelt asked Churchill for reassurances that Britain would not surrender its fleet to the enemy. His first request to this effect was made in July 1940. But the American monopolists were also eager to cash in on the favourable situation.

The U.S. rulers started out by reinforcing their positions in the Western Hemisphere. A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American republics was held in Havana on July 22-30, 1940, ushering in a new stage in the enslavement of Latin American countries by the U.S. imperialists. The official agenda contained such items as neutrality, protection of the peace of the Western Hemisphere and economic co-operation.<sup>1</sup> But behind these issues lay the U.S. wish to gain a stranglehold upon the economy, the armed forces and the foreign policy of the American states, and to put an end to British influence in Latin America. On August 18, 1940, the United States and Canada concluded an agreement at Ogdensburg, New York, under which the U.S. imperialists gained control of all Canada's defence levers.

The disastrous shortage of armaments after Dunkirk was an effective means of pressure on Britain by the United States. The U.S. Government offered to supply Britain with all the arms she needed, but tied this to a series of far-reaching demands. In return, it wanted Britain's latest technical inventions and research papers, and important naval bases in the Atlantic. Churchill's Government accepted the U.S. terms. "It is difficult to realise how abject a surrender to the United States was made by Winston Churchill while he was proudly holding a thumb aloft to boast that Britain would stand alone against Germany."<sup>2</sup>

The United States was quick to cash in on its deal with Britain. It received strategic raw materials and quite a few important inventions—the radar, airplane engine 1820, etc., etc.<sup>3</sup> R. H. Fowler, the British physicist, went to the United States on the instructions of his government with all available information concerning British and French atomic

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. II, Boston, 1940, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> George Marion, *Bases and Empire. A Chart of American Expansion*, New York, 1948, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

research. After some time, another British physicist, George Paget Thomson, delivered to the United States a tentative scheme of the uranium bomb and calculations for a reactor for the manufacture of plutonium. The United States also received the British blueprint of a gas-diffusing installation for the production of uranium-235.

The British bases in the Atlantic were leased to the United States rent-free for the term of 99 years by an agreement signed on September 2, 1940. The United States thus gained control over strategically important naval and air bases. The balance of power in the Atlantic Ocean tipped visibly in favour of the United States.

The United States received bases in Newfoundland, the Bermudas, the Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Antigua, and British Guiana. The U.S. leadership was itself startled by this success. In a message to Congress, President Roosevelt said:

"The value to the Western Hemisphere of these outposts of security is beyond calculation. Their need has long been recognised by our country. . . . For these reasons I have taken advantage of the present opportunity to acquire them."<sup>1</sup>

The agreement provided that Britain would under no circumstances surrender or scuttle its navy and would send its ships across the ocean to defend other parts of the Empire.

What did Britain get in return? All it got was 50 *destroyers and a vague* United States undertaking to defend the British possessions in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. leaders were true to themselves. They gave Britain 50 over-age destroyers earlier destined for scrapping. U.S. bourgeois investigators delight in this sleight of hand to this day. Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell write:

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. III, Boston, 1941, p. 206.

"This authority he (the U.S. President.—G. D.) used most notably in arranging with the British for the exchange of 50 old destroyers for a long-term lease of British bases in the Western Hemisphere."<sup>1</sup> In addition, in the latter half of 1940, Britain received 945,000 rifles, 84,000 machine-guns, etc. The shipments were highly profitable to the American monopolies.

Britain paid for these arms in cash, draining her currency and gold reserves, and curtailing her investments abroad.

By early 1941 Britain's finances had shrunk considerably. Yet the American monopolies were still eager to retain the very lucrative outlet for their commodities in the uncompetitive wartime British market. Besides, after Germany had crushed France, United States fears mounted. Washington wanted Britain and other countries to resist the nazi aggressor. This was why the U.S. Government devised the lend-lease scheme, which empowered the President to provide goods and services to those countries whose defence was "vital to the defence of the United States". The Lend-Lease Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President on March 11, 1941. For a start, Congress earmarked \$7,000 million to finance it.

Thus the Anglo-American bloc took final shape in the latter half of 1940 and early 1941. Britain and the United States were brought together by the common danger they faced from Germany and Japan, and by the common wish to get rid of German and Japanese competition in the markets of the world. But the designs of the United States went still farther afield. It wanted the markets and spheres of influence redivided not only with respect to Germany and Japan, but with respect to Britain as well. Dorothy Thompson wrote about it in her column in the *New York Herald Tribune*. She wrote that she was dreaming of the integration of the whole Anglo-Saxon world, for it was

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *United States Army in World War II. Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Washington, 1953, p. 21.

clear to her which group would be predominant. The heart of such an Anglo-Saxon world, she wrote, would be in the United States, where the greatest military and naval power, the greatest industry and technology were concentrated.

The downfall of Britain's international prestige, a natural sequel to its disastrous Munich policy, was unmistakable. And it was the United States that took the greatest advantage of it with enormous profit to itself. It forged ahead into a place of leadership in the Anglo-American bloc, while Britain took the unenviable part of "junior partner".

#### 4

The war in Europe added greatly to the complications in the Pacific Ocean. The Japanese imperialists were spoiling for a fight, eager to use the situation for their ambitious plans of conquest, just as in the First World War. Speaking the mind of Japan's ruling class, the *Hochi*, a Japanese daily, wrote on December 23, 1940:

"The military conflict in Europe is for Japan a divine act of assistance. But do not delude yourself into thinking that this divine wind will blow for ever. Japan's actions may add to this wind, or may terminate it entirely." Five days later the *Hochi* declared:

"This war is the key which will open the door to the building of the new order in East Asia that we have already begun. It is in this sense that we should pray for the war to become a war of attrition."

The defeat and surrender of the Netherlands and France left their far-flung possessions in the Pacific, such as Indonesia and Indochina, without a master.

Indochina had always enticed the imperialists with its vast resources of rubber, coal, iron, zinc, tin, gold, silver, etc. But what attracted Japan most at the time was its strategic worth. Indochina seaports, thrust forward to the



south, were a temptation Japan could scarcely resist. They could be used as bases in assaults on Indonesia, Burma and Malaya.

On September 23, 1940, Japan concluded an agreement with the Vichy Government to bring its troops into Indochina. This was done with the help of Hitler Germany, which was eager to invigorate relations with its Japanese ally. The people of Indochina, languishing in colonial slavery under the French plantators, were thus sold to a new master, a colonial ruler no less cruel and exacting.

Japan was also casting concupiscent glances at Indonesia and its rubber, oil, non-ferrous metals and coal. Indonesia was an important strategic crossroads. Japan's conquest of Indonesia would deprive Britain and France of important footholds in South-East Asia. Singapore would shrink in importance. British possessions east of Singapore would be exposed. Japan would dig in at the approaches to Burma and India, and would hold the Philippines surrounded. The future of Australia and New Zealand would be in jeopardy. For these reasons Japanese claims vis-à-vis Indonesia ran into desperate American and British opposition. The situation in the Pacific became tenser by the hour.

The threat of a war between Japan and the Anglo-American bloc loomed big.

But the main forces of the Japanese imperialists were still deployed against the Soviet Union. It took Japan some time to regroup its strength and set the stage for aggression against the United States and Britain. Just as in Europe, so too in the Far East, the Soviet Union was the main obstacle to aggression.

The other factor that stood in Japan's way was its war in China, which pinned down a considerable portion of its troops. Japan's rulers took urgent steps to end that war. They set up a puppet government in China's occupied areas under traitor Wang Ching-wei. They hoped this "government" would attract a certain section of the

Chinese landlords and capitalists, who were terrified of the hardships of war and, especially, the activities of the masses. Japan also tried to enlist the help of its allies in ending the war in China. Italy and Germany backed Japan's peace proposal to the Koumintang Government.

Chiang Kai-shek vacillated, rousing the alarm of the U.S. Government. It warned the Chinese Ambassador in Washington that negotiations between China and Japan would not have U.S. approval. No loans would be given to China unless guarantees were forthcoming that the Japanese proposal shall be turned down. U.S. pressure, coupled with the determination shown by the Chinese people under Communist leadership in the struggle against the Japanese aggressors, compelled Chiang Kai-shek to reject Japan's proposal.

But it was farthest from the minds of the Japanese rulers to abandon their plans in the South Seas. They carried through a total economic mobilisation and established government control over the national economy to limit consumption of raw material and, chiefly, to reduce popular consumption. The system of measures under this head came to be known as the "new economic structure".

Japan was preparing war not only against the United States and Britain. It also contemplated an attack on the Soviet Union. But after the lessons it had received at Lake Hasan and Halkhin-Gol it did not dare attack the U.S.S.R. before Nazi Germany. In the meantime, it prepared feverishly. In 1940 the Japanese General Staff had the plan of an attack on the Soviet Union signed and sealed.

Japan's aggressive moves were timed to similar moves by Germany and Italy. This brought the three aggressors still closer together.

On September 27, 1940, Germany, Italy and Japan signed a pact in Berlin. The preamble said that the three powers had "decided to stand by and co-operate with one another in regard to the efforts in greater Eastern Asia and the

regions of Europe respectively, in which it is the prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things.”<sup>1</sup>

Then followed the articles of their treaty:

“1. Japan recognises and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe.

“2. Germany and Italy recognise and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in Eastern Asia.

“3. Germany, Italy and Japan agree to co-operate in their efforts on the aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic and military means if one of the three contracting parties should be attacked by a power at present not involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict. . . .

“5. Germany, Italy and Japan affirm that the aforesaid terms do not in any way affect the political status which exists at present as between each of the three contracting parties and Soviet Russia.”<sup>2</sup>

The Berlin Pact was a continuance of the previous “anti-Comintern alliance”. But this time the contracting parties saw fit to show their true colours. They did not bother any longer to conceal their purpose of conquering the world, and did not hesitate to announce its ultimate division. Germany and Italy laid claim to Europe, and Japan to Asia. They went on unabashed to announce their goal of establishing a “new order”, under which head they implied colonial enslavement of the conquered countries.

The Soviet Union was the prime target of the Berlin Pact. The wording of Article 5 was not likely to deceive anyone as to its real purport. Prince Konoye, then Prime Minister of Japan, wrote in his memoirs, published after the Second World War, that the Berlin Pact was “a plan of projecting the tri-partite Anti-Comintern Pact, then in

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, September 28, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

force, into a military alliance aimed chiefly against the U.S.S.R.”<sup>1</sup>

In pursuance of their mutual Berlin Pact obligations, Germany, Italy and Japan negotiated their war plans. In February 1941 Ribbentrop informed the Japanese of the contemplated German assault on the Soviet Union which, he said, would “culminate in a resounding victory for the Germans and spell the end of the Soviet regime”.<sup>2</sup>

But the Soviet Union was not the only target of the Berlin Pact. Even more directly than the Anti-Comintern Pact, it was also aimed against the United States and Britain. This was a fresh blow to the ruling circles of those countries and, at once, to the protagonists of the Munich policy. The Berlin Pact alerted politicians in the United States and Britain. Roosevelt said in a radio speech on December 29, 1940, that “never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilisation been in such danger as now”.<sup>3</sup> Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles stated that the United States was facing “as grave a danger as our people have confronted during a century and a half of their independent life”.<sup>4</sup>

The situation prompted U.S. politicians to seek closer bonds with Britain. Colonel Frank Knox, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, said that should Great Britain fail to stem the tide, the United States would find itself surrounded by “international brigands, whose greatest victory would be the destruction of the United States”.<sup>5</sup> The first joint Anglo-American strategic plan was ready by November 1940. It specified that the defence of Britain was vital for the United States and that for this reason the United States

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *International Conciliation*, No. 367, 1941, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Philip P. Graves, *Record of the War, The Fourth Quarter*, Hutchinson & Co., London and Melbourne, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, October 7, 1940.

would do its utmost to prevent Britain's defeat and the break-up of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup>

In early October 1940 the negotiations between State Secretary Hull, British Ambassador to Washington Lothian and Australian Ambassador Casey culminated in an Anglo-American agreement on joint operations in the Pacific Ocean. Britain granted the United States the use of its naval base in Singapore and of ports in Australia and New Zealand. The United States promised to help Britain deploy troops from Australia to Burma and Malaya and to concentrate a big U.S. naval force in the Pacific. The negotiators decided to initiate a communication line to China via Burma for military supplies.

In July 1940, in an effort to appease Japan, the British closed the Burma Road for three months. Now traffic to China was re-opened.

The Berlin Pact did not remove the contradictions between its signatories. The German press declared that Germany had not conquered France and the Netherlands only to give the fruits of victory—the colonies of these two countries—to the Japanese. To bolster its alliance with Japan, Germany had had to help it seize Indochina prior to the signing of the Berlin Pact. But it gave to understand that the Indochina solution was not final. The German imperialists also claimed their former possessions in the Pacific Ocean, which Japan had received after the First World War. The Japanese imperialists, in their turn, had not the slightest intention to confine themselves to East Asia in case of success.

The main cause of the Japanese-German contradictions lay in the fact that the two states—Germany and Japan—each had programmes of winning world domination. This led up inescapably to an ultimate clash. Italy, whose plans vis-à-vis France were dashed, was in a huff. But the Italian imperialists still hoped to make hay in South-East Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *op. cit.*

After Italy joined the war against France and Britain, hostilities spread to Africa and the rest of the Mediterranean basin. The Italian imperialists aimed to set up a big colonial empire. British and French military weakness seemed to augur success.

Italian troops captured British Somaliland and advanced into Kenya. They entered the Sudan and occupied Kassala and Gabat, creating a threat to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. In September 1940 the Italians mounted an offensive in North Africa. Marshal Graziani sent his troops over the Libyan border into Egypt and advanced to Sidi-Barrani. But the offensive bogged down. The army was not ready yet to enter the Western desert.

While the Italian forces in Africa were preparing for fresh operations, the Italian Government went off half-cocked on a new venture, designed to head out Germany in South-East Europe. When Hitler stayed Mussolini's hand with respect to Italy's grasping demands on France in the summer of 1940, the Italian imperialists schemed of a "private" war in the Balkans.

At two o'clock in the morning of October 28, 1940, the Italian Minister in Athens called on the Greek Foreign Minister and handed him an ultimatum. The Italian Government, it said, requested the "Greek Government, as a guarantee of Greek neutrality and of Italian security, to allow Italian forces to occupy for the duration of the present conflict with Great Britain certain strategic points on Greek territory".<sup>1</sup> The Greeks were to reply within 3 hours. This was a pure formality, for Italian troops had by then already attacked Greece from Italian-occupied Albania. Hitler learned suddenly, Guderian recalls, that his ally had launched a war against Greece without his knowledge and consent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, October 29, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten*, Heidelberg, 1951, S. 126.

Italy expected Premier Metaxas's fascist government to give in without resistance. To be sure, that was just what Metaxas intended doing. Greek generals provided ample evidence of this in subsequent statements. General Katsimothos, for example, said:

"The Metaxas government neglected to fortify the frontiers. I received an order to beat a retreat to Arathos (a river in Thessaly). If this had been done, the war would have been lost. But the will of the soldiers at the front proved stronger."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party of Greece, whose leaders were imprisoned, made an ardent appeal to the people to resist the Italian aggressors. The Communist Party appeal said:

"Mussolini fascism has attacked Greece from behind, perfidiously, disgracefully, with the object of enslaving and subjugating it. Today, we Greeks are fighting for our liberty, honour and national independence. The battle will be very difficult and very cruel, but a nation that wants to live must fight regardless of the dangers and sacrifices."<sup>2</sup>

Mass demonstrations compelled the government to heed the people's will, as expressed in the Communist appeal. The Greek army engaged the Italian fascists. Fighting gallantly, it cleared Greece of the enemy and carried the battle into Albania, whence the Italian invasion had begun. Albanian guerrillas helped the Greek troops. As a result, the Italians were flung out of such important strategic points in Albania as the towns of Argyrokastro and Koritsa, and Port Saranda on the Adriatic.

Britain was quick to grasp the opportunity offered by the struggle of the Greek people. The mind of the British was well expressed by the *Labour Daily Herald*, which said:

"For us . . . the forced entry of Greece into the war offers signal opportunities. It presents us—if we move

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<sup>1</sup> D. Chevrier et A. Marin, *Démocratie ou Fascisme? Grèce*, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

quickly enough—with a springboard from which we may attack Italy at close quarters.”<sup>1</sup>

In the early morning of November 13, 1940, British naval and air forces attacked the Italian Navy based in Taranto. Three of the six Italian battleships anchored there were put out of commission. Two cruisers were badly damaged. This tilted the scales in Britain's favour in the Mediterranean, and enabled it to launch a big offensive in Africa.

But it was the resistance of the Greek and Albanian patriots, who created considerable difficulties for Italy, that decided the fate of the British offensive. On December 9, 1940, coming as a surprise to the Italians, the British forces attacked in North Africa. On December 11 they recaptured Sidi Barrani, crossed into Libya and soon were in possession of Cyrenaica, including the naval base of Bengasi. This was followed, after a pause, by a British offensive in Abyssinia, Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, the Sudan and Kenya. The fighting lasted more than six months, and ended after the last Italian soldier was flung out. By the summer of 1941 Italy lost all its colonies in East Africa, recently conquered Ethiopia included.

On May 20, 1941, the surviving remnants of the Italian expeditionary force under Duke D'Aosta, “vice-regent of Abyssinia”, surrendered at Amba-Alagi, Abyssinia.

All this time, from October 1940 to March 1941, Germany deliberately withheld assistance to its ally. Hitler wanted to make Italy pay for its bull-headedness. Besides, he was waiting for the hour when a badly bled Italy would plead for help, which would be given on Germany's own terms. The ambitions of the German imperialists in South-East Europe and the Middle East were boundless. The Hitlerites were waiting for a propitious hour to send their land armies across South-East Europe and Turkey to seize the oil of Iran and Iraq, to grab Egypt and the Suez Canal, and then, finally, to march on into India.

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Herald*, November 1, 1940.



South-East Europe was highly prominent in the Nazi plan of conquest, because the question of attacking the Soviet Union was already settled. The Nazis hoped to pump raw materials, food and manpower out of South-East Europe for the contemplated campaign and, also, to establish bridgeheads on the Soviet south-west frontiers. The German High Command was anxious to secure its right flank in the impending war against the U.S.S.R.

Hitler diplomats were working in high gear throughout South-East Europe after August 1940. They made the most of the contradictions obtaining between the Balkan states and of the territorial ambitions of their rulers. To entice Hungary, for example, the German Government exploited the dissatisfaction of its landlords and capitalists over the Treaty of Trianon, which had deprived Hungary of certain lands. Italy and Germany acted as "mediators" between Hungary and Rumania at a conference in Vienna. The "Vienna mediation" culminated on August 30, 1940, in an agreement whereby Rumania relinquished to Hungary a considerable section of Transylvania with a population of nearly 2,500,000. Germany promised the Rumanian rulers "compensations" in Soviet land. In the meantime, German agents in Rumania saw to it that power in the country fell into the hands of the most rabid advocates of war against the U.S.S.R., notably Ion Antonescu. On the latter's consent, German troops entered Rumania on October 7, 1940.

After the First World War, Bulgaria, which had then been Germany's ally, lost part of its traditional territory. Contrary to historical justice, Southern Dobruja was ceded to Rumania. The German imperialists decided to cash in on this. On September 7, 1940, Rumania agreed to return Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. The Soviet Union had always favoured the reinstatement of Southern Dobruja within Bulgaria, but Hitler propaganda in that country imputed the settlement solely to Germany.

At an hour critical to Bulgaria, the Soviet Union attempted to safeguard the independence of that fraternal Slav country from German imperialism. The Soviet Government warned Germany of the possible grave consequences its policy would produce in South-East Europe, and firmly rejected German proposals to "negotiate" spheres of influence in that region.

Twice, the Soviet Union approached the Bulgarian Government with proposals to sign a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. And twice, under German pressure, the Bulgarian Government turned these proposals down. The diplomatic missions of the United States and Britain in Sofia also advised the Bulgarian Government to reject the Soviet offers.

On November 18, 1940, Tsar Boris of Bulgaria met Hitler and reminded him obsequiously that "there, in the Balkans, Germany has a loyal friend, whom you must not abandon".<sup>1</sup>

This was an act of outright national betrayal, which delivered the Bulgarian people into the hands of the German aggressors.

Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist leader, said that "one of the basic reasons for Bulgaria's national humiliations and disasters over the last few decades lies in Bulgarian chauvinism and in the ideology and policy of Balkan hegemony, the wish to rule over the neighbouring peoples. This was the fertile soil on which fascism flourished in Bulgaria for years. German agents under Tsar Ferdinand and Tsar Boris sold Bulgaria to the Germans and turned it into a tool of German imperialism against our liberators and our western and southern neighbours."<sup>2</sup>

Having set the stage for alliance with the fascist rulers of South-East Europe, Germany started in on making it

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<sup>1</sup> ИМТ.

<sup>2</sup> Георгий Димитров, *Речи, доклады и статьи*, т. III, изд. БРП(к), София, 1947, стр. 40.

formal. On November 20, 1940, Hungary joined the Berlin Pact, followed on November 23 by Rumania, and on November 24 by Slovakia.

A sharp internal struggle proceeded in Bulgaria. The people demonstrated their sympathy for the Soviet Union. Hitler's agents, headed by Tsar Boris, were not numerous, but they stood at the helm of the country. Afraid of its people, the Bulgarian Government was eager to have German troops brought into the country speedily.

To mislead the population, German soldiers were brought into Bulgaria under the guise of tourist groups. On February 28 they occupied airfields, railway stations and border posts, thus opening the country to German divisions. On March 1, 1941, Bulgaria joined the Berlin Pact.

Now it was Yugoslavia's turn. On March 25, 1941, the Yugoslav Government also joined the aggressive pact. Hitler's Foreign Minister Ribbentrop "declared solemnly" that Germany would "respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia at all times". "The Axis power governments," he said, "during this war will not direct a demand to Yugoslavia to permit the march or transportation of troops through the Yugoslav state or territory."<sup>1</sup>

The statement was false throughout. Germany had no other purpose in signing the treaty than to rob Yugoslavia of its national independence and sovereignty and to mould it into an obedient tool.

Yugoslavia's entry into the bloc of aggressors set off an outburst of indignation. The Slav population of Yugoslavia knew only too well from experience what foreign rule was like. It objected to any and all deals with the German imperialists, those ancient foes of the Slavs.

A new royal government was set up, which did not ratify Yugoslavia's agreement to join the Berlin Pact. But it did not annul that agreement either. It pleaded with Germany to spare Yugoslavia's independence, while reiterating its

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, March 26, 1941.

readiness to meet Germany half-way in all other matters. In a note dated April 2 the Yugoslav Government informed Germany that "Yugoslavia still hopes even at this hour to preserve her neutrality at all costs short of sacrifice of her independence and integrity".<sup>1</sup>

But Germany, which had almost completed preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union, fixed for May 15, 1941, was determined to bend Yugoslavia to its will. Hitler did not want mutinous countries in the rear of the German army. This was why, on the day when the new Yugoslav Government was formed, March 27, 1941, Hitler postponed the attack on the Soviet Union and ordered the conquest of Yugoslavia simultaneously with an attack on Greece.

To a conference at German Headquarters on March 27, 1941, Hitler said:

"In the light of the coming Operation Maritsa, and especially during the execution of the Barbarossa Plan, Yugoslavia is a very unreliable factor. The time for ascertaining the true situation in the country and its attitude towards us in the political and military sense, is favourable. . . . Accordingly, the Barbarossa Plan will have to be postponed for four weeks."<sup>2</sup>

It was Hitler's object to wipe out Yugoslavia's armed forces and to destroy its statehood.<sup>3</sup>

By this time the Germans and Italians had made a new bargain. Italy had suffered heavy losses and approached Germany for help. Germany stated its terms: the command was to pass into German hands, and German troops were to enter Italy. Mussolini knuckled under. Germany was by then itself involved in the Mediterranean and eager to alter the situation, which had become unfavourable to its plans.

The nazi Command used Tunisia's territorial waters, placed at its disposal by the Pétain government, to deploy

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, April 3, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> See Корольков, Как подготовлялся план «Барбаросса», *Военная мысль*, № 8, 1946, стр. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *IMT*, Vol. I, p. 362.

several divisions under General Rommel to Libya in March 1941. Now Rommel was also in command of the Italian troops in North Africa in place of the dismissed Graziani. On March 31, 1941, Rommel's troops assumed the offensive. They were soon in control of Libya, although the gallant Tobruk garrison resisted tenaciously and retained possession of the stronghold. By June Rommel's forces advanced to a point between Sollum and Sidi Barrani. That was where they stopped in view of Hitler Germany's attack on the Soviet Union.

The U.S.S.R. did not abandon its efforts in behalf of the independence of the South-East European nations, which were falling more and more under the German fascist boot. After German troops entered Bulgaria, the Soviet Government told the Bulgarian Government on March 3, 1941, that "it could not share the Bulgarian Government's standpoint in relation to this matter, because its attitude did not lead to a stronger peace, but, whether the Bulgarian Government likes it or not, would extend the war and involve Bulgaria in it".<sup>1</sup> The Soviet statement branded the betrayal committed by Bulgaria's rulers and demonstrated the sympathy of the Soviet people for the working people of Bulgaria.

As for Hungary, the Soviet Government handed it the banners of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49, which had been kept in Soviet museums. The *Magyarország* wrote on this score on March 24, 1941, in an editorial:

"The Great Power east of Hungary has decided to return the banners of the Hungarian liberation struggle. On behalf of the Russian people, the Russian Government is thus paying tribute to the national tragedy of the Hungarian people. The return of these banners, which is a solemn historic act, is a reminder to the Hungarians about the meaning of a war of liberation."

When the Hitlerites swung the axe at the Yugoslavians,

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<sup>1</sup> *Внешняя политика СССР, Сборник документов, т. IV, стр. 545.*

the Soviet Government declared its friendship for that fraternal Slav people. On April 5, 1941, a few hours before Hitler Germany treacherously attacked Yugoslavia, a Soviet-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression was signed in Moscow.

Early in the morning of April 6 German warplanes savagely bombed the Yugoslav capital. The Belgrade raid claimed thousands of lives and was not prompted by any military reasons. It was an act of vicious terrorism.

Yugoslavia was invaded by 56 enemy divisions (German troops from Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, supported by Hungarian and Italian divisions). The people of Yugoslavia could have stood their ground for a long time, but for the fatal consequences of the rule of the Serbian bourgeoisie. There had been no preparation for defence. The army was poorly armed. The agrarian problem was unsolved. Progressive democratic elements were persecuted, while traitors were allowed to do their foul work with impunity. All this led up to a swift military collapse. The people and army were still fighting when the Yugoslav Government fled the country to Cairo.

By April 18 the nazis had occupied the whole country. Grim days set in for Yugoslavia. The nazis treated the peoples of Yugoslavia with extreme brutality. A manhunt began throughout the land for Yugoslav soldiers, officers and the youth. They were driven into concentration camps. But tens of thousands escaped the nazi dragnet and went into the hills and forests. Hiding from the occupation troops, they gradually joined the partisan struggle.

After occupying Yugoslavia, Hitler Germany set to dividing the spoils. Slovenia in the north became part of the German Reich. Croatia was made a kingdom with the capital in Zagreb. Duke Spoleto, an Italian fascist, was crowned king. But the new-baked monarch was mortally afraid of the Yugoslav partisans and preferred to stay in Italy. Ante Pavelić, a long-time Hitler hireling, ran the state. Italy signed a treaty "of guarantee and co-operation"

with Croatia, under which the latter was saddled with a frankly colonial regime. In addition, Italy was given Montenegro and a big slice of Dalmatia. The Bulgarian fascists were presented the southern part of Yugoslavia stretching to the Albanian border. Hungary obtained a wide strip of land in the bend of the Danube—Voivodina and Bachka. The rest of Yugoslavia constituted the "state" of Serbia under Hitler's vicegerent, Milan Georg Nedič, a Yugoslav quisling.

Hitler Germany's "generosity" in carving up Yugoslavia was meant to show that the servants could count on leftovers from the master's table. For that matter, the nazis did not care to squander their strength on the drawn-out and difficult struggle against the Yugoslav partisans, leaving this business to their Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian satellites.

Hitler Germany's attack on Yugoslavia was coupled on April 6, 1941, with an attack on Greece. In that country, too, the rulers and their military commanders betrayed the people. Quite unexpectedly the army of General George Cholacoglu laid down its arms at Epirus, though it was equipped to resist the invaders for some time. Later, the general headed a puppet government in Athens. The nazis poured into the breach, and the British expeditionary force in Greece quit the country without so much as a fight. By the end of April all of Greece was firmly controlled by Hitler.

At this point all South-East Europe was held by the German imperialists. But the benefits were less than the German leaders had expected. The invaders were bitterly hated by the population. A long-drawn struggle ensued. Local resistance reduced the quantity of raw materials and foodstuffs that the nazis had hoped to obtain. The Luftwaffe acquired important strategic bases in Southern Greece, but the fascist powers were unable to establish their supremacy in the East Mediterranean due to the big losses of the Italian Navy.

Germany wanted to push its bases in the Mediterranean farther south to protect sea communications with South-East Europe. Hitler decided to seize Crete. The operation also had an important psychological purpose—Britain was to be shown that the sea-barrier could not stop the German armed forces. A frightened Britain was more likely to follow the course begun by the Munichites, and eventually come to terms with the German imperialists.

The assault on Crete opened on May 20, 1941. German paratroopers seized the airfield, and were instantly followed by planes and gliders carrying troops and materiel. Sea-borne troop-carriers steamed in. It took ten days to conquer Crete.

The German Government wanted support points on the other shore of the Mediterranean as well. The fascist General Dentz, Pétain's vicegerent in Syria and the Lebanon, was eager to co-operate. But British and de Gaullist troops attacked him on June 8, and were soon in possession of the two Arab countries. The German plan of seizing the Middle East was shattered.

There were two reasons for this. First, the Italian naval losses had weakened the fascist powers in the Mediterranean. Second, the masses in the Arab East were inimical to the nazi invaders. Promptly, the British and French made the most of the situation to stamp out the intrigues of German agents in the region and to tighten their grip on the Arab countries.

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In the early stage of the war Hitler Germany seized nearly the entire European continent, save the U.S.S.R. The European countries fell prey to the nazi invaders one by one. In none of them did the authorities attempt to repulse the nazi hordes in the least effectively. The Germans drove them to their knees singly. The nazi armies took over Europe almost without a fight.



The chief reason for the disaster lay in the deep-going antagonisms within the European countries between the governing groups and the masses of the people. The people longed to resist the invader. They wanted to safeguard their national independence, to fight a just war of liberation. But the bourgeois governments feared their own people more than they feared the German aggressors. They could not care less for a battle against fascism in behalf of freedom and democracy. What they wanted was a deal with the fascists against freedom and democracy, against the masses. It was part of their scheme to direct the German drive eastward, against the U.S.S.R. To the imperialist governments of Europe and the United States Hitler Germany was less an enemy and much more a class ally.

The Second World War was a new expression of the general crisis of the world capitalist system.

In the latter half of 1940 the nature of the war began to change gradually. Patriots in the occupied countries of Europe took up arms against the fascist conquerors. In Britain and the United States the determination of the masses to repulse fascism grew from day to day. Popular pressure on the governments increased.

The ruling groups in the U.S.A. and Britain were also changing their attitude. Faced by a mounting threat from the fascist aggressors to their interests in the world, to national independence and statehood, they were compelled to fight back more vigorously against the Italo-Japanese-German coalition.

*Part III*

**FASCIST AGGRESSION SPREADS.  
FIRST STAGE OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR**

*Chapter Six*

**THE RELATION OF STRENGTH**

**1**

The German imperialists had been preparing the war for world power for a long time. They used home resources and generously dispensed U.S. capital to modernise their industry and increase production. The table below illustrates the growth of investments under the Hitler regime.

**German Industrial Investments<sup>1</sup>**  
(in million marks)

Year	Total	Capital goods
1933 . . . . .	557	309
1934 . . . . .	1,060	700
1935 . . . . .	1,636	1,221
1936 . . . . .	2,159	1,637
1937 . . . . .	2,843	2,208
1938 . . . . .	3,691	2,952
1939 . . . . .	4,432	3,596

<sup>1</sup> *Die Deutsche Industrie im Kriege 1939-1945*, Duncker u. Hum-bolt, Berlin, 1954, S. 20.

Output of the German engineering industry nearly quadrupled between 1933 and 1938. Production of the key strategic materials increased still more. Take the output of aluminium. It was 19,000 tons in 1932, and 200,000 tons in 1939.<sup>1</sup> This exceeded the aluminium output of all the European capitalist countries combined. The U.S. monopolies helped the German industrialists organise large-scale manufacture of synthetic gasoline and rubber. The gasoline output climbed to 1,150,000 tons in 1938, and subsequently approached the six-million-ton mark. By the beginning of the world war Germany had the greatest number of metal-cutting machine tools—a total of 1,600,000.<sup>2</sup>

The German imperialists put their economy on a war-time footing long before the war started. Production of arms and war materiel proceeded at a rapid pace. West German economists compiled an index of German pre-war war production.

German War Output<sup>3</sup>  
(per cent)

Year	
1933	100
1934	100
1935	200
1936	300
1937	450
1938	1,000
1939	1,250
1940	2,200

<sup>1</sup> *Die Deutsche Industrie im Kriege 1939-1945*, S. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 23. (Converted into percentages by the author.)

As you see, German war output increased 22-fold from 1933 through 1940.

Besides increasing production, the German imperialists piled up immense stocks of war materiel. By the end of 1939 their stocks amounted to a 10-months requirement of lead, a 13- to 18-months requirement of tin, antimony, nickel, molybdenum, chromium, vanadium, tungsten and manganese, and a 30-months requirement of cobalt.<sup>1</sup>

Germany's productive potential, its work force and its food, raw materials, mineral and fuel resources climbed steeply after the nazis occupied some of the capitalist countries in Europe. Germany gained possession there of £9,000 million worth of various property,<sup>2</sup> 135,000 tons of copper (a seven-months stock) and a 15-months stock of nickel.<sup>3</sup> Eighty-eight German divisions were equipped with French automobiles.<sup>4</sup>

The German productive potential at the time of the attack on the Soviet Union is shown in the table below.

German War-Industrial Potential in 1941<sup>5</sup>

Description	Units	Excl. occupied countries	Incl. resources of satellites and occupied countries
Population . . . . .	millions	69	290
Industrial workers . . . . .	millions	10	28
Coal . . . . .	mln. tons	235	400
Oil . . . . .	ditto	0.7	7.5
Steel . . . . .	ditto	22	45

<sup>1</sup> *Die Deutsche Industrie im Kriege 1939-1945*, S. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. A. Вознесенский, *Военная экономика СССР в период Отечественной войны*, Госполитиздат, Москва, 1947, стр. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Müller-Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, S. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Based on available figures. See *Die Deutsche Industrie im Kriege 1939-1945*.

Hans Kehrl, the West German economic expert, writes:

"The war economic situation changed radically in more ways than one through the Western campaign. Above all, the raw materials situation improved considerably. The Netherlands, Belgium and, mostly, France, but also Norway, had accumulated stocks far greater than normal in the first seven months of war, especially in the ports, and especially of 'strategic raw materials', such as metals, fuel, rubber, textile raw materials, etc., which were booty for the German Wehrmacht. The industries in those countries were also well stocked with raw materials and could cope with large German orders without bringing in fresh supplies. The resources of the iron and steel industry were greatly expanded, because the coal and ore mines and the steel mills of the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Poland fell into German hands almost intact. Large capacities were available in all branches of industry . . . for increasing production."<sup>1</sup>

After occupying France Hitler Germany transported workers from dependent and occupied countries to work in its own war economy. In 1942 the number of foreign workers in Germany topped ten million, and thirteen million by the end of 1944.<sup>2</sup>

This made Germany militarily the strongest country of the capitalist world. In 1940 Germany produced nearly 9,500 planes, 1,800 tanks, 4,000 guns, 57,000 machine-guns and 1,400,000 rifles.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, arms for Hitler's troops were also produced at plants in France, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary, Rumania and other nazi-controlled countries.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, Hamburg, 1953, S. 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Сф., Промышленность Германии в период войны 1939—1945 г. г.*, предисловие П. А. Белова, стр. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Важнейшие операции Великой Отечественной войны 1941—1945 г. г.*, Сборник статей, Воениздат, Москва, 1956, стр. 7.

Preparations for the German attack on the Soviet Union began in the wake of the French surrender, the day the original plans for the invasion of Britain were shelved. Troops were being regrouped and new divisions were formed. The German Command of Land Forces issued directions, dated September 6, 1940, "for the occupation forces in the east to be increased in the following weeks. For security reasons this should not create the impression in Russia that Germany is preparing for an eastern offensive."<sup>1</sup>

On December 18, 1940, the German High Command endorsed Directive 21 under the code name of Operation Barbarossa.<sup>2</sup> "The German Wehrmacht," said the directive, "should be prepared for the eventuality of crushing Soviet Russia in a swift campaign prior to the ending of the war against Britain."<sup>3</sup> The basic objectives of the assault on the U.S.S.R. were spelled out as follows:

"The Russian troop concentrations in the western part of Russia shall be annihilated in bold operations with deep panzer thrusts. Retreat of serviceable troops into the Russian hinterland must be prevented. . . . The ultimate goal of this operation is to wall off Asiatic Russia along the general line Arkhangelsk-Volga."<sup>4</sup>

The German imperialists had every intention of destroying the Soviet Union. At a military conference Hitler told his commanders:

"It is not enough to smash the Russian army and capture Leningrad, Moscow and the Caucasus. We must wipe

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, December 5, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Barbarossa or Redbeard was the surname of Frederick I, the Holy Roman Emperor (c. 1123-90). His campaigns of conquest culminated in a series of major defeats. Yet the German chauvinists glorified his name and created many legends about him. One of these says that Barbarossa is installed alive in the Kyffhauser, a mountain in Thuringia, and will leave his retreat to lead Germany once more in an eastward campaign.

<sup>3</sup> *IMT*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

the country off the face of the earth, and destroy its people.”<sup>1</sup>

Directive 21 fixed the direction of operations. The main blow was to be struck north of the Pripyat Marshes. This would be done by two army groups—the Northern, thrusting at Leningrad across the Baltic countries, and the Southern, which was to proceed across Byelorussia and on to the north-east. The nazis planned to capture Leningrad and Kronstadt, and strike out for Moscow in a two-pronged offensive from north and west. South of the Pripyat Marshes a blow was to be struck from Lublin in the direction of Kiev along the Dnieper southward. The German-Rumanian troops on the southern flank were to provide cover for the northern nazi flank.

The Hitler Command was out to secure the initiative from the start. After the easy victories in Western Europe the nazis were cocksure of success, and expected their war plan against the Soviet Union to operate like clockwork. Their script cast the Soviet Army in a purely passive role.

The nazi preparations for the war against the Soviet Union were meticulously thorough. The German armed forces were fully mobilised. They had modern combat experience and were equipped with the newest of weapons. They tried to effect a sweeping reconnaissance of the country, but were frustrated. They did not succeed in building up as strong a web of agents in the U.S.S.R. as in the Western countries. Soviet Government measures were an effective impediment, notably the closure of German consulates in various Soviet cities in 1938. “With them,” the nazi military attaché in Moscow is quoted as having said, “disappeared one of my last sources of information.”<sup>2</sup> But late in 1940 the Germans began making aerial photos in

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<sup>1</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, December 11, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Louis de Jong, *The German Fifth Column in World War II*, Chicago, 1956, p. 235.

swift planes, penetrating a fortnight before the attack far beyond the border regions of the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup>

The nazis planned to mount powerful initial attacks. These were to smash the main Soviet forces in the west of the Soviet Union and give Hitler the strategic initiative. They were sure that a staggering onslaught would rapidly put the Soviet Army out of action and destroy the socialist state.

The bombastic utterances of the nazi leaders show how confident they were that their reckless plans would succeed.

On December 5, 1940, Hitler told a conference of German generals that he expected "the Russian army to suffer a still more stunning defeat when assaulted by the German troops than the French suffered in 1940".<sup>2</sup>

In a talk with Matsuoka on March 27, 1941, nazi Foreign Minister Ribbentrop said Germany was sure that "the war with Russia will end in the final defeat of the Russian armies and the collapse of its political system".<sup>3</sup> The Hitlerites expected to secure victory before winter.

"The High Command and the Command of Land Forces," Heinz Guderian writes in his memoirs, "were so sure of ending the campaign before winter set in that they provided winter clothing only to every fifth man."<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, the German generals tried to put the blame for this wholly at Hitler's door. But Guderian admits that the generals were also to blame. "I cannot accept the now widespread contention," he writes, "that Hitler alone is guilty of the lack of winter clothing in the army in 1941."<sup>5</sup>

Hitler did not speak for himself alone, but for all his

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<sup>1</sup> Louis de Jong, *The German Fifth Column in World War II*, Chicago, 1956, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Helmuth Greiner, *Die Oberste Wehrmachtführung 1939-1943*, Wiesbaden, 1951, S. 326.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> Heinz Guderian, *Errinerungen eines Soldaten*, Heidelberg, 1951, S. 137.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.



generals, when he said: "I will not make the same mistake as Napoleon. When I march on Moscow I will start soon enough to get there before winter."<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before the attack on the Soviet Union General Jodl boasted at a conference in Berchtesgaden, "three weeks after we begin our offensive that house of cards will collapse."<sup>2</sup>

Certain that its war plans were flawless, the German Command drew up a directive on what had to be done to gain world domination after the conquest of the Soviet Union. This Directive No. 32, titled Preparations for the Period Following the Realisation of the Barbarossa Plan, provided for the capture of Gibraltar and for the "advance of a motorised expedition corps across the Transcaucasus to the Persian Gulf and to Iraq, Syria and Egypt".<sup>3</sup> There was also a provision to invade the British Isles. The only thing that could delay the plan, said the directive, was the weather.

Prior to the attack on the Soviet Union the German Government raised the strength of its armed forces to 7,234,000 men and officers. In addition, it had a trained combat-ready reserve. It reckoned that this was enough, because throughout the preceding part of the war German losses totalled as little as 93,736.<sup>4</sup> Germany had 224 divisions, of which 153 were detailed for the Soviet attack. The first strategic echelon had 129 divisions and the other 24 divisions were kept in reserve by the High Command and the army group commanders. In addition, Germany's satellites put into the field 37 divisions—Finland 17, Rumania 18 and Hungary 2. All in all, 190 divisions were poised for the war against the Soviet Union, with an air arm of some 5,000 warplanes.

The Hitler Command went to great pains to secure the

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<sup>1</sup> Waverley Root, *The Secret History of the War*, Vol. I, p. 520.

<sup>2</sup> See Корольков, *op. cit.*, стр. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Müller-Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, Band II, S. 102.

element of suddenness and surprise. The German press reported preparations for an invasion of the British Isles. German troops were moved about in Norway and Northern France. These manoeuvres were supposed to create the impression, Field Marshal Paulus revealed later, "of operations against the British Isles, thereby to divert Russia's attention".<sup>1</sup> For the same reason, the German Government did not notify its eastern border forces about the impending attack.

Yet the German press was gradually preparing the ground for the coming action by protesting Germany's love of peace and printing false reports about Soviet war preparations. Among other things, this was meant to win the sympathy and support of the Western Powers. The nazi aggressors were eager to parade as the defenders of Europe from a "Bolshevik invasion". Some American, British and Japanese papers played into Germany's hands and printed false reports of Soviet war preparations.

Fascist propaganda was corrupting the German army. The nazis held out material incentives to men and officers in the coming war. German servicemen were plied with enticing promises of quick and easy enrichment. The following statement by Hitler was given great prominence: "The German nation alone will be a nation of soldiers. All the other nations will be slaves, working for the caste of Teutonic warriors."

The crimes committed against the Soviet people were planned in advance and invested with the force of obligatory conduct stipulated in pertinent written orders. On May 13, 1941, the German Government passed a special decree "Exercise of Military Jurisdiction in the 'Barbarossa' Area and Special Measures for the Troops". This decree ordered the troops to be merciless in the treatment of the civilian population—to shoot all persons suspected of resistance. It emphatically forbade to try "suspects"

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<sup>1</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 377.

or to keep them under arrest, and prescribed that they be shot out of hand. The decree envisaged punitive operations against the population of entire districts.

German soldiers and officers and all German personnel were exonerated from responsibility for acts against the civilian population, even with respect to glaring military crimes. The German Government knew that the decree was criminal through and through, and subsequently ordered all copies of it to be destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

One of the top German leaders, Erich Koch, whom Hitler later made vicegerent of the occupied Ukraine, told servicemen:

"I give you my word that the factories and jobs won by us in the eastern regions will be given to you. I can live up to this promise in full measure. I will put everyone where he wants to be according to his capacities. I will not ask for either money, or the man's name. I am sure that we will together gain possession of enormous enterprises. The fruits of war must go chiefly to us, to those who fight and conquer."

The soldiers of fascist Germany were allowed to plunder civilians in Soviet villages and towns, to rape the women, and kill whomever they pleased. Crimes were encouraged, not forbidden.

The German servicemen fell under the spell of Hitler's propaganda. The prospect of rich spoils enticed them. They were sure that the war against the Soviet Union would be a walkover, holding promise of incalculable loot.

This prospect turned out to be false.

Göring, who represented the interests of German monopoly capital, was assigned to assume control of the Soviet economy. He worked out a programme of take-over under the cover-name of Green Folder long before the attack on the U.S.S.R. began. On June 29, 1941, Hitler

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. Aubrey Dixon and Otto Heilbrunn, *Communist Guerrilla Warfare*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1959, p. 103.

issued an order giving Göring unlimited powers to "make maximum use of stocks and industrial resources for the development of the economy".<sup>1</sup>

Göring's Green Folder contained the detailed scheme of an "eastern economic headquarters". Its ramified set of branches was later filled with agents of the leading German monopolies. It was they who were to assume "economic leadership" in the occupied regions. Göring's folder and sundry supplementary instructions ignored the vital interests of the Soviet population and doomed it to starvation. At a conference on June 20, 1941, Alfred Rosenberg said:

"We are not obliged at all to feed the Russian people out of the resources of this fertile land. We know it is a hard necessity that transcends all feeling . . . and the Russians face very lean years."<sup>2</sup>

Special commandos and "facilities" were established beforehand for the mass extermination of the civilian population. The German Government ordered the armed forces and the authorities in the occupied territories to follow the pertinent directives issued by Hitler. "We must exterminate the population," the latter said, "for this is part of our mission of safeguarding the German population. We shall have to develop techniques for annihilation. . . . Since I am sending the flower of the German nation into the inferno of war, spilling precious German blood without a tinge of remorse, I am surely entitled to destroy millions of people of a lower race, who are multiplying like worms."<sup>3</sup>

The mass killing of Soviet prisoners of war was also decided on beforehand. A War Prisoners Department was set up under Lieutenant-General Reinecke at the headquarters of the High Command. At a secret conference in March 1941 Reinecke issued instructions on "how to treat

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<sup>1</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 732.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 719-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518.

war prisoners". The p.o.w.'s were to be kept in the open, with almost no food, and were to be destroyed *en masse*. At a later date Field Marshal von Reichenau said in an order that "supplying civilians and war prisoners with food is needless squeamishness".<sup>1</sup>

The nazis intended to use the nationalist fascist bands enlisted beforehand by the German Command from among Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists and traitors. These were recruited throughout occupied Europe among the Russian white émigrés with utmost haste, trained in German spy schools, and set loose on the Soviet people.<sup>2</sup>

Germany saw to it that all its satellites were involved in the attack on the Soviet Union. Negotiations on this score began long before the assault. Fascist Italy was easy to persuade. Mussolini and his entourage were delighted over Hitler's anti-Soviet scheme. There was also an understanding with Hungary ever since 1938. Horthy, Hungary's fascist dictator, paid Hitler numerous visits and promised that Hungary would join the war against the Soviet Union. Hungarian Defence Minister General Károly Bartha met Field Marshal Keitel, Chief of the German General Staff, in Berlin in December 1940. They fixed the strength of the troops that Hungary would put into the field and settled the terms on which Hungarian territory was to be placed at Germany's disposal as a staging area for an attack on the U.S.S.R. In return, Hungary was to get Galicia and the Carpathian foothills up to the Dniester. The general staffs of Germany and Hungary established standing liaison. In late May 1941 the Hungarian Government formalised its intention of participating in the war against the Soviet Union, which it described as the upshot of "many years of voluntary military co-operation with Germany".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. O. Miksche, *Les erreurs stratégiques de Hitler*, Paris, 1945, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> From the deposition of Colonel-General Rusciar-Rüdiger, of the Hungarian army, *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 392.

In December 1940, General Heinrichs, a representative of the Finnish Command, attended a secret conference of the German General Staff in Zossen. He reported on the lessons learnt from Finland's 1939-40 war against the Soviet Union. The talks opened by Heinrichs were continued in the latter half of May and culminated on May 22 in an agreement co-ordinating military operations. The attack on the U.S.S.R. from Finland, with the latter's participation, was given the cover name of Blue Fox, and supplemented the Barbarossa Plan.

Finland was to help Germany capture the Baltic Fleet by destroying the White Sea-Baltic Sea Canal, and to cut the Soviet Union off from the Barents Sea by a thrust at Murmansk. In compensation Finland was to get East Karelia, excluding the Kola Peninsula (which the German monopolies wanted for themselves) and Leningrad Region. The Finnish and German fascists jointly worked out a dastardly plan of destroying Leningrad. An official document of the German General Staff said:

"The Führer has decided to wipe the city of Petersburg off the face of the earth. After Soviet Russia is defeated there will be no call for the further existence of that big densely-populated city".<sup>1</sup>

Negotiations with Rumania concerning its participation in the war against the Soviet Union opened in November 1940. Ion Antonescu, the fascist dictator of Rumania, was summoned to Berlin. A special military mission under General Hansen was sent to Rumania to reorganise its army. Antonescu and Hitler (January and May 1941) discussed joint operations against the Soviet Union. After the war Antonescu stated in his deposition:

"We made final arrangements for the joint attack on the Soviet Union. Hitler told me he had decided to attack the U.S.S.R. Once the attack was prepared, Hitler said, it should be mounted suddenly all along the frontiers of the

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<sup>1</sup> Nuremberg Trial, *Pravda*, January 14, 1946.

Soviet Union, from the Black to the Baltic Sea... Since Hitler's proposal to start the war against the Soviet Union coincided with my aggressive plans, I gave my consent and undertook to prepare the required number of Rumanian troops. I also promised to increase shipments of oil and farm products to the German army."<sup>1</sup>

Hitler promised that in return Antonescu would get Besarabia, Northern Bukovina and other Soviet territories west of the Dnieper.

Hitler Germany also negotiated joint action against the Soviet Union with Pétain. On October 24, 1940, Hitler broached the subject at their meeting in Montuare, France. Subsequently, on May 21, 1941, Pétain's Foreign Minister Darlan was summoned to Berchtesgaden, where he promised French "volunteers", raw materials, production plant and labour.

The German rulers pinned their greatest hopes on the Japanese. They wanted Japan to be the first to start the war against the Soviet Union. This would kill two birds with one stone—camouflage the gross violation by Germany of its commitments under the non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union, and divert the latter's attention and forces. The Hitlerites wanted the Japanese to weaken the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union to weaken the Japanese. This would cut short Japan's claims to world domination and make Japan dependent on Germany, much as was the case with Italy.

But the Japanese leadership evaded negotiations. It was as late as March 1941 that Josuke Matsuoka, the Japanese Foreign Minister, came to Berlin. He declared Japan's loyalty to its alliance with Germany and promised that Japan would "dedicate itself might and main to the common cause".<sup>2</sup> But he refused to name the exact date when Japan would attack the Soviet Union, and thus courted Hitler's displeasure. His country had imperialist goals of

<sup>1</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 383.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

its own, and refused to do Germany's bidding, which it thought unprofitable.

The Hitlerites also aimed to involve Germany's opponents in the anti-Soviet crusade. The German imperialists hoped to exploit the contradictions between the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union once more, and to cash in on the anti-Soviet sentiments of the British and American reactionaries. They were eager to sign a peace with Britain, obtain the support of the ruling groups in Britain and the United States, to prosecute the war against the Soviet Union with their assistance, and then undertake a new military campaign, first against Britain, and then against the United States.

The nazis dispatched Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy in the fascist party leadership, to realise this scheme. On May 10, 1941, Hess flew a Messerschmitt-110 to Britain from Augsburg, Germany.

The British Government negotiated with him through its special spokesman, Ivon Kirkpatrick. Hess was also visited by Lord Hamilton, Lord Simon and Lord Beaverbrook, all of them prominent British political leaders. With Simon, whose sympathies for German fascism were well known, Hess was more outspoken than with the others.<sup>1</sup>

Hitler's proposals, transmitted by Hess, boiled down to the following: make peace, and give Germany a free hand in Europe, and Britain in the British Empire, excluding the former German colonies, which are to be returned to the Reich. Pride of place was given to the item on the Soviet Union, which said, "the Reich is to present a number of demands to the U.S.S.R., to be satisfied either by negotiation or by war". Kirkpatrick asked whether Russia would be considered a part of Europe or of Asia, and was told, "of Asia".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 1947, Vol. XL, Doc. Hess-15, pp. 279-292.*

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Mourin, *Les tentatives de paix dans la seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris, 1949, p. 104.



Hess declared that "Hitler wished everlasting mutual understanding between himself and Great Britain, based on the integrity of the British Empire. The flight was meant to give Great Britain a chance to negotiate without loss of prestige."

The nazi emissary said he would deliver Britain's reply to Germany by plane. He also indicated another avenue, supplying Kirkpatrick with a letter to the German Embassy in Dublin, Eire.

The Hess proposals triggered a bitter controversy. Some of the British and American policymakers were for accepting the nazi offer. Others argued against it, for Germany's terms added to the imperialist contradictions, instead of relieving them. Britain would be at an obvious disadvantage. It would help the Hitler aggressors in Europe and Asia, and would get nothing in return besides what it already had. What was more, its possessions would shrink, for Germany wanted back the colonies it had lost after the First World War. The more farsighted of the British and American politicians saw through Hitler's plan. They realised that he wanted peace for a time only, and that he would ultimately go to war against Britain and the United States.

It is quite safe to say that it was the mood of the British working people that tilted the scales against Germany's attempted deal with Britain. Hess's mission alarmed the people of Britain. Meetings of protest against dealing with the Hitlerites swept the country. The matter was discussed on June 3, 1941, at a Labour Party conference. The suggestion of negotiating peace with Germany was voted down by an overwhelming majority. The conference stated the determination of the British people and working class to prosecute the war until a complete victory over fascism was won.

However, Kirkpatrick did go to Dublin, where he met agents of the German Government.<sup>1</sup> What his reply had been is a secret to this day.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Курт Рисс, *Тотальный шпионаж*, Воениздат, Москва, 1945, стр. 214.

The British people, however, were so greatly and so articulately opposed to any deal with Hitler Germany that the British Government could not but heed their will. Hess's mission failed. This was a big political defeat for Nazi Germany. It presaged the eventual development of an anti-fascist coalition of nations.

But Hitler did not grasp all the implications of his setback. "When the Barbarossa Plan will have been executed," he said boastfully, "the world will catch its breath and make no comment."<sup>1</sup>

On April 30, 1941, the German High Command ruled that Operation Barbarossa would begin on June 22.<sup>2</sup> On June 6, at the Chancellery in Berlin, the commanders reported that their troops were ready. The fascist monster stood poised for the attack.

## 2

The politicians of the capitalist world, the Hitlerites included, could not be expected to assess Soviet strength and its sources with any degree of accuracy.

Its main source lies in the socialist socio-political system. The socialist system is based on public ownership of the means of production and rules out exploitation of man by man. It is based on collective ownership and collective labour, the root of the intrinsic unity and solidarity of the people. There are no class antagonisms in Soviet society, for these stem from private ownership of the means of production.

The collective mode of ownership unites and consolidates the people, and multiplies their strength. The capitalist mode divides the population, hampers true unity, and saps the intrinsic forces of the country, while the

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, December 12, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> *Nuremberg Trial*, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 397.

collective mode gives very tangible advantages to the Soviet social system over the capitalist system.

The unbreakable alliance of the working class and peasantry, with whom the Soviet intelligentsia lives and labours hand in hand, is a most important source of might for the Soviet Union. The Soviet social system is a truly popular system, which draws its strength from the powerful support of the masses.

The victory of socialism in the Soviet Union shaped the ideological and political unity of the nation. This unity stems from the common economic and political interests of all Soviet people, who are ranged behind the Communist Party and the Government.

The Soviet political system, like the Soviet social system, is a truly popular system wrought by the people and supported by them. In accordance with the will of the people, the political order in the U.S.S.R. provides for every nation the opportunity of arranging its life freely with an eye to its national features. The Soviet political system is in nature deeply democratic. All that the Soviet Government does is prompted by concern for the good of the people and expresses their basic interests. Political power in the country is exercised by men and women elected by the people, with the entire nation participating in the country's political development.

The basic reason for the intrinsic solidarity and unity of the multinational Soviet state lies in its socialist relations of production. The Soviet nations are united by their common world outlook, unbreakable friendship, mutual trust and fraternal co-operation. The Soviet system has established friendship and fraternity between all the nations and nationalities of the country, and represents the only possible radical and fair solution of the national question—not possible anywhere outside the socialist system.

Soviet power has cemented the nations and nationalities of the country in a single socialist family. Their friendship

has become a powerful motive force, a force that activates vast masses of people, entire nations, causing far-reaching historical changes. The Soviet social and political system has stimulated the development of Soviet patriotism, a new, higher type of patriotism, which is another powerful motive force of Soviet society. It is rooted in the profound devotion and loyalty of the people to their Soviet country, in the fraternal community of all its nations, and in their readiness to give all their strength to the advancement of their land and the victory of communism. Soviet patriotism unites all citizens of the Soviet Union. It is a harmonious combination of the national traditions of the peoples and the common interests of all the working people of the U.S.S.R. Soviet patriotism is inseparable from socialist internationalism, which is an intrinsic feature of the Soviet people.

The motive forces of Soviet society, the political and social system of the U.S.S.R., predetermines the unity of front and rear in the event of war. It is on this unity that victory over the enemy depends.

The Soviet people built up great power under the leadership of the Communist Party. The Communist Party led the masses in the Great October Socialist Revolution and ensured the defeat of the foreign interventionists and their protégés, the whiteguards. It was under the leadership of the Party that the workers, peasants and the intelligentsia of the U.S.S.R. developed socialist society, moulded the Soviet Union into a mighty industrial power and built up redoubtable Armed Forces.

The Soviet people have immeasurable moral superiority over their adversaries. Lenin said of this moral advantage that "in any war victory ultimately depends on the spirit of the masses who shed their blood in the battlefield. Faith that the war is just and the sense of necessity to sacrifice your life for the good of your brothers raises the spirit of the soldiers and encourages them to bear unheard of hardships. Tsarist generals say that our Red Army men

brave hardships that no army of the tsarist system would ever have borne. This is explained by the fact that every worker and peasant taken into the army knows what he is fighting for and sheds his blood consciously for the triumph of justice and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Conscious of the war danger arising from the capitalist encirclement, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union prepared the country throughout the pre-war period to repel aggression.

Heavy industry had to be developed to the utmost to fortify the country's economic and defensive resources. The Party acted on the injunctions of the great Lenin, who said it was impossible to safeguard independence and the Soviet system without a heavy industry. The socialist industrialisation of the country laid emphasis on heavy industry, the backbone of the technical rearmament of the army and the reorganisation of industry, transport and agriculture.

The Party pushed through socialist industrialisation, the collectivisation of agriculture and the cultural revolution in the pre-war Five-Year Plan periods. In the brief span of 13 years the Soviet people developed the technical and economic groundwork necessary for the maximum enhancement of the country's defensive capacity.

Big new industrial centres had been built—a coal and iron complex in the Urals and the Kuznetsk area, a coal centre in Karaganda, oil fields along the Volga and in Bashkiria, and non-ferrous metals plants in Kazakhstan. In 1940 the key Soviet industries produced nearly 12 times as much as the industry of pre-revolutionary Russia, and the Soviet engineering plants produced 50 times as much as Russia's engineering plants of 1913.<sup>2</sup>

The following table shows what resources the Soviet Union had at the time the war broke out:

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<sup>1</sup> В. И. Ленин, *Сочинение*, т. 31, стр. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *National Economy of the U.S.S.R.*, Statistical Returns, Moscow, 1957, p. 45.

### Industrial Output of the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup>

(million tons)

	1913	1940
Iron . . . . .	4.2	14.9
Steel . . . . .	4.2	18.3
Coal . . . . .	29.1	165.9
Oil . . . . .	9.2	31.1

However, the Soviet economic potential, the foundation of the country's defences, was considerably smaller than that of Hitler Germany, which could rely on the resources of the countries it had conquered. It seemed to the foes of the Soviet Union, therefore, that in the wartime economic contest the scales would tilt in Germany's favour. But they built their inference on the material and technical factor, and overlooked the moral factor, the strength and spirit of the people, whose labour it is that creates the economic resources.

The Soviet Government showed constant concern for the development of the Soviet Armed Forces. It never forgot about the capitalist encirclement and the threat of an imperialist attack on the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Armed Forces were improved and strengthened continuously.

The servicemen had excellent morale—an unflagging will for victory and the capacity of withstanding the hardships of war, coupled with boundless loyalty to the people and to the lofty ideals of socialism.

Shortly before the war excellent types of weapons had been developed, especially tanks, artillery and warplanes. They were in no way inferior to German arms, and excelled them in some ways. However, when the war broke

<sup>1</sup> *National Economy of the U.S.S.R.*, Statistical Returns, Moscow, 1957, p. 55.

out the Soviet Union had not yet produced enough of them to equip the whole army.

The Soviet Union had the support of working people abroad, and that, too, was an important factor. The Soviet state had taken strength in this support ever since it was founded, and this has facilitated its victories over the enemy. The peace-loving pre-war policy of the Soviet Union and its untiring efforts to promote international peace and security, and collective action against fascist aggression won the Soviet Union the trust of the working people.

The high moral prestige of Soviet foreign policy furthered favourable international conditions in the struggle against the enemy. Even Churchill admitted that "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had never broken an engagement or treaty".<sup>1</sup>

In the period before the German assault Soviet foreign policy was designed to safeguard the country against an attack by Germany's possible allies—chiefly Turkey and Japan.

In March 1941 the U.S.S.R. and Turkey exchanged statements. In reply to the Soviet declaration that if Turkey were attacked it could rely on the complete understanding and neutrality of the U.S.S.R., the Turkish Government stated that "if the U.S.S.R. were in the same situation, it could rely on Turkey's complete understanding and neutrality".<sup>2</sup>

This was an asset to the U.S.S.R., although during the war Turkey methodically violated its engagement to remain neutral.

The Soviet-Japanese negotiations of a neutrality treaty dragged out over several months. The diehard, extremist elements in the Japanese Government and military command, closely associated as they were with Hitler Germany, resisted the idea tooth and nail. There was also U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. I, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Внешняя политика СССР*, Сборник документов, т. IV, стр. 547.

pressure to contend with, for the American monopolies groups wanted Soviet-Japanese relations to deteriorate. Senator Vandenberg, for example, declared that "if Japan and the Soviet Union conclude a non-aggression pact . . . I believe an embargo against Japan will be placed in effect immediately".<sup>1</sup>

After Matsuoka's trip to Berlin in March 1941, the Japanese Government agreed to sign the treaty. It wanted the treaty to safeguard it against pressure from Hitler, who was urging Japan to attack the Soviet Union because Germany could not be the first to strike owing to the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty. This latter treaty was concluded by the nazis without the knowledge of the Japanese Government. Now Japan paid Germany in its own coin and did not bother to obtain its consent. The Japanese Government reckoned that the treaty was giving it a chance to pick the most propitious hour for attacking the U.S.S.R. It expected the Soviet Union to reduce its armed strength in the Far East after the treaty was signed and thus improve the chances of a sudden Japanese onslaught.

Unlike the Japanese, the Soviet Union was sincerely eager to secure the peace in the Far East. The treaty was likely to rule out a simultaneous attack by Germany and Japan. Subsequent developments would depend on the course of events and the efficacy of Soviet resistance to Hitler Germany. But at no time did the Soviet Union misunderstand the perfidious designs of Japan's rulers.

The Soviet-Japanese Treaty was concluded on April 13, 1941. It said, in part:

"Article One. The two Contracting Parties undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations and each to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other Contracting Party.

"Article Two. If one of the Contracting Parties shall be

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<sup>1</sup> *Amerasia*, December 1940, p. 448.



the object of military action on the part of one or more third powers, the other Contracting Party shall observe neutrality throughout the duration of the said conflict.”<sup>1</sup>

Article Three fixed the term of the Treaty at five years from the day of ratification. The Treaty was supplemented by a declaration whereby the Soviet Union undertook to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchuria, while Japan accepted the same commitment with respect to the Mongolian People's Republic. There was also an exchange of letters, with the Japanese undertaking to wind up the Japanese concessions in Northern Sakhalin within a term of six months.

The Soviet-Japanese Treaty was a bombshell for the Germans. Ribbentrop ordered the German Ambassador in Tokyo to ask the Japanese Government for an explanation. The German Foreign Minister recalled a statement made by Matsuoka in Germany to the effect that “no Japanese Prime Minister or Foreign Minister will ever be able to make Japan remain neutral if a conflict arises between Germany and the Soviet Union. Japan would naturally be compelled in that case to attack Russia on Germany's side. No neutrality pact will prevent that.”<sup>2</sup> The Japanese Government reassured Germany that it was not going back on any engagements taken in relation to the other members of the fascist bloc.

The Soviet Government was in possession of information about Germany's war measures. It knew of the deployment of German troops to Poland, Rumania and Finland. German spy planes flew across the Soviet border more frequently. The U.S. Government informed the Soviet Union in January 1941 that a German attack was likely. A similar warning was made by the British Government on April 19, 1941. But all these and many other facts were misunderstood by Stalin. He qualified reports concerning

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<sup>1</sup> *Внешняя политика СССР*, Сборник документов, т. IV, стр. 550.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

the aggressive intentions of Germany vis-à-vis the Soviet Union as provocative and designed to complicate relations and cause an armed conflict between the Soviet Union and Germany.

Stalin decided that there was no need to order the army, and especially its western border contingents, to be ready for action. S. K. Timoshenko, then People's Commissar of Defence, and G.K. Zhukov, Chief of the General Staff, were confused by the strategic situation and did not make use of their authority to carry through express measures to bring the Soviet Armed Forces into a state of readiness.

Stalin's faulty judgement would not have had the repercussions it had if the Leninist principle of collective leadership had survived at the time. But Stalin had gone against the Leninist principles of administration and the standards of Party life. He handled all the key matters of government, Party leadership and military guidance by himself and did not heed the opinion of the other members of the Central Committee, the statesmen and generals.

When Germany attacked, the new Soviet frontier was not duly fortified and ready for defence. The reorganisation of the Soviet Army and its technical modernisation had not been completed. New weapons were only just trickling in, and the personnel had not yet learned to handle them. In the unjustified purges of 1937 and 1938 the Soviet troops lost many of their most experienced generals. The young men who assumed command did not have sufficient experience and knowledge. Some of the commanders promoted shortly before the war were not as yet properly equipped to control troops in the complicated environment of a modern battle.

There were also big flaws in the pre-war orientation of the personnel. The dangerous confidence in easy victory was widespread. Nothing was done to combat this overconfidence, self-assurance, underrating of the hardships of war, and contempt for the strength of the enemy. The

experience of the war had not been studied properly and the effects of fascist propaganda on the soldiers of the enemy armies were overlooked. The war industry was not sufficiently adjusted to mass produce the latest armaments at short notice.

The Soviet Union laid stress on a policy of peaceful co-existence and had no intention of attacking anyone. Hence, its Armed Forces were not mobilised and deployed for action in advance. When the need to take emergency measures arose, however, in face of a possible German attack, Stalin's incorrect evaluation of the political and military situation impeded the timely preparation of army and people to resist the German-fascist aggression.

However, in spite of all these errors, the policies of the Communist Party in the pre-war period had set the stage domestically and internationally for an ultimate victory over fascist Germany and imperialist Japan.

The Soviet victory had been prepared by the creative activities of the Communist Party and the people, and achieved by the sagacious leadership and will power of the Party, the unity of Party and people. It was a triumph for the Leninist policy of the Communist Party, aimed at the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., at reinforcing the country's economic independence and defensive capacity, and at the development of the creative forces of the people.

The triumph of socialism in the U.S.S.R. created the economic, moral and military resources which ultimately secured superiority for the Soviet Armed Forces over the forces of the fascist states.

*Chapter Seven*  
**THE NAZI ASSAULT**

**I**

On June 22 at 03.30 hours, without so much as a declaration of war or presentation of demands, fascist Germany attacked the Soviet Union along the entire frontier from the Black to the Baltic Sea. To mislead public opinion, the German Government declared that it had attacked preventively, because "Soviet Bolshevism" was a military threat to Europe. But what Hitler said that day intimated the true motives. "I have determined," he blustered, "once again to put into the hands of our soldiers the fate of the German Reich and of our people."<sup>1</sup>

The legend about "preventive" war, devised by the German imperialists to mislead public opinion, is maintained to this day by surviving nazis and by the Anglo-American reactionaries.<sup>2</sup> Yet Fritzsche, the prominent fascist propagandist, admitted at the Nuremberg trial that Germany had had no reason at all for accusing the Soviet Union of preparing an armed attack.<sup>3</sup> Professor Gerhard Ritter, the West German historian, wrote in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on June 22, 1951, that "it was high time to abandon the nazi legend that the war against Russia had been a preventive one, that it was a defensive move against

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<sup>1</sup> Grégoire Gafenco, *Prelude to the Russian Campaign*, Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 1945, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> See Charles Beard, *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940*, New Haven, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> *IMT*, Vol. II, p. 454.

an anticipated attack.... It was not a war to defend Europe, but rather to seize power over the whole continent."

The attack was a perfidious one. Germany violated the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty signed on August 23, 1939, which was operative for a term of ten years. Equally perfidious was the attack mounted jointly with Germany by its satellites—Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Finland and Slovakia. Italy had concluded a Treaty of Friendship, Non-Aggression and Neutrality with the Soviet Union in 1938, and Finland had undertaken not to attack the Soviet Union under the peace treaty it signed in 1940.

Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Sweden and Japan declared their neutrality, but in fact assisted Germany in many different ways. Franco Spain dispatched its Blue Division against the Soviet Union, and Portugal supplied Germany with food and tungsten. In 1942 Portuguese exports to Germany were 750 per cent higher than in 1939. Japan massed her troops along the Soviet border, thus distracting some 40 Soviet divisions.

Turkey ignored the Montreux Convention of 1936, under which belligerent warships were banned passage to the Black Sea, and allowed German and Italian vessels through the Dardanelles. The Turkish Government concentrated troops on the Soviet-Turkish border and supplied Germany with strategic raw materials and food products. On June 24, 1941, Turkey ratified its Friendship and Non-Aggression Treaty with Germany, which, in substance, amounted to a compact of alliance. This was an important link in Germany's war plan against the Soviet Union, for it provided cover to its right flank. Turkey's behaviour went against its obligations under the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of 1925.

Sweden supplied Germany with iron ore and ball-bearings, allowed Germany troops across its territory, maintained hospitals for them, while Swedish "volunteers" joined in the war against the Soviet Union.

The Bulgarian Government became an ally of fascist Germany, but did not venture to send Bulgarian soldiers to the Soviet-German front, for neither the army nor the people wanted it. The criminal purport of the reckless plans entertained by the Bulgarian fascists was brought home effectively to the army and the people by the Bulgarian Communists. However, the Bulgarian Government let Germany exploit the country's resources and use its Black Sea ports, and this was a big help to the Germans.

The Vatican had been informed by Germany of its plans of attacking the Soviet Union well in advance, and charged its priests in all countries to conduct an anti-Soviet campaign and appeal for active support of the nazis. The Vatican and Hitler Germany concluded an agreement under which Vatican agents would enter the Soviet Union in the wake of the nazi army to implant the Catholic faith, to help the nazi invaders enslave the Soviet peoples, and for the purpose of espionage and subversion.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the keen imperialist contradictions that had led to war between the two capitalist coalitions, the American monopolists, impelled by their itch for profit and their hatred of the Soviet Union, plied Hitler Germany with supplies through Vichy France,<sup>2</sup> Spain, Portugal and Switzerland. The American-owned industries in Germany produced arms, tanks, planes, automobiles, and munitions for the German armies. The U.S.-German cartel agreements remained in force throughout the war. United States and German monopolists met in Switzerland from time to time at the Bank for International Settlements to split their war profits.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Avro Manhattan, *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century*, London, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> See Pendar Kenneth, *Le dileme France Etats-unis, une aventure diplomatique*, Paris, Self, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> See Albert Norden, *Lehren Deutscher Geschichte*, Diets-Verlag, Berlin, 1947, S. 193.

The Pétain government, which maintained relations with Germany and the United States, sent to the Soviet-German front a special military formation of criminals and other riff-raff dressed in German fascist military uniforms, and called this unit the Legion of French Volunteers. On June 27, 1941, Admiral William Daniel Leahy, the U.S. Ambassador in Vichy, was informed by Pétain that the Germans would occupy the border regions of Russia and create independent buffer states. This, he said, would ultimately lead to the downfall of the existing government and eliminate the threat of communism.<sup>1</sup> Leahy nodded. The fact that Pétain and Leahy were of like mind on this score is not surprising. The ruling quarters in the United States had worked on schemes of partitioning the Soviet state and enslaving the country ever since that state came into being.

World imperialist reaction, of which the fascists of Germany, Italy and Japan were the main assault force, was eager to wipe out socialism by means of a war against the Soviet Union.

The German imperialists envisaged war against the Soviet Union as their key move in the struggle for world domination. They hated the Soviet Union, because they regarded it as the chief barrier to their goal.

The German war against the Soviet Union was reactionary, imperialist, aggressive and unjust. Its aims made it so. Hitler Germany meant to destroy the Soviet social and political system, to seize the land and the wealth of the country, to restore the rule of landlords and capitalists, to abolish Soviet statehood and wipe out Soviet culture.

The treacherous Hitler attack created a very precarious situation. The Soviet Union had to contend with a shrewd and brutal adversary possessing a vast war potential.

Due to the faulty judgement of Stalin, who misappraised the politico-military situation in the summer of 1941, the

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<sup>1</sup> W. Langer, *Le jeu américain à Vichy*, Paris, Plon, 1948, p. 172.

German assault took the Soviet Army off its guard. Having built up a considerable superiority in men and arms at crucial points, the enemy pounced on the Soviet troops all along the frontier. At some points the Soviet border forces were not even able to slow up the enemy invasion, let alone stem it. This frustrated mobilisation in the frontier areas and complicated the movement of troops rushed from the rear of the border areas. The border troops suffered heavy losses in men and materiel. This tilted the scales still more in favour of the enemy. The Soviet air force took a severe pounding too. Sudden Luftwaffe raids on airfields and the scarcity of newly-designed planes handed air superiority to the nazis.

The enemy captured the strategic initiative all along the front and thrust deep into Soviet territory. Nazi assault groups, consisting chiefly of panzer and motorised divisions, crushed Soviet resistance at the border and advanced rapidly eastward.

The Soviet armies suffered heavy losses and were compelled to retreat. Mobile enemy units, which had powerful air support, outflanked Soviet formations and penetrated deep into the rear. Unable to disengage themselves from the fast-moving adversary, the Soviet Army was often compelled to fight in extremely unfavourable circumstances, encircled by the enemy. In the first twenty or so days of the war the Germans advanced 400-600 kilometres in the main operational directions. The average daily advance was 30-40 kilometres, and as much as 50-60 kilometres on some of the days. On July 9 the nazis captured Minsk. The Soviet troops resisted tenaciously in spite of the heavy odds against them. They counter-attacked frequently, and delivered powerful counterblows. The enemy registered a heavy loss in men and materiel. To put it briefly, the Soviet Army was compelled to wage a fierce defensive battle, while retiring deeper into the country.

The German Command was delirious with joy. General



Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of Land Forces, bragged:

"It will be no exaggeration to say that the campaign against Russia has been won in a fortnight."<sup>1</sup>

German staff officers believed that the Soviet Command was no longer able to erect a continuous line of defence, not even at the most important sectors. Hitler read the dispatches from the Soviet-German front and predicted that the vital Soviet centres would fall in a matter of days. On July 8, 1941, he ordered Moscow and Leningrad to be levelled with the ground "because we do not want to have to feed their populations through the winter".<sup>2</sup> A similar directive was issued by Keitel. It said the "troops have ... the right and duty to use in this struggle any and unlimited means, even against women and children. . . . No German participating in combat action . . . is to be held responsible for acts of violence either from a disciplinary or judicial point of view."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, violence marked every yard of the Nazi advance on Soviet soil.

But Hitler was not alone in thinking the war against the Soviet Union would end in a matter of weeks. Many political leaders in other bourgeois countries were of the same opinion. To begin with, there was Winston Churchill, who makes no secret of it in his memoirs. True, Churchill refers to his military advisers. "Almost all responsible military opinion," he writes, "held that the Russian army would soon be defeated and largely destroyed."<sup>4</sup> But his reference is of no consequence, because in his instructions, such as the telegrams he sent his subordinates on July 6 and 19, 1941, Churchill spoke of the likelihood of a "Russian collapse".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, December 7, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Lord Russell of Liverpool, *The Scourge of the Swastika*, London, 1954, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 350.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

The West German war historian Jacobsen says Hitler was firmly convinced that he would defeat the Soviet Union in a *blitz* war. Nor was he the only one to think so. This point of view was shared by prominent military leaders not only in Germany, but also in the United States and Britain. The U.S. War Secretary and his Chief of Staff expected the campaign to last "a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months"<sup>1</sup> This was due to the staggering successes of the Wehrmacht before the summer of 1941, which the world followed in amazement and consternation, on the one hand, and to a complete underrating of the Soviet power of resistance, on the other."<sup>2</sup>

American and British military experts, like their German fascist counterparts, had a warped idea about the strength of the Soviet Union.

The Japanese, however, knew better. They had something to go by, for they had felt the impact of Soviet arms at Hasan and Halkhin-Gol. Jones, Borton and Pearn, three British historians, point out that the "Japanese had fought the Russians at Changkufeng and at Nomonhan, and in the latter engagement they had sustained a heavy defeat. This had imbued them with respect for Soviet armed strength, and they preferred to wait and see, rather than to plunge in on the German side."<sup>3</sup> For all this, the Japanese Government pushed ahead preparations for a war against the Soviet Union.

The suddenness of its attack enabled Germany to grasp the initiative and to secure major operational advantages in the early part of the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History*, New York, 1948, Harper and Brothers, pp. 303-04.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Jacobsen, 1939-1945. *Der zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik und Dokumenten*, Darmstadt, 1959, S. 471-72.

<sup>3</sup> F. G. Jones, Hugh Borton and B. R. Pearn, *Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946. The Far East 1942-1946*, London, Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 103.

It was not until two hours after hostilities had broken out that the German Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Friedrich Schulenburg, informed the Soviet Government that Germany was declaring war on the U.S.S.R. for massing troops on Germany's eastern frontier. This groundless charge was made by the German imperialists to pass off their treachery as an act of self-defence. The Soviet Government replied that "until the very last moment the German Government had not presented any complaints to the Soviet Government, that Germany attacked the U.S.S.R. despite the peaceable attitude of the Soviet Union, and that for this reason Fascist Germany is the aggressor".<sup>1</sup>

## 2

At noon on June 22 the Soviet Government informed its people over the radio that war had broken out. The Communist Party and the Government called on the nation to resist the fascist aggressors and expressed the "firm conviction that the whole population of our country, all workers, peasants, and intellectuals, men and women, will conscientiously perform their duties and do their work".<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet people had a redoubtable task on their hands, that of safeguarding the honour and independence of their socialist land, of defeating the fascist states, liberating the European nations, the German included, from fascism, and securing complete freedom for them to choose the political and socio-economic system. Those were the aims of the Soviet Union in the war it had been saddled with, and it was these aims that shaped the character of the war. The Great Patriotic War was, for the U.S.S.R., a just, anti-fascist war of liberation. It was a war of victorious socialism against an imperialist fascist invasion.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

The peoples of the Soviet Union grappled in a deadly duel with the main assault force of militant reaction. They fought in behalf of world civilisation, of social progress, to safeguard and consolidate the international base of socialist development.

All other considerations apart, the Soviet peoples' heroic stand was a national and international duty to the working class and the working people of all countries. The Communist Party spelled out the strategic line to suit the situation. It mobilised the masses and saw to it that the necessary conditions were created to defeat the enemy. The interests of the Soviet people were inseparable from the interests of all the other peoples of the world.

The Soviet Union's entry into the war against the fascist states was of prime historical importance. It was decisive in transforming the Second World War from an imperialist conflict into an anti-fascist war of liberation.

"Without Soviet participation," William Z. Foster pointed out, "it would have been out of the question for British and United States imperialism, themselves heavily tainted with fascism and always ready to make a deal with Hitler, to fight an all-out war against fascism."<sup>1</sup>

Soviet participation in the war put an entirely different face on the politico-military situation. No other state had been able to stem the German war machine.

The peoples in countries occupied by the nazis or faced with imminent occupation looked with great hope upon the heroic effort of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. They regarded the Soviet Union as the sole force capable of stopping and defeating the fascist armies and delivering mankind from the brown plague.

An all-out drive was made to mobilise the strength of the Soviet people to repel the enemy. The Communist Party acted on Lenin's injunction that all forces had to

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<sup>1</sup> William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, International Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 439.

be galvanised in the event of war. "Since matters have gone to the length of war," Lenin had written, "all other things should serve the interests of war. The country's internal life should serve the war. The slightest vacillation in this is intolerable."<sup>1</sup>

A State Defence Committee, which took over the country's political, military and economic administration, was established. The Central Committee of the Party assigned its best men to handle the military affairs.

On June 29, 1941, the Central Committee adopted an exhaustive decision on the tasks of Party and people in the war. The decision noted all the basic features of the war foisted upon the Soviet Union and formulated a concrete plan for the organisation of victory. It was a policy document that rallied the nation's forces and its material resources for the war effort.

The Communist Party inspired and organised the struggle against the fascist invaders. It concentrated the efforts of the Soviet people on the common goal and massed all forces and resources against the enemy. In overcoming the staggering difficulties that blocked the path to victory it showed once more that it is a closely-knit militant organisation.

For months the situation at the front was extremely precarious.

All the same, though enemy troops pushed farther into Soviet territory, the immediate strategic objective of the Barbarossa Plan—to annihilate the bulk of the Soviet Army in a lightning offensive west of the Western Dvina-Dnieper line near the border—failed dismally. This gave early notice that the strategic constructions of the German fascist commanders were faulty.

The nazis failed in one of the basic objectives of their plan. They had expected to break the spirit of the Soviet people and their Army, but did not.

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<sup>1</sup> В. И. Ленин, *Сочинения*, т. 31, стр. 112.

The Soviet Command employed versatile forms of combat in difficult defensive battles—to repulse enemy attacks, to counter-attack at some sectors of the front, and to foil the enemy's strategic schemes, paving the way for an eventual counter-offensive.

The tenacity and courage of the Soviet Army and of the nation as a whole took the wind out of the Nazi sails. Field Marshal von Kleist said later that the Soviet Army consisted from the start of "first-rate fighters" who "fought most toughly and had amazing endurance".<sup>1</sup> Tippelskirch writes that the tenacity of the Soviet soldiers was unexpected. "We were confronted," he writes, "by an enemy with a will of iron. It was nothing like making a house of cards collapse under the impact of rapid blows."<sup>2</sup> British military expert Fuller points out that "things were not going the way they had gone in Poland and France. Though outwardly the *blitz* was succeeding beyond measure, strangely enough there was little or no panic within and behind the Russian front."<sup>3</sup>

The first to engage the enemy were the Soviet frontier guards, and then the troops stationed in the border areas. They had not been deployed for battle when the assault came and were caught off their guard. But the invaders learned at once that they had underrated the spirit, courage and heroism of the Soviet soldier. The immense moral power and flaming patriotism of the Soviet people came into evidence at the very outset of the hostilities.

Many units, detachments and garrisons held out long after the enemy had advanced past them to the East. The 13th border unit of the 90th Vladimir-Volyn detachment, under Lt. A. V. Lopatin, completely surrounded by the enemy, fought on for 11 days. The garrison of the Brest stronghold fought back staunchly for more than 30 days.

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<sup>1</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, New York, 1948, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

Inscriptions by the defenders still survive on its walls. One such inscription says: "We were five: Sedov, Grutov, Bogolyub, Mikhailov and Selivanov. We were attacked at 03.15 hours on June 22, 1941. We shall die, but will not retreat!" Another inscription says: "I die, but I do not surrender! Farewell, dear country. July 20, 1941."<sup>1</sup>

The pillboxes north of the town of Sokal, part of the defences of the 124 Infantry Division, Fifth Army, held out against devastating enemy attacks for several weeks.

Soviet airmen battled in the skies with remarkable bravery. Junior Lieutenant D. V. Kokorev, pilot of the 124th Fighter Regiment of the 9th Air Division performed the first air ram in the history of the war early in the morning of June 22, 1941. He slashed off the tail of a fascist Messerschmidt with the screw of his own plane and then landed safely in a field. An hour later Junior Lieutenant G. Butelin rammed a Junkers-88. Towards the close of the day Senior Lieutenant I. I. Ivanov, flight commander of the 46th Fighter Regiment, rammed and demolished one more enemy plane. On June 26 Capt. F. N. Gastello, whose plane had been hit and was aflame, plunged it into a column of German tanks and lorries, of which several dozen were destroyed in the explosion.

In spite of heroic Soviet resistance, the enemy, though somewhat slowed down, continued to advance. At this stage the main effort of the Soviet troops was concentrated on stemming the enemy advance and forming a continuous strategic front. In the summer and autumn the Nazi juggernaut was brought to a stop at several points, but every time, after a pause for regrouping and replenishment, the fascist army pierced the Soviet defences and continued its onward march. The losses suffered by the Soviet Army earlier in the war and the shortage of reserves thwarted all efforts to stabilise the front.

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<sup>1</sup> *Говорят погибшие герои*, Госполитиздат, 1961, стр. 19.

The sudden invasion had prevented an orderly mobilisation of manpower and material resources and robbed the Soviet Union of considerable strength.

Before the war, the areas occupied by the enemy by November 1941 accounted for 40 per cent of the country's population, 41 per cent of its railways, 38 per cent of the cattle and 60 per cent of the pig herd. These areas produced 58 per cent of the country's steel, 60 per cent of its aluminium and 84 per cent of the sugar. They grew 38 per cent of the grain, mined 63 per cent of the coal and produced 68 per cent of the iron.<sup>1</sup>

The conversion of the Soviet economy to a wartime footing was complicated by the evacuation to the east of a large section of the industry from areas invaded by the enemy. In the first three months of the war more than 1,360 large factories were removed, 455 going to the Urals, 210 to Western Siberia, and 250 to Central Asia and Kazakhstan.<sup>2</sup> N. Shvernik was put at the head of the Committee for Evacuation. No longer operative at their old sites, the factories had not yet been installed at the new ones. Soviet industrial output dropped to less than half between June and November 1941, the output of ferrous metals shrank by nearly 70 per cent, the output of rolled non-ferrous metals by 98 per cent, and of ball-bearings by 95.5 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

Truly gigantic efforts were called for to remedy the situation. The production curve came out of the nosedive in December 1941. By March 1942 war production in just the eastern regions equalled the country's pre-war level.<sup>4</sup> This was an imposing economic triumph. The heroic labour

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<sup>1</sup> See H. A. Вознесенский, *Военная экономика СССР в период Отечественной войны*, стр. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.



effort of the working class and the high technological standards of Soviet industry had done the impossible. G. W. Feuchter, a Western researcher, said:

"The fact that the Soviet Russians succeeded in the most difficult circumstances to relocate industry and what is much more, to produce a large number of aircraft in an extremely short time . . . is one of the greatest technical accomplishments of the Second World War. It appears quite fitting at this point to lay every emphasis on this stupendous achievement."<sup>1</sup>

Soviet Army resistance grew stronger daily. In the fascist press boastful despatches from the front mingled with reports about increasing difficulties. *Völkischer Beobachter*, the fascist mouthpiece, reported on July 4, 1941: "It is indisputable that of all the opponents encountered by the German soldier, the Soviet is the most tenacious and stubborn." But the Hitlerites tried to put a good face on a bad game. They told their allies that everything was going well. When the apprehensive Japanese Government inquired in Berlin about the situation at the front, Keitel and Ribbentrop replied that the "slowing up of the advance of the German army is caused by the excessive length of communications and rear units lagging behind; this is the reason why the advance of the German army is approximately three weeks behind schedule."<sup>2</sup>

But what the Hitlerites hoped to conceal was clear to all concerned. The Swedish *Arbetaren* remarked in July 1941 that "the Germans have stumbled upon a far more tenacious and dangerous adversary than they bargained for. German losses in men, tanks and aircraft are extravagantly high."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Georg W. Feuchter, *Geschichte des Luftkrieges. Entwicklung und Zukunft*, Bonn, Athenäum-Verlag, 1954, S. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *New Times*, Moscow, No. 18, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Bolshevik*, Moscow, No. 15, 1941.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the Second World War sparked a Resistance Movement to fascist invasion throughout Europe. Progressives ranged themselves behind the Soviet people. The heroic Soviet war effort injected fresh vigour into the nations overrun by Hitler Germany.

Resistance to the nazis in the occupied countries appeared before Hitler's plunge against the Soviet Union, but it was not until after the plunge that it gained in scale and momentum.

"The Hitler aggression against the Soviet Union," wrote Maurice Thorez, "stimulated the Resistance Movement in our country, and especially the organisation of armed struggle. The patriots realised that a new balance of strength had taken shape and that now victory was assured for the partisans of the freedom and independence of nations. Until now many Frenchmen, even those hostile to the occupation forces, were sceptical of their strength, and doubted that France would ever be liberated. After June 22, 1941, the patriots said to themselves:

"'We are not alone; with an ally like the Soviet people we can win freedom, we can vanquish.'"<sup>1</sup>

The support rendered by Communist Parties abroad to the gallant Soviet war effort accorded with the vital national interests of the peoples in their struggle for independence and freedom against fascist slavery.

This support of the Soviet Union by the masses in the capitalist countries, above all by the working class, was, in effect, an act of internationalist proletarian solidarity.

It was the Communist Parties that headed the popular struggle against fascism in all countries. The influence of the Communists, those courageous and dedicated anti-fascist fighters, mounted overnight.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Thorez, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

The Communist Parties issued declarations on Hitler Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. These set forth comprehensive programmes of popular struggle for the early defeat of the fascist invaders, best suited for the countries concerned.

The Communist Parties of the nazi-occupied countries in Eastern and South-East Europe called on the masses to resist the occupationists, to organise a guerrilla movement and to prepare for armed uprisings. The Communist Party of Bulgaria made a public appeal on June 22, and on June 24 it adopted a decision to prepare for an armed uprising. Accordingly, the Bulgarian Communists established their first partisan groups in June 1941. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia adopted a similar decision, paving the way for a National Revolutionary Resistance Committee, which was founded in Prague in September 1941.

Sabotage became widespread in Czechoslovakia. The productivity of labour at Czech factories filling German orders dropped 40 per cent. Sabotage groups blew up factories and power stations, set fire to warehouses, damaged machinery and produced defective machine tools and arms. Some of the shops at the Skoda Works in Pilsen were put out of action, and so was the power station of a works producing artillery shells in Hřebnice. Communist-led strikes broke out at a few big factories. Skoda workers went on strike in Hrádek Kralové. So did the workers of the Walter aircraft works, the Kolben-Danek war plant, the Ringhofen car works in Prague, the steel mill Poldina Gut in Kladno, and many others. The first partisan units appeared that summer in Eastern Slovakia and some districts of Bohemia.

On June 22 the Politbureau of the Yugoslav Communist Party issued an appeal to the peoples of Yugoslavia, calling for armed resistance to the nazis. A partisan headquarters was established on June 22 in Belgrade. In July 1941 the partisans engaged occupation troops and

local puppet troops in numerous skirmishes and pitched battles.

The first shots were fired by the Yugoslav partisans on July 7, 1941, in Serbia, on July 13 in Montenegro, and on July 27 in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Very soon all Yugoslavia was enveloped in the flames of partisan warfare.

A clandestine conference of Communist groups was held on November 8, 1941, in Tirana, the enemy-occupied capital of Albania. It declared its faith in the ultimate defeat of fascism and founded the Communist Party, a united Albanian working-class organisation. The newly founded party lost no time in preparing far-flung partisan actions against the occupation troop.

Communist underground workers in Germany issued leaflets explaining the true purport of the events. According to Gestapo figures, between 62 and 519 illegal leaflets and pamphlets were issued in Germany monthly between January and May 1941. In July, a month after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, the number of underground publications climbed to 3,797. In August and September the figure was about the same, and in October it rose to 10,227.<sup>1</sup>

On October 6, 1941, the Communist Party of Germany issued an appeal to the German nation, the German armed forces, workers and peasants, and all working people. The appeal contained an exhaustive analysis of the situation and drew the following prophetic conclusion:

"By his perfidious and faith-breaking attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, Hitler committed a grave crime against the German people, one that will lead Germany to a major national disaster."<sup>2</sup>

The Communist Parties of the United States and Great

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Otto Winzer, *Zwölf Jahre Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg*, S. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Otto Winzer, S. 186.

Britain called on the peoples and governments of their countries to join hands with the Soviet Union in the struggle against Hitler Germany. Their declarations stressed that the Soviet cause was the cause of all the working people of the world, the cause of peace and socialism. The Communist Party of Britain said:

“Build a mighty common front of the people in unity with the people of the First Socialist State in the world!”

The Communist Party of the United States called for “full support and co-operation with the Soviet Union in its struggle against Hitlerism”.<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Parties in the nazi-occupied West European countries told the masses about the purpose and nature of Germany’s attack on the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of France declared in a special appeal on June 22, 1941, that the French nation would never go to war against the Soviet Union.

The first French guerrilla unit was organised before Hitler Germany attacked the U.S.S.R., in April 1941, in the Department Haute-Vienne. After June 22, 1941, the French Communists founded guerrilla detachments in many other departments. Leadership was in the hands of a National War Committee, founded in September 1941 by a decision of the Communist Party of France.

Within seven days of Germany’s attack on the Soviet Union, French patriots in the Paris area blew up several German troop trains. A large fuel dump was set afire in Toulouse. A war plant was blown up in Wingles. On July 14, 1941, on Bastille Day, big anti-German demonstrations were held in German-occupied Paris.

The demonstrators sang the Marseillaise and displayed streamers inscribed, “Long Live the Soviet Union!” In Paris, in broad daylight, patriots killed several Hitler officers. In July 1941 the miners of Pas-de-Calais organised

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Worker*, New York, June 23, 1941.

guerrilla units, and similar units appeared in Alsace, and elsewhere.

In 1941 and 1942 there were 1,657 acts of sabotage and anti-German actions in Belgium, including 246 railway explosions.<sup>1</sup> More than 500 German soldiers and officers were killed in the streets of Amsterdam between 1941 and 1945.

The heroic Soviet war effort helped the people of China in their war against imperialist Japan. The Soviet Union's entry into the war against Germany altered the situation in the Far East, turning the tide heavily in favour of the freedom-loving nations, the Chinese people in particular. The Chinese Communist Party issued a declaration on July 7, 1941, defining the aims of the national-liberation war against Japan in the new situation. The declaration called for the establishment of a powerful anti-fascist coalition composed of the Soviet Union, China, Britain and the United States. The Communist Party demanded a break between China, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other. It spelled out a programme for more effective operations against the Japanese.

"In the sacred war waged by the Soviet Union against fascist aggression," said the Chinese Communist Party, "the Soviet people are defending not only their own country, but also all the nations fighting for liberation against fascist enslavement."

The declaration of the Chinese Communist Party, which soon became a banner of struggle for the people of China, was rejected by the Kuomintang and the Chiang Kai-shek government. When the fascist diplomats departed from China, the Kuomintang government fêted them at a banquet. Ho Ying-chin, China's War Minister, said at the banquet on behalf of Chiang's government that it trusted Germany and Japan would win the Second World

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Görnitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, B. II, S. 68-69.

War, while the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States would be defeated.

The struggle of the Communist Parties, supported as it was by the masses, was a decisive factor in the emergence of the anti-fascist coalition. A united front of nations fighting the fascist invaders formed round the Soviet Union after the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War.

However, the liberation movement in the fascist-occupied European countries was chiefly a movement of scattered acts by isolated and numerically small groups, until the Germans were beaten at Moscow. This was no more than an opening stage in the liberation struggle, whose flames gradually spread throughout Europe.

#### 4

The war aims of the Soviet Union also shaped the objectives of Soviet wartime foreign policy. The purpose was to assure the most favourable international conditions for rapid victory. The imperialist plans of a crusade against the Soviet Union and the designs of isolating the Soviet state internationally had to be frustrated. It was essential to build up a powerful anti-fascist coalition of nations. The enemy camp had to be weakened. Its forces had to be split.

The U.S. and British ruling groups wanted Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan to bleed the Soviet Union. They wanted them to crush the revolutionary and democratic movement in Europe and the national-liberation movement in the East. These designs had to be thwarted. Last but not least, even in wartime Soviet foreign policy had to begin working for a democratic arrangement of the post-war world.

In brief, the main object of Soviet foreign policy was to erect a powerful anti-fascist coalition and thereby wreck the plans of an anti-Soviet crusade.

The German-fascist leadership, like many politicians in the United States and Britain, were blithely convinced that no anti-fascist coalition was practicable between states with diametrically opposite socio-economic systems.

On the eve of Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, June 21, 1941, the U.S. State Department drew up a memorandum, stating: "We should make no specific promises in advance or assume any commitments as to our future policy towards the Soviet Union".<sup>1</sup> There was rejection of the idea of an anti-fascist coalition behind this extremely vague formula. The State Department gave notice that in the event of a nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the United States would confine itself to lifting its restrictions on exports to the U.S.S.R., provided these did not prejudice other deliveries and U.S. domestic needs.

The imperialists did not abandon their hopes of rectifying matters at the expense of the Soviet Union even after the nazis attacked it, although it was clear that Hitler's armies represented a mortal threat to the freedom and independence of all nations since Hitler Germany had subjugated eleven European countries, including France, whose army was priorly considered the strongest in Europe. The threat of total defeat hung over Britain. But the people who thought a coalition impossible, who misunderstood or ignored the objective laws of history, were in for a disappointment. The operation of history was stronger than the wishes of individual leaders.

To begin with, there were the imperialist contradictions that had led to war between the chief capitalist powers. The rulers of the United States and Britain were compelled to form an alliance with the Soviet Union, for without it they could not hope to win the war against Germany, their competitor and adversary. *United Kingdom Policy, Foreign, Strategic, Economic*, a book published in 1950 by the Royal Institute of International Affairs,

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<sup>1</sup> Langer and Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 531.



contains the admission that Germany was close to defeating the United Kingdom during the Second World War, though it could engage no more than part of its forces against it. It is doubtful, the book says, that the United Kingdom would have survived, even with the support of the Commonwealth and the United States, if the Soviet Union had not entered the war. An official war report by General George C. Marshall said that the "heroic stands of the British and Soviet peoples saved the United States a war on her own soil".<sup>1</sup> Cold calculation compelled the U.S. and British rulers to enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union.

For a long time the British and American imperialists had contended that co-operation between the capitalist countries, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other, was impossible. But the facts indicated the reverse. Co-operation proved to be possible. What is more, its opponents were themselves obliged to strive for it.

The other objective factor to further the anti-fascist coalition was the struggle of the masses. The overwhelming majority of the British and American people were well disposed towards the Soviet Union. They demanded that their countries join efforts with the Soviet Union for the successful prosecution of the war against Hitler Germany.

In promoting the anti-fascist coalition, the Soviet Government acted on the injunctions of V. I. Lenin, who said:

"The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and *without fail*, most thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully using every, even the smallest, rift among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries . . . and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and

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<sup>1</sup> *The War Reports of Marshall, Arnold, King*, New York, 1947, p. 149.

conditional. Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism in general."<sup>1</sup>

The prevailing situation, induced the U.S. and British governments to line up with the U.S.S.R. Statements to this effect were made by Churchill on behalf of the British Government on June 22, 1941, and by Roosevelt on behalf of the U.S. Government on June 24.

The rulers of the United States and Britain intended to use the Soviet Union to weaken Germany and, conversely, to see the Soviet Union weakened by Germany. Here is how Churchill began his radio speech:

"No one has been a more consistent opponent of communism than I have for the last 25 years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it."<sup>2</sup>

Yet Churchill admitted that the Soviet war effort against the German-fascist army was of crucial importance to Britain's future. "The Russian danger," he said, "is therefore our danger, and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe."<sup>3</sup>

In the United States, Roosevelt's statement was published simultaneously with an interview by Senator Harry Truman, later Vice-President and President of the U.S.A. In his interview, Truman said blandly:

"If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible."<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. President's personal representative in Vatican, Myron C. Taylor, told Pope Pius XII that the U.S. Government was determined to give every practicable form of assistance to the Soviet Union in order to prevent "nazi

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 331-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, June 24, 1941.

Germany from conquering the Russian people and thus securing the wheat and oil and other means necessary to carry on further aggression".<sup>1</sup>

On September 3, 1941, Roosevelt said in a message to the Pope that the United States supported the Soviet Union against Hitler Germany because the Soviet system was "less dangerous to the safety" of the United States than German fascism. The only weapon which the Soviet Union uses outside of its own borders, the message said, is communist propaganda. Germany, however, has "undertaken the employment of every form of military aggression outside of its borders for the purpose of world conquest by force of arms and by force of propaganda".<sup>2</sup>

The war against Germany was a just war, a war of liberation, especially after the Soviet Union was drawn into it. This went into the making of the anti-fascist coalition, which the Soviet Government was quick to mould into a tangible and effective force.

At all times during the Great Patriotic War the Soviet Union acted as the promoter and champion of the anti-fascist coalition. Early in July 1941 through the British Ambassador in Moscow, the Soviet Government suggested a Soviet-British agreement against the common enemy. The proposal was accepted, culminating in an Agreement for Joint Action in the War Against Germany, which was signed on July 12, 1941. The agreement obliged the signatories to render each other assistance and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany. Furthermore, the signatories pledged that they would neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.<sup>3</sup>

This was the first effective step towards an anti-Hitler coalition. It paved the way for friendly, allied relations be-

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<sup>1</sup> *Wartime Correspondence Between President Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII*, New York, 1947, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Wartime Correspondence...*, p. 61-62.

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 77.

tween the Soviet Union and Britain, and between the Soviet Union and the other members of the British Empire. The agreement indicated that the two parties were firmly determined and interested in developing allied relations.

Since the instrument did not stipulate the ways and means of mutual assistance, the negotiations were continued. The question of a second front was the most important item in the talks. The difficulties faced by the Soviet Union could have been considerably relieved if a second front were opened without delay, for it would have diverted a portion of Germany's armed forces.

A message to Churchill by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. said on July 18, 1941:

"A front in the north of France, besides diverting Hitler's forces from the east, would make impossible an invasion of Britain by Hitler. Establishment of this front would be popular both with the British Army and the population of southern England. I am aware of the difficulty of establishing such a front, but it seems to me that, notwithstanding the difficulties, it should be done, not only for the sake of our common cause, but also in Britain's own interest."<sup>1</sup>

There was ample opportunity for opening the second front. Hitler Germany had flung the bulk of its armed forces against the Soviet Union, and, as a result, Western Europe was almost denuded of troops. The British Army had recovered after Dunkirk. It had been newly armed and was numerically strong. The Soviet Government, as Churchill admits,<sup>2</sup> had shown its willingness to help Britain open the second front with three or four army corps.

But Churchill wished to see the Soviet Union weakened and bled. He declined the Soviet proposals out of hand. True, he said in so doing that he would "be searching earnestly for other ways of striking at the common foe" and that Britain would do "anything sensible and effec-

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, Moscow, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 339-40.

tive" to help the Soviet Union. But these promises were vague and unreliable.

Britain's Prime Minister lavished praise upon the Soviet Army and the Soviet people. He wrote there was "general admiration for the bravery and tenacity of the Soviet soldiers and people".<sup>1</sup> This was true, but coming from Churchill it did not sound very sincere, especially since he wrote in his memoirs that he tried "to fill the void by civilities".<sup>2</sup> What he meant by civilities is clear from his own explanation: "When you have to kill a man it costs nothing to be polite."<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Government tried to prevail upon the British. In a message of September 3, 1941, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers said to the British Prime Minister that a second front was essential to frustrate the German designs of beating Germany's enemies one at a time. He also raised the question of aiding the Soviet Union with strategic raw materials, aircraft and tanks.

The British Government agreed to help the Soviet Union with war supplies. This sort of help could not, of course, compare with what a second front would have meant at the time. But it would to some extent mitigate the difficulties of the Soviet Union. However, the British procrastinated, seeking to settle the matter jointly with the United States.

The U.S. Government was inclined to supply the Soviet Union with munitions and armaments, but wanted the recipient to accept them on the harsh American terms. So there was also delay on the part of the United States.

The U.S. and British governments sent Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's closest adviser, to Moscow, to discuss the shipment of supplies. The U.S. President furnished him with a letter, which said:

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 543.

"I ask you to treat Mr. Hopkins with the identical confidence you would feel if you were talking directly to me."<sup>1</sup> En route Hopkins had a private talk with Churchill in London, and arrived in Moscow towards the end of July 1942.<sup>2</sup>

In Moscow, Harry Hopkins said the U.S. and British governments were willing to send materiel to the Soviet Union. But he made the reservation that decisions "relating to the long-range supply problem could only be resolved" if the U.S. Government "had complete knowledge, not only of the military situation in Russia, but of type, number and quality of their military weapons, as well as full knowledge of raw materials and factory capacity".<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. Government thus made the question of supplies conditional on information about the war situation in the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet war potential. The matter was left unsettled.

Yet there was a distinct turn for the better in Soviet-American relations. On August 2, 1941, the two governments exchanged notes concerning U.S. economic help to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union said the quantity of supplies and the speed of delivery should be "of such a scope as to correspond to the magnitude of the military operations in which the Soviet Union is engaging in offering armed resistance to the aggressor".<sup>4</sup>

However, in spite of their promises, the American and British governments did little or nothing to help the Soviet Union in the most difficult first few months of the war. In the following years of war, too, U.S. and British assistance to the Soviet Union was none too effective compared with the help the Soviet Union was rendering the two coun-

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<sup>1</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> H. Y. Morton, *Atlantic Meeting*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1943, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

<sup>4</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 84.

tries by engaging the main forces of fascist Germany. The Soviet-German front was the main theatre of operations throughout the Second World War.

A few weeks after the nazis attacked it, the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the émigré governments of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium and Norway. This emphasised the Soviet resolve that the national sovereignty of countries captured by Germany should be restored and indicated the Soviet people's desire to back the liberation struggle in the nazi-occupied countries. In this matter, too, Soviet policy differed radically from that of the U.S. and British policymakers, who continued to regard the smaller European countries as a coin of exchange in the imperialist game.

For a long time the U.S. and British governments would not concede that Czechoslovakia should be nationally revived, and insisted, of all things, that its seizure by Hitler Germany had been lawful. Britain, a signatory of the Munich agreement, was in no hurry to annul it. At first, it refused Beneš permission to form his émigré government inspite of his pro-British sentiments and then, after that government was formed on July 9, 1940, Britain refused to recognise it. And when it could no longer refuse recognition, it recognised the Czechoslovak émigré government conditionally as a provisional body, and said in the instrument of recognition that it had no intention of binding itself in advance to recognising or supporting any frontiers that may arise in Central Europe in the future. This formula was prompted by Britain's desire to leave the Munich question open and not to commit itself in the question of Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich frontiers.

When the Soviet Government approached the Czechoslovakian Government concerning official recognition, the British Government decided to go one better and announce the unconditional recognition of the Czech cabinet. This was to minimise the immense impression the Soviet stand was bound to make on the Czechoslovakian people. But

while the British Government pondered over the reservations it should make, the Soviet Union signed an agreement with Czechoslovakia on July 18, 1942.

On the same day, a few hours later, Anthony Eden handed a letter to Jan Masaryk, the Foreign Minister of the Czech émigré government, announcing *de jure* recognition. While compelled by the Soviet stand to make this announcement, Britain stated once more that its point of view concerning the territorial questions, remained unaltered.<sup>1</sup> This went to say that Britain's ruling class remained true to the Munich deal. As late as August 5, 1942, when Britain finally admitted that Germany's conduct had invalidated the Munich deal, Anthony Eden's note said the Czech border question would be settled after the war. Once more the British Government declined to recognise Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich frontiers.

Britain's standpoint differed radically from the Soviet standpoint. Beneš admitted that Soviet policy was always consistent and that it never failed to support the basic national interests of the Czechoslovakian people. He wrote:

"The Soviet Union, who from the first firmly opposed Munich and the events of March 15, 1939 (Germany's seizure of Czechoslovakia.—G. D.), has at this crucial hour struck a death blow at Munich and all its consequences by again recognising the Republic in its pre-Munich status in full and firmly, without any reservations or conditions."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-Czechoslovakian agreement of July 18, 1941, provided for mutual aid and support in the war against Hitler Germany and for the establishment of Czechoslovakian military units in Soviet territory.

On July 5, 1941, negotiations opened between the Soviet Union and the Polish émigré government in London.

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<sup>1</sup> R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Comes the Reckoning*, Book II, London, Putnam, 1947, pp. 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> Edvard Beneš, *Paměti Od Mnichova k nové válce ak novému vítězství*, Praha, 1948.



The latter suited its words to the sentiments of the Poles, denounced the political system in pre-September Poland, juggled adroitly with democratic slogans, and sought thereby to retain the political dominance of the bourgeoisie within the country. This democratic camouflage and the slogans of struggle against the occupation concealed the Sikorski government's real intentions. But its true nature came out when, supported by Britain, it submitted claims to the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. In defiance of the national interests of the Polish people, who languished under the Hitler occupation, the reactionary Polish émigrés obstructed the conclusion of a Soviet-Polish agreement. It was finally signed on July 30, 1941, but the frontier question was left open until a later date. The opening clause of the agreement said:

“The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognises the Soviet-German Treaties of 1939 regarding territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity. The Polish Government declares that Poland is not bound by any agreement with any third Power which is directed against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”<sup>1</sup>

The remaining clauses of the agreement provided for mutual assistance in the war against Germany and the establishment of a Polish army in Soviet territory.

Relations between the Soviet and Polish peoples developed well, for they were waging a joint struggle against the common enemy. Yet the Polish émigré government defied the will of its people, and violated its agreement with the Soviet Union. It had its selfish interests and imperialist designs to look after, and embarked on anti-Soviet intrigues. The policy of the Polish émigré government was shaped by the reactionary groups that had earlier supported the anti-Soviet designs of Poland's Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck. While prejudicing the true inter-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 81.

ests of the Polish people in other respects, the émigrés initiated a campaign, claiming possession of traditionally Ukrainian and Byelorussian land, and this at a time when the Soviet Union was straining every muscle to stem the enemy.

The hostile attitude of General Sikorski's Polish government was accentuated by the appointment of General Anders, known for his ill will towards the Soviet Union, to head the Polish army in the U.S.S.R. While forming his units and enjoying the material assistance of the Soviet people, Anders gave little thought to fighting the Germans and concentrated on using his troops for his own adventurist ends. The Polish army was being formed in the middle reaches of the Volga. "I am very pleased with this choice of place," Anders told his entourage, "because the area is far enough from the front, and military operations will not interfere with our training. After the Red Army collapses under the German onslaught, which is bound to happen in a few months, we shall fight our way out along the Caspian shore to Iran. Being the only armed force in the area, we shall be able to do whatever we please."

On September 27, 1941, the Soviet Government exchanged notes with the French National Committee of Liberation. Long before the United States and Britain, the U.S.S.R. expressed itself willing "to afford the Free French every possible help and assistance in the common struggle against Hitlerite Germany and her allies".<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union undertook "to assure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France . . . after the achievement of our joint victory over the common enemy".<sup>2</sup> This was the first genuine recognition of the Free French, tantamount to an alliance against the fascists.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

By heading the efforts of the peoples to establish an anti-fascist coalition, the Soviet Union expanded its foreign relations and fortified its international position. This was a natural upshot of the struggle waged for years by the U.S.S.R. to rally all progressive forces for joint resistance to fascism.

## 5

By that time Iran acquired strategic importance for the anti-fascist coalition and for greater co-operation between the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Britain. Vital communication lines crossed that Eastern country, which also possessed vital strategic materials, such as oil, and neighboured on key areas of the Soviet rear.

Hitler Germany had established fairly close relations with Iran's ruling quarters and maintained a far-flung web of agents in the country. After the war broke out it began shipping Iranian raw materials and food supplies to Germany. The nazis considered Iran a new staging area in their war against the Soviet Union. The threat to Soviet interests, and those of Britain and the rest of the anti-Hitler coalition was very grave. Thrice (June 26, July 19 and August 16) the Soviet Government warned Iran of the possible consequences of its policy. But the Iranian Government ignored the sound Soviet advice.

On August 25, 1941, a new Soviet note was sent to Iran. It listed facts from the history of Soviet-Iranian relations to show the friendly attitude of the Soviet Union. It reminded Iran of the three latest Soviet notes, which the Iranian Government had not heeded. The Soviet Government said that German agents in Iran were grossly violating the "elementary obligations of respect for the sovereignty of Iran" and "transformed the territory of Iran into a theatre of preparations for a military attack on the Soviet Union". The Soviet note pointed out that

since the situation was "pregnant with grave perils"<sup>1</sup> it was not only entitled, but also obliged under Article 6 of the 1921 Soviet-Iranian Treaty to act in self-defence. One such measure was the entry of Soviet troops into Iran on August 26, 1941.

Simultaneously, British troops entered the southern section of Iran. The Iranian *démarche* was made jointly by the Soviet and British governments, but what the British rulers had at the back of their minds was to shore up their positions in the Middle East and take advantage of the grave situation on the Soviet-German front to induce a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran and take control of that country.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Britain, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, was recorded in a Tripartite Treaty of Alliance signed on January 29, 1942, whereby the Soviet Union and Britain undertook to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iran, to defend it from aggression, and to withdraw their troops from Iranian territory not later than 6 months after all hostilities between the Allied Powers and Germany and its associates had ceased. Iran, for its part, undertook to co-operate with the Allied governments, to give them the unrestricted right to use, maintain, and guard all means of communication, and to assist in obtaining supplies and in recruiting labour.

The entry of Soviet and British troops into Iran and the Tripartite Treaty had an immense international impact. Hitler's agents in Iran were rendered harmless and the new seat of war in the Middle East was eliminated. Iran joined the struggle against fascism by affording facilities to the Allies. The joint Anglo-Soviet action, the first these countries made as allies in the common war, showed that the idea of an anti-fascist coalition was quite practicable.

Always true to its international obligations, the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 92.

Union meticulously fulfilled all the terms of the Iranian Treaty. It helped Iran considerably, particularly in supplying food.

The United States imperialists saddled Iran with an unequal treaty which gave the special U.S. economic mission under Dr. A. C. Millspaugh, an agent of the American monopolies, what were virtually unlimited privileges. In 1943 Millspaugh was appointed Administrator-General of Iran's finances. The United States assumed control over the country's economy, finances and government machinery, aiming to turn Iran into something of an American colony. But popular opposition succeeded in ousting the Millspaugh mission from the country in February 1945.

However, the scramble for Iran's natural resources continued. After elbowing out Britain, the U.S. took control of a considerable portion of the Iranian oil industry.

## 6

The liberative aims of the Great Patriotic War rallied the freedom-loving nations of the world to the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. acted as the main striking force of the anti-Hitler coalition, an accord that emerged through its efforts. Now the masses demanded that the U.S. and British governments conclude an effective alliance with the Soviet Union.

The British and Americans decided to discuss the political and military situation and work out a course of action. It would have been more proper to discuss the matter jointly with the Soviet Union, but the U.S. and British governments preferred separate conferences.

An Anglo-American conference was held under a tight veil of secrecy aboard warships at the Argentinia naval base in Newfoundland. The conference dealt with three questions—the situation in the Pacific, ways and means of helping the Soviet Union, and the war aims of the United States and Britain.

In relation to the Pacific, the United States and Britain agreed that they "should take parallel action in warning Japan against new moves of aggression".<sup>1</sup> The object was for the U.S.A. to settle its contradictions with Japan at the expense of the Soviet Union and China.

Harry Hopkins reported on his trip to Moscow, and a decision was taken to send war materials to the U.S.S.R.

On August 15, 1941, the U.S. President and the British Prime Minister sent a joint message to the head of the Soviet Government, suggesting a conference in Moscow to discuss mutual deliveries of raw materials and war supplies. The Soviet Government consented.

For almost two years since the outbreak of the war the U.S. and British governments kept silent about their war aims. The ruling monopoly groups in those countries could not afford to tell the people of their imperialist objectives and were in no hurry to make any general declarations, fearing that these might tie their hands. But after the Soviet Union announced its high-minded aims of liberation, they could keep silent no longer.

The Anglo-American discussion of war aims revealed acute imperialist contradictions between the two countries. The U.S.A. wanted provisions giving American capital unobstructed access to British possessions. These, they hoped, would lead to a redivision of the British Empire. Churchill objected. "England does not propose for a moment," he said, "to lose its favoured position among the British Dominions."<sup>2</sup> The controversy was settled by a compromise. The Anglo-American declaration on allied war aims included the old expansionist U.S. demands ("freedom of the seas", "equal opportunities", etc.), couched, however, in terms of mere suggestion. The interests of the British imperialists were covered by the

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<sup>1</sup> *Peace and War. United States Foreign Policy 1939-1941*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, 1943, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, New York, 1946, p. 36.

reservation that "existing obligations" would be duly respected, meaning that Britain's rights to its colonial empire would remain intact.

The Anglo-American declaration, named the Atlantic Charter, was signed on August 14, 1941. The sweep of the world-wide liberation movement compelled the U.S. and British governments to make democratic promises which they did not intend to keep. These were meant to veil their imperialist aims.

The Atlantic Charter said that the U.S.A. and Britain sought no territorial aggrandisement and desired to see no territorial changes that did not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, that they respected the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they would live, that they would endeavour to further equal opportunities for trade, etc., etc. But the terms in which each of these principles was couched left considerable room for manoeuvre.

Principle 3 of the Atlantic Charter, for example, contained the extremely important undertaking to facilitate the restoration of the sovereign rights and self-government of nations. It said, however, that these would be restored to those nations only that had been forcibly deprived of them. In due course this reservation was extended still further. The United States and Britain defined seizures as acts of aggression by the fascist powers, which left the colonial peoples out in the cold. At least, this was how Principle 3 was interpreted by Winston Churchill when he returned from the conference. He said to Parliament on September 9, 1941:

"At the Atlantic meeting we had in mind primarily restoration of the sovereignty, self-government, and national life of the states and nations of Europe now under the nazi yoke."<sup>1</sup>

Later, Churchill clarified his point. "Let me, however, make this clear, in case there should be any mistake about

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, September 10, 1941.

it in any quarter," he said. "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."<sup>1</sup>

The Atlantic Charter said not a word about the need of rallying all forces for the struggle against the enemy.

The Soviet Government declared on September 24, 1941, with an eye to the democratic principles contained in the Atlantic Charter, that it agreed with its fundamental principles, but considered that its practical application would "necessarily adapt itself to the circumstances, needs and historic peculiarities of particular countries". The Soviet statement emphasised the need for "smashing Hitlerite aggression and annihilating the yoke of nazism today" in order to attain "full and speedy emancipation of the nations groaning under the oppression of the Hitlerite hordes."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Union advanced its own programme for the anti-fascist coalition. Its basic principles were: elimination of racial exclusiveness; equality of nations and their territorial integrity; liberation of enslaved nations and restoration of their sovereign rights; the right of every nation to arrange its life as it wishes; economic assistance to victimised nations; restoration of democratic freedoms; destruction of the Hitler regime.

The prestige and force of this programme lay in its moral superiority and in the might of the Soviet Union, far and away the key member of the anti-Hitler coalition. It expressed the basic interests and aspirations of the progressive section of mankind and hence enjoyed the support of all the freedom-loving nations.

The Moscow Conference of the U.S.S.R., U.S. and Britain, September 29-October 1, 1941, helped to build up the anti-fascist coalition. The United States was represented

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, November 11, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 98.



by Averell Harriman, the banker, and Britain by Lord Beaverbrook, the English reactionary press king.

At the Moscow Conference the United States asked the Soviet Union for air and other bases in Siberia.<sup>1</sup> They showed an unwarranted interest in the fate of the Baltic Fleet, urging the Soviet Union to scuttle it.<sup>2</sup> Last but not least, the American and British spokesmen tried to raise the question of "special" terms on which "aid" was to be rendered to the Soviet Union.

All these attempts, which contradicted the principles of the anti-fascist coalition, encountered firm Soviet resistance. The Soviet Union regarded supply shipments as one of the forms of mutual economic co-operation between members of the anti-fascist coalition, and ultimately won the point.

But the solution of concrete questions was also achieved with great difficulty. Churchill had given the British delegation instructions authorising very small shipments to the Soviet Union, and those only at the end of 1942. "Your function will be not only to aid in the forming of the plans to help Russia," the instructions said, "but to make sure we are not bled white in the process; and even if you find yourself affected by the Russian atmosphere I shall be quite stiff about it here."<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet requests to the United States and Britain, fairly modest considering the resources of those two countries, were much reduced. For example, the Soviet Union

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<sup>1</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> On September 12, 1941, the British Ambassador to Moscow submitted the following memorandum to the Soviet Government: "If the Soviet Government were compelled to destroy its naval vessels at Leningrad in order to prevent their falling into the enemy hands, His Majesty's Government would recognise after the war claims of the Soviet Government to a certain compensation from His Majesty's Government for the restoration of the vessels destroyed." Cf. *Correspondence*. . . , Vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 410, 411.

asked for 30,000 tons of aluminium by the beginning of October 1941. It was promised 5,000 tons "as soon as arrangements for shipment are completed, and 2,000 tons monthly thereafter". In making this promise, the American and British spokesmen tried once more to make the deliveries conditional on exhaustive secret information to be supplied by the Soviet Union.

However, eager to have the Soviet Union resist Hitler Germany, the United States and Britain abandoned their groundless demands and reached an understanding with the U.S.S.R. concerning mutual deliveries for the coming year. The question of transport was settled as well. The pertinent documents were signed on October 1, 1941, before the Conference closed.

A month later, on November 2, 1941, the U.S. Government informed the Soviet Union that it had decided to extend the Lend-Lease Act to the Soviet Union and offered an initial credit of \$1,000 million.

In spite of its grim military and economic situation, the Soviet Union shipped raw materials to Britain and the United States, promoting greater war production in those countries. As for the U.S. and British governments, they failed to keep to the schedule of shipments. An official U.S. report indicated that by the end of the first Protocol period only about four-fifths of the supplies had actually been shipped.<sup>1</sup> Numerous U.S. and British officials admit that deliveries of war supplies from their countries to the Soviet Union in 1941-42 were "disappointingly slow".<sup>2</sup>

Langer and Gleason, the American historians, wrote that "American supplies to Soviet Russia inevitably remained insignificant. . . . For the period to October 1 they were estimated to reach only \$29,000,000." At this rate, the authors said, the United States would make "but a

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<sup>1</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Lend-Lease, Weapon for Victory*, New York, the Macmillan Company, 1944, pp. 207-08.

<sup>2</sup> John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance. The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Co-operation with Russia*, New York, 1950, p. 89.

slight contribution to Soviet defence or to ultimate victory on the Eastern front".<sup>1</sup>

But no matter how small these Anglo-American deliveries were, they were badly wanted by the Soviet Union, for it was straining all its resources in its war against Germany.

All in all, the Moscow Conference settled all the matters on its agenda and showed that co-operation between the members of the anti-fascist coalition was quite practicable. Hitler's plan to destroy his adversaries one at a time had the bottom knocked out of it.

Soon after the Moscow Conference the Soviet Government made a new important initiative. On November 8, 1941, it proposed to the British Government to clarify mutual relations and reach an understanding concerning war aims and the organisation of post-war peace. It also suggested a treaty of mutual military assistance in Europe. The Soviet Government pointed out at once that the motives advanced by the British Government in avoiding to declare war on Finland, Hungary and Rumania, which were Germany's satellites, were fallacious.

At a time when the Soviet Union sought honestly and sincerely to develop and consolidate allied relations, the ruling groups in the United States and Britain refused to abandon the two-faced policy they had pursued before the war. They continued their secret moves for a new compact with Hitler.

While Lord Beaverbrook was *en route* to Moscow to attend the Conference, his son, Aitken Beaverbrook, a British army officer and later an M.P., negotiated secretly on behalf of the British Government in Lisbon on September 13, 1941, with Gustav von Köver, a Hungarian fascist acting on the authority of the German Government. Aitken Beaverbrook and Köver discussed the possibility of a separate peace between Britain and Hitler Germany.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 560.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Falsifiers of History*, Moscow, 1951, p. 100.

But the imperialist contradictions that obtained between Britain and Germany were still operative. The inexorable logic of events led to a further development of allied relations between the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S.A. The anti-Hitler coalition of nations and governments was gradually becoming a reality in world political and military affairs.

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The burgeoning anti-fascist coalition was opposed by a bloc of aggressors headed by Hitler Germany. This was a bloc that arose on purely imperialist soil, an alliance of conquistadores moved by a common itch for plunder and aggression. Direct pressure by Germany on its European allies was a prominent factor in the relations that governed this aggressive association.

By the time of its faith-breaking assault on the Soviet Union, Germany had conquered and subjugated a number of European countries. German troops were stationed in them, and the Gestapo and SS ruled them with a hand of iron. Hitler's allies retained only a semblance of independence. The final say was always with the German authorities.

The military assistance which German imperialism enjoyed from its allies affected the balance of strength from the very outbreak of the Soviet-German war.

Germany lavished extravagant promises on its allies to obtain the desired cannon fodder. Apportionment of Soviet land was discussed at Hitler's headquarters on July 16, 1941. The conference decided to annex the Crimea and its adjacent areas, the Ukraine, the Baltic states, the Bialystok forests and the Kola Peninsula to Germany. The land on either bank of the Volga was to be a German colony, and the Transcaucasia, including Baku, a German military base. Bessarabia and Odessa were promised to Rumania, together with Soviet territory west of the Dniester. Leningrad, Leningrad Region and Eastern Karelia

were to go to Finland, and Hungary was to get Galicia and the Carpathian foothills.

Joint prosecution of the war by the states of the Hitler bloc was based on their common predatory aims. But their unity failed to remove the keen contradictions within the bloc. The satellites were unhappy over their secondary status. Dissatisfaction was mounting in Italy. For decades the Italian imperialists had dreamed of ruling the universe. Now, in place of Mussolini's promised "historic role of the great Italian empire", they had to rest content with the unsavoury role of Hitler's handmaid. Italy's industries closed down due to a shortage of raw materials and fuel, which were shipped to Germany. Making the most of the situation, German industrialists purchased Italian factories at give-away prices and removed them to their own country.

A backstage struggle proceeded between the German satellites over the supply of cannon fodder. Each of them was eager to reduce its contribution and preserve its armed forces for a subsequent scrimmage with other satellites over the war booty. Territorial disputes gradually developed into bitter conflicts, such as the one between Rumania and Hungary.

But earlier on, while Germany was still carrying all before it, the most loyal of its allies were jubilant, anticipating rich spoils.

The U.S. and British governments, which had supported Finland in the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-40, were eager to maintain relations with that ally of fascist Germany. Secretary of State Hull, for example, went to the length of congratulating the Finnish minister on October 3 on the seizure of the Karelian areas of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

After the signing of the Anglo-Soviet agreement for joint action in the war against Germany, the Soviet Gov-

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Wuorinen, *Finland and World War II, 1939-1944*, Ronald Press Company, New York, 1948, p. 136.

ernment insisted that Britain declare war on Hitler Germany's allies who participated in the attack on the U.S.S.R. Churchill, who had backed the Finnish reactionaries, tried to resist. But he soon saw that his position was untenable. The British Government declared war on Finland, Hungary and Rumania.

On November 29, 1941, before declaring war, Churchill sent a personal message to Mannerheim, Supreme Commander of the Finnish Army, through Schoenfeld, the U.S. Minister to Finland. He was deeply regretful, Churchill wrote, for as he foresaw, Britain would be compelled in loyalty to its ally Russia to declare war on Finland within a few days. It would grieve Finland's many friends in Britain, Churchill went on to say, if Finland were to be tried together with the guilty and defeated nazis. Churchill said it was his recollections of the last war and of their correspondence that had prompted him to send this purely personal and private message.<sup>1</sup> Mannerheim wrote back that he "appreciated" the British Prime Minister's friendly gesture.<sup>2</sup>

On December 6, 1941, Britain made a formal declaration of war.

After Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, the Japanese Government informed the U.S.S.R. in an official statement that it would abide by the Soviet-Japanese treaty and stay neutral. But on the same day it also informed Germany that it would help its war effort against the Soviet Union from the Far Eastern end of the fascist Axis, adding that its statement of neutrality was made to mislead the Soviet Union.

The Japanese *Kokumin* wrote on July 2, 1941, that the war between Germany and the Soviet Union was not just a war between those two countries. It was decisive for the future of East Asia, it said, and a war of the Axis countries against the democracies.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 14, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The Japanese attitude did not satisfy Germany, which had by then realised the power of Soviet resistance and longed for Japanese aid against the U.S.S.R. On July 1, 1941, Ribbentrop telegraphed Tokyo that it was committed under the Berlin Pact to attack the Soviet Union at once. The plan of the attack, whose code name was Kantokuen (Special Kwantung Army Manoeuvres) had been worked out well in advance by the Japanese Command with the assistance of the German General Staff.

Ribbentrop's telegram was discussed at a top-level conference presided by Emperor Hirohito on July 2, 1941. It ruled that Japan would indeed attack the Soviet Union, but not before Germany scored decisive victories on the Soviet-German front, forcing the U.S.S.R. to deploy its troops from the Far East. The text of the decision said:

"As concerns the German-Soviet war the Japanese Empire shall not interfere in this conflict for some time, though the spirit of the Axis must be safeguarded. However, preparations for war against the U.S.S.R. should be made in secret. . . . If the course of the German-Soviet war shall be favourable for the Empire, the question of the Northern blow should be settled with armed force."<sup>1</sup>

This was fresh evidence of the existing German-Japanese imperialist contradictions. In contrast to Germany, Japan was eager to shift the main burdens of the war on its ally and preserve its own forces to the maximum. "Germany had no real desire to see Japan triumphant in Asia," wrote a group of British historians, "and Japan feared what a Germany who had made herself dominant in Europe might afterwards seek to do in the Far East."<sup>2</sup>

The Japanese reinforced their troops along the Soviet border in Manchuria and Korea. They mobilised fresh contingents in the summer of 1941. In the meantime, secret

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<sup>1</sup> *История войны на Тихом океане*, Токио, издательство Тоюо Keizai Shimbosha, т. III, 1953, стр. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, Borton and Pearn, *Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946. The Far East 1942-1946*, p. 103.

groups formed on Emperor Hirohito's orders amassed bacteriological weapons of mass annihilation in Manchuria.

The aggressive ambitions of the Japanese imperialists were indeed boundless. Take the following passage from *Nippon*, a Japanese daily, of July 9, 1941:

"The front line of Japanese defence should run in the north from the Kara Sea along the Urals to the Caspian Sea, then towards the Caucasian and Kurdistan Mountains, the Persian Gulf, reaching across Saudi Arabia to Aden in the south. This line of defence is absolutely essential for the countries of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere."

Japan did not join in the war against the Soviet Union, but it gave Hitler Germany every possible help and comfort. Ribbentrop acknowledged this in a telegram to Tokyo of May 15, 1942. The telegram said that the concentration of Japanese troops along the Soviet-Manchurian frontier was a great help "since Russia, in any case, is compelled to keep troops in Eastern Siberia to ward off a Russo-Japanese conflict".<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Government plied Germany with intelligence concerning the economic, political and military situation in the Soviet Union through its military and diplomatic agencies. In a telegram of July 15, 1941, Ribbentrop authorised the German Ambassador in Tokyo "to thank the Japanese Foreign Ministry for letting us have a telegraphed report of the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow. . . . It would be a good thing if we could get reports from Russia regularly in this way."<sup>2</sup>

Japan also attempted to blockade Soviet Far Eastern ports and made piratical attacks on Soviet shipping. What was more, it demanded that the Soviet Government stop shipping goods to the Soviet Union via Vladivostok. The Soviet Government replied that "it could not consider as other than a hostile act any attempt to interfere with the effecting of normal commercial relations between the So-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



viet Union and the U.S.A. through Soviet ports in the Far East.”<sup>1</sup>

Fascist Germany was desperately conscious that the bloc it had built up was unstable and sought to shore it up. It was for this purpose that Berlin organised the rite of renewing the Anti-Comintern Pact, concluded in 1936, for a term of five years. This was done on November 25, 1941. The German political leadership thus attempted once more to capitalise on the anti-Communist purport of its military alliance to undermine the then burgeoning anti-fascist coalition, invigorate the fascist bloc and speed Japan’s attack on the Soviet Union.

The Anti-Comintern Pact was signed by Germany and its satellites—Italy, Hungary, Spain, Finland, Croatia, Denmark, Rumania, Slovakia and Bulgaria—and by Japan and its puppet governments of Manchukuo and Wang Ching-wei in Japanese-occupied China. It was obviously an aggressive military bloc seeking world domination.

But no pact, new or old, could shore up the Italian-Japanese-German alliance. This alliance was rent apart by bitter imperialist contradictions, chiefly between Germany and Japan, and between Germany and Italy. A conflict brewed among them over the share of the war burden and the war booty.

It was the purpose of the bloc that made it unstable. It was unjust and predatory, because aimed against all the nations of the world.

The peoples hated the Hitler bloc. The aggressors were isolated. This isolation grew as time went by.

The political and moral resources of the Axis gradually ran out. It was losing strength.

The nazi hopes of consolidating the Axis were crushed by the Soviet victory in the Battle for Moscow.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 93.

## *Chapter Eight*

### THE BATTLE FOR MOSCOW

#### 1

It was apparent by August 1941 that the German Command had miscalculated the Soviet resistance capability. The German operations may have been successful on the face of it, but their outcome did not decide the issue at all. Hitler's generals admit that they "did not bring about either the rapid destruction of all enemy fighting forces or crush the fighting spirit of the Red Army".<sup>1</sup>

The Germans had envisaged a swift thrust into the Soviet hinterland. But their plan was foiled. The Nazi advance was stemmed repeatedly, and the Soviet Army struck painful counterblows. German losses in men and materiel were immense. The prospect of a winter campaign, which the German Command had not bargained for, loomed bigger every day.

In early September, following the Battle of Smolensk, the fascist troops on the central section of the front were compelled to halt their offensive.

Leningrad was the chief objective on the northern flank. In July the Germans made their first attempt to capture the city, but it was foiled by the tenacious resistance of the Leningrad garrison. The second fascist attempt, made in August, was also foiled.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilanz des zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 53.

Early in September 1941 the nazi troops made an all-out assault, preceded by a ferocious artillery bombardment and air attack.

Here is how a witness described it:

"The houses, streets, bridges and people, plunged in darkness only a second earlier, were suddenly illumined by sinister flames. Dense clouds of black smoke rose slowly to the sky, filling the air with an acrid smell. Fire brigades, self-defence groups and thousands of workers fought the fires in spite of fatigue after a full working day. Their efforts tamed the flames gradually, and the fires died. But the Badayev warehouses, where the food was stocked, continued to burn. The fire there raged for more than 5 hours."<sup>1</sup> The Soviet troops, helped actively by the population of the city, succeeded in hurling the nazis back.

The nazis failed to capture Leningrad, but blockaded it from the land. Began a heroic defence, which lasted more than 900 days. Defying the hunger and hardships of the tight siege, heedless of air raids and artillery bombardments, the Soviet Army and the gallant city population, backed by the whole Soviet people, stood their ground manfully.

In the south, the German juggernaut rolled on. The numerically small Soviet Seaboard Army, supported by the Black Sea Fleet and the local population, pinned down and devitalised 18 enemy divisions in the battle for Odesa between August 10 and October 16, 1941. Late in September, the Germans captured Kiev, crossed the Dnieper and drove a deep wedge into the Ukraine, emerging at the approaches to the Crimea. This raised the curtain on the heroic Soviet defence of the Crimean Peninsula.

The initial advantages gained by the Germans in their southward drive deep into Soviet territory were still operative, in spite of the heroism and devotion shown by the men of the Soviet Army. The German Command sought

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<sup>1</sup> Д. В. Павлов, *Ленинград в блокаде*, Воениздат, 1958, стр. 25.

to make the most of these advantages in an assault on Moscow. It expected to crush Soviet resistance and win the war before the winter set in.

The Moscow offensive was devised by the High Command of German Land Forces as part of the general war plan. Jodl, who was an enthusiastic advocate of this blueprint, wrote on August 10, 1941, that "all other tempting operational possibilities by neighbouring army groups drop into the background when compared with the main goal of annihilating the strong enemy force faced by Army Group Centre and of capturing Moscow".<sup>1</sup>

Germany's political and military leaders knew that Moscow was of crucial importance. It was the capital of the Soviet Union, the nations' standard-bearer in the struggle of liberation. It was the people's pride and hope. Moscow industries were vital to the Soviet economy. The city was a key communication centre, and a major seat of culture. Weighing all these factors, the German generals believed that the fall of Moscow would have a decisive bearing on the outcome of the war.

Having decided to attack Moscow, the nazis regrouped their forces. The bulk of Army Group Centre, consisting of more than 80 divisions, of which 23 were panzer and motorised divisions, was massed against the Soviet capital. Air support was furnished by the nazi Second Air Force, consisting of more than 1,000 planes. The Soviet Command could muster about half this number of men and armaments, for the losses suffered in summer 1941 had greatly depleted the Soviet Army.

The fascist Command intended to envelop Moscow from north and south by means of a series of powerful panzer and motorised assaults via Kalinin and Tula, while infantry formations were to advance frontally from the west.

There was no doubt in nazi minds that the Moscow offensive would succeed. When it opened on October 2, 1941,

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<sup>1</sup> D. Mendelsohn, *Die Nürnberger Dokumenten*, S. 40.

Hitler said in a speech that "a premise has at last been created for the final massive blow that will destroy our enemy before winter comes. All humanly possible preparations have been completed. This time the preparations followed a clear-cut plan and proceeded step by step, in order to manoeuvre our opponent into a spot where we can deliver the death blow. Today opens the final big and decisive battle of the year."

On October 10 the Senior Quartermaster of the German Army issued instructions as to what barracks and buildings were to be used in Moscow and its environs to quarter the German troops. Goebbels, the propaganda boss, ordered all Berlin newspapers to reserve space in their October 12 issue for "last-minute reports" about the fall of Moscow.

The Nazi generals had a plan ready to demolish the city. At a conference in the headquarters of Army Group Centre, Hitler said:

"The city is to be surrounded. No Russian soldier, no civilian, man, woman or child, must leave the city. Every attempt to do so is to be frustrated by force. Preparations have been made to flood Moscow and its environs by means of giant installations, and to drown it in water. Where Moscow stands today, there will be a vast sea to hide the metropolis of the Russian people forever from the gaze of the civilised world."<sup>1</sup>

The German advance was quite successful at first. The situation grew more ominous every hour. Moscow was in peril of a direct enemy assault. In the north, enemy tanks and motorised units seized Kalinin, in the south they captured Orel and moved on to Tula.

The German troops fought fiercely, despite heavy losses, but the Soviet soldiers hung on with striking tenacity. The feat of the 28 soldiers of the 1077th Regiment of the fa-

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<sup>1</sup> Fabian von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler*, Europa Verlag, Zürich, 1946, S. 48.

mous 316th Division under General I. V. Panfilov has gone down in history. They did not flinch in face of 50 enemy tanks at Dubosekovo, destroyed 18 of them and clung to their position. At the village of Strokovo, north of Volokolamsk Highway, 22 sappers under Jr. Lt. P. I. Fristov and Political Instructor M. A. Pavlov held up 20 enemy tanks and a battalion of nazi infantry for a full day. Countless other examples of the devotion shown by Moscow's defenders, of mass heroism, could be cited here.

On October 19, 1941, the Soviet Defence Committee announced a state of siege in Moscow and the adjacent areas. Some of Moscow's factories and most of the government offices were evacuated, but the Defence Committee and Supreme Command Headquarters stayed in the capital.

In the latter part of October the enemy advance on Moscow was blocked some 100 kilometres west of Moscow and in the Tula area after heavy fighting. The Soviet troops prevented the enemy from straightening his lines and enveloped the flanks of Army Group Centre, compelling the Germans to expend considerable strength on defensive actions and protection. Precious time was won to bolster Moscow's defences and to mass strategic reserves in its environs.

It took supreme courage, combat skill and immense willpower to withstand the ferocious German onslaught. The Soviet troops stood their ground. Moscow's population pitched in might and main. More than 500,000 citizens came out to build fortifications in and around Moscow. Eleven volunteer divisions and 87 combat battalions were formed. Partisans were active in the rear of the Moscow-bound enemy forces. More than 40 partisan groups and underground Party organisations operated in Moscow's environs captured by the enemy.

The first partisan detachments were headed by Party workers, such as T. Bumashkov, N. Popudrenko, I. Yakovenko, F. Korotkov, heads of local Soviets, such as S. Kov-

pak, S. Korneyev, etc., veteran Bolsheviks and veterans of the Civil War, such as P. Kuksenyuk, V. Korzh and G. Linkov, and collective-farm chairmen, factory directors and many other Communists, Komsomols and patriots. Railway engineer Konstantin Zaslouov showed great skill as the underground leader of the Orsha partisan brigade. V. Zebolov, who had lost both his hands, was a shrewd partisan scout. Partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, an 18-year-old Moscow Komsomol member, refused to kneel before her fascist torturers when captured, and died a glorious death. The partisan movement spread throughout the environs of Moscow and other areas temporarily captured by the nazis, and was a striking testimonial to the popular nature of the Great Patriotic War.

The Moscow Communist Party Committee took charge of the mobilisation of Moscow civilians. Its appeal to Muscovites read:

“Moscow is in peril, but we will fight bitterly and tenaciously, to our last drop of blood. Let every one of you, whatever post you occupy and whatever job you do, consider yourself a soldier of the army defending Moscow from the fascist invaders. May all who are helping to build fortifications know that their labour is adding to Moscow’s defence. May all who are working at the factories know that their labour is contributing to the defence of our homeland and of Moscow. May the soldiers of the Red Army and the men of the combat battalions know that the nation has given them arms to defend their country and their people to their dying breath.”<sup>1</sup>

The first nazi Moscow offensive foundered. The German Army brass was in tantrums. Colonel-General Heinz Guderian, who was in command of the Second Panzer Group, reported on November 6, 1941:

“It is a torture for our troops and a disaster for our cause, because our opponent is winning time and we, with

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<sup>1</sup> *Kommunist*, No. 17, 1956, p. 34.

all our plans, face the inevitable prospect of winter warfare... An excellent opportunity of dealing a powerful blow is slipping out of our hands, and I don't know whether we'll ever have another."<sup>1</sup> The Nazi leadership was deeply alarmed. On October 25 Hitler told Ciano that if he had known "what was in store he might never have started at all."<sup>2</sup>

In desperation, the Germans decided to mount a second offensive against Moscow.

Tippelskirch reports that the commander of Army Group Centre was strongly in favour of continuing the Moscow offensive. He hoped to break the Soviet resistance. The High Command of Land Forces did not wish to forego a final attempt either.<sup>3</sup>

Fierce battles were fought on land and in the air. The Germans sent their best pilots, seasoned in air battles over Western Europe, to raid Moscow.

The first air raid on Moscow was made in the evening of July 21, 1941. It was followed by many more at regular intervals. The raids grew in number as the Nazi offensive developed. But Moscow's anti-aircraft defences were highly effective. Between July and December 1941 Moscow repelled 132 air raids and shot down 1,035 Nazi aircraft.

Lashed on by the approach of winter, the German Command opened its second "general" offensive on Moscow on November 16. Note the grounds given for this offensive in the order of the German Supreme Army Commander:

"Considering the importance of imminent events, especially the winter and the poor supply of the army in materiel, I order the capture of Moscow, the capital, at any price and at the earliest possible date."

This time the German Command massed 51 divisions, including 21 Panzer and motorised divisions, for a lunge at Moscow along a front stretching from the Moscow Sea

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<sup>1</sup> H. Guderian, *Reminiscences of a Soldier*, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Ciano's *Diplomatic Papers*, London, 1948, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> Tippelskirch, *History of the Second World War*, p. 200.



to Yefremov. The rest of Army Group Centre was employed as cover for the flanks of the assault force. In 20 days and nights of bitter fighting the German troops advanced 80-90 kilometres, flinging back the Soviet Army north of Moscow to the Moskva-Volga Canal, Krasnaya Polyana and Kryukovo, and south of Moscow to Kashira. At some points the German fascist troops were 25-30 kilometres from Moscow proper. The brunt of the German blow fell on the Soviet troops under Generals K. K. Rokossovsky and L. A. Govorov.

The offensive exhausted Germany's resources. The nazis sustained immense losses in men and materiel. German reserves dwindled almost to nil. The badly mauled fascist force held a front about 1,200 kilometres long, with its flanks but scantily covered.

## 2

Towards the close of November the Soviet Command began preparing a counter-offensive at Moscow.

The High Command decided to strike at the flanks of the enemy north and south of the capital, and to follow up with a westward drive. The left wing of the Kalinin Front under General I. S. Konev was to join in the assault on the northern flank of the nazi Army Group Centre, operating hand in hand with the right flank of the Western Front. The South-Western Front, under Marshal S. K. Timoshenko, was to open an offensive on its right wing and thereby assist the troops of the Western Front in smashing the southern flank of Army Group Centre. The operation was directed by General G. K. Zhukov.

The Soviet Army was short of arms, munitions, fuel and other materiel. Factories were being moved to the rear from the evacuated areas, the national economy was being converted to war production and it was scarcely possible as yet to make up for the losses sustained during the initial retreat. The shortage of weapons made it doubly

difficult to wrest the strategic initiative from the Germans.

The Soviet Command decided to take advantage of the exhaustion shown by the enemy, and of his lack of tactical and operational reserves. The tenacity of the Soviet troops and the large reserves engaged were decisive in the counter-offensive.

German generals testify that the Soviet counter-offensive caught them unawares. Tippelskirch writes that "the German army, which had strained all its forces and was neither morally nor materially prepared for a war of manoeuvre in winter, was caught off its guard by the Russian counter-offensive. The impact of the Russian blow and the scale of the counter-offensive were so great that they shook up the front along a considerable frontage and nearly brought about a complete disaster."<sup>1</sup>

The first to strike were the armies on the left wing of the Kalinin Front, followed next day by the main forces of the Western Front and the armies on the right wing of the South-Western Front. The counter-offensive crashed through the extended line of defence along the flanks of the northern and southern nazi groups and created the threat of encirclement. The enemy withdrew hastily.

The Moscow counterblow and the counterblows at Tikhvin and Rostov developed into a general Soviet offensive, spearheaded towards the centre. It gained its greatest momentum in the western direction. Crushing desperate enemy resistance, Soviet troops advanced all of 400 kilometres at some points and dealt a smashing defeat to the nazi Army Group Centre. The enemy abandoned a large amount of armour and guns in the battlefield and sustained heavy losses in men. The Soviet Army approached Velikiye Luki, Velizh, Byely, Rzhev, Gzhatsk and Vyazma.

"The sword of retribution was drawn,"<sup>2</sup> Tippelskirch

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<sup>1</sup> Tippelskirch, *History of the Second World War*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

observes mournfully. The German defeat at Moscow had an immense historic impact. The Soviet Army had fought with miraculous valour to turn the tables on the enemy. Its strategic counter-offensive revealed the splendid qualities of its personnel and the skill of its officers. Preparations for the counter-offensive had been thorough and efficient. The Supreme Command had ingeniously combined a strong westward thrust with strokes at other points, concerting the efforts of its troops all along the front. Soviet morale was very high. The Soviet soldier displayed unexampled tenacity and courage. It was in the Battle for Moscow that Soviet Guard formations first came into being.

The German *blitzkrieg* had obviously foundered. The Soviet Army smashed the myth of German fascist invincibility. The U.S. and British generals, who had always revered German military skill and were among the first to believe the Nazi troops "invincible", now saw the legend dissolve. The anti-Soviet plans of the American and British reactionaries lay in shambles. The national-liberation movement of the peoples had fresh encouragement.

The German defeat at Moscow told quite markedly on the subsequent course of the war. "The outcome of this winter's campaign," wrote Tippleskirch, "had disastrous consequences for the further prosecution of the war."<sup>1</sup> Churchill said, "the Russian resistance broke the power of the German armies."<sup>2</sup>

The German Command tried to gloss over the true causes of the defeat and to conceal its scale. The failure was explained away by the harshness of the winter, which had impeded its advance and allegedly favoured the Red Army. This tale, however, did not carry much weight, not even among Germany's allies. The Italian Foreign Minister, Ciano, wrote in his diary:

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<sup>1</sup> Tippleskirch, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 352.

"The vicissitudes of the war, particularly the recent ones, have convinced Hitler that Russia, that ocean of land, may have innumerable surprises in store."<sup>1</sup>

For all this, authors inimical to the Soviet Union still like to blame the German defeat in the Battle for Moscow on the severe Russian winter. Take *A Soldier's Story* by U.S. General Omar N. Bradley, who was in command of the European Theatre and headed the U.S. General Staff after 1949. "Outside the gates of Moscow," he writes, "where the German armies had been drawn up on the edge of triumph, a bitter Russian winter suddenly paralysed the Wehrmacht."<sup>2</sup>

References to the bitter Russian winter are both groundless and unconvincing. The fact that the German troops were unprepared for winter warfare reveals the weakness of the German High Command and its inability to consider factors liable to arise in the war against the Soviet Union.

The nazis did not know how to neutralise the inevitable consequences of their Moscow defeat. Arvid Fredborg, a bourgeois historian, tells of the reaction in Berlin to news of the nazi defeat at Moscow. "Unrest grew among the people," he writes. "The pessimists remembered Napoleon's war with Russia, and all the literature about *La Grande Armée* suddenly had a marked revival. The fortune-tellers busied themselves with Napoleon's fate, and there was a boom in astrology."<sup>3</sup>

The unrest spread to the German generals, who had until then agreed heart and soul with Hitler and his plans. After war's end, many of them sought to vindicate the fascist imperialist strategists by shifting the blame for the defeat entirely on Hitler who, they charged, ignored their opinions. But this is not true. The Second World War was planned and conducted by the German generals jointly with Hitler.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, New York, 1951, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Arvid Fredborg, *Behind the Steel Wall*, London, 1944, pp. 60-61.

After the German defeat at Moscow Hitler reshuffled his generals. "Of all its influences," said Fuller, the British war historian, about the Battle for Moscow, "those on the German Army and its Command were the most disastrous. The first never recovered the vigour it lost, and, in the eyes of the world, it was no longer the invincible army. The second was literally annihilated.... Such a pogrom of generals had not been seen since the Battle of the Marne."<sup>1</sup>

On April 27, 1942, the Reichstag passed a law giving Hitler full powers to remove officials.<sup>2</sup>

The outcome of the Moscow Battle added to the contradictions within the fascist coalition—primarily between Japan and Germany, Italy and Germany, and also between Germany's satellites and the German nazis. The thrashing which the Germans received at Moscow averted a Turkish attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Japan postponed its plans of war against the U.S.S.R. to 1942. Its leadership had already been inclined to do so when the German offensive on Moscow was still only beginning. On October 4, 1941, Ott, the German Ambassador to Tokyo, reported to Berlin that a Japanese military assault on the Soviet Far Eastern forces, which were still very strong, was not likely until the coming spring. "The tenacity shown by the Soviet Union in the war against Germany," Ott reported, "leads me to believe that a Japanese assault, if begun in August or September, would not pry open the door to Siberia this year."<sup>3</sup>

On November 17, 1941, Japan officially warned Berlin that it had postponed its attack on the U.S.S.R. until 1942. The Soviet victory at Moscow thus squashed the designs of international reaction, which expected to destroy or weaken the Soviet Union by simultaneous blows from West and East.

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<sup>1</sup> Fuller, *The Second World War*, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *The Goebbels Diaries*, London, 1948, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

Soviet prestige soared. The freedom-loving peoples glimpsed a realistic possibility of Germany's downfall. The heroic resistance of the Soviet people was an inspiring example for patriots in other countries, stimulating their struggle against the fascist "new order".

The "new order" was no more than the old order of imperialist colonial enslavement. The "new" brought into it by the German imperialists during the war was its application to European countries and the macabre combination of colonial enslavement with the physical annihilation of part of the conquered population. It was only natural that this "new order" should be pushed through under the anti-Communist standard, because it was the Communists who always fought for the freedom and national independence of their country against imperialist oppression. A reactionary who had given considerable support to Hitler's cutthroats, the Bulgarian Premier Filow, said that "the destruction of communism is the most important prerequisite of a new order in Europe".<sup>1</sup>

Apologists of imperialism in the U.S. and Britain were quite favourably inclined towards the "new order" both during and after the war. Arnold Toynbee, the reactionary British historian and faithful servant of the monopolies, suggests that Hitler's "experience" should be taken into account in founding a "world state", based on armed force. He urges an Anglo-Saxon "new order" for Europe and the rest of the world.

It was the German occupation troops, the terror machine of the nazis and the quislings that constituted the "pillars" on which the "new order" rested in the nazi-occupied countries.

Most of the traitors were of the propertied classes—big bourgeois, landlords, reactionary government officials, monarchist officers and a section of the Right-wing Socialist leaders. The fight against traitors and collaborators

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<sup>1</sup> Filow, Bogdan, *Bulgariens Weg*, Sofia, 1942, S. 27.

was headed by the working class, which acted hand in hand with the peasantry, the intellectuals and the patriotic element among the petty and middle bourgeoisie. This gradually produced the alignment of class forces characteristic of a popular democratic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution.

The struggle for liberation in the occupied countries was headed by the Communist and Workers' Parties who, unlike other parties, withstood the trials of the war and proved themselves to be parties of true patriots and devoted champions of freedom, democracy and national independence.

The Soviet victory at Moscow ushered in a new stage in the liberation movement of the European peoples. Well-organised, close-knit partisan groups appeared, which operated according to a thorough and effective plan.

Early in 1942 a Fatherland Front headed by Communists was founded in Bulgaria. Partisan detachments appeared. The Fatherland Front adopted a programme envisaging the country's liberation from the nazis and the fascist monarchist dictatorship. It called for Bulgaria's joining the anti-Hitler coalition and for the establishment of a people's democratic regime.

In Greece, on the initiative of the Communists, patriots founded the EAM, the National-Liberation Front, whose military organisation, the ELAS (Greek People's Army of Liberation), waged a guerrilla war against the German invaders.

The Polish Workers' Party was founded in January 1942. Its Central Committee appealed to the people to join forces in a national front for a free and independent Poland. The appeal said:

"Nobody can destroy a nation that has given the world Copernicus, Mickiewicz, Chopin and Marie Sklodowska. Nobody can conquer a nation which has fought on all bat-

tlefields for the freedom of nations and written in blood on its banners the motto, 'For your freedom and ours'.<sup>1</sup>

The Gwardia Ludowa, People's Guard, organised on the initiative of the Polish Workers' Party, started partisan warfare against the German fascist aggressor. "The Polish Workers' Party," said Boleslaw Bierut, "is the foremost organised militant detachment of the working class, the advance force of the people in the grimmest period of its history. The P.W.P. was the first party to launch a determined struggle against the nazi occupation."<sup>2</sup>

The Polish partisans acted first near Radom, in the Kielce and Lublin departments (voyvodships). In and around Lublin the Polish partisans operated jointly with Soviet partisans, and their operations were large-scale and effective. Through 1942 and 1943 the Gwardia Ludowa engaged the nazis in 237 battles, blew up 127 nazi trains and demolished 36 railway stations.

The partisan movement gained momentum in Czechoslovakia too. A large partisan force that soon grew into a partisan brigade and was given the name of Jan Žižka operated in the Moravská Ostrava area. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia organised an anti-war campaign in the Slovak army, which the Hitlerites wanted to use against the U.S.S.R. Mutinies broke out in the Slovak regiments. Slovak soldiers refused to fight against the Soviet Army and escaped to the partisans.

An armed struggle broke out in the Transcarpathian Ukraine. The first partisan detachments had appeared around Uzhgorod late in 1941. They consisted of local saltmine workers. By the summer of 1942 their force grew to more than 10,000.

The partisan movement in Albania expanded in early 1942. Very soon that little country had 40 partisan groups with over 10,000 fighters.

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<sup>1</sup> *W 10 rocznice powstania PPR*, str. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, str. 21.



The partisan movement in Yugoslavia gradually developed into an armed uprising. The national-liberation war in Yugoslavia was a type of popular revolution. There emerged a united liberation front. Representatives of the Yugoslav people assembled on November 26-27, 1942, in the liberated Croatian town of Bihač and founded the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation, the first parliament of new Yugoslavia.

The Resistance Movement in Europe was a great help to the Soviet Union. It engaged more than 600,000 German troops in the Balkans alone.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union sent assistance and comfort to the Resistance fighters. The ruling quarters of the United States and Britain, on the other hand, co-operated with the anti-popular émigré governments. It was their aim to capture the vantage points in Europe held at the time by the fascists, which they hoped to do with the help of the reactionary ruling cliques ensconced in London and elsewhere.

The United States stepped up the operations of their Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a seat of espionage and sabotage against the freedom-loving peoples, whose headquarters in Europe were located in Berne, Switzerland. The OSS was headed by Allen Dulles, brother of John Foster Dulles. During the war it spent huge sums of money and gave away vast quantities of arms to subvert the Resistance Movement.

The British imperialists had similar organisations. While banding together against the national-liberation movement, the intelligence agencies of the United States and Britain were continuously at each other's throats in the scramble for influence in post-war Europe.

A special department of the Office of Strategic Services handled subversive activities against the working-class movement. A similar department was created in

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<sup>1</sup> Görlitz, *Der zweite Weltkrieg*, op. cit., B. 2, S. 63.

Britain with the co-operation of some Labour Party leaders.

The American and British spy centres operating against the national-liberation movement pursued the following objectives:

1. To take advantage of the war in order to plant agents in the European anti-fascist organisations, especially the Communist Parties, trade unions and national front bodies, and to paralyse their activities.

2. To suppress the popular movement by all possible methods, not short of armed struggle jointly with the nazis. To form armed detachments for this purpose from the remnants of the former armed forces of the countries concerned.

3. After Germany's liberation from Hitler, to ensure through their agents and through armed intervention the establishment of reactionary pro-American and pro-British regimes in the European countries, Germany included.

4. To organise the collection of intelligence about the Soviet Union and its army, and about the democratic and working-class movement in the European countries.

The various émigré governments were used for this purpose. A fierce struggle ensued between the United States and Britain for influence over these governments. The United States gradually elbowed out the British, although for some years many émigré governments showed a distinct preference for the latter.

The governments of the United States and Britain and the various émigré groups used a variety of forms and methods to combat the liberation movement. Much was done through traitors and through co-operation with the Gestapo.

Special organisations were founded to spy on patriots and to deliver them to the nazi occupation authorities. These (the intelligence brigade in Poland, the Balli Kombëtar in Albania, Mihajlovič's chetniks in Yugoslavia, etc.) were generously supplied by the United States and

Britain with agents, money and arms. Special units were formed by the U.S. and British intelligence agencies to exterminate patriots and to pounce on partisan detachments from the rear. Some of the finest men in the occupied countries, who fought arms in hand for freedom and independence, were thus destroyed. The émigré governments and their agents hated their own peoples more than the fascist oppressors, to whom they were attracted by their sense of class solidarity.

Mihajlovič's chetniks in Yugoslavia gradually became part of the occupation forces. Yet the émigré government kept calling them the Yugoslav Home Army, and the Yugoslav king in London was formally their supreme commander.

A united front composed of the occupation forces, local reactionary cliques, their émigré counterparts, Trotskyists and other traitors, and hirelings of the imperialist U.S. and British spy agencies thus emerged to combat the national-liberation movements in all the nazi-occupied countries.

The Soviet Union was the only country to help and support the national-liberation forces. Soviet policy conformed as always with the aspirations of the peoples and the attitude of progressives abroad. Support rendered by the Soviet Union and other progressive quarters to the liberation movement in the occupied countries was an effective means of weakening Hitler's rear, depriving Germany of reserves, liberating the peoples from the nazi yoke and rallying them to the struggle against the invaders.

The German-fascist armies were thus exposed not only externally to Soviet striking power, but also internally to the striking power of the armed patriotic forces in the occupied countries. Support of the liberation movement tended to strengthen the leadership of the proletariat and its Communist vanguard in the struggle against the occupation forces and collaborators, paving the way for post-war liberation.

The Soviet treatment of the liberation movement in the occupied countries was mirrored in the speeches of Party and Government leaders and in a series of documents. One such document was the communication issued on December 18, 1942, by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on Albanian independence. The communication extended moral support to the Albanian patriots and the Resistance Movement in other countries. It said:

"The Soviet Union fully sympathises with the courageous struggle for liberation waged by the Albanian patriots against the Italian invaders, and does not recognise any claims of Italian imperialism to Albanian territory, and wishes to see Albania free from the yoke of the fascist invaders and its independence restored. . . . The question of the future state system of Albania is her own domestic affair and must be decided by the Albanian people themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The statement obliged the U.S. and British governments, which were informed of it beforehand, to clarify their attitude. British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden professed "sympathy" for the Albanian people and said not a word about their liberation struggle and Britain's attitude toward it.<sup>2</sup> U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull's statement was worded quite differently. It said that the efforts of the various partisan units operating against the common enemy in Albania were admirable and commendable.<sup>3</sup>

The reference to "various" partisan units in Albania was deliberate. The U.S. Government implied the "Balli Kombëtar" gangs formed by the imperialists, which really operated against the Albanian people. The U.S. statement was meant, among other things, to encourage the anti-popular forces in Albania, who were in effect helping the German-fascist invaders.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, December 18, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

In December 1941 the Soviet Union signed a declaration of friendship and mutual assistance with the Polish Government. The Soviet Union pledged its strong friendship to the fraternal Polish people in its hour of trial. In June 1942 the Soviet Government reiterated its wish "to see France liberated and able once again to occupy in Europe and in the world her place as a great democratic and anti-Hitlerite power."<sup>1</sup>

Soviet foreign policy coupled with Soviet military successes enhanced the sincere friendship and respect which the working people of all countries had for the U.S.S.R.

### 3

Soviet foreign policy was largely devoted to the consolidation of the anti-fascist coalition. This line was prompted by the interests of the anti-fascist struggle and the desire to speed the collapse of the aggressor states.

In December 1941 Anthony Eden visited Moscow. He discussed the second front, post-war peace arrangements and an Anglo-Soviet treaty.

The splendid Soviet war effort and the defeat suffered by the Germans at Moscow strengthened the anti-fascist coalition. On January 1, 1942, twenty-six countries, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and China among them, issued a declaration pledging to employ all their resources against the fascist countries and promising not to sign any separate armistice or peace with the enemy countries. However, the Soviet Union still bore the brunt of the war.

The Soviet victory at Moscow marked a radical change in the fortunes of war. Had Germany been prevented from manoeuvring its strategic reserves as freely as it did, the turning point would have materialised. A second front in Europe, that is, an Anglo-American landing in

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. I, p. 177.

Western Europe and an assault on Germany in strategic co-operation with the Soviet Army, was absolutely essential.

The masses in the United States and Britain, conscious of the urgent need for a second front, clamoured for it. "The resistance of the Soviet people has aroused a mass movement of solidarity of a really remarkable character," wrote Harry Pollitt, the leader of the British Communist Party, and added, "It has taken forms of activity never before witnessed in Britain."<sup>1</sup>

The successful Soviet offensive in the winter of 1941-1942 had created a favourable situation for a second front in Europe in 1942. The French Resistance Movement had grown considerably, which was another factor favourable for the second front. The French patriots could have facilitated the Anglo-American landing in France and assisted in the fighting. But the rulers of the United States and Britain resisted. Hermann Rauschning, a West German journalist, notes that the British and U.S. objective in the Second World War was to bleed Russia, in order "to make it powerless for decades".<sup>2</sup> The U.S. and British leadership refused to co-operate with the European partisans. They said help from partisan units was unacceptable because "the Resistance Movement engendered the spirit of disobedience and sowed seeds of future civil war".<sup>3</sup>

Bent on fortifying the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition and settling the question of agreed operations against the enemy, and, last but not least, hastening the conclusion of an Anglo-Soviet treaty delayed by the British, the Soviet Government suggested in April 1942 that its Foreign Minister should visit London. The suggestion was accepted, and the trip extended to Washington as well. The May negotiations concerned the opening of a second front in

<sup>1</sup> Harry Pollitt, "The Communist Party and the Fight For Unity", *Labour Monthly*, No. 1, 1942, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann Rauschning, *Ist Friede noch möglich?* Heidelberg, 1953, pp. 94-95.

<sup>3</sup> Liddel Hart, *Défence de l'Europe*, p. 65.

Europe in 1942. The idea hit a snag. The U.S. and British governments went out of their way to justify a postponement. They were guided by the notion that a strong ally was dangerous, that strengthening that ally was not in their interests, that if the ally, nevertheless, grew stronger, then measures should be taken to weaken him. Ralph Ingersoll, the American journalist, wrote that the "profitable percentage on Russian lives lay in the fact that the longer the Russians fought, the weaker the Russians would be at the end of the war".<sup>1</sup>

In April 1942 Harry Hopkins and General Marshall of the U.S.A. and spokesmen of the British Government and war command reached the decision to refrain from an invasion of Northern France unless a desperate situation arose on the Russian front or the situation in Western Europe was critical for Germany.<sup>2</sup>

This accord was soon reaffirmed in a telegraphic exchange between Churchill and Roosevelt, who agreed to keep their armed forces "in reserve". Speaking to his aides, President Roosevelt compared the U.S. and British armed forces to benchwarmers in a football match. "Before the game is so far advanced that our blockers are tired," he said, "we got to get in there for the touchdown. We'll be fresh."<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. and British leaders told the Soviet Union that they were not as yet strong enough to open a second front. They promised solemnly, however, to open it in Europe in 1942. The promise was worded with precision. What is more, the British Government handed the Soviet Union a memorandum on June 10, 1942, in which it said that over 1,000,000 British and American men and officers would be involved in the landing. The memorandum stressed that much would depend on the situation, but that

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, New York, 1946, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York, Harper, 1948, pp. 418-19, 423.

<sup>3</sup> Elliot Roosevelt, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

“provided it appears sound and sensible we shall not hesitate to put our plans into effect”.<sup>1</sup>

The Anglo-Soviet Treaty of alliance against Hitler Germany and its associates in Europe, and of co-operation and mutual assistance after the war was signed in London on May 26, 1942. The treaty was an upshot of the sincere Soviet effort to fortify the anti-Hitler coalition and establish lasting relations of friendship between the peoples of Britain and the Soviet Union. It accorded with the vital interests of the two countries and, coupled with the later Franco-Soviet Treaty, laid the foundation of European security. It was a fresh triumph for the Soviet policy of international co-operation.

The Anglo-Soviet Treaty consisted of two parts. The first part contained commitments for the duration of war—to render each other military and other assistance and support of every kind, to refrain from separate negotiations and to conclude no armistice or peace treaty with the enemy. The second part of the Treaty contained undertakings for the prevention of new aggression and for mutual post-war assistance against aggression over a term of 20 years. The Treaty envisaged joint measures against any new German aggression and mutual assistance, including armed help, in the event aggression was renewed. The signatories also undertook to refrain from territorial acquisitions, from interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and from forming coalitions or alliances aimed against either of the signatories. They pledged to render each other economic assistance.

Yet the British Government insisted on the reservation that the commitments assumed by the signatories may, by mutual agreement, be considered redundant after the establishment of a United Nations Organisation. Soon after the U.N. was organised, British Foreign Minister Bevin took advantage of this reservation in 1946 to go back on

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, London, 1951, p. 305.



Britain's obligations, and thus violated the condition of *mutual* agreement. He declared Britain free from all obligations save those of the United Nations Charter.

A Soviet-American agreement was signed in Washington on June 11, 1942, on the principles of mutual aid in the prosecution of the war against aggression. The agreement governed the economic and financial relations of its signatories pertaining to reciprocal deliveries of commodities and meant that American supplies specified under the Lend-Lease Act would also go to the U.S.S.R. The text of the agreement was identical to the U.S.-British agreement signed on February 23, 1942. However, though identical in wording, there was a world of difference between the two. To the U.S. ruling quarters the lend-lease system was a vehicle of expansion, a means of economic and political enslavement and an instrument for acquiring strategic military bases in foreign territory. None of this could apply to Soviet-American relations, because the Soviet Government frustrated every expansionist move of the U.S. monopolies and stood guard over the country's national independence and sovereign rights.

But the conclusion of the Soviet-American agreement was another unquestionable triumph of Soviet foreign policy. It dealt a blow to the American ultra-reactionaries, who opposed deliveries of supplies to the Soviet Union, and was an admission on the part of the United States that the Soviet-German front was the decisive theatre of the war.

It was through untiring Soviet efforts that the anti-Hitler coalition took final shape, dealing a new blow to nazi diplomacy and scotching the intrigues of the U.S. and British reactionaries.

By and large, the U.S. and British ruling circles welcomed the anti-Hitler coalition. They knew nothing but a coalition like that could ensure them victory over Germany and Japan, their chief rivals and claimants to world domination. They thought it would help them preserve their

positions in Europe and elsewhere, and meant to take advantage of the heroic Soviet war effort to fortify their influence in the world and extend the sphere of their expansionist policy.

The anti-fascist coalition was of immense importance for the Soviet Union and all the progressive democratic forces, for it was a stepping stone to rapid victory.

The coalition meant failure for the imperialists who schemed to isolate the Soviet Union internationally. Far from being isolated, the Soviet Union assumed a position of leadership in the powerful anti-fascist bloc, and extended its international relations. It was the fascist aggressors who were internationally isolated.

The coalition was a setback for the U.S. and British extremists. The imperialist reactionaries had less room for manoeuvre. The enemies of the Soviet Union within the governments of the United States and Britain could no longer act in the open, but the masses, and especially the working class, gained the opportunity to express their support of the Soviet Union and to study the experience and achievements of the Soviet state. The anti-fascist coalition helped the American and British working class to exert a direct influence on the policy of their governments in external and internal affairs. Diplomatic relations between the Soviet and the capitalist governments of the anti-fascist coalition expanded. Friendly contacts developed between Soviet public organisations and working-class, trade-union and other democratic organisations abroad.

A mass movement for working-class unity brought about a rapprochement between the British Trades Union Congress and the Soviet trade unions. An Anglo-Soviet Trade-Union Committee was formed on the proposal of the Central Trade Union Council of the U.S.S.R. in October 1941. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the efforts of Soviet and British trade unions for victory over Hitler Germany and to support the liberation struggle in the occupied countries.

The working people of the United States and Britain fought with redoubled vigour for democratic freedoms at home. This compelled the American and British governments to restrict the activities of domestic fascist organisations.

The anti-fascist coalition was graphic evidence that countries with different social systems could co-operate to mutual advantage. Soviet foreign policy, guided by Lenin's thesis that international co-operation was possible between countries with different socio-economic systems, had thus put the idea to the test of practice in the grim environment of war. The coalition was a voluntary alliance based on the principle of equality, equal rights and mutual respect.

## Chapter Nine

### WAR BREAKS OUT IN THE PACIFIC

#### I

The inception of the Pacific seat of imperialist contradictions dates back to the early period of imperialism. The contradictions kept developing, and grew particularly sharp between Japan and the United States, the two claimants to Pacific domination.

"We are witnessing a growing conflict, a growing clash between America and Japan," wrote Lenin, "because a dogged struggle has been going on between Japan and America for many years over the Pacific Ocean and the possession of its shores. The diplomatic, economic and commercial history of the Pacific and its seaboard is full of absolutely definite indications that the conflict is growing and making war between America and Japan inevitable."<sup>1</sup>

The contest between the aggressive interests of imperialist Japan, the United States and Britain in the Far East produced a seat of war.

Paradoxical as this may sound, in spite of their bitter imperialist contradictions with Japan, the ruling quarters of the United States and Britain had aided and abetted Japanese aggression in the Far East. They had hoped Japan

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<sup>1</sup> В. И. Ленин, *Сочинения*, т. 31, стр. 435.

would turn against the Soviet Union and the democratic forces of China.

The Japanese, for their part, made the most of the situation. They invaded Manchuria, and in 1937 overran other sections of China, assaulting the positions there of their imperialist rivals, the United States and Britain. The American and British governments did not lose hope, however, that Japanese aggression would ultimately assume the direction they wished.

Professor Treat, of Stanford University, said of Japan's aggression in China that the powers should entertain nothing but gratitude for it. Hearst, the well-known U.S. publisher, said in 1935 it would be quite in order for Japan, as a stabilising force in the Far East, to control China.

In their efforts to provoke a Japanese aggression against the Soviet Union, the rulers of Britain, and especially of the United States were not only tolerant of Japan's conduct, but thought it most propitious. General Douglas MacArthur, top U.S. commander in the Philippines, said Japan had its chance after Hitler's invasion of the Netherlands and the crushing defeat of France. If it had lunged southward at that time, he said, it would have won its victory cheaply.<sup>1</sup>

An objective analysis will show why Japan did not assail its imperialist adversaries, Britain and the United States, in 1940. The hands of the Japanese aggressors were tied by the Soviet policy of peace and by Soviet economic and defensive power. They had no choice but to postpone their plans of aggression until Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

One more reason why the Japanese were unable to act was the heroic resistance of the Chinese people, which diverted a considerable portion of Japanese strength. Chiang Kai-shek, a menial of the American imperialists, knew this very well. He was willing to surrender if this

<sup>1</sup> Hallett Abend, *Ramparts of the Pacific*, New York, 1942, p. 183.

would direct Japan's aggression against the Soviet Union. His treacherous attack on the 4th Route People's Liberation Army in January 1941 with a force of 80,000 Kuomintang bayonets was a step in that very direction.<sup>1</sup> But his act of treason set off an outburst of public indignation so great that Chiang's attempt to prepare the ground for surrender fell through.

Unofficial Japanese-American negotiations to adjust the basic contradictions in the Pacific Ocean opened in January 1941. Japan was represented at the talks by Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto, leader of the fascist Black Dragon Society, who conversed at length with responsible officials of the U.S. State Department. This was diplomatic spadework for subsequent negotiations at a higher level, which opened in March 1941.

This time it was Admiral Nomura, the Japanese Ambassador to Washington, who was Japan's authorised spokesman, while State Secretary Cordell Hull represented the United States. The talks proceeded under a veil of secrecy.

By the time the negotiations began, the United States Government knew of the impending German attack on the U.S.S.R. It was therefore eager to adjust its relations with Japan as quickly as possible and facilitate a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. This plan was exposed by the Communist Party of the United States in a series of articles in the *Daily Worker*.<sup>2</sup>

In April 1941 the U.S. Government submitted a set of specific proposals to the Japanese in the form of a draft Japanese-American agreement. The U.S. proposals centred on Japan's withdrawing its troops from China, abandoning the idea of annexing China and adhering to the "open-door" policy. In exchange, the U.S. Government agreed to the "integration" of the Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei regimes and promised to recognise Manchukuo. This

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<sup>1</sup> The People's Liberation Army of China consisted then of two armies, the 8th Route Army and the 4th Route Army.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Worker*, New York, March 1, 1941.

was, in effect, a proposal to carve up China without resort to arms.

To improve its bargaining position, the Japanese Government tried to capitalise on the anti-Soviet and anti-democratic ambitions of the U.S. ruling quarters. This is why it entitled its counter-proposals, "Proposals for a Joint Policy of Combating Communism." Japan said it would be willing to conclude a treaty with the United States, provided it was granted unrestricted access to strategic raw materials in the South-West Pacific, extensive U.S. economic assistance, U.S. consent to the "neutralisation" of the Philippines, U.S. recognition of Manchukuo, and, lastly, termination of U.S. support to Chiang Kai-shek.

The Japanese banked on the anti-Soviet sentiments of the U.S. rulers to complete their conquest of China. They hoped U.S. economic assistance would help expand their military economic potential, which they would ultimately use against the United States. For its own part, Japan was willing to "pledge" that it would make no armed attack in South-East Asia or the South Pacific, and to transfer its troops from southern to northern Indochina.

The Japanese proposals were submitted to the U.S. Government on May 12. On May 16 State Secretary Hull informed the Japanese that their proposals were tentatively acceptable "with certain modifications", to wit: no Japanese monopoly in China and no restrictions to other interests in that country. The U.S. reply said nothing about withdrawal of Japanese troops from the Chinese mainland. Though with a heavy heart, the U.S. Government was inclined to let the Japanese occupation forces remain on the mainland to combat the Chinese liberation movement. Hull also gave to understand that the United States was willing to negotiate secretly with Chiang Kai-shek on this score.

In effect, this was to be a "Far Eastern Munich", the terms of which emerged in the imperialist struggle between the United States and Japan. The ruling groups of

the two countries brawled and bargained with each other in a most unscrupulous manner by intimidation and rank blackmail.

The Chinese Communists saw through this bargaining, and warned the Chinese people about it. A Central Committee directive issued in May 1941, said:

“Japan, the United States and Chiang Kai-shek are hatching a new treacherous plan, the plan of an ‘Eastern Munich’ to pave the way by means of a compromise between Japan and the United States at China’s expense for struggle against Communists and the Soviet Union. We must expose this plan and fight against it.”

The directive made clear that the Chinese people would not recognise any Japanese-American deal at China’s expense and would continue to resist the imperialist aggressors.

On June 21, 1941, on the eve of Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union, the U.S. Government handed its official reply to the Japanese proposals. The U.S.A. went through the motions of objecting to Japan’s claim to economic advantages in China and the South Sea countries. It referred half-heartedly to the need of withdrawing Japanese troops from China at some future date. It said it wanted to participate in the drawing up of peace terms between Japan and China, but added that it did not consider its conditions final. It left the door open for a further discussion of the “joint policy of combating communism” and, in particular, of the stay of Japanese troops in China and the recognition of Manchukuo.<sup>1</sup>

• But although the two countries made certain mutual concessions, the imperialist contradictions between them were too great to allow for a final settlement.

“If the Japanese Government takes any further steps in pursuance of a policy or programme of military domina-

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<sup>1</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, 1931-1941*, Vol. II, Washington, 1943, pp. 556-57.



tion by force or threat of force of neighbouring countries," said Roosevelt in an oral statement to the Japanese Ambassador on August 17, "the Government of the United States will be compelled to take immediately any and all steps which it may deem necessary."<sup>1</sup>

The projected Japanese-American deal encountered mounting resistance among the American people, who called for determined action against fascist aggression and militarism. Last but not least, developments on the Soviet-German front hindered a compact as well. Conscious of Soviet strength in the Far East and unwilling to render Germany direct military support because that would dissipate their strength, the Japanese imperialists decided to attack the possessions and advance posts of the United States and Britain.

Japan's rulers were bent on ousting their rivals and assuming dominance in the Pacific and in South-East Asia. They hoped to seize the immense wealth of that region and multiply their military economic potential in anticipation of a war against the Soviet Union. They thought the United States and Britain would be too preoccupied with the war against Germany to oppose effectively a Japanese aggression. They also thought that the ruling quarters in the United States and Britain, moved by anti-Soviet sentiments, would consent to a deal with Japan at some later date.

On September 6, at a top-level conference in the Emperor's presence, the Japanese Government adopted a programme of conquest known as the Basic Principles of Imperial National Policy. Article 3 of this programme said:

"If no prospects of our demands being accepted appear before the middle of October, war shall be started without delay against America, England and the Netherlands."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Papers. . .*, Vol. II, Washington, 1943, pp. 556-57.

<sup>2</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, 1931-1941*, Vol. II, Washington, 1943, pp. 556-57.

The final decision to attack the United States and Britain was adopted at a subsequent conference on November 5, 1941. It was itemised as follows:

1. Begin military operations in early December. The Army and Navy shall complete preparations for combat.
2. Continue negotiations with the United States in accordance with the plan.
3. Increase co-operation with Germany and Italy.
4. Shortly before opening the hostilities establish secret military relations with Thailand.<sup>1</sup>

The November 5 decision envisaged continued negotiations with the United States under a new plan. The negotiations were to divert the attention of the U.S. Government, lull its vigilance and thereby ensure that Japan's attack is unexpected and sudden. To give the negotiations a semblance of authenticity, the Japanese diplomat Saburo Kurusu was sent to assist Admiral Nomura in the United States. He left Tokyo on November 5, the day Japan's rulers made up their minds to attack the United States and Britain in the Pacific.

The Japanese Supreme Command issued orders to the appropriate "naval and military commands to proceed to their several stations and make ready for precipitate attack."<sup>2</sup> Japan's top naval commander was told in an order that "war with the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands has become inevitable."<sup>3</sup> Sealed orders were sent to the various naval commanders concerning "the several positions they were to attack, notably Pearl Harbour, the Philippines, and Hongkong. The date was fixed."<sup>4</sup>

An editorial in the Kwantung Army newspaper *Manchuria Daily News*, of November 6, said the current phase

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<sup>1</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, 1931-1941*, Vol. II, Washington, 1943, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Moore, *With Japan's Leaders*, New York, 1942, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> *Кампания войны на Тихом океане, материалы комиссии по изучению стратегических бомбардировок авиации Соединенных Штатов*, Воениздат, 1956, стр. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Moore, *op. cit.*, New York, 1941, pp. 257-58.

in Japanese-American relations was reminiscent of the final week of the Russo-Japanese negotiations preceding the outbreak of the conflict of 1904.

On November 20, 1941, the Japanese Government handed its new proposals to the United States through Kurusu and Nomura. These said the United States was not to meddle in Sino-Japanese relations and was to allow joint use by Japan and the United States of Indonesian commodities and materials. It demanded resumption of Japanese-American trade relations and wanted Japan to get "necessary supplies of oil" from the United States. The two parties would pledge non-aggression in South-East Asia and the South Pacific. The Japanese Government, the proposals said, was willing to withdraw its forces from Indochina after "a just peace is established in the Pacific region". Pending this peace, it would recall its troops from the south to the north of French Indochina.<sup>1</sup>

But with the Soviet-German war already on, the U.S. Government was no longer inclined to pay so high a price to the Japanese aggressors for their anti-Soviet disposition. On November 26, 1941, the U.S. Government submitted to Japan its plan for a "broad solution of the controversial questions." The plan was in two parts. The first was the draft of a joint declaration concerning the basic principles of American and Japanese policy in the Pacific. The second listed specific proposals for a multilateral non-aggression pact, the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China and Indochina, recognition of Chiang Kai-shek's regime as China's only legitimate government, conclusion of a trade agreement on a most-favoured-nation basis, and stabilisation of the dollar and yen exchange rate.<sup>2</sup>

The new American proposals were taken as evidence by Japan's rulers that the U.S. Government had no inkling of Japan's warlike intentions. In Japan public opinion was

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<sup>1</sup> *Contemporary Japan*, Tokyo, Vol. XI, No. 1, January, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *American Diplomacy in the Far East*, 1942, pp. 245-46.

already being conditioned to the idea of war. On November 29 Premier Tojo said in an article that East Asia must be "purged with a vengeance".<sup>1</sup> The article caused apprehension in the United States, but Admiral Nomura hastened to state in a press interview in Washington on December 2 that he could not believe anyone wished war.

On November 25 the Japanese naval task force assigned for the Pearl Harbour operation received its sailing orders, with specific instructions to proceed secretly to Hawaiian waters and deliver a deadly blow to the U.S. Navy in Hawaii the moment war was declared. After the raid the task force was to abandon Hawaiian waters and return to Japan.<sup>2</sup>

On December 1, 1941, the Japanese Cabinet decided to start the war in early December. The following day the task force received orders to attack Pearl Harbour.

Japan's camouflage could have failed. In October 1941 U.S. intelligence obtained the key to Japanese coded messages. Many of these hinted broadly at the impending attack.

"Say very secretly to Hitler and Ribbentrop," said a radiogram from Tokyo to the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin, "that there is extreme danger that war may suddenly break out between the Anglo-Saxon nations and Japan, and that this war may come quicker than anybody dreams."<sup>3</sup> On receiving this information from the respective Japanese ambassadors, the governments of Germany and Italy grasped its purpose at once. The Italian Foreign Minister Count Ciano wrote in his diary: "A stunning move by the Japanese."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, New York, 1944, pp. 483-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Кампания войны на Тихом океане*, стр. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, Washington, 1946, Part 16, p. 2390.

<sup>4</sup> *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, p. 414.

Japanese radiograms intercepted by the United States gave an intimation of the approximate date set for the assault. A secret message was sent to Washington for Kurusu and Nomura on November 22. It named the end of November as "the deadline [that] absolutely cannot be changed. After that things are automatically going to happen."<sup>1</sup> On December 3, U.S. intelligence intercepted an order to the Japanese Embassy in Washington to destroy all secret documents, and above all, the codes. Intelligence officers kept the embassy premises under surveillance and discovered that its staff was burning papers in the backyard. Another radiogram was intercepted on December 6, which stressed that the Japanese Government's statement to the United States was to be submitted on December 7 on all accounts at 13.00 hours Washington time. This accent on the hour should have given the U.S. leaders food for thought.

State Secretary Cordell Hull admitted later that he was "at all times intensely interested in the contents of the intercepts".<sup>2</sup>

"During this period," he said, "all the information we received made clearer Japan's purpose to attack."<sup>3</sup> U.S. Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, added:

"We were all wondering where the blow would strike."<sup>4</sup>

But the U.S. Government knew that as well. On January 27, 1941, Joseph C. Grew, the U.S. Ambassador in Tokyo, reported to Washington secretly that "there is a lot of talk around town to the effect that the Japanese ... are planning to go all out in a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbour."<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Government was also informed that the Japanese and German secret services were col-

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<sup>1</sup> *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, Part 11, p. 5398.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5373.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5397.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5427.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph C. Grew, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

lecting information about Pearl Harbour. Japanese "fishermen" visited the Hawaiian Islands, took photographs, sounded depths, and made other recordings.

On April 9 and 14, 1941, two top-level U.S. officers submitted reports from the Hawaiian Islands to General Marshall, furnishing fairly accurate analyses of the probable Japanese plan of attack, and its likely consequences.

But all these warnings fell on barren soil. Blinded by their anti-Soviet plans, the rulers of the United States kept hoping against hope that Japan would attack the Soviet Union. The U.S. monopolists danced attendance on the Japanese aggressors. On November 30, 1941, the U.S. banker Bernard Baruch offered the Japanese a loan of \$1,000 million. This was a desperate attempt by the U.S. imperialists to strike a deal with the Japanese at the eleventh hour, while a Japanese task force was already steaming for Pearl Harbour.

The U.S. armed forces acted according to an operational plan approved on July 21, 1941, based on the inference that Japan would attack the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> On November 29, 1941, an intelligence service memorandum said that within the next three months the Soviet Union was the only likely objective of a Japanese attack and that Japan was sincere in seeking an understanding with the United States and Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> True, on October 16 the War and Navy Departments had issued a warning to the Pacific Command. It said, however, that a war was more likely between Japan and the Soviet Union, although a Japanese attack on the United States and Britain was also possible. After this "warning", precautionary measures previously taken by U.S. garrisons in the Pacific were slackened.

As a result, the United States dug its own grave. U.S. war historians admit that "the news [of the Pearl Harbour attack] came as a shock. . . . It caught by surprise not only

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<sup>1</sup> *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, Part 14, p. 2568-2601.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Part 14, pp. 1368-1373.

the American people at large, who learned of the attack a short while later, but also their leaders.”<sup>1</sup>

U.S. writer G.W. Warnecke notes rightly that “the long British-American appeasement of Japan is the real explanation of the mental and military unpreparedness of the Western Powers”.<sup>2</sup> The term “appeasement”, by the way, was at the time extensively used as a synonym for Munich.

## 2

On December 7, 1941, Kurusu and Nomura asked Cordell Hull to receive them at 13.00 hours. He received them at 14.20, thirty minutes after he learned of the Pearl Harbour attack. The Japanese spokesmen handed him a memorandum rejecting the American proposals of November 26. The final paragraph read:

“The Japanese Government regrets to have to notify hereby the American Government that, in view of the attitude of the American Government, it cannot but consider that it is impossible to reach an agreement through further negotiations.”<sup>3</sup>

The memorandum did not contain a declaration of war, although an armed attack was already underway when it was handed to the U.S. Government.

The Japanese launched their aggression at several points at once. On December 7, 10.45 hours Washington time, the Japanese seized the International Settlement in Shanghai. At 11.40 hours they bombarded British fortifications in Northern Malaya. At 12.05 hours they began a landing in Malaya, and one hour later launched an offensive across Southern Thailand towards the Malayan border. At 13.20 hours they attacked Pearl Harbour.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Washington, 1953, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Pacific Affairs*, December 1942, p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph C. Grew, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

On December 8 an imperial rescript was published in Japan, declaring war on the United States and Great Britain.

The concentration of U.S. naval forces in Pearl Harbour was intended to make Japan more malleable during the Japanese-American negotiations. But far from intimidating the Japanese rulers, it was a God-given opportunity for them to put the main U.S. naval force in the Pacific out of action at one stroke.

The Japanese Command believed it had to destroy the core of the British and U.S. navy before it could win possession of the South-West Pacific and other territories.

The U.S. Command neglected the possibility of a sudden Japanese attack, and ignored the defects of the naval base at Pearl Harbour. Pearl Harbour was crowded and shallow, and a distinct hazard for a large naval force. It was 500 metres wide and only 12 metres deep. Its sole exit crossed a coral reef, and in an emergency the harbour could easily become a trap. Due to a lack of space, battleships were moored in pairs, side to side. There were 60 warships, plus 24 auxiliary ships, and of this armada eight were battleships.

The Japanese task force of six aircraft carriers, two battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and nine destroyers steamed out of Hitokappu harbour on the Kuriles at 06.00 hours on November 26. It reached the point where it was to launch its planes, 200 miles north of Oahu, at 06.00 hours on December 8, a Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese carriers had a force of 360 aircraft. These pounced on the U.S. naval vessels and airfields in Hawaii at 07.55 hours. The first wave of planes registered torpedo and bomb hits on all the U.S. dreadnaughts. Twelve submarines, five of them carrying midget submarines handled by two-man crews, assisted in the attack. The submarine action was not effective, while the midget submarines

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<sup>1</sup> The confusion of dates is due to the international date line running across the West Pacific.



proved a total failure. Only one of them managed to penetrate the harbour and participate in the attack.<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, which caught the U.S. armed forces totally unawares, culminated in a defeat unparalleled in the history of naval warfare. In 110 minutes the Japanese sank five battleships and heavily damaged the other three. All in all, the United States lost 19 warships and an appreciable portion of its Hawaii-based air force. The losses in men and materiel were appalling. The Japanese losses were relatively small—29 aircraft and six submarines, of which five were midgets.

The outcome of the Pearl Harbour attack was also a surprise for the Japanese. This probably explains why they did not make the most of it. The operational plan envisaged a "strike and a subsequent rapid withdrawal". Vice-Admiral Nagumo, who commanded the operation, kept to the letter of the plan and withdrew at once north-westward. If he had pursued the remnants of the American fleet, which was retreating hastily to the east, the American losses would have been still greater. U.S. military opinion, that of General George C. Marshall included, is that the Japanese blundered by neglecting the opportunity to capture Pearl Harbour.

The first days of the Pacific War were just as hapless for the British. The British Pacific Squadron of two battleships and four destroyers steamed out of Singapore on December 8 to attack Japanese transports reported to be landing a Japanese force in Northern Malaya. The squadron was spotted by Japanese submarines, which instantly radioed Saigon. In the morning of December 10 Japanese torpedo boats and bombers attacked the British squadron and sank the two British battleships.

The U.S. and British naval losses encouraged Japan, for now, it seemed, the stage was set for the conquest of the South Seas.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Sherman, *Combat Command. The American Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific War*, New York, 1950, p. 38.

The first few days of war in the Pacific Theatre showed that battleships and heavy cruisers were unsuited for modern naval warfare, being vulnerable from the air. U.S. and British naval officers admitted it. Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, then commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, writes that the navy's plans, drawn up shortly before the Japanese attack, "based on battleships as the supreme weapon at sea, became about as realistic as Grimm's fairy tales. Most of the 'backbone' of the Fleet was at the bottom of Pearl Harbour, a mass of useless junk. The complacency of the navy hierarchy was shaken to its foundations."<sup>1</sup>

Japan's attack on the United States pushed apart the frontiers of the war, adding to the number of belligerents. On December 8, 1941, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan. On December 11 the United States declared war on Germany and Italy, which reciprocated in kind. Bulgaria, Slovakia and Croatia declared war on Britain and the United States. Hungary and Rumania, already at war with Britain, also declared war on the United States. The puppet Manchukuo government, too, issued a declaration of war on the two Western Powers.

The day Germany and Italy joined the war against the United States, that is, December 11, 1941, the Axis powers signed a new military accord to supplement the previous Berlin Pact. The new pact provided that Germany, Italy and Japan would henceforth prosecute the war against Britain and the United States jointly with all the means at their disposal until the end of hostilities. They pledged themselves not to conclude an armistice or peace without mutual and full consent. Article 3 said: "After the victorious culmination of the present war Italy, Germany and Japan shall co-operate closely in the spirit of the tripartite pact concluded on September 27, 1940, in order to establish and maintain a new just order in the world." The three

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Sherman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

fascist powers, as you see, no longer concealed their final objective of conquering and enslaving the whole world.

War on the fascist states was declared by Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Union of South Africa, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, and India. The governments of Free France, the Netherlands, Poland, Ethiopia and Belgium followed suit. After four and a half years of a costly and sanguinary undeclared war, China, attacked by Japan in 1937, declared war on that country on December 9, 1941.

### 3

The first phase of the Pacific war, ending in May 1942, was one of triumph for Japanese arms. The Japanese won a temporary advantage. They seized vast and wealthy colonial possessions in the Pacific with a relatively small force. The armed forces of the United States, Britain, the British dominions and the Netherlands surrendered one strategic point after another. Singapore, whose excellently equipped garrison of 100,000 could have resisted for at least several months, surrendered without a fight. This was a sad and painful setback. Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, the American journalists, described the campaign in the South Seas as "a narrative of shame, disgrace, and stupidity".<sup>1</sup>

In some five or six months the Japanese consolidated their foothold in Indochina and Thailand, captured Malaya and Singapore, conquered the main islands of Indonesia, a part of New Guinea, Burma, the Philippines and Hongkong. They occupied Guam, Wake, New Britain, the Solomon Islands, etc., and invaded the province of Yunnan, South China, through Burma. They thus gained possession of 3,800,000 square kilometres of territory with a

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China*, New York, 1946.

population of some 150,000,000, which excludes territory earlier seized in China.

Japan's successes in the Pacific added to its imperialist contradictions with Germany. Each was grinding its own axe in their common struggle for world domination. A temporary solution was found in compromise. On January 18, 1942, Germany, Italy and Japan signed a military convention in Berlin dividing the world into two zones, of which the western was to be Hitler Germany's and Italy's and the eastern, Japan's.

America's entry into the war was the upshot of greatly sharpened international imperialist contradictions. Not only was U.S. imperialism determined to frustrate the German and Japanese drive for world rule. It was bent on realising its own plans of what it called "world leadership".

The U.S. imperialists capitalised on the entry into the war of the Latin American countries, being "much more intent on tightening their economic, political and strategic grip on Latin America than on resisting the policy of pro-fascist neutrality pursued by some of the Latin American reactionary governments".<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Government gave all-out support to the reactionary pro-fascist cliques. As a result, the alliance of American states operated less against fascism and much more against the progressive elements and the national-liberation movement in Latin America.

At the Rio de Janeiro Conference (January 15-28, 1942) the United States saddled the Latin American countries with an agreement promising U.S. "aid" in setting up naval and air bases. A resolution was adopted to stimulate the production and exchange of strategic raw materials, farm products and manufactured goods. The United States went a step further. It induced sixteen Latin American republics to lift customs and trade barriers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Victorio Codovilla, *Será America Latina Colonia Yanqui*, Buenos-Aires, 1947, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *War and Peace Aims of the United Nations*, pp. 583-84.

The Rio de Janeiro Conference ushered in a new stage in the colonial subjugation of Latin America by the U.S. imperialists, a new stage in the gradual elimination by the United States of its British competitor in that region of the world.

America's involvement in the war was a fresh source of enrichment for the monopolists. U.S. industrial output rocketed skyward, as shown in the following table:

U.S. Industrial Output<sup>1</sup> (1939=100)

1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
100	115	149	183	219	216	186

Concentration of capital in industry kept pace with growth of production. In 1939 the U.S. manufacturing industry employed 13 per cent of the labour force in factories of more than 10,000 workers each. In 1944 the percentage rose to 30.4. Factories with 1,000 to 10,000 workers, controlled by the big industrial monopolies, plus the above-mentioned factories, accounted for 52.8 per cent of the labour force employed in the manufacturing industry.

Concentration in the U.S. Manufacturing Industry<sup>2</sup>

Number of workers	Number of factories		Total labour force			
			In thousands		In per cent	
	1939	1944	1939	1944	1939	1944
1-99	187,477	197,638	2,787	3,138	25.8	18.9
100-499	14,000	15,938	2,782	3,225	25.8	19.3
500-9,999	2,374	4,461	3,811	5,248	35.3	31.4
10,000 and more	49	344	1,420	5,083	13.1	30.4

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Concentration and World War Two, Report of the Smaller War Plants Corporation*, Washington, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-19.

The industrial monopolies added very greatly to their wartime incomes by stepping up the exploitation of workers. War orders were distributed with an eye to the benefit of the biggest monopolies. Harold L. Ickes, then U.S. Secretary of the Interior and member of the Defence Committee, said "the Defence Committee is doing all that it can to favour its big-business friends".<sup>1</sup> The war orders went to only 100 or 150 of the biggest manufacturers.<sup>2</sup>

Fascist Germany concentrated its main forces on the Soviet-German front. This enabled the United States and Britain to deploy considerable ground, naval and air forces to the Pacific Theatre. The fact that Japan was still contemplating an attack on the Soviet Union diverted much of its armed forces from the Pacific Theatre and greatly affected the balance of strength. The stubborn Soviet stand in the decisive war theatre thus gave the United States and Britain a chance to build up superior forces in the Pacific.

In May 1942 big forces were engaged in a naval battle in the Coral Sea (between Australia, the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides). The two belligerents (U.S.A. and Japan) laid an accent on aircraft. The warships on either side did not fire a single round. Losses were about equal, but the Japanese fleet was forced to withdraw.

In a second battle early in June 1942, Japan suffered a new setback near Midway. It lost four carriers, one cruiser and many planes. The Midway Battle revealed that the scales were tilting against Japan.

Though clearly superior in the Pacific, the policymakers of the United States and Britain did not launch any full-scale offensive against their enemy. For more than two years, though obviously stronger, U.S. and British forces

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<sup>1</sup> Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary*, Vol. III, New York, 1954, Simon and Schuster, p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> Donald M. Nelson, *Arsenal of Democracy*, New York, 1946, p. 276.

confined themselves to minor naval engagements and just as minor engagements on land—the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

#### 4

The failures and errors of U.S., British and Dutch arms in the Pacific were due largely to the colonialist and racialist policy of the respective governments. This prevented them from enlisting the help of the local population in the fight against Japanese expansionism. The U.S. and British rulers were afraid to let the masses assist them against the Japanese aggressors, for they feared that this would encourage the national-liberation movement. The United States, for example, rejected the Philippines Communist Party proposal of a united national resistance front.

The British, American and Dutch administrators were true to themselves as colonialists even in wartime, standing aloof from, and operating against, the masses.

But the battles raging on the Soviet front stimulated the national-liberation movement in the Pacific all the same. Whether the colonialists liked it or not, the peoples took up arms against fascist aggression and the Japanese-sponsored "new order".

End of March 1942 a mass organisation, the Hukbalahap (People's Anti-Japanese Army), went into action in the Philippines. That same year a people's army was formed in Malaya, and in Burma the patriot army of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League fought the invaders tooth and nail. A partisan movement mushroomed in the East Indies, Indochina, and Korea. The people of India rose up for freedom.

The U.S. and British rulers were no less hostile to the liberation struggle in the Pacific than they were to the Resistance Movement in Europe. The American and British imperialists were afraid that the national consciousness

of the Eastern nations would be roused by it. They feared that the wartime struggle against the Japanese aggressors would, after war's end, develop into a struggle against any and all imperialist oppression.

The Americans and British made extensive use of the compradore bourgeoisie, which was closely associated with the colonialists, to combat the national-liberation movement. They sought new anti-popular deals with the compradores.

The British colonialists clung desperately to their positions in India. They would rather have it captured by the Japanese than allow the Indian national-liberation movement to develop. If worse came to the worst, they reckoned that India's occupation by Japan would be no more than temporary, and that it would help crush India's liberation movement. Rather than lose the country entirely, the imperialists preferred defeat.

Britain's economic policy in India, too, was prompted by the consuming desire of the imperialists to retain their hold on that country. The British looked with apprehension on India's heavy industry. They went out of their way to impede its growth, especially that of its key branches, in order to prevent the Indians from building up an economic groundwork for national independence. But the war insistently claimed India's resources and productive capacity. Production increased, though in a somewhat peculiar way. India produced automobile bodies, for example, but not the engines. It produced bodies for British tanks, but not the tank motors, and the fuselage for British aircraft, but not the aircraft engines.

The conduct of the British planters and manufacturers, who refused to alter their way of life in wartime, incensed India's masses.

In March 1942 the British Government tried to check the rising liberation movement in India by a series of trifling concessions. A special mission arrived to make to India's principal parties and organisations the following



proposals: India shall get dominion status and parts of India shall be entitled to form separate dominions. In return, all power shall remain in the hands of the British viceroy for the duration.

This move was designed to subvert the liberation movement, to split and weaken the Indian people. The Communist Party of India and other democratic organisations condemned this plan. The national bourgeoisie represented by the Indian National Congress protested. Jawaharlal Nehru said rightly, "to think of partitioning India at this stage went against the whole current of modern historical and economic development".<sup>1</sup>

But the landlord and bourgeois Muslim League was in favour of partition. It suggested religion as the criterion for demarcation. Its proposal stemmed from the strife deliberately fanned among the country's religious groups by the British colonialists.

The Indian National Congress headed by Gandhi and Nehru countered with the proposal of establishing an Indian national government, which would mobilise the nation's forces against the aggressor and ensure India's active co-operation within the anti-fascist coalition.

The Congress proposals were rejected. On July 18, 1942, the Indian National Congress responded to the rejection with a call for a mass campaign "to destroy British rule in India". The British authorities lashed out against the Congress leaders. On August 9, 1942, they arrested Gandhi, Nehru and others.

India's Communist Party, like all the other Communist Parties in East Asia, drew up a clear-cut consistent programme for national liberation, its prime objective being to repel the Japanese aggressors. The Indian Communists urged formation of a united national front of anti-fascist resistance and the establishment of a full-fledged national

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<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, New York, 1946, p. 464.

government under leaders of the national-liberation movement to raise the country's power of resistance to fascism.

Instead of warring against the fascists, the British Government sent troops to India to suppress the national-liberation movement. More troops were massed there than ever before in the period of British rule.

The American imperialists were also eyeing India greedily. Washington announced plans of "aid" to India, which were resisted by Britain and by Indian progressives, who did not wish to let one colonialist country replace another in the saddle, and worked for full liberation from all colonial rule.

But American capital did manage to fortify its economic positions in India. All in all, the colonialists' policy weakened the forces opposed to the Japanese aggression. Much damage was also done by imperialist agents in other Eastern countries, where they did not miss an opportunity to stab the national-liberation movement in the back. For one, this was the policy of the Chiang Kai-shek clique in China.

At the time when the Anglo-American and Kuomintang troops were reeling back under the Japanese onslaught in 1941 and 1942, the People's Liberation Army, guided by the Chinese Communist Party, stood its ground and defied the Japanese. In mortal fear of this mass resistance, Chiang Kai-shek announced in 1942 that the war in the Pacific did not concern China. This was succour to the Japanese. Some 30 Kuomintang generals went over to the enemy and brought their troops with them in 1941 and 1942. Japanese war historians note that "Kuomintang troops kept surrendering all the time, and the Kuomintang Command sought to direct the Japanese army against the Liberated Areas and the People's Liberation Army".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Pacific War*, Toe Keizai Shimboisha, Tokyo, Vol. IV, p. 53.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army was faced by a far greater number of Japanese soldiers than the British and American armies, or Chiang Kai-shek's army. It had to cope with 60 per cent of the Japanese troops and 95 per cent of the puppet troops operating in China.<sup>1</sup> Japanese losses inflicted by the People's Liberation Army were dozens of times greater than the losses inflicted by the Kuomintang troops and, what is more, by the American and British troops. Suppose total Japanese losses in China in 1937 were 100, then Japanese losses sustained from the People's Liberation Eighth Route Army in 1942 were 214, and those sustained from Kuomintang troops were 32.

The heroic Chinese people made a substantial contribution under the leadership of their Communist Party to the common war effort against Japanese aggression.

The American and British governments backed the traitor Chiang Kai-shek clique. They built up Chiang's arms and reserves to combat China's democratic forces. To further Chiang's anti-democratic course and at the same time prevent a deal between him and the Japanese, the U.S. Government sent a special military mission to China under General Joseph W. Stilwell, who was appointed Chief of Staff of the Kuomintang Armed Forces on March 10, 1942.

The astute foreign policy of the Soviet Union enabled it to avoid a simultaneous German and Japanese attack, a war on two fronts. But at no time during the war did the Soviet people conceal their aversion of the Japanese militarists who had started the Pacific war. The Soviet press pointed to the reckless adventurism of the Japanese rulers and predicted Japan's defeat.

American and British falsifiers of history, who seek to minimise the decisive role played by the Soviet Union in the attainment of victory, describe the hostilities in the

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Pacific War*, Toe Keizai Shimboisha, Tokyo, Vol. IV, p. 53.

Pacific Theatre as a special "war in the Pacific", which they claim to have been autonomous of the Soviet-German front. They also deny the contribution made to Japan's defeat by the great Chinese nation in its harrowing war against the Japanese invasion.

Yet the hostilities in the Pacific were only secondary in the over-all context of the Second World War. The main theatre, where the outcome of the war and the future of nations hung in the balance, was the Soviet-German front. The Soviet war effort exercised a decisive influence on the course of events in the Pacific. The defeat of Germany, the chief party in the fascist bloc, sealed Japan's doom.

Imperialist Japan associated all its plans of conquest with the defeat of the Soviet Union. But its expectations were dashed, for it had not weighed the might of the Soviet Union, which turned out to be strong enough to crush Germany and then knock out Japan's strongest fighting force, the Kwantung Army, in 1945.

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Precedence among all the international and military developments as of June 1941 go to the Soviet-German front, the decisive theatre of the Second World War. In the early stages of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet people and their armed forces confronted a challenge no capitalist country had been able to meet—the task of stemming the German war machine, which had overrun nearly all continental Europe.

The opening period of the Great Patriotic War lasted until November 18, 1942. In this period the U.S.S.R. frustrated the German-fascist plan of *blitzkrieg* and prepared in the battlefield and in the rear to turn the tables on the nazi aggressors. The challenge was thus duly met by the heroic Soviet people under the leadership of their Communist Party.

*Part IV*

**SOVIET COUNTER-OFFENSIVE.  
THE TURNING OF THE TIDE**

*Chapter Ten*

**THE VOLGA VICTORY**

**1**

In early summer 1942 Nazi Germany still had huge forces it could freely manoeuvre due to the absence of a second front in Europe. No radical change in the relation of strength on the Soviet-German front had yet been achieved. The military reverses of the first war months, which resulted in the loss of sizeable territory and reduced the Soviet military and economic potential, made themselves felt.

The German Command went to work on a plan of operations for summer 1942 at the end of November 1941, i.e., after the Moscow offensive had failed.

The new plan was based on a new concept. The Barbarossa Plan had made the Moscow offensive of 1941 part of a lightning strategic effort in which the German army was to have defeated the main Soviet forces, captured the country's vital centres and thus attained a quick victory. The collapse of this scheme made the German Command refurbish the whole of its strategic pattern.

The new plan was built on the assumption that seizure of the important economic regions in the country's south would weaken the Soviet Union and strengthen Germany to an extent that would decide the outcome of the war.

Oil and food shortages grew to alarming proportions in Nazi Germany by the end of 1941, prompting the German Command to adopt the new plan.

The German Command counted on the exhaustion of Soviet economic and military resources, and expected to resume its Moscow offensive and seize the Soviet capital at its convenience. This was why a large Nazi force was kept in the Moscow sector.

The strategic plan for the summer campaign was outlined by German General Headquarters at a conference on November 19, 1941. On April 5, 1942, Headquarters approved Directive 41, which spelled out the basic tasks for the 1942 summer campaign. The German troops were to annihilate remaining Soviet manpower and seize as many vital military and economic centres as possible. The directive suggested massing all available forces for the key operation in the south with a view to destroying the enemy across the Don and capturing the Caucasian oil-fields and communication lines.<sup>1</sup>

In a speech on September 9, 1942, Hitler dwelt in detail on Directive 41 and explained the concept it was built upon. "What we aimed at," he said, "was, firstly, to capture the enemy's last remaining major grain areas; secondly, to capture his last remaining coal, which we can make into coke; thirdly, to move closer to his oil-fields, to capture them or, at least, to cut them off from the rest of the country, and, fourthly, to extend the offensive and cut the Volga, the enemy's last major waterway."<sup>2</sup>

The Nazi plan for the summer campaign revealed the predatory goals Germany pursued in the Soviet Union more clearly than anything before it. "It is not a war for the throne or altar," said Goebbels blandly. "It is a war for grain and bread, for a plenteous dinner-table, for plen-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hans Doerr, *Der Feldzug nach Stalingrad*, Darmstadt, 1955, S. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, November 22, 1946.

teous breakfasts and suppers ... a war for raw materials, rubber, steel and iron ore."

Germany took advantage of the absence of a second front in Europe and concentrated vast forces on the Soviet-German front. By the end of June it had built up a strength of 237 divisions, of which 184 were German. During the summer and autumn of 1942 the number of enemy divisions kept growing, and finally totalled 266, of which 193 were German. But no longer was Germany able to mount an offensive along the entire Soviet-German front, as it did in 1941. It had to confine itself to just the southern sector.

Five German, one Rumanian, one Italian and one Hungarian armies, which made up Army Group South, were poised for the assault. The group was divided into two, with Group B advancing north of Group A, to the Don in the Voronezh-Novaya Kalitva sector and then heading south between the Don and the Volga, to Stalingrad (now Volgograd). Group A was to advance southward to the lower reaches of the Don, while part of it would invade the Caucasus.

The German Command thus planned to capture the main grain and industrial regions of the Soviet south, cut the Volga, and pave the way for an offensive in the Caucasus. On reaching the Volga, Group B was to cover the northern flank and rear of the force invading the Caucasus.

The southward attack also had certain political motives. To begin with, Hitler Germany was eager to draw Turkey into the war on its side, dangling before the Turkish ruling clique the prospect of a "rendezvous" in the Soviet south. Especially so, since Turkey's ruling quarters nurtured an ambitious programme of Pan-Turkish territorial conquest. In July 1941, *Bozkurt*, a Turkish magazine, published a map showing the Pan-Turks intended to grab nearly half of the Soviet Union.

In connection with the German offensive in the south, the German Ambassador to Ankara, Franz von Papen,

negotiated assiduously with Turkish statesmen. Şükrü Saracoğlu, Turkish Prime Minister, said he was "eager to see Russia destroyed".

"The destruction of Russia," he said, "is the Führer's achievement, an achievement the like of which is accomplished once in a century. . . . Germany alone can solve the Russian problem, and this only by killing half of the Russian nation."<sup>1</sup>

Von Papen informed Turkish President İsmet İnönü of the imminent German offensive in the Caucasus, and stressed that Germany "would highly appreciate a concentration of Turkish forces on the Russian border".<sup>2</sup> Quite willing to help, the Turkish Government deployed 26 divisions to the Soviet-Turkish border. But the Soviet offensive that started on the Volga took the wind out of Turkey's sails.

Japan, which had multiplied its military and economic resources by seizures in the South Seas, was the other country that prepared for war against the Soviet Union in the 1942 summer. The Japanese press screamed that the Soviet Far East "belonged by rights" to the Japanese Empire and should be ruled by a Japanese Governor-General. The Japanese General Staff worked out a new plan, whereby the war against the U.S.S.R. would be started by a sudden attack—a stab in the back in the light of the Soviet-Japanese treaty. The Japanese army in Manchuria and Korea was again, as in the summer of 1941, made ready for combat, and the Japanese Government was only waiting for the fall of Volgograd to hurl its troops against the U.S.S.R. But the heroic defence of the Volga city again compelled the Japanese militarists to postpone the date of their attack.

The outcome of the Volga Battle was crucial for the ultimate outcome of the whole Second World War. But

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<sup>1</sup> *Документы МИД Германии*, вып. II, Госполитиздат, Москва, 1946, стр. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, стр. 58.



even then the U.S. and British governments went back on their promise to open a second front in Western Europe in 1942, despite insistent popular demands in the two countries.

While the U.S.S.R. was locked in single combat with Hitler Germany and its satellites, the governments of the U.S.A. and Britain kept the bulk of their fighting force on the sidelines of the war.

Some U.S. and British military and political leaders spoke quite candidly about the real reasons behind the dilatory tactics of their governments with regard to the second front. In 1941 Liddell Hart, the British war historian, said in a book<sup>1</sup> that Britain's past history prompted it to spare its enemy, for he was its potential ally, and to weaken its ally, for he was its most likely future enemy. Constructions of this sort were aimed, in effect, at preparing British public opinion for a future anti-Soviet compact between the British rulers and surviving German militarists.

Arnold, Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice, said on June 3, 1942, that American monopolists were planning a military alliance with Germany. "The small group of American businessmen who are parties to these international rings," he said, "still think of the war as a temporary recess from business as usual—with a strong Germany. They expect to begin the game all over again after the war. It is significant that all these cartel leaders still talk and think as if the war would end in a stalemate, and that, therefore, they must be in a position to continue their arrangements with a strong Germany after the war."<sup>2</sup>

To mislead public opinion, Western spokesmen employed "arguments" to explain the delay of the second front. They made much of the Nazi legend about an Atlantic

<sup>1</sup> Liddell Hart, *The Way to Win Wars. The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, Faber and Faber Ltd., London.

<sup>2</sup> *New Times*, No. 9, Moscow, 1948, p. 9.

Wall, which allegedly barred the road to continental Europe. The military and political leaders of the U.S.A. and Britain pretended to believe that the Atlantic Wall existed. Eisenhower, then Supreme Allied Commander in Africa and Europe, said that "the fortified coast of Western Europe could not be successfully attacked".

"Many held," he continued, "that attack against this type of defence was madness, nothing but military suicide."<sup>1</sup>

Eisenhower added that "definite signs of cracking German morale would have to appear" before it would be practicable to open a second front.<sup>2</sup> This coincided with Churchill's opinion that a second front was more desirable at a time when "the Anglo-American forces could perform a triumphal march from the Channel to Berlin with no more than a few snipers' bullets to annoy them".<sup>3</sup>

The governments of the U.S.A. and Britain wanted the Soviet Union to fight it out with Germany, and then to come to the victors' table. They admitted quite frankly that they had built up enormous, but idle armies. Speaking in the House of Commons, Churchill said, "very large numbers of troops remained on fronts which were not engaged..."<sup>4</sup> The public was told that the menace of a German invasion of the British Isles had not yet ended. Churchill said so in April and again in July 1942.<sup>5</sup>

He laid stress on the idea that "no one could be sure that Germany would not break Russia, or drive her beyond the Urals"<sup>6</sup>. One would think that in the circumstances the United States and Britain should give their ally a helping hand. Nothing of the kind. Churchill was sooner gloating over the plight of his ally than expressing concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, New York, 1948, pp. 45-46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 767.

<sup>4</sup> W. Churchill, *The End of the Beginning*, Boston, 1943, p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 447.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

The myopic U.S. and British politicians overlooked the fact that the threat to the Soviet Union was also a threat to their own countries. After the war, Edward R. Stettinius, the U.S. wartime lend-lease administrator, wrote:

“The American people should remember that they were on the brink of disaster in 1942. If the Soviet Union had failed to hold on its front, the Germans would have been in a position to conquer Great Britain. They would have been able to overrun Africa, too, and in this event they could have established a foothold in Latin America.”<sup>1</sup>

British Labour Party leaders saw eye to eye with Churchill's Cabinet in the matter of a second front. Responding to public demands in Britain for an early second front, Attlee and Bevin said that the demands of irresponsible people should not influence military decisions and that the government knew what it was doing.

The Communist Party was the only British political party to work for the early opening of a second front. The Communists issued many official statements condemning sabotage of the second front and urging the British Government to live up to its commitments.

Churchill kept deliberately delaying the solution of the second front problem and devoted himself more to the Pacific Theatre. The U.S. leaders were inclined to do the same. Every time the war against Japan cropped up in the discussions, the U.S. General Staff insisted on the Soviet Union entering it. What it wanted was to see the Soviet Union weaken Japan, and Japan weaken the Soviet Union. More than that, it wanted to gain a foothold in Eastern Siberia and the Soviet Far East. A memorandum of the Operations Division of the U.S. General Staff, of March 25, 1942, said “Russia is most anxious to avoid belligerency in Western Siberia; but it is this area which interests us”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, New York, 1949, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Matloff and Snell, *op cit.*, p. 156.

The U.S. Government and the top U.S. generals wanted air bases in Soviet Siberia in order to gain a foothold in that area and to provoke an armed conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union.

The U.S. President insisted that large U.S. Air Force units should be stationed in the Soviet Far East and Siberia, and sought Soviet consent for an American military mission under General Omar C. Bradley to inspect Soviet military installations in the Far East and for General George C. Marshall to visit Moscow for a comprehensive discussion of matters pertaining to Siberia.

On January 13, 1943, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. informed the U.S. President that the Soviet Union was not in need of air force units, but of planes without pilots, for it had enough pilots of its own. He stressed that help in the way of aircraft was required "not in the Far East where the U.S.S.R. is not in a state of war, but on the Soviet-German front, where the need for aircraft aid is particularly great". The message expressed surprise over the U.S. proposal that "General Bradley should inspect Russian military objectives in the Far East and elsewhere in the U.S.S.R. It should be perfectly obvious that only Russians can inspect Russian military objectives, just as U.S. military objectives can be inspected by none but Americans. There should be no unclarity in this matter."<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. demands, veiled though they were by the professed wish to "aid" the Soviet Union, were turned down.

Instead of opening the second front in the summer of 1942 the U.S.A. and Britain undertook a series of so-called commando raids along the French shore. These raids conveyed to the Germans that no landing of large forces was to be expected in Western Europe. Furthermore, failure of the raids, which were made by insignificant forces, was meant to "prove" that it was impossible to open a second

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 50.

front without incurring the risk of almost certain defeat. This was why, prior to the landing of the Allied troops in Dieppe, London radio broadcast on August 19, 1942, that the operation had limited objectives. Formally, the broadcast was meant for the French patriots, to discourage premature action on their part. But in point of fact it was meant for the Germans, to give them a chance to ward off the landing of a task force made up of Canadian divisions. The men and officers involved in the raid fought bravely, but were doomed in advance.

Small wonder that many people in Britain and the United States doubted the second front would ever be opened. "Many officers employed in planning the invasion confessed haunting, persistent fears that the planning was merely a gigantic bluff, and that we would never attempt to invade Western Europe. So, the general public may be forgiven their doubts."<sup>1</sup>

Official British and U.S. historians claim that the absence of the second front in summer 1942 was amply compensated by lavish supplies to the Soviet Union. J.F.C. Fuller writes, for example, that "in the autumn of 1942 the economic position of Russia was a desperate one, and had it not been for the steady stream of Anglo-American supplies then pouring into Archangel, it is doubtful whether the Russians would have been able to turn to their advantage the fantastic situation in which Hitler had placed his armies."<sup>2</sup> This is entirely false. There was nothing even remotely resembling a "stream of Anglo-American supplies".

Take the evidence of historian D. F. Fleming. "At first," he writes, "the stream of lend-lease supplies was only a trickle. During 1941 its value was mainly moral. During 1942... the aid sent to Russia... could not be tremen-

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<sup>1</sup> John Dalgleish, *We Planned the Second Front*, London, 1945, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War*, p. 186.

dous.”<sup>1</sup> And Edward R. Stettinius, the U.S. lend-lease administrator, admits that “in the over-all picture, the volume of fighting equipment we sent could not have bulked large”.<sup>2</sup> McInnis also estimates that Western aid at the time of Stalingrad was small. Furthermore, he adds that “its quality was often below that of Russian first-line equipment”.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the governments of the United States and Britain tried to use supplies and temporary stoppages of deliveries at crucial periods in the war to exert pressure on the U.S.S.R. At first they said they lacked transport facilities due to the coming invasion of North Africa. Then, with a view to disrupting deliveries to the U.S.S.R., a convoy of supplies headed for Archangel was deliberately exposed to a German attack.

The reference is to convoy PQ-17, of 34 supply ships, which sailed from Iceland on June 27, 1942. The convoy was escorted by six destroyers, two anti-aircraft ships, two submarines and eleven smaller vessels. The support force consisted of two British and two U.S. cruisers, and three destroyers. Nine British and two Soviet submarines were near the north coast of Norway. Then there was a cover force of two battleships, one aircraft carrier, three cruisers and a squadron of destroyers. There were enough warships to see the convoy through seas where the Soviet fleet was keeping the Germans at bay.

On July 4, when the supply ships were in mid-sea, the escort, support and cover forces were recalled west by orders from London. The convoy was advised “to disperse and make for Soviet harbours singly”. The British Admiralty issued the order, although it knew the German Command was informed of the convoy’s route. The vessels

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<sup>1</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins*, Vol. I, Doubleday, New York, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., *Lend Lease, Weapon for Victory*, New York, Macmillan, 1944, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Edgar McInnis, *The War, Fourth Year*, Oxford, 1944, p. 90.

were thus deliberately exposed to attack by German aircraft and U-boats. Churchill makes a very significant entry in his memoirs on this score. "I let the matter drop as far as I was concerned,"<sup>1</sup> he writes. The British seamen had no inkling of the scheming done behind their backs. They showed supreme courage in their endeavour to help the Soviet people in their hour of need.

Convoy PQ-17 was attacked. Twenty-three of its 34 ships were sunk. This gave the U.S. and British authorities a plausible excuse to reduce shipments of supplies to the Soviet Union. On June 17 the British Government officially notified the U.S.S.R. that deliveries would be discontinued. Churchill admits in his memoirs that the Soviet Union was denied deliveries of war supplies at a time when it needed them most.

The Soviet Government informed Churchill of its opinion on the stoppage of supplies to the northern harbours. The British excuses were described as untenable.

"Given good will and readiness to honour obligations," the Soviet message said, "steady deliveries could be effected, with heavy loss to the Germans. The British Admiralty's order to the PQ-17 convoy to abandon the supply ships and return to Britain, and to the supply ships to disperse and make for Soviet harbours singly, without escort, is, in the view of our experts, puzzling and inexplicable."<sup>2</sup>

The message pointed out that the Soviet Government could not reconcile itself to the second front in Europe being postponed till 1943.

The Polish émigré government's army formed on Soviet territory was due to set out for the forward lines under the Soviet-Polish agreement. Most of its men were spoiling for a fight with the nazis. But General Anders, who was in command, had other plans.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence . . .*, Vol. 1, p. 56.

A Polish émigré paper published in London said in May 1942:

"By August or September of this year both the German and Soviet armies must be rendered harmless. They will destroy each other, and the time will come for the Anglo-Saxons to strike."<sup>1</sup> At the height of the Volga Battle, Anders's army was evacuated to the Middle East.

The émigré government of Czechoslovakia was also eager to withdraw its units, formed in Soviet territory, to the Middle East. But its attempts to do so failed. The men of the Czechoslovakian units asked the Soviet Government to send them into action against the Hitlerites. Their request was granted. In March 1943 they were engaged on the Soviet-German front near the village of Sokolovo, south of Kharkov.

## 2

Hitler Germany was not the only country that coveted Soviet oil. The U.S. and British imperialists had their eyes on it as well, and tried to make the most of the difficulties experienced by the Soviet Union. The governments of the U.S.A. and Britain worked out a programme (known as the Velvet Plan) for deploying their troops from the Middle East to the Caucasus, and each wanted to be ahead of the other. This kind of race, too, was an indication of imperialist contradictions.

In August 1942 Churchill flew to Moscow to bring belated news that the U.S.A. and Britain refused to fulfil their allied obligation to open the second front in 1942. In the plane Churchill made the following entry into his diary:

"I pondered on my mission to this ... Bolshevik State I had once tried so hard to strangle at its birth. ... What was it my duty to say to them now? General Wavell, who had literary inclinations, summed it all up in a poem. ...

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<sup>1</sup> *Trybuna Wolności*, September 1, 1946.



There were several verses, and the last line of each was, 'No second front in nineteen forty-two'.<sup>1</sup> Judging by this passage, Churchill considered his policy of sabotaging the second front a projection of his old anti-Soviet policy.

The conference in Moscow involved Soviet statesmen, the British Prime Minister and the U.S. Ambassador. Negotiations also proceeded between the general staffs of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and Britain.

The British Prime Minister, supported by the U.S. spokesman, officially notified the Soviet Government that the second front would not be opened in 1942, and that it was timed for 1943. A Soviet Memorandum was handed to Churchill, which said:

"The British Government's refusal to open a second front in Europe in 1942 delivers a moral blow to Soviet public opinion, which had hoped that the second front would be opened, complicates the position of the Red Army at the front and injures the plans of the Soviet High Command. The difficulties in which the Red Army is involved through the refusal to open a second front in 1942 are bound to impair the military position of Britain and the other Allies."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Memorandum doubted that the second front would be opened in 1943. On January 30, 1943, the Soviet Government asked the U.S. and British governments what preparations were being made for the second front, and whether it would be opened in 1943. There was no reply, although the Soviet Government issued assurances that "the Soviet Armed Forces will do all in their power to continue the offensive against Germany and her allies on the Soviet-German front",<sup>3</sup> a pledge which, the whole world knows, it observed faithfully.

Churchill thought he could capitalise on the tremendous strain experienced by the Soviet Union at the time of the

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<sup>1</sup> W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence . . .*, Vol. 1, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Battle on the Volga. He clamoured for Soviet consent to British troops occupying Soviet Transcaucasia. But he soon saw that he would never get it. It was clear to him, moreover, that he and his U.S. colleagues were due for a disappointment. They had hoped the war would exhaust the Soviet Union. But there was no sign of this. The reverse was much more likely. This spurred Churchill, on his return to Britain in October 1942, to issue a secret memorandum in which he called for a broad military alliance against the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup>

With the Volga Battle at its height, British Ambassador Samuel Hoare and Japanese Ambassador Suma held secret talks in Madrid. Hoare proposed that Britain and Japan conclude peace. He said Britain was prepared to recognise Japan's acquisitions in North China, but wanted Japan to return Singapore and all of Malaya. The British peace overtures, like the U.S. proposals, made on different terms, pursued the same purpose of speeding a Soviet-Japanese war.

The United States, too, attempted to profit by the tense situation on the Soviet-German front. When Washington got wind of Churchill's proposal to send British troops to the Caucasus, the United States hastened to back it and insisted that a U.S. force participate in the undertaking. This was not all. The U.S. Government offered to set up American military bases at important Soviet economic and strategic centres in the Transcaucasus, the Pacific seaboard and Kamchatka. It made a fresh demand that U.S. air bases be set up in Siberia. "We cannot let the matter rest here," wrote General Henry H. Arnold, Commander of the U.S. Army Air Forces, to Eisenhower, "We must develop the facilities as quickly as possible. Furthermore, we must move into them so that when world conditions make it necessary there can be no argument about the matter."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> Matloff and Snell, *op cit.*, p. 341.

The Soviet Union demurred, and the U.S. ruling circles retaliated by sabotaging deliveries of supplies to the Soviet Union at the height of the Volga Battle.

Despite the firm Soviet stand, the U.S. and British governments insisted on their plans of occupying the Soviet Transcaucasus. On September 28, 1942, Churchill sent the Joint Anglo-American Command an aide-memoire in which he admonished them not to miss the bus in the Caucasus. But he was troubled by the possibility of the German offensive foundering in 1942.<sup>1</sup> The aide-memoire also said that PQ-19, a convoy of supply ships for the U.S.S.R., was cancelled, of which, he felt "most strongly", the Soviet Union should not be told. On October 5, 1942, Roosevelt sent Churchill a message in which he approved his plans of invading the Caucasus and agreed that the Soviet Union should not be told that the convoy would not sail.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile fierce fighting proceeded on the Soviet-German front. On June 28, 1942, the Germans took the offensive. The German attempt to crush the Soviet left flank south of Orel failed. But the Soviet Army was forced to retreat across the Don, fighting effective delaying actions against superior Nazi forces. On July 6 the Hitlerites were stopped short near Voronezh by counter-attacks from the north against the flank of the advancing enemy force. The initial German plan was frustrated. The pivot of the fighting shifted south, to the Volga sector. On July 12 the Soviet Supreme Command established the Volga Front under Colonel-General A. Jeremenko, with N. S. Khrushchov as Member of the Military Council.

The opening action of the Volga Battle was fought on the River Chir on July 17. For four harrowing months, until November 18, 1942, the Soviet Army stood its ground, putting up a stiff defence.

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<sup>1</sup> See W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 514.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 516.

Two German armies, the Sixth and the Fourth Panzer Army, converged on Volgograd. But the Soviet troops held the superior enemy forces at bay.

Men and officers performed miracles of bravery. Take just these few episodes, of which there were thousands upon thousands. Some hundred German tanks were destroyed on August 9 when the 64th Soviet Army counter-attacked. Near Kletskaya four soldiers of the 33rd Guard Division, 62nd Army, under P.O. Bolotov, who had 2 anti-tank guns between them, faced 30 German tanks and destroyed 15 of them in one day. On another sector, 16 soldiers of the 40th Guard Infantry Division, under Jr. Lt. V. V. Kochetkov, flung back five consecutive attacks by a company of nazis supported by 12 tanks on August 16. After they used up their ammunition, the surviving Soviet soldiers rushed the enemy tanks with bundles of handgrenades in their hands, and blew up six of them.

On July 25 the German Command launched its notorious Plan Edelweiss, aimed at seizing the Caucasus. German troops broke through to the Kuban area and the Northern Caucasus. Soviet troops of the North Caucasian Front were compelled to withdraw to the foothills of the Main Caucasian Range. Soviet resistance on the Volga was very tenacious. It was at this point that the German Command deployed its 4th Panzer Army from the Caucasian sector to that Volga city, depleting the German forces in the Northern Caucasus. Fierce fighting in the Caucasus continued until December 1942, when the Soviet troops finally halted the enemy.

German generals claim that a dire oil shortage was the cause of their failure in the Caucasus sector. Field Marshal von Kleist, Commander of Army Group A, asserts:

"We used up our fuel and came to a standstill. The fuel supply was inadequate."

Tippelskirch says the same thing. "Supply difficulties,"

he writes, "prevented us from capturing the Caucasian passes."<sup>1</sup>

But all these contentions are at variance with the facts. The real cause of the German failures lay in the mounting Soviet resistance and in the reckless adventurism of the German military commanders. Hard as he tried to prove that inadequate supplies were the reason for Nazi defeats, Kleist said in the long run:

"We may still have reached our goal if my armies had not been drained off unit after unit, to prop the offensive on Stalingrad. Hitler neglected his main objective as he sought to achieve the secondary one. In the final analysis, he achieved neither."

On August 21, under heavy pressure, the Soviet forces withdrew from the outer ring of defences to the inner ring in the city. On August 23 the Luftwaffe sent several hundred of its planes to bomb the peaceful city and its civilian population. Marshal A. Jeremenko described this piratic attack in one of his books: "The earth of Stalingrad seemed to bristle and turned black. It seemed as though a monstrous hurricane had fallen upon the city, raised it into the air and then flung back the ruins of its houses upon the squares and streets. The air grew hot, acrid and bitter. It became difficult to breathe. The din was undescrivable. It jarred on the ears with the hellish disharmony of diverse noises. The screech of dropping bombs mixed with the boom of the explosions, and the clatter of toppling houses with the crackle of the flames. And in this chaos of sounds we distinctly heard the groans and curses of the dying, the weeping and pleading of the children, the sobbing of the women. Our hearts contracted from pity for the innocent victims of this fascist brutality. The mind would not suffer the thought that it was impossible to

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt von Tippelskirch, *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 246.

prevent the pain of hundreds of peaceful people, especially the children."<sup>1</sup>

On September 13 the fighting shifted inside the city, and Hitler hastened to announce its fall. But his announcement was premature. The embattled city would not surrender. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1942-43 it was the focus of all operations on the Soviet-German front. The city was a major industrial and communications centre which the German Command coveted in order to cut the Volga and set the stage for capturing and holding the Caucasus.

The tense battle on the south wing of the Soviet-German front involved Germany's main forces, while the city on the Volga, in turn, involved the bulk of the enemy troops operating in the south. Concerned for the safety of the flank and rear of its Caucasian group, the German Command redeployed to the Volgograd sector the 4th Panzer, 3rd and 4th Rumanian and 8th Italian armies. The Caucasian group was thus weakened, and unable to continue its thrust. The heroic Soviet defence on the Volga frustrated the German plans of seizing the Caucasian oilfields.

The Soviet Command did its utmost to hold Volgograd, while maintaining its positions on the flanks of the German force engaged in the city. The bridgeheads on the right bank of the Don and the defile between the lakes south of Volgograd had to be held at all costs. In mid-September, the Soviet Command set about concentrating considerable forces northwest and south of Volgograd.

The Soviet Army defended Volgograd in very difficult circumstances. General Chuikov, who was in command of an army defending the city, wrote:

"Speaking of the city defence, one must describe the theatre of the battle, for it made the position of my army particularly difficult. The city stretches 40 kilometres from

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<sup>1</sup> А. И. Ерёмченко, *Сталинград*, Воениздат, 1961, стр. 135-136.

north to south, and is less than three kilometres wide. The steppes around it abound in ravines and gorges running west to east, as a rule, and emerging on the Volga bank. Thus, they divide the city into separate districts. The huge water barrier—the Volga—in my army's rear—was not only a hindrance to the flow of supplies. It prevented me from manoeuvring men and weapons. This had to be done at night, and only in the narrow strip running along the right bank of the Volga. The enemy held the dominating hills, and thus had a visual command of the terrain for dozens of kilometres, keeping the area under ceaseless fire from land and air. It may be recalled that the enemy had broken through to the Volga in the early stage of the battle, and threatened our flanks. This gives a good idea of how complex and difficult it was for the defenders of the city to stem the tide.”<sup>1</sup>

At one time the depth of the defences at Volgograd was a mere 700 metres. But the Soviet Army withstood the onslaught and delivered a crushing blow to the German troops. This gave it an opportunity of preparing an offensive which carried the Soviet troops from the Volga to Berlin and the Elbe.

The tenacious Soviet stand halted the German drive, both on the Volga and in the Caucasus. The enemy paid dearly for his venture in men and materiel. What is more, time was working against the nazis. The Soviet Command gained a chance to mobilise and prepare powerful reserves.

It was at the time of the Volga Battle that some Soviet infantry divisions were conferred the title Soviet Guard Divisions. By spring 1943 the Soviet Army had more than 300 Guard units and formations.

The world followed the grand battle on the Volga with bated breath. It was clear to everybody as the months went by that the outcome of the war hinged largely on

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<sup>1</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, February 2, 1946.

the outcome of the Volga Battle. A Beirut paper, *Saud al Shaab* wrote in October 1942: "The guns at Stalingrad are not only making mincemeat of the Germans. The walls of Berlin are shaking from them. Hitler is gnashing his teeth hysterically. Drug addict Göring is shaking in his boots. The pygmy Goebbels's heart is in his mouth. He is screaming to high heaven that the Russians are not playing the game by refusing to surrender. The echo of the gunfire reaches Paris, the pearl of France.... The shells bursting in Stalingrad are making the blood of Frenchmen seethe. They remind the French of their own guns, which thundered only yesterday at Valmy and Verdun and will thunder tomorrow in the rear of the invader, who defiled French soil. The echo of Stalingrad reverberates round the globe, in Chungking, New York, London and El Alamein. But some guns are burning from shame, because they are silent.... The city on the Volga gives notice of Hitler's early end. It has become a graveyard for the sinister and monstrous forces of fascism."

The city's successful defence delivered a crushing blow to the designs of reactionaries throughout the world. The counter-offensive buried their plans entirely. The forecasts of bourgeois military experts that the Soviet Union was unable to undertake large-scale offensive operations in 1942-43 were proved wrong.

By early 1943, the Soviet Union, alone though it was in its combat with Hitler Germany and its satellites, reversed the course of the Second World War and paved the way for victory over the fascist aggressors.

Credit for the German defeat on the Volga goes to the skill and ingenuity of Soviet General Headquarters, the General Staff, and the Military Councils of the fronts. Through skilful and expeditious manoeuvring the Soviet Command had managed secretly to mass considerable forces in the chosen sectors by severe economy on other fronts.

On November 19, 1942, the Soviet Army launched its



counter-offensive. "We were entirely in the dark about the concentration of large Russian forces on the outflanks of the 6th Army (on the Don)," said Colonel-General Jodl at the Nuremberg trial. "We had no idea of Russian strength in this sector. Nothing had been there before, and suddenly a blow of tremendous force and crucial significance was delivered there."

Leaders in the United States and Britain had not expected the Soviet onrush either. They relied on the communication of Admiral W. H. Standley, U. S. Ambassador in Moscow, who informed Washington in November 1942 that "he thought the Russian army would hold the Germans throughout the winter about where they were then".<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet attack was well timed. A pair of pincers, each composed of several prongs, pierced the German flanks. The troops of the South-West and Volgograd fronts made contact on November 23 at the township of Sovetsky, thus enveloping the big enemy force. Twenty German and two Rumanian divisions, totalling 330,000 men and officers, were trapped. In the offensive of November 19-30 the Soviet troops built up a strong outer ring of enclosure, capturing five and smashing seven enemy divisions.

In the second stage of the offensive the Soviet troops thwarted all German attempts to relieve the trapped Nazi armies. Field Marshal Manstein's Army Group Don, which broke through from the Kotelnikovo-Tormosin area, was checked and hurled back. The Soviet armies of the South-West, Volgograd and Voronezh fronts swept the enemy before them, and moved far westward, widening the outer ring of the encirclement to 170-250 kilometres. Meanwhile, troops of the Don Front steadily compressed the enveloped German troops into a constantly shrinking pocket.

On January 8, 1943, the Soviet Command presented an ultimatum to the invested German force. The Nazis turned it down. The German High Command ordered the troops

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<sup>1</sup> William Leahy, *I Was There*, New York, 1950, p. 124.

to stay where they were. To carry out this order, commanders at the front had to resort to extreme measures to maintain discipline. Three hundred and sixty-four men were executed.<sup>1</sup>

On January 10, 1943, the armies of the Don Front began mopping up the enveloped German force. The operation was completed by February 2. The plan of trapping and destroying the Nazi troops on the Volga culminated in a brilliant victory. "Crack German troops of 330,000 were destroyed or taken prisoner; Hitler Germany went into mourning, while the bright sun of victory shone gloriously over the Soviet Armed Forces."<sup>2</sup>

"It was the gravest defeat the German Army ever experienced," said Görlitz, a contemporary German bourgeois historian.<sup>3</sup>

The counter-attack at Volgograd developed into a general offensive along the huge front from Leningrad to the Azov Sea. In four months and 20 days the Soviet Army advanced 600-700 kilometres westward at some points, and liberated many important economic and strategic areas. The threat to the Volga and the Caucasus was lifted. Enemy losses added up to 112 divisions. In January 1943 the Soviet Army breached the blockade of Leningrad, and restored railway traffic along the southern bank of Lake Ladoga.

The outcome of the Volgograd Battle presented striking evidence of the socialist country's power and vitality. It showed that the Soviet Union possessed a mighty army equipped with modern armaments, experienced commanders, and splendid morale. The battle revealed the superiority of Soviet warcraft over that of Hitler Germany. It greatly enhanced Soviet international and military prestige. Progressives throughout the world hailed the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> Görlitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg, 1939-1945*, B. 1, S. 411.

<sup>2</sup> Р. Я. Малиновский, «Страж мира», *Правда*, 23 февраля, 1957 г.

<sup>3</sup> Görlitz, *op. cit.*, B. 1, S. 418.

Volga victory as an unexampled feat of valour and devotion.

The German defeat on the Volga was a turning point in the Second World War. It spelt ruin to the nazis, and victory to the anti-fascist coalition.

The Volga debacle evidenced the intrinsic weakness of Hitler's rule. An Italian historian, Communist Roberto Battaglia, wrote that the Soviet victory at Volgograd was "a culmination point . . . not only militarily, but also psychologically."<sup>1</sup>

Bourgeois politicians and historians outdo one another in belittling the historic Soviet victory. They either say nothing about the Volga Battle, or refer to it casually, giving pride of place to operations of secondary importance. In a report to the U.S. President, General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, equated Volgograd and El Alamein.

"The crisis of the war," he wrote, "broke out at Stalingrad and El Alamein."<sup>2</sup> He is undeterred by the fact that the latter battle involved a far smaller enemy force, that it was fought far away from the main war theatres, in the desert, and did not, nor could, affect the general course of the war.

True, some Western historians do not go against the facts and make a show of impartiality. Kurt von Tippelskirch, for example, admits in no uncertain way that the Volga defeat turned the tide of the war. "Although in the context of the war as a whole the developments in North Africa are given more prominence than the Stalingrad battle," he says, "the disaster at Stalingrad shocked the German Army and people to a much greater degree."<sup>3</sup>

"The disaster at Stalingrad" is something he keeps mentioning time and again throughout his book.

<sup>1</sup> Roberto Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza italiana*, Einandi Editore, 1953, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *The War Reports of Marshall, Arnold and King*, Philadelphia and New York, 1947, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> K. Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 268.

A prominent American war expert, Elseworth Raymond describes the Volga Battle as "a turning point" of the Second World War and stresses that the Soviet Army won it with no help from the U.S.A. and Britain. In a collection of articles published by Liddell Hart, Hitler general Heinz Guderian writes: "Stalingrad was the turning point of the Russian campaign. The front moved back—in jerks, it is true, and at long intervals, but remorselessly."<sup>1</sup>

The Volga defeat caused an acute crisis in the fascist camp. Germany went into mourning. Nazi propagandists tried to console the Germans by saying that Volgograd was very far from Berlin. But it was beginning to dawn on most people in Germany that the war against the Soviet Union would be lost. The Hitler clique, too, was in tantrums. General Jodl, for example, Guderian reports, was absolutely cast down.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the Volga Battle, on February 7, 1943, the nazi leadership ruled to continue the war and effect a "total mobilisation", i.e., to call to arms the rest of the German male population not employed in skilled jobs in the war industry. Many skilled workers were recruited as well. A nazi underground was planned in case Germany lost the war.

The nazis met the shortage in workmen by rounding up millions of foreign labourers for forced labour in German industry and agriculture. Among these were many young people forcibly transported to Germany from the occupied areas of the Soviet Union. There were also many men and officers of the Soviet Army, captured wounded or sick. Tens of thousands of Soviet citizens were tortured to death by the fascists in concentration camps, and many more were destroyed in the nazi "death factories". But neither torture nor death, slave labour nor hunger could

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soviet Army*, Ed. by B. H. Liddell Hart, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> See H. Guderian, *op. cit.*, S. 388.

break the spirit of the Soviet patriots. They fought on against fascism in the enemy's rear, on his own ground.

The struggle of Soviet patriots inside the fascist empire claimed many thousands of lives. It was waged by out-laws, men weakened by constant hunger and hard labour, behind the barbed wire of p.o.w. camps and in the camps of "Eastern workers". One had to be a Bolshevik, with a Bolshevik's courage and tenacity, to endure the dreadful ordeal of Hitlerite slavery, to spurn surrender and rally thousands of fighters to the struggle against fascism. The heroic struggle of Soviet people inside the nazi empire was moved by the spirit of socialist internationalism and merged with the patriotic deeds of German anti-fascists and with the liberation movement of all foreigners enslaved by the Third Reich.

The liberation struggle of Soviet people inside Hitler Germany and in the nazi-occupied countries diverted sizeable enemy forces from the Soviet-German and other fronts. It kept the nazi clique on tenterhooks, and greatly influenced the political situation in Germany. It contributed to the final defeat of fascism, and to the victory of the peace-loving forces.

The nazis lived in constant dread of mass actions by foreign workers. Hitler's General Headquarters and the Gestapo had a plan ready (coded as Valkyries) for military operations to suppress a possible revolt of war prisoners and foreign workers. A large force had to be kept in Germany for this emergency. It dealt mercilessly with members of the underground movement.

The nazis dreaded not only the foreign workers, but their own people as well, especially after the Volga defeat, which stimulated the underground Communist groups in Germany.

Communist groups carried on underground work in Germany throughout the war. One of the groups, headed by Anton Saefkow, Franz Jakob and Bernhard Bästlein, formed in Berlin in 1942, established strong contacts in about

30 industrial enterprises. Georg Schumann's Communist group was active in Saxony, Theodor Neubauer's—in Thuringia. All these underground organisations had a far-flung network and included not only members of the Communist Party, but also Social-Democrats, non-party people and soldiers of the German home army. They established contacts with men and officers of front-line units, and maintained connections with Soviet war prisoners and foreign workers in Germany.

In the south of the country, German Communists set up a major underground organisation—the Anti-Fascist German People's Front—which worked shoulder to shoulder with Soviet prisoners, who had an organisation of their own—the Fraternal War Prisoners' Association. Noting the close co-operation of these two organisations, Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the C.C. of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, wrote that organisations of Soviet war prisoners appeared rapidly in nearly all the South-German p.o.w. camps and in more than 20 camps of Eastern workers... By the end of 1943, when the two organisations had come to the highest point in their activities, Soviet officers had a Resistance organisation which embraced all South Germany from Karlsruhe to Vienna, and whose membership consisted of several thousand members organised in military units, partly armed. But their courageous preparations fell through, because the police managed to penetrate into both organisations.”<sup>1</sup>

The Communists called for the overthrow of Hitler by a popular uprising, worked actively against the war, for an immediate democratic peace, organised sabotage at factories producing war materials, and distributed anti-fascist leaflets.

On July 12, 1943, a Free Germany National Committee was formed by German anti-fascists in the Soviet Union. It was organised by German Communists and men and

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<sup>1</sup> *Novy Mir*, Moscow, No. 8, 1957, p. 201.

officers captured at Volgograd. The National Committee issued an appeal to the German troops and people, in which it analysed the situation and outlook on the Soviet-German front and inside Germany. The appeal urged all German patriots to wage a liberation struggle against fascist rule, for the establishment of a free Germany. Soon after, a Union of German Officers was formed, which accepted the programme of, and joined the Free Germany movement.

### 3

That a crisis had arisen in the fascist camp was evident from the fact that the nazis started thinking of how to end the war. They hoped for a deal with the ruling circles of the U.S.A. and Britain. The same tendencies also appeared in the latter two countries. The imperialists were frightened by the Volga victory, for it reduced to nought their hopes of weakening the Soviet Union. It is not surprising, therefore, that U.S. historians aver that the Soviet victory on the Volga sowed the seeds of the cold war. W. W. Rostow, for one, says, "the cold war can be dated. . . roughly from the beginning of 1943", and, incongruously, puts the blame for it on the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

As Soviet successes multiplied, the U.S. and British governments made a series of attempts to strike an anti-Soviet bargain with Hitler Germany. Throughout the war, reactionaries in Britain and the United States did their utmost to wreck the co-operation of the anti-fascist coalition, to protract the war, bleed the Soviet Union and save the nazi aggressors from total defeat.

The German imperialists, who were not slow in perceiving this state of affairs, broadened their secret talks with the governments of the United States and Britain after the Volga Battle. They offered peace, so they could in-

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<sup>1</sup> W. W. Rostow, *The United States in the World Arena. An Essay in Recent History*, New York, 1960, Part IV, p. 141.

tensify their war against the Soviet Union. The American and British imperialists were quite willing to hold these secret talks with the nazis, in defiance of their Allied obligations to the U.S.S.R.

The Hitlerites made use of the governments of Franco Spain, Sweden and Switzerland as mediators, aiming to split the anti-Hitler coalition and build up an Anglo-American-German bloc against the U.S.S.R. Samuel Hoare, the British Ambassador to Madrid, and Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, negotiated with the nazis through Spanish middlemen.

Most prominent in the series of attempts to effect a secret deal with Germany were the talks held in Switzerland in February 1943. Allen Dulles, by authority of the U.S. Government, met the Hitlerite envoy, Prince Hohenlohe. Dulles expounded the official U.S. views on war and peace. He said the United States wanted the German state to continue "as a factor of order and rehabilitation". Dulles stressed that the partition of Germany or the separation of Austria was out of the question. He also favoured giving German industry, that bulwark of war and aggression, a top role in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Dulles set forth a plan for reviving an anti-Soviet "cordon sanitaire" of Poland, Rumania and Hungary, adding that Poland should be expanded "to the East", i.e., at the expense of the Soviet Union. He informed Prince Hohenlohe of the United States intention to set up a Danubian Confederation of countries of South-East Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The Dulles-Hohenlohe talks were an outright attempt by the United States, which worked in unison with the British Government, to explore the possibilities of a separate peace with Hitler. As such, it was a gross violation of the Allied commitments. However, acute imperialist

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Conversation Pauls-Mr. Bull", *Falsifiers of History*, Moscow, 1951, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



contradictions between the two groups of powers prevented a new Anglo-American deal with Hitler Germany. The other reason why the talks foundered was the increased Soviet international prestige and the deep affection won by the heroic Soviet people among the masses throughout the world.

The U.S. intelligence service resumed its contact with the German industrialists and bankers, who had close ties with the U.S. monopolies. This group, which was headed by Hjalmar Schacht, was planning a *coup d'état* in order to replace Hitler with a new fascist dictator. They wanted this new führer to conclude an "honourable" peace with the U.S.A. and Britain, and to deploy the whole of the Wehrmacht to the Soviet-German front. Kaltenbrunner communicated with Dulles through Höttl, a Gestapo official, who made frequent visits to Switzerland. It was established at the Nuremberg trial that the contacts between Kaltenbrunner and Dulles via Höttl were particularly frequent after May 1943.

The Polish émigré government, which knew of the anti-Soviet "cordon sanitaire" project, launched at the beginning of 1943 a clamorous campaign demanding that the Soviet Union satisfy the expansionist ambitions of Polish landlords and capitalists. It went to the length of officially handing these demands to the Soviet Union.

Under the circumstances, the Soviet Union could no longer maintain relations with the Polish émigrés in London. In a Note dated April 25, 1943, the Soviet Government said that the Polish émigré government had assumed a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union and had so forfeited its Allied relationship with the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government inferred from available evidence that the Polish émigré government maintained contacts with the nazis and committed gross anti-Soviet provocations. Diplomatic relations with the London Poles were broken off.

The Soviet Government had notified the U.S. President and the British Prime Minister in good time that the atti-

tude of the Polish émigré government towards the U.S.S.R. was not normal and productive of violations of the rules of Allied relations. The facts cited by the Soviet Government were so obvious and convincing that the U.S. and British Governments did not even try to contest them. Churchill admitted in a personal message to the head of the Soviet Government that the Polish Government "make charges of an insulting character against the Soviet Government and thus seem to countenance the atrocious nazi propaganda".<sup>1</sup> Yet the U.S. and British governments sought to prevail upon the Soviet Government to maintain relations with the London Poles. The Soviet break with the émigré Poles invigorated the anti-fascist coalition. Furthermore, it laid a firm foundation for close friendship between the Soviet and Polish peoples.

Poles resident in the Soviet Union formed a Union of Polish Patriots. The Union organised an armed detachment—the patriotic Kosciuszko Division—which first saw action against the nazis at Lenino, Smolensk Region, on October 12, 1943. This is the day Poles now celebrate as Army Day.

The friendly support of the Soviet Union helped the Polish patriots within Poland to intensify the struggle against the nazi invaders and their henchmen. December 31, 1943, witnessed the establishment in Warsaw of their governing body—the Krajowa Rada Narodowa.

#### 4

The Volga victory induced an acute crisis not only in Germany, but in the fascist bloc as a whole. The Soviet Army frustrated the plan of co-operation between the Wehrmacht and the Japanese army. Japan was to have attacked the Soviet Far East and Siberia after the Germans had seized Volgograd. The Japanese and German

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 124-25.

armies were to have met somewhere in Siberia and the Middle East. But now, the Japanese imperialists abandoned this plan and no longer entertained any hope of German success.

Having massed its élite troops, half of its artillery and two-thirds of its tanks on the Soviet border, Japan fell back on the defensive in the Pacific Theatre, relinquishing the strategic initiative to its enemies. The Volga victory also altered the military and strategic situation in the Pacific in another way. New sections of the people were roused by it to resist the Japanese aggressors.

But the governments of the U.S.A. and Britain, and Chiang Kai-shek too, did not use the favourable situation wrought by the victories of Soviet arms. They did not undertake any offensive operations to speak of against Japan in 1943.

It was quite different with the People's Liberation Army of China. In 1943, inspired by the Soviet victories, it mounted a sweeping offensive. Japanese historians stress the heroism displayed by the Communist-led 8th and 4th Route armies, and the partisan units.<sup>1</sup> The People's Liberation Army grew rapidly. In the latter half of 1943 the 8th and 4th armies were about 500,000 strong, while the partisan units had nearly two million men. In the winter of 1942-43 life in the liberated areas in South, Central and Eastern Hupeh Province went back to normal.

The United States and Britain were bent on weakening the liberation movement in China, and in January 1943 relinquished their extraterritorial rights to the Chiang Kai-shek government, hoping that this would add to its popularity and prestige.

The heavy losses suffered by the armies of the German satellites during the Soviet offensives stimulated the anti-fascist struggle in those countries. The situation was especially acute in Italy. The Soviet stand, wrote Battaglia, helped the Italian workers "to realise the particular tasks

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<sup>1</sup> *История войны на Тихом океане*, т. IV, стр. 53.

of the Italian working class, and to awaken to their guiding role with regard to the nation as a whole".<sup>1</sup> Working-class influence grew in Italy day by day. On March 9, 1943, Mussolini sent a letter to Hitler urging peace with the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The Vatican made a similar appeal. On March 25, 1943, Mussolini said that the Soviet Union could not be annihilated "even if Japan entered it."<sup>3</sup>

Hitler ignored Mussolini's advice. But even if Italy had managed to withdraw from the war at that time, the popular movement against the fascist dictatorship would not have ceased. After the Volga Battle Mussolini's fascist regime was doomed.

Rumania's fascist rulers were deeply alarmed, too. Antonescu tried to stop the shipments of cannon-fodder. In a personal message to Hitler, he wrote: "In 1942 Rumania made the most palpable contribution of all the European countries in terms of its 26 best divisions. We lost 18 of them on the Don and near Stalingrad during the Soviet offensive which we could not stem. In engagements on the Kuban River the other eight divisions lost in a year war materiel sufficient to equip two divisions. Our casualties amount to 250,000 men, excluding convalescents, while the equipment of 24 divisions has been lost for good."<sup>4</sup>

The complaints of Rumania's fascist dictator also pursued another aim. Antonescu wanted the concessions Hitler had promised him at the expense of Horthy Hungary. But Hitler had made promises to both the Rumanian and the Hungarian fascists, and could honour neither. Antonescu continued sending fresh divisions to the Soviet-German front.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> See Ciano, *Diario*, p. 550-58.

<sup>3</sup> *Les Lettres secrètes échangées par Hitler et Mussolini (1940-1943)*, Ed. du Pavois, Paris, 1946, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Ю. Корольков, «Как подготавлился план Барбароссы», *Военная мысль* № 8, 1946, стр. 46.

The political situation also deteriorated in Hungary. The remainder of the 2nd Hungarian Army, smashed by Soviet troops, was withdrawn to Hungary and disbanded. There was widespread discontent in the country over Hungary's participation in the war.

Similar discontent arose in Finland, but the Finnish fascists were still sure of Germany's potentialities. They did not grasp the implications of the Volga Battle and still pinned their hopes on a German victory.

All in all, however, the Volga victory depressed all those who counted on the exhaustion of the U.S.S.R., and instilled fresh strength in those who longed for freedom and independence.

## 5

The Soviet partisans set an inspiring example to all peoples in their fight against the German invaders. The Soviet partisan movement was a powerful force.

The first stage of the Soviet partisan movement covers the period from the beginning of the war to late autumn 1942. This was when partisan units were formed, the most effective methods and forms of struggle were found, and the proper organisational structure of the partisan movement was framed.

As time went by, the partisan units and groups were enlarged, and established permanent liaison with the Soviet Army Command. On May 30, 1942, a Central Partisan Staff was set up at General Headquarters of the Supreme Command, and in July 1942 it was supplemented by a Ukrainian Staff.

Local partisan headquarters were also set up in the occupied territories. Partisan units operating in the Bryansk forest area established a joint staff in the summer of 1942, and the partisan units of Minsk Region established one in autumn 1942. The staffs co-ordinated and developed

the partisan movement, and furthered close co-operation with the Soviet Army.

The partisan units made the ground burn under the feet of the enemy. They destroyed enemy manpower and war materiel. In Minsk alone the partisans killed over 1,600 nazi military and civil officials, including Wilhelm Kube, butcher-in-chief and Hitler's vicegerent in Byelorussia. According to the German General Staff, Soviet partisans exploded 960 bombs in Zhitomir in one day.<sup>1</sup> Partisan formations liberated vast areas from the enemy and set up partisan territories. In summer 1942 one such territory of 400 villages and towns was established in the north-west regions. Seventy-two partisan units and ninety groups were active in the Bryansk forest area. By autumn 1942 partisan territories sprang up in Leningrad and Smolensk regions, in the Polesye forests, Brest Region, the Nalibok Woods, near Shepetovka, etc.

Partisans carried out successful railway warfare, disrupting German deliveries of war materials to the front.

Partisan formations fought in close co-operation with the Soviet regular troops. At the end of January 1942, when General Belov's Cavalry Corps was raiding the Vyazma area, partisan units in the Moscow Region joined in the offensive and captured Dorogobuzh by storm. Throughout the Soviet offensive near Moscow guerrilla fighters helped the regulars by harassing the enemy rear and collecting intelligence. During the Volga Battle the partisan operations were especially vigorous.

The guerrilla formations were very mobile. In the early stage of the war the Byelorussian partisans made several raids into the enemy rear. In May-June 1942 G. Linkov's units marched from the Lepel area to Polesye, enlisting fresh forces for the partisan movement in Byelorussia.

To combat the guerrilla movement in the autumn of 1942 the German Command employed 144 police battal-

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<sup>1</sup> See Görlitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, B. II, S. 121.

ions, 27 police regiments, 10 police and punitive SS divisions, two guard corps, 20 German and satellite infantry divisions, and 72 special formations. All in all, some 60 divisions had to be withdrawn from the front lines to repel partisan actions.

The second stage of the partisan movement began with the Soviet counter-offensive in the Volga area and ended in the spring of 1944. The partisans developed a massive offensive, closely associated with the general Soviet Army attack.

The German Command was deeply troubled by the guerrilla fighting. Already on July 25, 1941, a month after the war broke out, it issued a special order about Soviet partisan actions. On October 25, 1941, it issued a special directive on how "to fight the guerrilla bands". As the partisan movement grew stronger, anxiety among the nazis increased. On September 6, 1942, Hitler's General Headquarters issued an order which admitted that "the bands in the East have become an unbearable menace during the last few months, and are seriously threatening the supply lines to the front".<sup>1</sup> Soon after, it published "Instructions on How to Fight the Bands in the East".

Memoirs by former Hitler generals contain evidence of nazi distress over the partisan movement. Guderian writes that "guerrilla warfare has become a real scourge greatly affecting the morale of front-line soldiers".<sup>2</sup> Werner Picht, an ideologist of German imperialism, stated that "the longer the German soldier stayed in that country, the greater the hell that it was for him".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. A. Dixon and O. Heilbrunn, *Communist Guerrilla Warfare*, London, 1954, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Bilanz der Zweiten Weltkriegeres*, S. 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 45.

The liberation struggle in the occupied countries passed to a new stage. Real guerrilla armies developed from separate partisan units. United national fronts were promoted by Communists in the occupied countries. The Communist Parties rallied the people to active struggle against the invaders.

French workers sabotaged production at enterprises filling German war orders. The forests and mountains of Southern France, especially the departments of Upper Savoy, became a partisan citadel. The francs-tireurs destroyed transmission lines and power stations. Between 1941 and 1944 they made 1,500 sallies, destroying 1,600 and damaging 1,200 power-line masts. Two transmission lines supplying the Paris area with electricity from Alpine hydro-power stations were put out of action for 320 days. In 1943 the patriots struck in the industrial centre of Le Creusot and stopped 31 factories and works in the Briey Basin for a week.<sup>1</sup> In November and December 1943 patriots in Grenoble blew up artillery dumps and nazi military barracks.

By the end of 1943 there were about 200,000 francs-tireurs and other partisans in France. A National Resistance Council, established on the initiative of the Communists on May 27, 1943, co-ordinated the patriotic movement in France. The Council consisted of 33 representatives from all the political parties and organisations participating in the Resistance Movement.

The first partisan units appeared in Italy in 1943. They were based in Piedmont, Lombardy and Emilia. In Eriuli, an industrial worker and Communist, Mario Fantini, formed the First Garibaldi Battalion of 500 men in the autumn of 1943. By that time the partisan movement had swept across Italy, and was particularly strong in the country's north.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Liberté*, November 30, 1947.



In Czechoslovakia, too, the partisan movement was gaining momentum. At the beginning of 1943, a big partisan formation named after Chapayev, a hero of the Civil War in Soviet Russia, went into action against the Germans in Eastern Slovakia.

A National-Liberation Army was founded in Bulgaria in 1943. It struck at Nazi war bases and supply lines.

At their conference in Durazzo (September 16, 1942), Albanian patriots discussed the integration of all Albanian partisan units. A general council and general staff were created to direct the armed struggle. On July 27, 1943, the general staff issued an order to amalgamate all partisan forces into a People's Liberation Army. Very soon this army was containing 170,000 fascist troops. Many Italian soldiers went over to the Albanian People's Liberation Army and formed the Antonio Gramsci Partisan Battalion.

By autumn 1943 the partisan movement spread to almost all Yugoslavia. The partisans had to cope not only with the German troops, but also with the chetnik units under Mihajlovič, Defence Minister of the Yugoslav émigré government, which enjoyed British and U.S. support.

On December 14, 1943, the Information Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. said in a special statement that "the activities of the Chetniks of General Mihajlovič ... have hitherto prejudiced rather than helped the cause of the struggle of the Yugoslav people against the German invaders, and for this reason could not but meet with an unfavourable attitude in the U.S.S.R."<sup>1</sup>

The German generals and the fascist leadership dreaded the partisan movement and screamed to high heaven that "partisan warfare contradicted the rules of international law".<sup>2</sup> But the author of this quotation, Hitler Colo-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 101.

nel-General Lothar Rendulič, admits the momentous significance of partisan warfare in the Second World War. "In no other war was partisan warfare as important as in the last world war," he writes. "In scale and scope, it was something completely new in the history of wars. Through its tremendous effect on the front-line troops and the various supply problems, on the rear and the administration of the occupied territories it became part of the total war. Its appearance and steadily growing intensity from year to year in Russia, Poland, in the Balkans, but also in France and Italy, influenced the character of the Second World War as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

The colossal scope of the partisan movement testified to the fact that the Second World War gradually assumed the character of a peoples' war against the fascist aggressors.

In all countries, the peoples' struggle against fascism was directed by the Communist Parties. This was not an accident. The crucible of war showed the peoples that they would achieve their national aspirations and secure freedom and independence only under the guidance of the Communists.

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The Volga Battle was the greatest of all the battles fought on the Soviet-German front. It was crowned by a victory over the cream of the Wehrmacht. It was not simply a big victory, but marked a decisive turn of the tide in the whole Second World War.

The Soviet Army wrested the strategic initiative from Germany, and Hitler's troops were forced to pass from the offensive to defence. Defence, however, augured Germany nothing but defeat.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 135.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### THE FIGHT FOR NORTH AFRICA

#### 1

In North Africa British troops and Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps waged a see-saw war from November 1940 to September 1941. But the German Command paid less and less attention to this sector as time went by. At the outset, the Libyan front looked important to Germany, because it wanted to capture the Suez Canal and cut Britain's main communication line to its colonies.

The British Government, for its part, bent every effort to keep its lifeline secure, and the Libyan front occupied a prominent place in its strategy.

The situation changed after the Germans were routed near Moscow. From then on, the Soviet-German front held down all German forces, making Hitler divert his attention from other fronts. Fuller admits that "Hitler and his staff looked upon the Libyan war as a sideshow, and of so little consequence that it did not warrant a diversion of forces which might possibly be of use in Russia".<sup>1</sup> Tippleskirch, too, repeatedly stresses that "the German Wehrmacht was more than tied up in Russia".<sup>2</sup>

In December 1941 and in June 1942 Roosevelt and Churchill discussed at their conferences in Washington

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<sup>1</sup> J. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> K. Tippleskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 225.

the outlook of operations on the war fronts. Serious disagreements arose between the two statesmen. The British Government stuck firmly to its plan of invading South-East Europe, with Turkey participating. Churchill was an eloquent advocate of so-called Balkan strategy. He repeated arguments brought up by Lloyd George during the First World War, calling the Balkans "the back door to Europe" and "Europe's soft underbelly" which would open the way to a swift victory.

In actual fact, the British imperialists thought least of all about speeding the end of the war. The key purpose of their Balkan strategy was to establish British domination in South-East Europe, impose a colonial regime on its peoples and rehabilitate an anti-Soviet "cordon sanitaire" that would be a weapon of British foreign policy. After the Soviet Army won several major victories, Balkan strategy was meant to perform yet another task, that of blocking a Soviet offensive across the continent by occupying South-East Europe and subsequently moving the Anglo-American forces northward.

The U.S. imperialists had their own plans as regards South-East Europe. In the circumstances, however, they considered invasion of North Africa to be their main goal. Their plan was to gain a foothold there, to seize North Africa's wealth, and then lay claim to the oilfields in the Middle East.

"British prestige among the peoples of the Near East has sunk lower than at any time during the past century," wrote an American magazine. "The United States can no longer afford to leave control of Near Eastern affairs in British hands. . . . We must not forget that the Near East is the best bridge to Europe; if that bridge is lost it will have to be reconquered, even at the cost of hundreds of thousands of American lives. Fortunately, the Near East is not lost yet. But we must hurry. The United States must make the Near East a fortress by concentrating immense military forces there, and buttress the fortress with all of

the political and economic means at its disposal. It is imperative that this immense opportunity should not be allowed to go by default.”<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. ruling circles sought to gain a hold on important economic and political positions of their competitors in both the enemy and Allied camps. This is what made the U.S. political leaders suggest an invasion of North Africa, whose economic resources had long been an object of their ambitions. After North Africa, the Americans planned to invade Italy, Austria and the Balkans. To promote the interests of the U.S. monopolies, Washington claimed a commanding role in the planning of Anglo-American war operations. This is how Anglo-American and U.S.-French imperialist contradictions came to the surface in questions of military policy.

Roosevelt attached great importance to North Africa, since “the whole of this region was evidently of vital interest to the United States”.<sup>2</sup> This was the reason why American aircraft were busy photographing North Africa from the air as early as 1940-1941.

Initially, the U.S. War Department objected to the African invasion, because it “could be only an indirect contribution to the defeat of the nazis”.<sup>3</sup> But the American monopolies induced the War Department to accept their plan.

The U.S. Government did not show its hand completely to its British partners and managed to talk Britain into the African landing. In the circumstances, the British Government accepted the expansionist ambitions of U.S. imperialism, which the latter sought to satisfy at France's expense.

The U.S. Government wanted to deal with French politicians who would agree to relinquish leadership in North

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<sup>1</sup> *Asia*, April 1942, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> William L. Langer, *Le Jeu Américain à Vichy*, Paris, 1948, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Matloff and Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Africa to the U.S. monopolies. It was prepared to negotiate with anybody who would open the gates of North Africa to U.S. troops, said de Gaulle in his memoirs. To be sure, it did find such politicians; they were General Weygand and Admiral Darlan. These two agreed to help the United States, provided it acted vigorously and ensured success.

As the Vichy band saw Hitler's plans of crushing the Soviet Union going up in smoke, it evinced a marked desire to strike a bargain with the United States. In a message to Washington concerning his talks with Darlan, Leahy wrote that the unexpected difficulties the Germans ran into in Russia made the French, including Darlan and other collaborationists, gravitate towards the U.S. point of view. Their ultimate attitude, he wrote, would depend on the outcome of the Russian campaign.<sup>1</sup>

In Pétain's Vichy government Darlan was a prominent figure. Since spring 1941 he held the posts of Premier, Defence Minister, Aviation Minister, Minister of the Navy, Foreign Minister and Minister of Information. He had worked hard to shore up the fascist regime in France, while flirting with the U.S. Government, which kept the U.S. Government from establishing ties with the French National Committee of Liberation.

While preparations were being made for the African landing, the British Government made up its mind to launch an offensive in that area in order to recoup its losses before the Americans arrived. The strategic situation was quite favourable, because the Battle on the Volga not only drew off considerable nazi forces, depleting Germany's reserves, but also compelled Hitler to denude the African front and deploy forces from it to the Soviet-German Theatre. By autumn 1942 the 8th British Army had seven infantry and three armoured divisions and seven tank brigades opposing four German and eleven Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

divisions, which had seen considerable action and were numerically under strength.

On October 23, 1942, the British troops passed to the offensive and mounted a sudden attack in the El Alamein sector. The German and Italian troops retreated all along the front. In a fortnight of bitter fighting the British troops advanced 850 kilometres, and on November 20 captured Benghazi. The plight of the German troops was rendered hopeless when an Anglo-American force landed in Morocco and Algeria far in their rear.

## 2

Operation Torch, the cover name of the Anglo-American landing in North Africa, began on November 8, 1942. The operation was accomplished by three groups under the command of Lt.-Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. One group of Americans sailed from the United States and landed in French Morocco. The other two, made up of British and American troops, arrived from England. One of them landed in the Oran sector, the other near Algiers. The landing forces were brought in 500 transports covered by 350 naval vessels.

Franco Spain got wind of the Anglo-American landing some time before, and informed Germany. But Hitler could do nothing about it, because he had his hands full in the Battle on the Volga.

The French armed forces in North Africa offered no more than token resistance. Admiral Jean Darlan, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Vichy forces in North Africa, concluded a cease-fire agreement with General Eisenhower, enabling the Anglo-American troops to sweep inshore and occupy Algeria, Morocco and parts of Tunisia, the rest of the area still being in German hands.

Although the African landing had a specific purpose and did not appreciably influence the course of the war, the loss of North Africa was a painful blow to Germany,

which had exploited African raw materials and foodstuffs. Besides, many French naval vessels stationed in African ports joined the Allies. However a considerable section of the French Navy was in Toulon, in the south of France. This being so, the nazis saw no sense any more in maintaining an unoccupied part of France.

On November 21, 1942, German troops crossed the demarcation line. It was their objective to capture the French warships in Toulon. In the meantime, Italian troops entered Nice, Savoy and Corsica.

The Germans invested Toulon. Pétain's messenger, Admiral Abrial, rushed to the city with orders to prevail on the French sailors to surrender their vessels to the Germans. But his mission failed. The French sailors demurred. Unable to take the ships to sea, the French sailors scuttled them. The scuttled Toulon naval force consisted of three battleships, an aircraft carrier, four heavy and three light cruisers, 25 destroyers, 26 submarines and other vessels.

Flandin, Pétain's Foreign Minister, Pucheu and Peyrouton, who had both been Ministers of the Interior in the Vichy government, and other extreme reactionaries followed the example set by Darlan after the Anglo-American landing in North Africa, and sided with the United States and Britain. Darlan gave them official posts in his civil administration of French North Africa—the Supreme Commissariat. Peyrouton was appointed Governor of Algeria.

The appointments were made with the approval of the U.S. Government. At a press conference on November 18, 1942, President Roosevelt said he fully backed all the agreements concluded by Eisenhower in North Africa. Eager to subjugate France and acquire a foothold in its colonies, the U.S. monopolies were quite willing to deal with recent collaborators. With U.S. backing, Darlan hastened to proclaim himself "head" of the French state, commander-in-chief of the French armed forces and political dictator.



The Anglo-American authorities did not interfere with the fascist legislation enforced by the Vichy government in North Africa, sanctioning the persecution and suppression of the patriotic forces. Twenty-seven Communist members of parliament stayed behind the bars of the Maison-Carrée convict prison in Algiers, where they had been thrown on Pétain's orders. "Two months have passed since the Anglo-American landing," Florimond Bonte, one of the 27 imprisoned Communists, wrote in his diary, "but none of the political prisoners has been freed. We were kept in prison because the authorities knew that as soon as we were liberated we would demand punishment for the traitors and fight for the national and social liberation of France and Algeria, and for the establishment of truly democratic institutions."<sup>1</sup>

The twenty-seven Communists wrote to Eisenhower, expressing surprise at being kept behind bars. But they did not receive a reply. "The American authorities," Florimond Bonte wrote, "preferred to deal with inveterate Vichyists, who had been active accomplices of Hitler and Mussolini, since they represented reaction and obeyed the orders of the magnates."<sup>2</sup> It was not until February 5, 1943, almost three months after the Anglo-American landing, that the Communist deputies were released.

The situation in North Africa roused considerable public anger. United States support of French reactionaries and fascist collaborators raised the veil on the true aims of the U.S. imperialists. Progressives throughout the world were indignant over the U.S. actions. The democratic press pointed out that U.S. policy in North Africa went against the liberative aims of the war against fascism.

It was evident that the U.S. Government had an ulterior motive in supporting the French fascist reactionaries in North Africa. It was a premeditated line, which discredited U.S. policy and antagonised the French. So the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> Florimond Bonte, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Government decided to dispense with Darlan's services. In December 1942 Darlan was assassinated. Another French reactionary, General Henri Giraud, was made his successor.

January 14 to 24, 1943, delegations of U.S. and British leaders headed by Roosevelt and Churchill held a conference some five miles from Casablanca, North Africa. The official communiqué said the conference was convened "with a view to drawing the utmost advantage from the markedly favourable turn of events at the close of 1942".<sup>1</sup> But, paradoxically, as an outcome of the conference the second front in Europe was again postponed, this time from 1943 to 1944. As a substitute, the Anglo-Americans mapped out the invasion of Sicily, a relatively insignificant operation, for the summer of 1943. The Casablanca Conference, said U.S. journalist Ralph Ingersoll, "laboured mightily and . . . brought forth the Sicilian mouse."<sup>2</sup>

As for warfare against Germany proper, the conference ruled to limit it to air raids only.

The information furnished to the Soviet Government concerning the Casablanca talks was far from complete. The message Roosevelt and Churchill sent to the U.S.S.R. said:

"Our ruling purpose is to bring to bear upon Germany and Italy the maximum forces by land, sea and air which can be physically applied."<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Government saw the implications of the Casablanca Conference. It pointed out that the second front was again being postponed and that Anglo-American operations in Tunisia were suspended for no tangible reason. This comforted the Germans, who promptly deployed an additional 27 divisions, including five panzer divisions, to the Soviet-German front.

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. V, World Peace Foundation, Boston, 1944, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Ingersoll, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

The Casablanca Conference also discussed the Pacific Theatre. But it took no decision to intensify the anti-Japanese war. Chiang Kai-shek assented. The participants in the conference thought it very desirable to get a definite engagement from the U.S.S.R., that it would join in the struggle against Japan once Germany was out of the war.<sup>1</sup>

The Casablanca Conference witnessed fresh Anglo-American dissent over the course of military action, especially in the European Theatre. The controversy culminated in compromise, the parties dividing their spheres of influence. Britain was to bear political and military "responsibility" for the Balkans and the Middle East, while the United States was "responsible" for North Africa and the Far East. The U.S. spokesman consented to prepare an invasion of South-East Europe in conformity with Churchill's plans.

From the Casablanca meeting Churchill flew to Aden, where he conferred January 30 and 31, 1943, with President Ismet İnönü and other Turkish leaders. "The Turkish statesmen," the official communiqué said, "reviewed Turkish policy over the last few critical years, while the Prime Minister assured them that His Majesty's Government has been watching this policy with full sympathy and understanding."<sup>2</sup> Note that Churchill did not shrink from thus expressing solidarity with the pro-Hitler policy of Turkey's rulers.

In his negotiations with the Turkish leaders Churchill did his best to secure for British capital more favourable conditions to fight back U.S. economic expansion in Turkey, and to retain the Turkish market for Britain. The British Cabinet was eager to fortify the position of British firms in the Near and Middle East, because their U.S. rivals were treading dangerously on their toes in that area. Churchill also discussed Turkey's participation in British

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 612.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, February 2, 1943.

Balkan strategy, promising the Turks a lavish supply of armaments.

Germany was losing battle after battle at the time, and the Turkish reactionaries were quite willing to alter the trend of their policy and grind the axe of British and U.S. ruling quarters, though they were not quite ready yet to break relations entirely with Hitler.

In another controversy at Casablanca, France was the bone of contention between the U.S.A. and Britain. The British had established close relations with de Gaulle, and were disgusted with the American nomination of General Giraud. Ultimately, the U.S.A. and Britain reached the compromise decision of letting de Gaulle and Giraud share leadership in the French émigré government on equal terms.

But their decision hung fire, because there was acute rivalry between the two principals in the Anglo-American deal—de Gaulle and Giraud. A French Committee of National Liberation was formed at last on June 8, 1943. De Gaulle and Giraud were appointed co-chairmen, and each had six followers. The U.S. Government continued backing General Giraud. In July 1943 it invited Giraud to visit the United States, and deliberately snubbed de Gaulle. Recognition of the French National Committee of Liberation by the U.S.A. and Britain was held up. In the meantime, the Soviet Government, respectful of French statehood, decided to recognise the Committee. When he heard of this, Churchill sent a special message to the Soviet Government on June 23, 1943. But the British Premier had no valid arguments to support his attitude to the French Committee.

On August 23, 1943, the Soviet Government announced that it "decided to recognise the French Committee of National Liberation as the representative of the State interests of the French Republic"<sup>1</sup> and to exchange with it plenipotentiary missions.

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 234.

Even after they extended their official recognition to the French National Committee of Liberation, the United States and Britain continued ignoring it. They did not reply to its proposals of September 1943 concerning terms of co-operation between it and the U.S. and British military commands after the re-entry of France. Although France had this representative body, the United States formed a special military administration—the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories (A.M.G.O.T.)—for France as well as other countries to be entered by Anglo-American troops. A.M.G.O.T. was to secure American leadership (with Britain participating) in areas of Europe awaiting liberation from fascist occupation. In April, the U.S. President issued instructions whereby supreme power in France would belong to the Commander-in-Chief, that is, General Dwight D. Eisenhower.<sup>1</sup>

Having set its sights on forming and consolidating its own authority in France, rather than that of any French claimants to power, the United States lost interest in General Giraud. Furthermore, French public opinion evinced little or no liking for Giraud. On November 9, 1943, Giraud resigned, and de Gaulle remained sole Chairman of the French National Committee of Liberation.

The Casablanca Conference also discussed the ultimate objective of the war with Germany. It resolved to prosecute the war until the *unconditional surrender* of the fascist states. This decision reflected the Soviet Union's influence, which had defined the task more fully by invoking the *complete defeat* of Hitler Germany and its unconditional surrender.

This decision was greeted with an outburst of petulance and anger by the extreme reactionary section of the U.S. and British ruling circles, who had kept hoping for a

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<sup>1</sup> See De Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre, L'Unité—1942-44*, p. 212.

separate compromise peace with the fascist states. British war theorist Liddell Hart denounced the term "unconditional surrender" in 1944. He thought it advisable to preserve the Hitler regime, and, which was more, the Führer himself as head of the German state. "The prospect of Hitler's overthrow," he wrote, "carries the ominous possibility that in the place of the man will arise a legend, even more dangerous to civilisation than the Napoleonic legend has proved."<sup>1</sup> The same point of view was held by another British historian, J. Fuller, who maintained that the two words—"unconditional surrender"—would "hang like a putrefying albatross around the necks of America and Britain".<sup>2</sup> Charles G. Tensill, an American historian, viciously attacked Roosevelt for using the term. Tensill said the United States should stay on the sidelines and let Germany and the Soviet Union destroy each other.<sup>3</sup> Appealing to the "general experience of war through many centuries", Liddell Hart argued that the long run of Britain's security and prosperity could be traced to the fact that it had usually ended its wars by agreement, instead of exhausting itself in pursuit of victory as its successive continental rivals had done.<sup>4</sup>

On March 20, 1943, the British 8th Army, deployed near the Libya-Tunisia border, resumed its offensive. Eisenhower's troops attacked in Western Tunisia. Hemmed in from two sides, the Italo-German troops withdrew to the north of Tunisia. In early May they converged to Cape Bon, the north-eastern point of Tunisia, and laid down their arms on May 12. The war in North Africa was over.

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<sup>1</sup> Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn from History*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1944, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup> See C. G. Tensill, *Back Door to War. Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933-1941*, Chicago, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn From History*, p. 50.

The North African victory fired the ambitions of the American monopolists to dominate the world. Leading bourgeois journalists, very sensitive and responsive to the wishes of the tycoons, opened a pertinent press offensive. In 1943 U.S. publicist Walter Lippmann came out with the project of an "Atlantic community", a prospective instrument of U.S. hegemony in the capitalist world. He repeated his proposal a few months later, and described the United States as the centre of "Western civilisation".<sup>1</sup> The U.S. monopolies were bent on dominating those of the capitalist countries that were ravished by the war.

But the avarice of the U.S. monopolies ranged ever farther. They showed an intense interest in the British and French colonies, especially those of the Middle East. In September 1944 the U.S. *Fortune* magazine wrote:

"We have built roads and seaports and airfields in the Middle East. . . . These cannot be written off, like obsolete tanks or scrapped bazookas, because they are now as much a part of world geography as is the Panama Canal—and we made them. They are also a vital link in the global communications we have built, for which we have incurred a large part of our national debt. . . . We also have huge oil interests in the Middle East".<sup>2</sup>

Note the parallel drawn by the journal between the Middle East and the Panama Canal zone where the U.S. monopolies exercise complete control.

The struggle for North Africa and the Middle East did not proceed merely in the context of the war, between the U.S.A. and Britain, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other. It was also a struggle between the imperialists of the United States and Britain, between those of the United States and France. Furthermore, it was a struggle against the national aspirations of the

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<sup>1</sup> W. Lippmann, *U.S. War Aims*, Boston, 1945, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Fortune*, September 1944, p. 113.

Eastern peoples. The U.S. and British ruling circles kept the peoples of Africa and Asia deliberately on the sidelines of the war and opposed the Arab countries joining it.

The U.S. and British ruling circles were farthest from the thought of liberating the peoples. On the contrary, their purpose was to strengthen their colonial grip on them. That was the core of their wartime policy in the Eastern countries.

The United States and Britain were fighting Hitler, because they were determined to frustrate his plans for world domination and to promote their own. It was for the benefit of world opinion that they made liberal use of anti-fascist and liberation slogans. Just the same, they went out of their way to prevent the masses from raising the banner of liberation in the war against the fascist states. Throughout the war, which involved scores of millions of people, the British and U.S. imperialists concentrated on the pursuit of their narrow egoistic aims.

However, when General George G. Patton, Commander of the U.S. Third Army, took the liberty of declaring, "It is our destiny to rule the world,"<sup>1</sup> the U.S. Government and its War Department took exception to his excessive frankness, which roused adverse comment all over the world.

American imperialism's itch for world power was evident from its plans for the future. Walter Lippmann saw the implications of this in 1943, and warned that this could spark "the most terrible of all wars."<sup>2</sup> While the Second World War was still at its height, the U.S. Government built war industries far in excess of its needs and spent immense funds on developing a web of war bases that would outlive the war and promote its aggressive plans in the post-war period.

U.S. and British policy towards Germany was predicated entirely by the imperialist plans of their ruling classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Omar Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> W. Lippmann, *U.S. War Aims*, Boston, 1945, p. 132.



Albert Z. Carr, Truman's special assistant, wrote in his diary in 1943: "High officials in Washington and London did not conceal in private talks their expectation of trouble with Russia after the war. Roosevelt's insistence on 'unconditional surrender' by Germany was considered a mistake by this group. It was evident that they preferred not to destroy Germany's military power, since they expected that eventually it would again be directed eastward."<sup>1</sup>

In search of allies for their post-war policy, the U.S. and British governments established contacts and secured the support of the most reactionary groups in Europe. They built up a network of secret agents in South-East Europe, like Ferenc Nagy in Hungary, and Lulchev and Nikola Petkov in Bulgaria. They established close relations with Portugal's fascist dictator Salazar. Salazar, who no longer counted on Hitler's victory, changed his orientation and in October 1943 made the naval and air bases on the Azores available to the U.S.A. and Britain.

Spanish dictator Franco still hoped for a German victory, and helped it as best he could. He was not much of a military ally, but useful economically and politically. Spain's economic part in the war was not limited to its own resources. Spain re-exported to Germany big quantities of various goods obtained from the United States and Britain, who had left Spain out of their blockade. Supplies arrived in Spanish harbours unhindered, and were immediately re-shipped to Germany. The U.S. Import and Export Bank granted Franco a loan of \$13,750,000, and British banks a loan of £2,000,000.

By an agreement reached between Franco and the German Ambassador in Madrid, the former undertook to help Germany in the war and to work for "greater contradictions between Britain and the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and between Britain and the U.S.A., on the

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Marzani, *We Can Be Friends. Origins of the Cold War*, New York, 1952, p. 224.

other".<sup>1</sup> On May 12, 1943, in a radio broadcast Franco urged Britain and the United States to break relations with the Soviet Union and come to terms with Germany, for which he offered to mediate. Jordana, Spain's Foreign Minister, made the same proposal. Both of them talked repeatedly with Samuel Hoare, British Ambassador to Madrid, arguing that Britain should abandon its alliance with the U.S.S.R., and join Germany. The British Ambassador did not cut them short and voiced his readiness to continue the discussions.

Not content with the oral discussions, Jordana put his proposals on paper and submitted them to Hoare in a secret memorandum. "Germany," Jordana said, "is the only existing force in the centre of Europe capable of realising the great universal work of containing and even destroying Communism, and in the face of this danger, for the sake of European solidarity, all minor divisions should disappear so that we can confront this grave problem which hangs over us."<sup>2</sup>

London, too, was the scene of similar talks. Duke Alba, the Spanish Ambassador, told Eden that it was bad policy to speak good of the Soviet Union. Eden said he shared Alba's view, although the exigencies of the war compelled him occasionally "to praise his Eastern Ally".<sup>3</sup>

Communications of the German Ambassador from Madrid reveal London's benevolent attitude towards the Spanish proposals. "In Britain there are responsible persons and even one member of the Cabinet," he wrote, "who favour the idea of peace mediation and a common European front against Bolshevism."<sup>4</sup>

By the summer of 1943, the Anglo-American troops massed on the British Isles completed their preparations

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<sup>1</sup> *Документы МИД Германии*, вып. 3, стр. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Hoare, *Ambassador on Special Mission*, Collins, London, 1946, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> *Документы МИД Германии*, вып. 3, стр. 155.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

for invading Western Europe and establishing a second front. "By the end of July 1943 we were optimistic enough," a British officer wrote, "to feel ready for the day. . . . As I watched the camps take shape and the stored dumps grow I felt that nothing could ruin this enterprise. It was solid and real, carefully tended, and even lovingly fondled."<sup>1</sup> He was quite right. The lower echelons of the Allied fighting force were looking forward to the opening of the second front. Plans for an Allied landing on the northern shore of Europe and speedy victory over Hitler Germany stimulated the energies of the people and had their hearty support.

But carefully prepared though it was, and strategically ripe, the landing was put off once again. The troops were ordered to begin tactical exercises. The Anglo-American Command did not go out of its way to guard the secret of its order to postpone the European invasion. "In plain words," wrote an observer, "it was one up to the German intelligence."<sup>2</sup> The nazis were thus able to transfer to the Soviet-German front several combat-ready divisions from Western Europe.

The deliberate postponement of the second front not only created added difficulties for the Soviet Army, but was also a heavy burden for the British people. But the Right-wing leaders of the British Trades Unions followed the policy of the British ruling circles.

At the Third Session of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee in the summer of 1943 in Moscow, the British delegation headed by Citrine bluntly rejected the Soviet draft of a declaration urging the early opening of the second front.

The German Command was surprised at the U.S. and British governments postponing the European invasion in 1943.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Dagleish, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

"I was surprised," said Field Marshal Rundstedt after the war, "that you did not attempt an invasion in 1941 while our armies were advancing deep into Russia." He added: "I expected an invasion in 1943, once we had occupied the whole of France. For I thought you would take early advantage of this extensive stretching of the German forces in the West."<sup>1</sup>

Having gone back on their renewed commitments to open the second front in Europe in 1943, the U.S. and British governments also refused to organise shipments of supplies to the Soviet Union by the northern route. The convoy scheduled to sail to the U.S.S.R. via the northern route in March 1943, was never dispatched. The shipments were put off until autumn, of which Churchill notified Moscow on March 30, 1943. The formal pretext was that "onwards every single escort vessel would be required to support offensive operations in the Mediterranean".<sup>2</sup> In actual fact, the bulk of the U.S. and British ships was idle, because the second front had been postponed.

Acknowledging receipt of the notification, the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers replied:

"I regard this unexpected step as a catastrophic cut in the delivery of strategic raw materials and munitions to the Soviet Union by Great Britain and the U.S.A., because the Pacific route is limited in shipping and none too reliable, and the southern route has small clearance capacity, which means that those two routes cannot make up for the cessation of deliveries by the northern route. It goes without saying that this circumstance cannot but affect the position of the Soviet troops."<sup>3</sup>

On July 10, 1943, the Anglo-American troops landed in Sicily. The invasion was two months behind the initial schedule, and again because of a professed lack of ves-

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<sup>1</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, London, 1948, p. 237-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

sels.<sup>1</sup> There were two German and four Italian divisions in Sicily, three of the latter being considerably under strength. In addition, the island had six Italian coastguard divisions, which were miserably equipped.

The Sicily campaign, planned for 90 days, was expected to atone somewhat for the fresh postponement of the second front in Europe.

But the Italian troops offered little or no resistance. Neither did the Germans, after an initial stand. The campaign was over in just 38 days, ending on August 18. It showed clearly that the Anglo-American postponement of the European invasion was absolutely unwarranted, because fascist Germany did not have the strength at that time to offer any serious resistance to an Anglo-American landing in France.

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<sup>1</sup> Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1946, p. 351.

## *Chapter Twelve*

### **BATTLE OF THE KURSK BULGE**

#### **I**

The Soviet winter offensive of 1942-43 ended on March 31. The German-fascist army was flung back to Mtsensk, Malo-Arkhangelsk, Sevsk, Rylsk, Sumy, Belgorod and the Northern Donets. At and round Kursk the frontline formed a big westward bulge. The salient was held by Soviet troops, with a large strategic reserve at their back. The Kursk bulge offered either side an opportunity to mount a big strategic offensive.

An enemy offensive was liable to alter the balance of strength quite considerably in favour of the Soviet Union, because, considering the highly-developed fortifications, the attackers would suffer far greater losses. The Soviet Army could wait. The Germans, on the other hand, could not. The time factor, the nazis were intensely aware of it, was working against them.

Furthermore, the German Command had to take account of the drooping morale in the rear, and, worse still, in the operating army. For that matter, the German Government, too, was in a state of depression. Goebbels wrote an article for *Das Reich*, March 24, 1943, which he entitled, "Twilight of the War". He wrote that for Germany "the war was a murky twilight. . . . The misfortune that has befallen us is an act of fate. We erred in our estimate of the Soviet war potential."

As Hitler Germany prepared for the new offensive, it announced a new slogan, "Festung Europa" (Stronghold Europe), giving to understand that it would cling to all the territories the Soviet Army had not yet liberated. The German summer plan was accordingly named Operation Citadel. There was to be a double envelopment, with large panzer groups thrusting from the Orel and Belgorod areas to surround and wipe out the Soviet forces at Kursk.

A very large force under Field Marshal von Kluge was deployed to the staging area. Eleven infantry, seven panzer and two motorised divisions were to strike Kurskward from Orel, and eighteen divisions (seven infantry, ten panzer and one motorised) from Belgorod. On the Orel-Kursk Front there was a German division per 2.7 kilometres and 40-50 tanks and 70-80 guns per kilometre of frontage. On the Belgorod-Kursk Front there was a division per 4.5 kilometres with 42 tanks and 50 guns per kilometre of frontage. The Germans meant to use their newest weapons—the Tiger and Panther tanks, self-propelled Ferdinand guns, and ME-190 aircraft.

Preparations for the German offensive were almost completed, and the assault was expected any day. Yet, grinding their own axes, the governments of the United States and Britain maintained that the Germans had no intention to attack.

On June 19, 1943, the British Prime Minister wrote to the Soviet Government:

"We have some reason to believe that the unexpectedly rapid defeat of the Axis forces in North Africa has dislocated German strategy and that the consequent threat to Southern Europe has been an important factor in causing Hitler to hesitate and to delay his plans for a large-scale offensive against Russia this summer."<sup>1</sup>

On June 27, Churchill wrote again:

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 1, p. 134.

“You will not be heavily attacked this summer.”<sup>1</sup>

If the Soviet Supreme Command had taken his word for it, the German offensive may have been a success.

But the Soviet Command had a good idea of what Hitler was up to. Strong and deep fortifications were raised, and strategic reserves were brought up. At key points the Soviet defences were 100 kilometres deep. Supreme Headquarters worked out a plan for the Kursk bulge. Troops of the Central and Voronezh fronts were to block the German offensive and sap its power. In the next stage the troops of the Western, Bryansk, Central, Voronezh and Steppe fronts would mount a counter-offensive.

The German assault on the Kursk salient began at 05.30 hours, July 5, 1943. The German blow was aimed at the main concentrations of Soviet troops. Bitter fighting ensued. The attack developed slowly, and involved heavy losses for the nazis. The Soviet forces resisted actively, manoeuvring reserves in bold fashion and sending tanks out in counterblows against wedges driven into their defences by the enemy. It was the first time the Soviet forces used tank armies and units of anti-tank artillery.

The clash at the village of Prokhorovka was the biggest in the Kursk Battle. Both sides flung 1,500 tanks into the fray. The first day the Germans lost over 350 tanks and more than 10,000 men and officers. I. Kozhedub, the gallant Soviet pilot, brought down many German planes. Other Soviet airmen matched his courage. Pilot A. Gorovets shot down 9 enemy planes in one battle. Fighter pilot A. Maresyev, who had lost both his feet in spring 1942, had returned to the ranks, and fought bravely. He knocked down three German planes in the early air battles over the Kursk bulge. The French “Normandie” squadron fought alongside the Soviet airmen. Its fliers shot down 33 enemy planes in July and August 1943.

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 141.



After a week-long offensive the Germans advanced as little as 6-8 kilometres in the Orel-Kursk direction and 30-35 kilometres in the Belgorod-Kursk direction. Their plan was frustrated. "The purpose of the German attack," wrote Tippelskirch, "foundered after a few days and the losses sustained were never to be made good."<sup>1</sup> He added: "The initiative passed for good and in a difficult environment to the enemy."<sup>2</sup>

Having repelled the enemy attack, the Soviet forces mounted an offensive of their own on July 12, 1943. Orel and Belgorod were cleared of the enemy on August 5, and by mid-August the Nazi force in the Orel area was totally destroyed. On August 23 the Soviet Army liberated Kharkov. Liddell Hart commented:

"The effect was to paralyse their [the Germans'.—G. D.] freedom of action, while progressively decreasing their balance of reserves. It was a strategic form of 'creeping paralysis'."<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet counter-offensive at Kursk gradually developed into a general offensive along a big frontage. An operation at Smolensk, successfully completed in August-September, moved the frontlines farther west from Moscow. Troops of the South-Western and Southern fronts crushed a large German force in the south and liberated the Donets Basin, all in a matter of six days.

In the Ukraine, the Germans were driven across the Dnieper River. On the face of it, the wide and deep Dnieper was a difficult obstacle. The German Command prepared the western bank for a protracted defence. It erected a powerful honeycomb of fortifications. But the Soviet Army crossed the Dnieper on the march at a number of points, taking the German Command completely by surprise. Kiev, the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, was liberated on No-

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<sup>1</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 59.

<sup>3</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy. The Indirect Approach*, New York, 1954, p. 296.

vember 6, 1943. The main Soviet force, advancing south of Polesye to the Black Sea, seized large bridgeheads on the west bank of the Dnieper, and was poised for fresh offensive operations.

The Kursk Battle, in which the German Command had hoped to regain the strategic initiative proved the total failure of nazi offensive strategy. It was a fresh disaster for the German fascist armies. Guderian admits that it was a "decisive defeat", in which "the initiative passed to the enemy once and for all".<sup>1</sup>

Not only nazi Germany's offensive strategy, but also its defensive plan fell through in the summer of 1943. Hitler's "citadel" crumbled. Soviet troops drove a deep wedge into his "Festung Europa". German attempts to pass to a firm strategic defence along the Soviet-German front in order to win time and conclude the secret negotiations proceeding with the United States and Britain on favourable terms, were thwarted. The Germans failed to stem the Soviet offensive.

The 1943 summer offensive completed the turning of the tide begun in the Battle on the Volga. The German defences along the Dnieper, Mius and Molochnaya were smothered. The Soviet Army advanced fighting all of 500 kilometres in the central section of the front, and as much as 1,300 kilometres in the south. Fascist Germany was so much nearer to its day of doom.

The Soviet Union had an efficient and rapidly growing war establishment, which again demonstrated the advantages of the socialist system. The Soviet rear operated like clockwork to supply the scintillating Soviet offensive with all the necessary resources.

The advance of the regular Soviet armies combined with a partisan offensive in the enemy rear.

The partisans struck massive blows at enemy communication lines, pared down enemy manpower and arma-

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<sup>1</sup> Guderian, *op. cit.*, S. 283.

ments, and effected spectacular raids across enemy-occupied territory.

In August 1943, at the time of the Kursk Battle, the partisans wrought havoc with enemy railway communications. Early on August 4, 1943, Leningrad, Byelorussian and Ukrainian partisans mined and exploded 36,000 rails. Traffic along the Kovel-Rovno and Kovel-Kholm lines was reduced by 70-80 per cent. All in all, the Byelorussian partisans blasted 120,800 rails in the month of August 1943. The commander of a corps of German guard troops reported on August 31, 1943:

"The partisans have carried out an operation on an unprecedented scale to stop German supplies by planned and sudden attacks on the railways. There were 6,784 explosions in just the first two nights of August along the sector held by our corps! In mid-August the number of rail explosions climbed to 15,000."<sup>1</sup> In August-September 1943 the partisans reduced rail traffic by 40 per cent throughout the occupied part of Byelorussia, this proving of inestimable help to the advancing Soviet forces.

The Byelorussian partisans wiped out 282,000 enemy men and officers from the beginning of the war to December 1, 1943, blew up 5,758 enemy trains, more than 3,500 railway and highway bridges, and destroyed 255 aircraft and 812 tanks. The Leningrad partisans killed 44,876 enemy men and officers from the beginning of the war to April 1, 1943.

As for the Ukrainian partisans, according to the available incomplete figures they exterminated more than 175,000 men and officers, destroyed or damaged 2,331 enemy troop trains, 64 aircraft, and 527 tanks and armoured cars from the beginning of the war to February 15, 1944.

After the autumn of 1942 partisan detachments made a few big raids across the enemy rear. Partisans under

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<sup>1</sup> Р. Сидельский, *Борьба советских партизан против фашистских захватчиков*, Москва, 1944, стр. 21.

S. Kovpak and A. Saburov left the Bryansk forests, crossed a few regions in the Ukraine and established a new partisan territory in Polesye, across the Pripyat River. On the night of December 4, 1942, Kovpak's partisans performed Operation Sarny Cross, in which they blew up all the five bridges of the Sarna railway junction. The same group smashed a German river flotilla on the Pripyat near the village of Arevichi in April 1943.

Raids were also made by partisan detachments under M. Naumov, A. Fyodorov, L. Melnik, and others. The partisans departed from the Bryansk forests and areas on the east bank of the Dnieper to establish new bases in the Ukraine west of the Dnieper.

In summer 1943 Kovpak's partisans set out for the Carpathian Mountains. Between July 19 and 24 they blew up 41 oil wells, 13 oil reservoirs, 3 oil refineries, and 1 ozocerite plant. On their heels came partisan detachments headed by A. Saburov, Olekseyenko and Shitov. Moldavian partisans under Andreyev and Shkryabach made a thrust toward Bessarabia, under Melnik and Buinyi towards Vinnitsa, and under Kapusta towards Grodno. Melnik's group reached Vinnitsa, where Hitler's headquarters was located at the time.

Some 360,000 partisans, with a reserve of about 500,000, operated in nazi-occupied territory in the autumn of 1943. Partisan lunges at enemy communication lines impeded redeployment of fascist troops in the summer and autumn of 1943, and thereby effectively helped the offensive launched by the Western, Central and Voronezh fronts. During the fighting for control of the Dnieper in the autumn of 1943, the partisans captured a large bridgehead on the western bank and prepared 25 crossings on the Desna, Dnieper and Pripyat for the advancing Soviet troops.

Kovpak's detachment traversed about 10,000 kilometres, fighting all the way, in its 26 months in the enemy rear, and raided 18 regions. It killed 18,000 Hitlerites, blasted

62 troop trains and 256 bridges, destroyed 96 warehouses, 2 oil plants, more than 50,000 tons of oil, more than 200 kilometres of telephone and telegraph lines, 50 communications offices, some 500 motor cars, and 20 tanks and armoured cars.

The Nazi Command had to send reinforcements to the Eastern Front from Western Europe. Depletion of the German occupation forces in France created extremely favourable conditions for opening the second front in Europe. But the leaders in the United States and Britain procrastinated.

In its messages to the U.S. and British governments, the Soviet Government pointed out that they were going back on their commitments. On June 11, 1943, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. wrote to the U.S. President concerning the new postponement of the second front. The message said:

"Your decision creates exceptional difficulties for the Soviet Union, which, straining all its resources for the past two years, has been engaged against the main forces of Germany and her satellites, and leaves the Soviet Army, which is fighting not only for its country, but also for its Allies, to do the job alone, almost single-handed, against an enemy that is still very strong and formidable."<sup>1</sup> The message was also forwarded to the British Prime Minister.

Churchill replied on behalf of the two governments. He attempted to argue that opening the second front would be disastrous for the United States and Britain, since their armed forces were certain to suffer defeat. "I cannot see," he exclaimed pathetically, "how a great British defeat and slaughter would aid the Soviet armies."<sup>2</sup>

On June 24, 1943, in another message to the British Prime Minister, the head of the Soviet Government pointed out that the difficulties of organising a second front had been known when the U.S. and British governments under-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

took their solemn obligations. Since that time conditions for a second front had improved substantially thanks to the Soviet Army victories. For this reason, he wrote, Churchill's references to "defeat and slaughter" were "utterly groundless". The message ended as follows:

"I must tell you that the point here is not just the disappointment of the Soviet Government, but the preservation of its confidence in its Allies, a confidence which is being subjected to severe stress. One should not forget that it is a question of saving millions of lives in the occupied areas of Western Europe and Russia and of reducing the enormous sacrifices of the Soviet armies, compared with which the sacrifices of the Anglo-American armies are insignificant."<sup>1</sup>

The United States and Britain did not take advantage of the favourable situation for an offensive in the Pacific either. The Kuomintang armies, too, were passive in the war against Japan. When Hitler Germany launched its summer offensive at Kursk, the Kuomintang tried to mount an offensive of its own, but not against the Japanese militarists. It attacked the Liberated Areas in China on July 7, 1943, and concurrently resumed secret negotiations with Japan concerning surrender. Kuomintang troops and generals defected in increasing numbers to the Japanese. The threat of a Kuomintang surrender was rising to a culmination point. The People's Liberation Army repelled the Chiang Kai-shek attack on the Liberated Areas, and continued its offensive operations against the Japanese.

Rolling back under the onslaught of Soviet troops, the fascist armies committed monstrous crimes. Indignations over their atrocities mounted all over the world. But the U.S. and British rulers denied the nazi offences. They wanted to keep the door open for possible negotiations with the Hitlerites. When a few British soldiers, wounded

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 138.

and captured during the nazi offensive in France and subsequently repatriated through the International Red Cross in 1943, told their tales of horror, the British ruling circles frowned. One of the soldiers, Private Pooley, was persecuted for revealing the fact that 99 British prisoners of war were executed on the orders of a German officer.

The American monopolists denied knowledge of the nazi atrocities. And small wonder! Equipment for the gas chambers at the fascist "death factories" was supplied by German firms (such as Siemens-Halske) which were closely connected with the U.S. monopolies and shared their profits with them. Buses with built-in gas chambers were produced at German factories belonging to Ford and General Motors. The Bank for International Settlements, with headquarters in Basle, Switzerland (established under the Allyn Abbott Young Plan for credits to Germany) did not close for the duration and bought gold from the German Reichsbank, including gold teeth extracted by the nazis from people they destroyed in the death camps. Thomas McKittrick, a New York banker, was director of the Bank.

The American and British monopolists received tremendous profits not only from the German war industries, but also from industries in Germany's satellite countries. The Romino-Americana, of Rumania, yielded a net profit of 726 million lei in 1943 to its U.S. stockholders, and the British concern Astra-Romina, also of Rumania, made a net profit that year of 840 million lei.

## 2

The resounding Soviet victories compelled Churchill and Roosevelt to meet earlier than they had intended. Their conference took place in Quebec, Canada, August 11-24, 1943. Like the preceding conferences, it was a separate one. The Soviet Union did not participate. Soviet opinion about further war actions had therefore to be pub-

lished in the press. A Soviet Information Bureau communication on the second anniversary of the war pointed out that the United States and Britain were procrastinating as regards the second front. The communication stressed that "organisation of a second front in Europe this year would speed the end of the war and, consequently, greatly reduce the loss in lives on the part of the anti-Hitler coalition."<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before the Quebec Conference opened, Pravda carried an editorial entitled, "The Second Front". The editorial demonstrated that the U.S. and British governments had successively violated their solemn obligation of opening the second front. It pointed out that the delay was due to numerically small but influential groups, while the peoples of the United States and Britain were filled with determination to prosecute the struggle against fascism to the utmost. "To be sure," the editorial said, "there are such circles, albeit numerically small, who have no desire at all for the war to end soon. But arms manufacturers, war suppliers and others who place their private, selfish interests before those of the masses and those of the occupied countries languishing under Hitler's boot, should not be given too much of a say in such big political issues."<sup>2</sup>

The Quebec Conference again discussed the second front. The U.S. and British ruling quarters were apprehensive over the successes of Soviet arms. They were afraid the nazi regime in occupied Europe may be destroyed if they missed the bus. The monopolists feared the mounting popular movements in Western Europe and were preoccupied with plans for establishing their influence in the post-war world.

Hence, the U.S. delegation at Quebec was inclined to speed the opening of the second front on the northern coast of France. The U.S. imperialists were eager to im-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, June 22, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, August 6, 1943.



plant American influence in Western Europe and thus weaken Britain's positions. Winston Churchill, on the other hand, advocated a Balkan invasion. He said in just so many words that it was his purpose to prevent a "Soviet rush into that area", which, he said, would be "to the detriment of Britain and incidentally of the United States".<sup>1</sup>

Churchill's plan hinged on the British ambition to dominate Europe and keep Britain's American rivals out of the western part of that continent. The U.S. spokesmen, in the meantime, argued that the Soviet Army would exhaust itself speedily and leave the field open for the Anglo-American forces in West and South-East Europe.

However, the advocates of delay won again. The Quebec Conference postponed the second front until 1944. Instead, it recommended a campaign in Italy.

The U.S. and British spokesmen in Quebec also exchanged opinions about the future of Germany. Anthony Eden told Hull that his Cabinet did not favour imposed dismemberment, "largely because of the impracticability of carrying it out", and added that it "would be well to bring about a separation of the different states of Germany if it could be done voluntarily".<sup>2</sup> The discussion indicated that the British "had been giving much thought to the possibility of bringing about, by natural forces, a separation of the German states".<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. Government was also in favour of Germany's partition.

Hull declared that "it was not impossible to consider an economic reorganisation of Germany whereby, in her own interests, the decentralisation of the country would unconsciously develop".<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Government submitted a plan for Germany's dismemberment, known as the Morgenthau

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<sup>1</sup> Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, p. 1232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1233.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1234.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1233.

Plan. However, no decision was taken on this issue, the discussions being postponed.

The conference, in which Chiang Kai-shek participated, dealt closely with the military operations in the Pacific. No new decisions were taken, and Chiang Kai-shek was advised to conserve his strength and armaments for a civil war. The Kuomintang asked for more arms. General Stilwell was ordered to train and equip fresh Kuomintang divisions, and to organise an offensive against Japan in Northern Burma.

The Burman offensive was carried through by Chiang Kai-shek's forces airlifted across the Hump to the scene of operations. The British Command, which had a considerable force in India, did not want to engage its troops in neighbouring Burma. It was intent on preserving a combat-ready army to oppose the Resistance Movement in the colonies, which it knew to be determined to achieve liberation from the imperialist yoke. Britain's efforts to conserve its reserves until the end of the war were prompted by its desire to keep intact its colonial empire, a territory of 14,000,000 sq. miles with a population of more than 550,000,000.

The British Government objected to an offensive in Burma, fearing the penetration of American capital and influence. Churchill suggested abandoning the offensive and concentrating on other regions in the Pacific. The United States was compelled to make concessions. British Admiral Louis Mountbatten was put in supreme command of Allied Forces in South-East Asia, India and China included. Stilwell was still in charge of China supplies under the lend-lease law and remained Chiang Kai-shek's chief of staff and commander of troops in Burma. He also retained control over the air route from India to China.

The international situation was largely shaped by the triumphant offensive of the Soviet Army. Pushed to the edge of the precipice, the top fascist political and military leaders looked desperately for salvation. They seized again

upon "total mobilisation" and stepped up their efforts to bring about a split in the anti-fascist coalition. They sought contacts with pro-Hitler elements in the United States and Britain, and hoped desperately for a separate peace with the Western Allies.

German industrialists and top Hitler officials met in Strasbourg at the Rotes Haus Hotel in the autumn of 1943, where they worked out a programme for preserving Germany's war-industrial potential and its top military experts in the event of surrender. The programme was built on the premise that American and British monopolies would facilitate its realisation. The Himmler Plan was part of this programme. It was drawn up on September 10, 1943, in Pückler Castle near Cottbus, 80 kilometres from Berlin, where Himmler conferred with Generals Rundstedt, Mannstein, Brauchitsch, von Kluge and Kleist. The plan was meant to ensure the safety of the fascist élite and Hitler's staff. It envisaged the establishment of semi-legal organisations to function after the war until the U.S. and British governments conclude an outright alliance with the German militarists. Himmler and the fascist generals thought of the post-war period as a short breathing space between the second and a third world war.

### 3

The Resistance Movement in the fascist-occupied European and Asian countries grew rapidly through 1943. The Communist Parties rallied the masses to the struggle for national independence and freedom. The Soviet Union, as before, supported the liberation movement of the Hitler-enslaved peoples.

The German-fascist forces were thus exposed to strong attacks in the rear. An acute crisis broke out in the fascist bloc due to the victories of Soviet arms. The Soviet 1943 summer offensive had a strong bearing on the situa-

tion in Italy. An Italian army of 10 picked divisions was completely smashed on the Soviet-German front. About 200,000 men and officers did not return from battle. Italy had lost all its colonies. Its Mediterranean fleet suffered a series of humiliating defeats.

The Italian Communist Party organised a powerful anti-fascist movement. A broad popular front appeared, with Communists at its head. The Christian Democratic Party refused to join the popular anti-fascist front and assumed a hostile position. The Vatican, too, was inimical. The Pope called on the people of Italy to submit to the fascists, and showered slander upon the Communists. He also appealed to the peoples of other occupied countries, telling them to stay out of the Resistance Movement.

On July 19, 1943, Hitler and Mussolini met in Verona. Mussolini asked for troops and armaments to maintain his authority in the country. But in face of the expanding Soviet offensive Hitler could not afford to help him. Instead, he suggested a plan that flouted Italy's national interests. He urged Mussolini to abandon South and Central Italy and to concentrate all Italy's armed forces in Pavia, there to build up a solid line of defence in the event of an Anglo-American invasion.

In the meantime, international reaction was working feverishly on a plan to salvage the fascist dictatorship in Italy. It was a joint effort of the American and British rulers, the Italian monopolists and the Vatican. Cardinal Francis Spellman, of New York, came to Italy in February 1943 on the pretext of visiting the Vatican. He was to act as middleman. The plan envisaged Mussolini's retirement for the sake of preserving the fascist dictatorship. "Both the Vatican and the Western Allies ... had the same fear that the revolutionary forces in Italy might get the upper hand. Accordingly, they came to an agreement by which, although Mussolini would be brought down, the general structure of the regime, with due modifications, would

remain intact.”<sup>1</sup> Under this plan the King of Italy was to order Mussolini’s resignation and issue a warrant for his arrest.

On July 24, 1943, Mussolini reported to the Great National Council of the Fascista Party on his talks with Hitler. The Duce insisted that Hitler’s demands be accepted. The Council responded with a resolution that Mussolini should resign, which won a majority vote. The following day the fascist dictator was arrested. Churchill hastened to inscribe in his diary a laudation to Mussolini, a man with whom he had corresponded for many years.<sup>2</sup>

Mussolini’s overthrow was a most important development. Luigi Longo, a leader of the Italian Communist Party, described it as a sequel to the big strikes organised by Communists in Italy’s key industrial centres in spring 1943. The Italian working class came to the forefront as a powerful political force.

Marshal Badoglio, another Italian fascist, was appointed the new Premier of Italy. After his appointment, he issued the following directive:

“Any movement is to be suppressed ruthlessly in its embryo. We must give up the outdated methods of cordons, sound signals, warnings and persuasion. The troops shall engage all violators in battle order, open fire without warning, and not shrink from using mine-throwers and artillery, just as they would against the enemy. On no account are the troops to fire into the air. They are to fire at their targets, as in combat, and if anywhere isolated acts of violence are committed against the armed forces, the culprits are to be shot at once.”<sup>3</sup>

The Italian monopolists sought to create the impression that they were breaking with fascism. They hoped thereby to win popularity and prevent further mass manifestations.

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<sup>1</sup> Avro Manhattan, *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century*, London, 1947, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. V, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

But the specious reforms carried through by Badoglio were very thinly disguised. The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* wrote, for example, that "behind a grotesque façade of revising fascist legislation and shaping a new electoral law the Badoglio policy has played into the hands of nazism".<sup>1</sup>

The negotiations Hitler began with Mussolini were resumed on August 6 in Treviso, near Venice. Italy was represented by General Guariglia, Badoglio's Foreign Minister, and Ambrosio, Chief of Staff of the Italian Army. Ribbentrop and Keitel represented Germany. But, as before, Germany could not afford to render the assistance Mussolini, and then Badoglio, asked for.

Badoglio tried to crush the popular movement and continue the war, but the crisis in the Italian fascist party and the mounting popular struggle for liberation, stimulated by Soviet victories, compelled the Badoglio government to break relations with Germany.

Secret military negotiations opened in Madrid on August 15, 1943, between an Italian spokesman, General Castellano, and British and U.S. negotiators. The talks were continued in Lisbon and culminated in an armistice agreement, signed on September 3 by Italy and Eisenhower's representatives, who acted on behalf of the United Nations.

The Italian armistice, announced on September 8, was a purely formal affair. It did not contain any clauses stipulating the eradication of fascism in Italy, and of its consequences. Nor did it stipulate any partial compensations by Italy for losses inflicted on countries by its aggressions. It said merely that hostilities would cease immediately, that Corsica and the whole territory of Italy would be surrendered for use as operational bases and for other purposes, that all prisoners or interned citizens of the United Nations would be repatriated, the Italian Navy and

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 2, 1943.

Air Force would be disarmed, and that the Allies would be allowed to use Italian airfields and naval harbours.

On September 3, Anglo-American troops began a landing in South Italy. They did not encounter any resistance. Liddell Hart recalls that the "landing on the toe was preceded by a tremendous but superfluous bombardment—the only German division in the neighbourhood having moved north several days earlier".<sup>1</sup>

In Northern Italy, where the country's industries were concentrated, the Communists stood at the head of a growing partisan movement. The U.S. and British governments believed that if they suppressed the partisan movement with their own resources, this would have unfavourable international repercussions and would cause anger in their own countries. So they let Hitler Germany handle the situation.

The dilatory tactics of the Anglo-American troops gave the nazis a chance to invade Northern and Central Italy. The Anglo-American Command issued an order to the Italian partisans to cease resistance, surrender their arms to the nazis, and to go home "until better weather set in". But the Italian patriots carried on. "Former Soviet Army P.O.W.S.—from the unknown soldiers who gave the signal for insurrection and died in battle near Santa Maria Capua Vetere to the better-known men, well remembered to this day—joined the partisan movement without hesitation. One Soviet major in Cuneo Province assumed command of a Russian detachment in the Paolo Braccini brigade," wrote Roberto Battaglia in his history of the Italian Resistance Movement. He mentioned a partisan by name of Fiedar,<sup>2</sup> whom he described as "one of the bravest fighters of the partisan movement in Liguria".

Fiedar Poetan was posthumously awarded the Gold Medal, the country's highest award, by the Italian Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> Liddell Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

ment. In 1962 it was established that the hero's full name was Fyodor Andrianovich Poletayev. Before the war he had been a collective-farm blacksmith in Skopino District, Ryazan Region. Fyodor Poletayev was posthumously conferred the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The Allies did not prevent Germany from releasing Mussolini, who hastened to organise the puppet "Republica di Salò" in German-occupied Italy, which derived its name from Salò, the town that became its capital.

"The Salò Republic," wrote Battaglia, "was not the result of inner Italian developments and not to be compared with the previous fascist regime. It was born in Germany and was nothing more than the many other puppet governments established by the nazis in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

On October 13, 1943, the Badoglio government declared war on Germany. On the same day the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Britain published a declaration recognising Italy as a co-belligerent. The front line crossed the peninsula south of Naples. The Anglo-American operations unfolded very slowly. An official report said the campaign was a slow and agonising advance across difficult terrain. Yet the numerous and well-armed Anglo-American troops were opposed by just 10 German divisions.

Nazi General Kesselring, who was in command of the German troops in Italy, wrote later: "As favourable as the conditions were for the Allies, their actual successes were surprisingly small."<sup>2</sup>

Having occupied Southern Italy, the U.S. and British authorities did nothing to abolish the fascist laws there. Authority was assumed by A.M.G.O.T., the Anglo-American Military Administration, which made extensive use of the services of Italian fascists. Anglo-American policy in Southern Italy revealed that the British and American imperialists were out to saddle the European nations with

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 77.



their own administration, to trample upon their national rights and sovereignty. It was obvious from what they did that they were favourably inclined towards the fascist dictatorship. Battaglia notes in his book that Churchill wanted a "tranquil" Italy, that is, an Italy incapable of action. He needed this trump in his international game aimed at making Italy a jumping-board for a leap to the Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

But Italy's surrender was of great international importance. The Soviet victories knocked Italy out of the fascist bloc and smashed the fascist Axis. Italy's surrender was an example other German allies were sure to follow, auguring the collapse of the bloc as a whole.

The international impact of the Soviet victories also led to a successful uprising in Corsica. The uprising began on September 8, 1943, on the initiative of the Corsican National Front, headed by Communists. Francois Vittori, a Communist and former member of the 14th International Brigade in Spain, was in command of the insurgents. The bitter fighting, which lasted almost a month, ended in ignominious defeat for a large enemy force of 115,000 men and officers. Incidentally, the total population of Corsica, including infants, was no more than 300,000. Numerically, therefore, the well-armed fascist troops in Corsica equaled the Italo-German divisions which the U.S. and British troops fought for 7 months in North Africa.

A council was set up to govern Corsica and municipal governments were established under Communist leadership. Corsica was the first department of France to be liberated from enemy occupation.

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

### *Chapter Thirteen*

#### **THE TEHERAN CONFERENCE**

The victories of Soviet arms in 1943 brought the end of the war considerably closer. Soviet foreign policy had to concentrate on tasks connected with the democratic arrangement of the post-war world. The basic principles of this accommodation were announced by the Soviet Government as follows:

1) liberating of the peoples of Europe from the fascist invaders and helping them to rebuild their national states, which the fascist enslavers have dismembered;

2) granting the liberated peoples of Europe full rights and freedom to decide what form of government they are to have;

3) taking measures to ensure that all the fascist criminals responsible for the war and the suffering the peoples have endured shall meet with stern punishment and retribution for all the crimes they have committed, no matter in what country they may seek shelter;

4) establishing an order in Europe that will preclude entirely the possibility of new aggression by Germany;

5) establishing lasting economic, political and cultural collaboration among the peoples of Europe based on mutual confidence and mutual assistance in order to rehabilitate their economy and culture, which the Germans have wrecked.

The Soviet Government embarked on a policy furthering these just principles for the post-war democratic arrangement of the world.

For their part, the U.S. and British ruling classes lifted the veil little by little on their imperialist plans. Troubled by the popular liberation movement, they intensified their offensive on the patriots in the German-occupied countries.

They continued to sabotage the opening of the second front, while intriguing in the Balkans. The U.S. imperialists were bent hell for leather on winning world domination. The development of bacteriological and atomic weapons proceeded in the United States in closely guarded secrecy. At Quebec, the U.S. and British spokesmen discussed the use of atomic weapons. The U.S. Government spent much of its budget on setting up U.S. war bases all over the world and extending the navy and air force to promote its plans of world domination.

Throughout the war the U.S. monopolies maintained close contacts with the German monopolies. The list of American firms that assisted Hitler Germany during the war includes 239 of the biggest U.S. trusts.<sup>1</sup>

In September 1943 the U.S. and British governments concluded a secret agreement concerning the terms of surrender for the fascist government of Hungary with an eye to salvaging the reactionary regime and pressing it into the service of the Western Powers. The agreement was to enter into force after Anglo-American troops landed in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

In autumn 1943 Churchill had several conferences with Ernest Bevin, a Labour Party leader, and Jan Smuts, then Premier of the South African Union. They discussed the establishment of a Western anti-Soviet bloc. On November

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Watson Ambruster, *Treason's Peace. German Dyes and American Dupes*, New York, Beechhurst Press, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> See J. F. Montgomery, *Hungary the Unwilling Satellite*, New York, 1947.

25 that year Smuts advocated such a bloc at a secret sitting of the British Parliament. The negotiations then encompassed the émigré governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and France.

The conferences were separatist in nature. They engineered anti-Soviet and anti-democratic plans behind a veil of secrecy, and were paraded before public opinion as preparatory to the opening of the second front. After the Quebec Conference, *The Times* wrote:

“The significance of the Quebec decisions lies rather in their implication that it is possible to continue at higher pressure the strategy of striking down Hitler first and yet have power to spare for the launching of great new enterprises in the Far East.”<sup>1</sup>

A fierce struggle ensued over the principles of strategy between the leaders of the United States and Britain. Eisenhower wrote in his diary that “the struggle to secure the adoption by all concerned of a common concept of strategical objectives is wearing me down. Everybody is too much engaged with small things of his own.”<sup>2</sup>

“There seemed only interminable talk—and always talk of obstacles, never talk of how anything could be done,” wrote Ralph Ingersoll. “Striking out into its [Britain’s.—G. D.] inertia was like driving your fist into a punching bag of wet manure: it gave a little, it swayed gently—but when your fist came away, its shape filled out again and it was as if it had not been touched. Only you felt soiled.”<sup>3</sup>

The policy of sabotaging the second front roused public dissatisfaction. The separatist method of conferences was also extensively discussed. The public in Britain and the United States received word of the Quebec decisions with marked restraint. Many said conferences would be futile “so long as the seat of the Soviet Union remained empty”.

It was very deplorable that the members of the Anglo-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, August 27, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Matloff and Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Ingersoll, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Soviet-American anti-fascist coalition had not jointly discussed problems of war for several years running. The blame for this lay entirely at the door of the United States and Britain. The Soviet Government not only voiced its readiness to discuss matters related to the war, but took the appropriate practical steps.

To create the impression that they did not object to joint discussions, the U.S. and British governments issued repeated proposals to convene a conference. But none of them were in earnest.

On December 16, 1941, for example, the U.S. President suggested convening in Chungking a conference of Chinese, Soviet, British, Dutch and U.S. representatives not later than December 17. The results, he suggested, should be reported to the governments concerned by December 20. The Soviet Government replied that it was impossible to convene a conference at such short notice. It also requested information about the purpose of the conference.<sup>1</sup> But there was no reply to the Soviet communication.

Some time later, the U.S. and British governments raised the question of a Three-Power (U.S.S.R., U.S. and Britain) heads of government meeting, although many practical issues could have been more advantageously discussed by the respective ministers and military experts. A number of locations was suggested, which were unacceptable to the Soviet Union owing to distance, such as Fairbanks in Alaska, Cairo, Khartoum, Asmara in Eritrea, Baghdad and Ankara. In a message to the Soviet head of government, of June 19, 1943, Winston Churchill said candidly he was sure the Soviet Government was right to refuse such invitations. Then he went on to suggest Scapa Flow, the main naval harbour in the north of Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Soviet military successes obliged the U.S. and British governments to examine the key international

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. II, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 134-35.

problems jointly with the Soviet Government. In the latter half of 1943 Moscow was the venue of conferences by Soviet, British and U.S. representatives, which furnished tangible evidence that international co-operation concerning warfare and post-war rehabilitation was possible and desirable between countries with different social systems.

The Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference (October 19-30, 1943) centred its attention on military co-operation between the three Great Powers. The Soviet Union insisted on speeding the victory over Hitler Germany and its satellites. The U.S. and British spokesmen were unable to advance any valid arguments against the Soviet proposals. The subsequent communiqué said the three governments recognised as their prime objective to speed the end of the war.

The decision for close Three-Power military co-ordination enhanced international co-operation and facilitated Soviet diplomatic efforts to expedite the opening of the second front in Europe.

The Conference pledged international co-operation after the war. Its communiqué said it was essential for the countries concerned "in their own national interests and in the interests of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and co-operation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities, and that only in this way could peace be maintained and the political, economic and social welfare of their peoples fully promoted".<sup>1</sup>

On October 19, 1943, a third agreement on supplies to the Soviet Union was signed in London. At the negotiations the Soviet Government pointed out that, far from increasing in 1943, shipments had decreased, which was out of focus in view of the grand Soviet offensive. The new agreement provided for considerably greater supplies.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 240.

The Three-Power Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow dealt at length with the problems of Eastern Europe. Acting on Churchill's instructions, Britain's Anthony Eden sought Soviet and American consent for a British invasion, with Turkey participating, of South-East Europe. The Soviet delegate declared that the British plan was not prompted by military considerations, and that it was aimed at objectives far removed from the wishes and interests of the peoples. The Soviet spokesman insisted on a second front in Western Europe.

The American and British Foreign Ministers urged the Soviet Government to resume diplomatic relations with the hostile Polish émigré government. They were not concerned with improving Soviet-Polish relations. What they wanted was that the émigré group in London should after war's end assume power in liberated Poland. The Soviet side declined.

The United States and Britain submitted the proposal to establish a Danubian Confederation, this in spite of serious differences between the two countries on this matter. The Danubian Confederation, as they conceived it, was to unite the countries of South-East Europe under Austria. In other words, the Western Powers intended to artificially resurrect the old Austria-Hungary. The plan was initiated by the U.S. monopolists and the Vatican.

Ever since 1942 the U.S. rulers and the Vatican had been drawing up plans for the restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy and the establishment of a Catholic state in the heart of Europe. This state was to consist of Austria, Hungary, Bavaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc. It was to be fashioned as an instrument of U.S. imperialist policy in Europe. According to a British historian, President Roosevelt thought the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy one of the worst blunders made after the First World War. He planned the Danubian Confederation with the idea of unifying the Danubian region, and was not particularly interested in the dynastic restoration of the

Hapsburgs, but "certainly would not have objected to it if it had facilitated reconstruction".<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the U.S. Government, far from opposing the ambitions of the Hapsburgs, encouraged them in every way. In 1940 President Roosevelt received Otto Hapsburg, pretender to the Austro-Hungarian throne, at the White House. The U.S. War Department corresponded with Otto officially. In November 1942 Otto was advised by the War Department to form an Austrian Legion for operations in South-East Europe. But the idea fell through. However, official contacts with the Hapsburgs and other Austro-Hungarian monarchists continued. The Vatican was quite enthusiastic over the plan of reviving the Hapsburg monarchy. Cardinal Francis Spellman discussed it at length with Pope Pius XII on instructions of the U.S. Government during his stay in Rome in February 1943.

But the U.S. Government had yet another plan with regard to Austria—a plan of leaving it as a part of Germany. This was revealed by Allen Dulles in a conversation with Hohenlohe. But the two plans pursued one final goal—the establishment in Europe of a force that could ultimately be used for fresh expansion in behalf of the American monopolists. The reconstruction of Austria-Hungary was conceived as a tool against the Soviet Union, a bulwark of imperialism against democracy in Europe and a centre for the spreading of Catholicism throughout Central and South-East Europe.

The Soviet Government pointed out that the choice of political system was a matter the peoples of the countries concerned should decide for themselves, and that any decision made without them was impermissible. It would be dangerous and unfair to create artificial "federations" by foreign intervention and outside pressure, said the Soviet spokesman. The Soviet Union suggested a declaration on Austria, and the Moscow Conference adopted it.

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<sup>1</sup> J. F. Montgomery, *op cit.*, p. 215.



The Declaration voiced the wish of the three governments for "a re-established free and independent Austria in which the Austrian people themselves, as well as those neighbouring states which will be faced with similar problems, to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace".<sup>1</sup>

The Declaration provided the groundwork for the restoration of Austria and annulled its *Anschluss* to Germany, which the imperialist powers had recognised before the war. In pursuance of the principles enunciated in the Declaration, the Soviet Union stood its ground firmly in defence of Austria's national rights after the end of the war against Anglo-American and West German plans of a new *Anschluss*.

The Declaration said: "Austria is reminded . . . that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade for participation in the war on the side of Hitler Germany, and that in the final settlement, account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation."<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. delegation at the Moscow Conference submitted proposals on the colonial question. The rulers of America were eager to parade as defenders of the colonial peoples, in order to undermine the power wielded by the British and French imperialists over the Eastern peoples, and to saddle the latter with their own brand of colonial domination. The United States suggested a resolution promising independence to all peoples. The Soviet delegation treated this U.S. proposal favourably, because in its view the colonial peoples could take advantage of it in the interests of liberation from foreign rule. But the British delegation objected to discussing the colonial issue, and the matter was dropped.

The three Foreign Ministers discussed the ways and means of ensuring general security after the war and raised the question of an international organisation to safeguard

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

peace. The U.S. Government showed a lively interest in the idea. A month before the Conference opened, the U.S. Congress adopted the Fulbright resolution in favour of appropriate international machinery with power adequate to establish and to maintain a just and lasting peace among the nations of the world, and in favour of participation by the United States in this machinery through its constitutional processes.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. expected to play first fiddle in this projected body. But the British Government had no intention whatsoever of conceding to the United States the positions it held in the League of Nations. "We hold strongly to a system of a League of Nations," wrote Churchill in his notes to Eden for the forthcoming Moscow Conference.<sup>2</sup>

The Moscow Conference drew up a declaration on the question of general security, signed by the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., Britain and China. The Declaration noted the necessity of establishing "at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation for the maintenance of international peace and security, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States..."<sup>3</sup>

This was a declaration of considerable importance. Not only did it recognise the need for the establishment of a United Nations Organisation; it also spelled out the key principles for international co-operation between sovereign countries wishing to maintain peace and security.

Clause 6 said that after the termination of hostilities the governments concerned would not "employ their military forces within the territories of other states, except for the purposes envisaged in this Declaration and after joint consultation".<sup>4</sup>

The United States and Britain violated the Declaration grossly by establishing war bases and stationing troops

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<sup>1</sup> See *Congressional Record*, Vol. 89, Part 6, 1943, p. 7706.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

abroad which they employed to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries. Another, and the grossest, violation was the American aggression against the freedom-loving people of Korea, in which Britain, the other signatory of the Declaration, participated.

Italy's surrender indicated that German fascism had lost the war and that the "new order" it had established was on the brink of collapse. But U.S. and British anti-democratic policy in the part of Italy wrested from the Germans was doing great harm to the cause of the anti-fascist coalition. It revealed that the Anglo-Americans gravitated towards separate actions. To obstruct separatism and ensure co-ordination, the Soviet Government suggested an appropriate three-power body. The Moscow Conference resolved to establish a European Advisory Commission with its seat in London to examine European problems and to work out joint recommendations. An Advisory Council was also established for Italy, consisting of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Britain, the French Committee of National Liberation and, later, Greece and Yugoslavia.

The Conference adopted a declaration on Italy. This contained elements of compromise, but was anyway unmistakably a victory for the democratic forces. The Declaration defined a set of measures for the democratisation of Italy and the eradication of all survivals of Italian fascism.

"This document," writes Battaglia about the Declaration, "was very important because it clarified the most delicate and complicated questions concerning Italy's situation. To begin with, it contained a solemn recognition of the struggle waged by the most active part of the Italian nation for peace against fascism.... It discounted the notion, that the Italian people had been obedient to the Fascia and had welcomed the adventures of the fascist regime so long as the latter was successful. It also denied the no less specious notion that only a few of the more politically conscious and enlightened individuals resisted fascism. On the contrary, and quite rightly, it spoke of the

resistance shown by large sections of the population, and though diplomatic caution imposed restraint, it was easy to see that this applied mostly to the working class. Recognition of this quite naturally established the right for this foremost section of the people to have its representatives in the government and a say in the leadership of the struggle both now and in the future."<sup>1</sup>

An end was put to A.M.G.O.T. in Italy and, by precedent, helped the French people avoid the same treatment after the Anglo-American landing in France. On February 11, 1944, an Italian Government was reinstated in Southern Italy.

A Declaration on the Responsibility of the Hitlerites for Atrocities Committed was adopted on Soviet initiative. It affirmed that war criminals would be punished by the nations against which the crimes were committed, while the chief war criminals were to be tried jointly by the Allied Powers. The Declaration warned that the war criminals would not escape retribution, because the three Allied Powers would "pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth" and would "deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done".<sup>2</sup>

This was a painful blow not only to the German war criminals, but to their patrons as well.

The Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference was a prominent milestone in the history of the anti-fascist coalition. It showed that international co-operation was both practicable and beneficial. Its decisions facilitated the struggle of progressives for the democratic arrangement of the post-war world. They added strength to the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition and struck a devastating blow at its enemies. "The Conference," wrote *Pravda*, "has performed its mission of consolidating the forces of the Allies in the interests of all the freedom-loving peoples."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, November 2, 1943.

The Moscow Conference paved the way for the first of a series of three-power summit conferences, fixed for Teheran. The Teheran Conference was made possible by the sparkling victories of Soviet arms, the successes of Soviet foreign policy in developing international co-operation, and by the insistent wishes of the masses in the United States and Britain.

On their way to Teheran, Churchill, Roosevelt and their parties conferred in Cairo from November 22 to 26, 1943. At this fresh separate conference, Britain and America tried to iron out their contradictions in order to put up a united stand in the matter of a second front at Teheran. But the attempt failed. The U.S. Government held Churchill's "Balkan strategy" in disfavour. It was afraid to miss the bus in Western Europe. President Roosevelt told his son it was high time to attack "Europe from the West". He added: "At that, by next spring, the way things are going in Russia now, maybe a second front won't be necessary!"<sup>1</sup>

Chiang Kai-shek came to Cairo to discuss Far Eastern problems. The United States promised him more arms and loans.

It was obvious that the U.S. and British governments were much more concerned over Chiang Kai-shek's invading the Liberated Areas of China, rather than fighting the Japanese aggressors. The U.S. and British spokesmen wanted to know the intentions and plans of the Chinese dictator, and to sound his determination to accumulate strength for a civil war.

Fresh contradictions arose between the United States and Britain over operations in the Pacific Theatre. The British Government was alarmed by the incursions of U.S. imperialism in South-East Asia. The British did not want U.S. troops advancing across Northern Burma. Chur-

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<sup>1</sup> Elliot Roosevelt, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

chill demanded naval landings, hoping that the U.S. Navy would reconquer for Britain its colonial possessions in South-East Asia. In a conversation with Roosevelt, British Supreme Commander Mountbatten insisted that the Americans increase their supplies to the British armed forces.

But ultimately Britain accepted the American plan of operations in Northern Burma, though it added to America's influence in Britain's South-East Asian possessions.

A joint Declaration of the United States, Britain and China was made public in Cairo on December 1, 1943. The Declaration stressed that the Three Powers proposed to deprive Japan of all islands in the Pacific Ocean captured or occupied by it since the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, and that all territories which Japan annexed from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands would be returned to the Republic of China. Japan was also to be ousted from all other territories it had captured by force. The Cairo Declaration thus centred on dispossessing Japan of islands it had seized during the First World War (the Mariannas, and the Marshall and Caroline Islands), now coveted by the United States, and, which was most important, recognised Manchuria, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands as a part of China. The Declaration also said that Korea would in due course become free and independent. The Three Powers issued undertakings to continue large-scale operations until Japan surrendered unconditionally. This point in the Declaration did not reflect the actual situation in the Pacific Theatre, because U.S., British and Chinese operations in the area were fairly modest in scale.

The Cairo Declaration spelled out the war aims against Japan in a spirit of justice, covering up the true goals of the U.S. and British rulers, and, in particular, the U.S. designs to consolidate the unpopular Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship in China. What the American monopolies really wanted was to exploit the territories liberated from the Japanese as spheres of investment and war bases in the

Pacific. It stands to reason that they could not formulate these expansionist plans in just so many words within the context of the anti-fascist war, whose just nature was largely determined by the participation in it of the Soviet Union.

The Conference of the heads of government of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Britain in Teheran lasted from November 28 to December 1, 1943. Pride of place at the Conference was given to military matters. The British delegation expounded its plan of invading South-East Europe with Turkey's participation. The Soviet delegation demonstrated that Britain's plan was far removed from the objective of defeating Germany as quickly as possible, that it pursued other aims.

An Anglo-American landing in the Balkans would be senseless militarily, because it would not speed Germany's downfall. One more stable front would come into being, like that in Italy, since the general environment, the terrain, the rivers and absence of good roads would make it difficult for the landing force to overcome German resistance.

Churchill maintained that the road across the Balkans was the easiest. Why stick your head into the crocodile's mouth at Brest, he said, hinting at Europe's geographical outline, when you can go to the Mediterranean and strike at the "soft underbelly".<sup>1</sup> A cartoon published in the U.S. press was a fitting reply to his statement. It showed an Allied soldier before a cemetery, with the Alps and peaks of the Balkan range in the background. The inscription below the cartoon read, "The man who called this the soft underbelly should have his brains examined".<sup>2</sup>

The arguments presented against setting up the second front in South-East Europe were well reasoned. The Balkan invasion plan was rejected. The Teheran Conference

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<sup>1</sup> M. Clark, *Calculated Risk*, London, 1956, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, New York, 1958, p. 228.

adopted the decision to open the second front in Western Europe before May 1, 1944. Bradley notes that the Soviet delegation tilted the scales in this resolution, adding:

“With that the final decision was made, and thus after two years of discussion, evasion, diversion, and confusion Overlord became the irrevocable crux of Allied strategy in the European war.”<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union promised to support Operation Overlord with a big offensive in the east. This would prevent the Germans from deploying troops from east to west. The military staffs of the Three Powers agreed to maintain close contacts with regard to the coming operations in Europe.

At the beginning of the Teheran Conference, the U.S. President suggested discussing the Soviet Union's participation in the war against Japan after Germany surrendered. But the President's proposals mentioned U.S. offensive operations on the Kuriles, which the U.S. monopolists had long been planning to capture.

The Soviet Government rejected the U.S. claims to the Kurile Islands, and pledged Soviet entry into the war against Japan six months after the end of the war in Europe. Churchill in his memoirs welcomed this Soviet pledge.<sup>2</sup>

Rejection in Teheran of the Balkan invasion plan was a setback for British imperialism. The Anglo-American agreement with Hungary's fascist government became meaningless. “At the Teheran Conference, in December 1943,” a historian deplores, “the proposed Allied invasion across the Balkans was dropped at the request of Stalin. Thus there was no Anglo-American army near enough to accept the unconditional surrender of the Hungarian army or to develop military collaboration.”<sup>3</sup>

The governments of the United States and Britain, each with ulterior motives, submitted plans for Germany's dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> J. F. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 163.



memberment and abolition of a united German state. They reckoned that the isolated parts of Germany would fall under their influence more easily. This would serve to fill the pockets of their monopolists, and further their aggressive designs.

President Roosevelt submitted a plan for "five autonomous states: 1) Prussia (reduced), 2) Hannover and North-west, 3) Saxony and the Leipzig area, 4) Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Cassel and the area south of the Rhine, 5) Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg, whereas the Kiel Canal and Hamburg, and the Ruhr and the Saar, to be under United Nations control."<sup>1</sup> (Read U.S. control.)

The Roosevelt plan was to enable the U.S. monopolies, grown rich on the war, to dispose of their future rivals more easily.

The British suggested carving up Germany into three parts—Prussia, South Germany (Bavaria, Württemberg, the Palatinate, Saxony and Baden), and the Ruhr. Churchill thought Prussia could remain a national state. He believed South Germany should become part of a Danubian Confederation. As for the Ruhr, he hoped Britain would secure control over it and, thus, backed by its industrial power, capture commanding heights on the European continent.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Union turned down the dismemberment schemes, acting as a champion of the German peoples' national rights.

There was a preliminary discussion in Teheran of Poland's future frontiers. The Soviet Government came out for a fair arrangement based on historical experience and consistent with the geographical distribution of the Polish population. The U.S.S.R. stressed that Poland's frontiers should be a factor of stability and security rather than of conflict and war. The Soviet delegation backed the legitimate interests of the Polish people, and insisted that

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Sherwood, *op cit.*, p. 797.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 401.

Poland be returned its lands in the west. It proposed that Poland's western border should be along the rivers Oder and Neisse.

The Three-Power Teheran Declaration stated that the governments of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Britain fully recognised their supreme responsibility "to make a peace which will command the goodwill of the overwhelming mass of the peoples of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations".<sup>1</sup>

The Conference also adopted a declaration concerning Iran. It acknowledged Iran's assistance to the anti-Hitler coalition, especially the transportation of supplies from overseas to the Soviet Union. The Three Powers agreed to render Iran economic assistance both for the duration and after the war, and declared their desire to maintain its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Teheran Conference was a major international event. It was the first time that leaders of the three Great Powers met, demonstrating that joint solutions of the key international problems were highly effective.

On their way home from the Conference Churchill and Roosevelt conferred once more in Cairo. They discussed the outcome of the Teheran Conference and arrived at the conclusion that in the matter of a second front they would act upon the existing situation, rather than upon commitments assumed. On the initiative of Churchill, who had not abandoned the idea of "Balkan strategy", a conference took place in Cairo between Churchill, Roosevelt and Turkish President Ismet Inönü. They discussed Turkey's participation in an invasion of South-East Europe. The United States, eager to invigorate U.S. monopoly influence in Turkey, promised the Turkish Government lavish military supplies.

The Moscow and Teheran conferences demonstrated a growth of Soviet influence and prestige. In the pursuit

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 248.

of its great liberative mission, the Soviet Union won the support of all the freedom-loving nations.

The Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Collaboration, concluded in Moscow on December 12, 1943, was a striking expression of the aspirations entertained by the peoples fighting for their freedom and independence.

The British Government tried to obstruct the signing of the Treaty by President Beneš, by "putting obstacles in the way of his Moscow visit",<sup>1</sup> but its efforts came to naught.

The Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia undertook to render each other military and other assistance and support of every kind in the war against Germany and its European allies, and pledged themselves not to enter into any negotiations or conclude a peace treaty with Hitler's or any other similar government, or to negotiate and conclude without mutual consent any armistice or peace treaty with Germany or its allies in Europe.

Article 3 of the Treaty read:

"Confirming their pre-war policy of peace and mutual assistance, expressed in their Treaty signed at Prague on May 16, 1935, the High Contracting Parties undertake that, if one of them should, in the post-war period become involved in hostilities with Germany, resuming her 'Drang nach Osten' policy, or with any of the states which may unite with Germany directly or in any other form in such a war, the other High Contracting Party will immediately render the Contracting Party thus involved in hostilities all possible military and other support and assistance at its disposal."<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty envisaged economic relations upon the broadest scale and all possible mutual economic assistance after the war.

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<sup>1</sup> R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Comes the Reckoning*, London, 1947, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. I, p. 251.

This 20-year Treaty has been of utmost historic importance for the people of Czechoslovakia, for its independent national existence and its struggle for socialism. It has provided dependable protection to Czechoslovakia's national rights and to the life and work of its people. The Treaty formalised the unbreakable friendship of the Soviet and Czechoslovak peoples, sealed by the blood they shed together against the German-fascist intruders. Designed to ensure peace and security in Europe, the Treaty erected a reliable barrier against eastward imperialist aggression. It was received with satisfaction by the Soviet people and aroused patriotic enthusiasm in Czechoslovakia.

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The Soviet victory on the Volga turned the tide in the war, and the summer offensive operations of the Soviet Army in 1943 sealed its outcome. The Soviet Union captured the strategic initiative from Germany for the benefit of the anti-fascist coalition.

The Soviet Army set to liberating its homeland from the fascist invaders, clearing the way for victory in behalf of the vital interests of the Soviet people and all the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

*Part V*  
**THE CRUCIAL VICTORIES**

*Chapter Fourteen*  
**THE OFFENSIVE OF 1944**

**1**

The year 1944 has gone down in history as the year of decisive Soviet victories. The Soviet offensive pounded the nazi war machine beyond recognition. Germany's satellites were put *hors de combat*, Soviet land was almost entirely cleared of the invaders, and the fighting was carried into enemy territory.

In this new stage of the war Soviet foreign policy concentrated on securing favourable international conditions for the final and complete defeat of Hitler Germany and the liberation of the peoples from fascism. Its efforts consolidated the anti-fascist coalition. Soviet diplomacy, coupled with the heroic prosecution of the war by the Soviet Army induced a further growth of Soviet international prestige.

When 1944 set in, the Soviet-German front ran along the river Svir, Lake Ilmen, west of Velikiye Luki, east of Vitebsk, west of Gomel through Zhitomir, Cherkassy, Zaporozhye, and on to the Black Sea near the city of Kherson. As before, nearly all of Germany's fighting strength—257 divisions, of which 207 were German and 50 were Hungarian, Rumanian and Finnish—was massed on the Soviet-German front.

The main strategic objective in 1944 was to clear Soviet land of the German-fascist invaders and to assist the peoples of Eastern Europe against the occupationists.

Knowing that the German Command had few reserves and was having difficulties in maintaining communication lines running parallel to the front, the Soviet Supreme Command worked out a plan for a succession of assaults at different sectors.

In January and February the Soviet Army mounted a big offensive at Leningrad and Novgorod. The objective was to relieve Leningrad of the blockade and artillery bombardments, to smash the strategic enemy force on the northern flank of the Soviet-German front, and thus facilitate further offensive operations at other points. The troops of the Leningrad, Volkhov and Second Baltic fronts faced the German Army Group Nord and Army Group Karelian Isthmus. The enemy lines, which ran across forest marshland, were well distributed in depth and strongly fortified.

The offensive opened on January 14, 1944. The Soviet Army breached the powerful enemy fortifications and advanced far into the German defences. The Leningrad Front troops surrounded and smashed the enemy force in their sector. The troops of the Volkhov Front defeated the enemy in the Novgorod area. On January 21 the Soviet offensive was in full swing all along the front from Kaporsky Bay to Novosokolniki.

Leningrad was relieved and Leningrad Region was cleared of the enemy. Soviet troops set to liberating Soviet Estonia.

The offensive proceeded in close co-operation with the partisans. Operating in the enemy rear, partisan groups paralysed German rail movements, blowing up 300 bridges and 133 troop trains.

Between the end of January and March 1944 the troops of the four Ukrainian fronts carried out a series of combined operations in the Ukraine west of the Dnieper against

a large enemy concentration of 96 divisions, including more than 70 per cent of the nazi panzer divisions and nearly 50 per cent of the nazi motorised divisions on the Soviet-German front.

To begin with, there were three big operations—one at Korsun-Shevchenko, another at Rovno-Lutsk and one more at Nikopol-Krivoi Rog.

In the Korsun-Shevchenko area the First and Second Ukrainian fronts encircled and destroyed nine infantry and one panzer divisions, a motorised brigade and a large force of artillery and engineer units. The enemy was flung back from the Dnieper in its middle reaches. The nazi plan of resuming the defensive along the Dnieper collapsed.

Troops of the First Ukrainian Front smashed an enemy group in the Rovno-Lutsk area and enveloped Army Group Süd. The Nikopol-Krivoi Rog operation by the Third and Fourth Ukrainian fronts, launched in late January 1944, wiped out an enemy bridgehead on the left bank of the Dnieper south of Nikopol.

The second stage of this combined offensive was composed of the Proskurovo-Chernovtsy, Uman and Bereznegovato-Snegiryov operations.

In the first of these an assault force of the First Ukrainian Front struck out from Shepetovka at Chernovtsy. In the meantime, the Second Ukrainian Front mounted an attack from Zvenigorodka at Mogilyev-Podolsky and on to Chernovtsy. The Soviet Army soon reached the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains and cut the German-fascist front in two. An enemy force of more than 15 divisions was invested in the area north of Kamenetsk-Podolsk. However, it was not totally annihilated. On defeating the enemy in the Carpathian foothills, the Soviet troops reached the border of Czechoslovakia and Rumania along a frontage of more than 200 kilometres.

The Uman operation of the Second Ukrainian Front crushed German resistance in the Uman-Jassy direction.

The remnants of the enemy force were flung far across the Dniester to the Carpathian foothills. The Second Ukrainian Front reached the River Pruth on the Soviet-Rumanian frontier, made a force crossing, and carried the battle into Rumanian territory. In the Bereznegovato-Snegiryov operation the troops of the Third Ukrainian Front smashed the nazis in the lower reaches of the Ingulets River and arrived on the bank of the Southern Bug, with the enemy beating a retreat across the waterway.

The partisan detachments had shifted their bases across the Dnieper some time before all these operations, reinforcing the local partisan groups, and were able to render effective assistance to the advancing Soviet Army. Operating in concert with the regular troops, the partisans struck painful blows at the enemy rear.

The Soviet offensive beyond the Dnieper was carried through on a vast scale. It had a front of some 1,400 kilometres, and was 500 kilometres deep. Enemy losses added up to 66 divisions. The Ukraine was almost totally freed.

When the Soviet Army reached the frontier and entered Rumanian territory, the Soviet Government issued a statement on April 2, 1944, that it would pursue the enemy until he was routed and capitulated. The Soviet Government stressed that it was not pursuing the aim of acquiring any part of Rumanian territory, or of changing the social order of Rumania. It pointed out that the entry of Soviet troops into Rumania was dictated exclusively by military necessity and by the continuing resistance of the enemy troops.<sup>1</sup> The statement said that the Soviet Army would perform its historic mission to the last, and would advance westward until Hitler Germany and its satellites were defeated.

The entry of Soviet troops into foreign countries was an important international event. Every yard of the Soviet advance westward spelled liberation from fascism to

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 66.



the peoples, flinging open the gates for them to free and independent democratic development.

It was the first time that people abroad met Soviet people face to face. They came to trust them. The just and progressive policy of the Communist Party, its efforts to liberate the peoples from fascist enslavement, were seen by the working people in foreign lands at first hand. The masses, headed by the working class and its vanguard, the Communist and Workers' Parties, intensified the struggle for the overthrow of the fascist regimes, the restoration of independence, radical democratic transformations and close alliance and friendship with the U.S.S.R. A people's democratic revolution was coming to a head in the German-occupied countries of East and South-East Europe.

Between March and early May 1944 the Soviet Army, co-operating with the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Naval Flotilla, liberated Odessa and the Crimea. Thus ended the Soviet spring offensive of 1944.

In this offensive the Soviet Army liberated more than three-quarters of German-occupied Soviet territory and arrived on the Soviet border along a frontage of more than 400 kilometres. The Soviet forces now had to complete the defeat of the enemy and liberate the peoples of Europe from German enslavement.

The Soviet summer offensive opened in Karelia. In June and July 1944 troops of the Leningrad and Karelian fronts smashed Hitler's Finnish allies in the Vyborg and Svir-Petrozavodsk operations, emerging on the Soviet-Finnish border and pursuing the enemy far into Finland.

The Byelorussian operation by the First Baltic and the three Byelorussian fronts was one of the biggest offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War.

Mounting the assault on June 23-24, the troops of the four fronts breached enemy defences by combined action in six different sectors, and enveloped and destroyed nazi forces in the Vitebsk and Bobruisk areas. By July 3 a large enemy group of 30 divisions was surrounded east of

Minsk. While part of the Soviet troops were mopping up the pocket, which operation they completed in mid-July, other troops advanced on the heels of the enemy, driving him to the western frontiers of the Soviet Union.

The Byelorussian operation smashed the German Army Group Centre, which lost more than 30 divisions in various pockets. Soviet Byelorussia and most of Soviet Lithuania were cleared of the enemy. On forcing the Niemen, the Soviet troops reached the German frontier. The offensive proceeded along a front of nearly 1,300 kilometres at a depth of 550-600 kilometres.

The Lublin-Brest operation by the First Byelorussian Front, July 18-August 29, 1944, was part of the big Byelorussian operation. The main blow was struck somewhat west of Kovel in the general direction of Lublin and Praga (a suburb of Warsaw on the eastern bank of the Vistula), by-passing Brest from south and north. On July 21 troops of the First Byelorussian Front reached the Soviet-Polish border. By that time formations of the First Ukrainian and Second Byelorussian fronts had also come to the Polish frontier. On July 22 detachments of the First Byelorussian Front entered Poland and liberated the city Chełm. On July 24 they liberated Lublin.

Concerted actions by the Soviet Army and the partisans were highly effective in the Byelorussian operation. A large army of Byelorussian partisans participated in the battles that liberated Byelorussia from the nazis. Three days before the operation opened, in the early morning of June 20, the partisans blew up more than 40,000 rails, putting the railways in the enemy rear out of action for some time. This created considerable confusion. The nazis were unable to regroup and to deploy reserves. The partisans controlled entire districts and guided Soviet troops into the rear of the retreating nazi forces along roads under their control.

Hitler generals, officers and soldiers taken prisoner in the Byelorussian operation were transported under escort

via Moscow into the far rear. Jean-Richard Bloch, the prominent French progressive writer, who watched them march through the streets of Moscow, wrote:

"I have just seen them, those 57,600! The remains of the German Army Group Centre, the prisoners taken at Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Minsk. . . . I, who saw the Germans enter and install themselves in our cities, relished this spectacle.

"I was a witness to the crime, and now savoured the retribution. . . . Ah, my friends, these German prisoners taken in recent battles, filing in their thousands across Moscow, presented an encouraging and staggering spectacle. This column, striding past us in august silence, was, as it were, the living image of one of the greatest changes of fortune in history.

"But the turning of the tide was not due to chance. It was the result of the formidable energy, the dogged tenacity, the brilliant foresight and unexampled will power of the Russians."<sup>1</sup>

The next Soviet operation proceeded in the Western Ukraine. Known as the Lvov-Sandomir operation, it opened in July and ended in August 1944. In this operation troops of the First Ukrainian Front crushed the German "Northern Ukraine" group of armies and liberated Lvov, Stanislav and Peremyshl.

The Soviet soldiers displayed miracles of bravery during this offensive. Here is one of many of their feats. The first to reach the centre of the city of Lvov was a T-34 tank, "Gvardia", of the 63rd Tank Brigade. Its radio operator, A. P. Marchenko, oblivious of dense enemy fire, hoisted a red flag on the city hall. The tank engaged in skirmishes inside the city for six successive days. Its crew killed more than 100 enemy soldiers and officers, and destroyed 8 German tanks. The tank commander and

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Richard Bloch, *De la France trahie à la France en armes*. Commentaires à Radio-Moscou 1941-1944, Paris, 1949, pp. 430, 432, 433.

Marchenko, the radio operator, were killed, and the rest of the crew were seriously wounded. In remembrance of their supreme daring, the surviving tank has been installed on a platform in the heart of Lvov.

In the final stage of the operation the Soviet troops crossed the Vistula and developed a bridgehead on the western bank of the river near Sandomir.

The Soviet 1944 summer offensive pushed Germany to the brink of disaster. Fuller attests that "by mid-August the German situation was desperate in the extreme."<sup>1</sup> The star of liberation was rising over Europe.

The Polish population welcomed the Soviet troops enthusiastically, and rendered them every possible assistance and comfort. A democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution proceeded in Poland in an environment of general patriotic jubilation. People's democracy was emerging in the country by the will of the people.

In the city of Chełm, liberated by the Soviet Army, the Krajowa Rada Narodowa formed a Polish Committee for National Liberation, the organ of the new people's democracy, on July 23, 1944. Its inaugural decree said:

"On the eve of the decisive battle, whereby the German invaders shall be banished from Poland, the Krajowa Rada Narodowa is establishing the Polish Committee for National Liberation as a provisional executive authority to provide leadership to the people in their struggle of liberation, to ensure their independence and the revival of Polish statehood."<sup>2</sup>

The Committee also issued a manifesto setting out the programme for the Polish people's struggle for final liberation from the German yoke and the establishment of people's democracy.

On July 26, 1944, the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announced that the Soviet Army had entered Poland jointly with the Polish army, thus starting in on the

<sup>1</sup> Fuller, *The Second World War*, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, July 26, 1944.

liberation of the long-suffering fraternal nation from German occupation. The Statement stressed that the Soviet troops were determined "to crush the enemy German armies and to help the Polish people in its liberation from the yoke of the German invaders, and in the restoration of an independent, strong and democratic Poland."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government declared that it regarded the military operations of the Soviet Army in the territory of Poland as operations in the territory of a sovereign, friendly and allied country, and that, therefore, it had no intention of establishing its own administrative bodies in Poland, this being the affair of the Polish people.

The Soviet Statement was an expression of friendship towards the people of Poland. The Soviet Government was sincerely eager to help the Polish people establish an independent, strong and democratic state. The Statement amounted to Soviet recognition and support of the legitimate rights of the Polish Committee for National Liberation, with which the Soviet Government decided to conclude an agreement governing relations between the Soviet Command and the Polish Administration. (An identical agreement was concluded with Czechoslovakia on May 8, 1944.)

The U.S. and British governments invigorated their support of Stanislaw Mikolajczyk's émigré government in London. The United States granted it a \$ 10,000,000 loan to prosecute its struggle against Poland's democratic forces, while the request for arms made to the U.S.A. and Britain by the Polish People's Army was ignored.<sup>2</sup>

Mikolajczyk's émigré government gave little heed to the national aspirations of the Polish people. It rejected the programme of the Polish Committee for National Liberation and objected to Poland's claim to its western lands.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> See Ralph Parker, *Conspiracy Against Peace*, Moscow, 1949, p. 106.

The U.S. and British governments were preoccupied with Poland's territorial problems. Expecting the émigré government to assume control over Poland, they wanted its frontiers extended. They were willing to let Poland have East Prussia. The Soviet Government called the attention of the U.S. and British governments to the fact that the north-eastern part of Prussia, including Königsberg, should go to the Soviet Union. Churchill admitted that "the Russians had a historic and well-founded claim to this German territory."<sup>1</sup>

But the United States and Britain still backed the claims of the Polish émigré clique to the Byelorussian and Ukrainian lands. They did not hesitate to threaten the Soviet Union and tried to depict the U.S.S.R. as a force inimical to Poland, denying the liberative nature of the Soviet war effort against German aggression. In reply, the Soviet Government declared that "threats as a method are not only out of place in relations between Allies, but also harmful, for they may lead to opposite results", and that "the method of intimidation and defamation, if continued, will not benefit our co-operation".<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet offensive also stimulated the liberation movement of the Albanian people. On May 25, 1944, the First Albanian National-Liberation Anti-Fascist Congress opened in the small southern Albanian town of Permet. The Congress elected a General Council to head the liberation struggle and adopted resolutions on key questions related to the country's future. The popular struggle against the German-fascist occupation forces in Albania expanded considerably. To curb this movement of liberation the British Government sent its agents to the country with instructions to organise the reactionary forces there for armed actions against the Albanian patriots.

The liberation movement in the Balkans disrupted fascist Germany's rear. The alarmed German Command planned

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212, 213.

an assault on the partisan centre in Yugoslavia. Field Marshal Rommel landed paratroopers on May 25, 1944, in the town of Dravar, where, in a suburban cave, the Supreme Headquarters of the Yugoslavian partisans was located. But the paratroopers were spotted in good time, and the partisan leadership moved out of the cave. A Soviet plane flew them from Kupreš Field to Vis Island in the Adriatic.

British ruling quarters had by this time stimulated Mihajlovič's reactionary chetnik movement. A British office brought Mihajlovič special orders to crush the people's liberation movement, since this was essential for opening the door into the country to British soldiers in due time.<sup>1</sup> British Army Colonel Bailey told Mihajlovič that all Communists had to be destroyed, unless they prejudice the projected British landing in Dalmatia. Colonel MacDowell, of the U.S. Army, issued similar instructions. "Your present is hard," he told Mihajlovič, "but your future is radiant. Germany has lost the war. We do not care what relations you had with the Germans. What you must do is keep your post. I have come to help you."<sup>2</sup>

Czechoslovakia's émigré government under Beneš followed a similar anti-popular line. In February 1944 it negotiated with the British Government concerning the entry of British troops into Czechoslovakia. The talks were designed to prevent the Czechoslovakian people from restoring their independent national state.

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The crisis in the fascist camp grew more acute every day as the Soviet armies closed in on Germany. It was dawning on most Germans that they had lost the war. The nazis unleashed a reign of terror to shore up the rear.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, June 14, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 16, 1946.

A fresh wave of wholesale killings swept the country. A secret fascist journal, published for the information of Hitler Germany's top officials, reported with a shudder the growth of the workers' anti-fascist movement.

In 1944, it said, arrests among underground anti-fascist groups amounted to:<sup>1</sup>

January . . . . .	42,580
February . . . . .	45,044
March . . . . .	46,302
April . . . . .	52,939
May . . . . .	56,830
June . . . . .	66,991

For more than 11 years Ernest Thaelmann, leader of the German Communist Party, languished in various fascist prisons, suffering inhuman tortures. The German Communists knew of Thaelmann's tenacity, his indomitable faith in the working class and Soviet victory. Thaelmann was feared by the fascist leaders, though he was behind bars. On August 17, 1944, they had him brought to Buchenwald, where he was assassinated.

Germany's manpower was nearing exhaustion. The "total mobilisation" weakened the rear, while failing to bolster the front. Many of the mobilised people refused to fight. Of the 200,000 Alsatians inducted into the army, 62,000 deserted and 35,000 were either sent to concentration camps or executed.<sup>2</sup>

Germany's satellites were inclined to withdraw from the war. Some of them looked round for an avenue of escape. The first to do so was Finland.

In mid-February 1944 Paasikivi, a prominent Finnish leader and advocate of friendly relations with the U.S.S.R., paid an unofficial visit to A. M. Kollontai, the Soviet Am-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Lage*, Juli, August, September, 1944.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue historique de la deuxième guerre mondiale*, Octobre, 1955, p. 40.



bassador in Stockholm. Kollontai told him on behalf of the Soviet Government that the "Soviet Government has no grounds for feeling particular confidence in the present Finnish Government, but that if the Finns had no other possibilities, the Soviet Government in the interests of peace was agreeable to negotiate with the present Finnish Government concerning the cessation of hostilities".<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Government demanded that Finland rupture relations with Germany and intern German troops and ships, wherein the Soviet Union was prepared to render it due assistance. It also demanded the restoration of the Soviet-Finnish treaty of 1940 and the withdrawal of Finnish troops to the frontier specified in that treaty.

Finland was thus given a realistic opportunity of dropping out of the war and rupturing relations with Hitler Germany. But the Finnish ruling class embarked on a dual policy. On March 17, 1944, the Finnish Government said it could not accept the Soviet terms because "it was not absolutely certain of the interpretation of these terms and of their significance".<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union replied that a Finnish delegation would be allowed to come to Moscow for the pertinent interpretation.

A Finnish delegation under Paasikivi arrived in Moscow on March 26, 1944. It was handed the Soviet peace terms. Besides the conditions spelled out by Ambassador Kollontai, the Soviet Union insisted that Finland pay compensation for the losses caused to the Soviet Union by military operations and by the occupation of Soviet territory payable in goods over five years. The Soviet Union also asked for the return of Petsamo (Pechenga) and the Petsamo region, which it had voluntarily ceded to Finland in 1920. In return, the Soviet Union consented to renounce its rights to the lease of Hangö and the Hangö district.

A fierce controversy ensued in Finland when the Finnish delegation returned home. The people insisted on an

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

immediate cease-fire. Yet the Finnish Government, which banded with the nazis, demurred.

On April 19, 1944, the Finnish Government rejected the Soviet armistice terms. The Soviet Government replied: "Finland today has no political independence. She lost it from the moment when she admitted German troops to her territory. What is at stake at present is the restoration of Finland's lost independence by means of the expulsion of the German forces from Finland and the cessation of hostilities."<sup>1</sup>

Hitler's Foreign Minister Ribbentrop voyaged post-haste to Helsinki on June 22, 1944, to prevent Finland's capitulation. He obtained a written reassurance from the Finnish President Ryti that Finland would stand by Germany and not sign a separate armistice with the Soviet Union. Ryti pointed out in his message, however, that Finland's loyalty would depend on whether or not Germany rendered "every possible assistance to the Finnish armed forces in repulsing the Russian offensive in Finland".<sup>2</sup>

Early in March 1944, Hitler demanded that Horthy Hungary, one of Germany's most faithful satellites, carry through a total mobilisation and send large forces to the Soviet-German front and Yugoslavia. He also insisted on greater shipments of raw materials and food. But the Hungarian Government could no longer ignore the situation at home. It did not dare fulfil the German demands. The Germans responded with fresh troop trains to Hungary and engineered a new, more servile cabinet.

In April 1944 Rumania approached the Soviet Government for the armistice terms. The Soviet reply on April 12 contained the following conditions: rupture with Germany and joint operations by Rumanian troops against the Germans with a view to restoring the independence of Rumania; restoration of the Soviet-Rumanian frontier as stipulated in the 1940 treaty; compensation for the losses

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 14, 1945.

inflicted on the Soviet Union by the hostilities and by the Rumanian occupation; repatriation of war prisoners and interned persons; and free passage across Rumania for Soviet troops as exacted by military necessity. The Soviet Government agreed to annul the Vienna Award of 1940, which transferred Northern Transylvania from Rumania to Hungary. The territory would be returned to Rumania.<sup>1</sup>

The Antonescu government declined these terms. But the fascist bloc was shaken to its foundations. The dilatory tactics of the German satellites regarding the conclusion of an armistice could alter nothing.

### 3

The military and political successes of the Soviet Union, which had immense international impact and determined the outcome of the war, were based on the heroic labour of the Soviet people. In 1944 the Soviet Army had more armour, more guns and more warplanes than the enemy. Soviet arms were of a better quality than those of the Axis armies. The Soviet Army was amply supplied by the rear with all necessary materiel.

In August 1943 the Soviet Government issued a decision on immediate measures for the rehabilitation of areas liberated from German occupation. Vast projects were launched to restore the economy of the newly freed territories.

The Soviet Army had come to the frontiers of Germany. Germany's Balkan rear was breaking up under the joint onslaught of Soviet arms and the Resistance Movement. It was a difficult front to hold for the German armed forces. The German Command rushed the remnants of its battleworthy forces from Western Europe to the east. The liberation movement in the occupied countries gained momentum. The military and international situation indicated clearly that the Soviet Union was quite able to complete

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy...*, Vol. II, p. 105.

the rout of fascist Germany single-handed, and to liberate the peoples of Europe from Hitler rule.

The decisive Soviet victories over fascist Germany also undermined the political and strategic positions of the Japanese imperialists. In April-May 1941 the Japanese Government had given a written undertaking to settle the question of winding up the Japanese oil and coal concessions in Northern Sakhalin not later than November 1941. Subsequently, it took advantage of the Hitler attack on the U.S.S.R. to evade its commitment. In 1944 the Soviet Government raised the question again, demanding that the property of the Japanese concessions be transferred to the Soviet Union and that Japanese nationals and other foreigners be prohibited to fish in Soviet waters. This time the Japanese Government was more tractable. It accepted the Soviet demands and an appropriate Soviet-Japanese protocol was signed in Moscow on March 30, 1944.

*Chapter Fifteen*

**ALLIES LAND IN FRANCE**

**1**

The second front in Europe was not opened in 1941, and not in 1942. It was not opened in 1943, when the tide had turned and Germany lost its advantage in the battlefield. It was when the outcome of the war was a foregone conclusion that British and American troops landed in Northern France. This was on June 6, 1944.

The deliberate delay of the second front was the greatest crime committed by the British and U.S. reactionaries against the nations fighting the fascists. This includes the British and American peoples. The late opening of the second front cost the nations a tremendous loss in lives.

U.S. ruling quarters regarded the landing of troops in Europe as a phase in their battle for world power. This was why, too, Churchill still tried in 1944 to put off the invasion of Europe in the interests of Britain's monopolists. This was why he insisted on the offensive in Italy. The Italian campaign began in January and proceeded at a leisurely pace. On June 5, at long last, British and American troops entered Rome.

In the meantime, the international situation evidenced the compelling need for a second front, for every further

delay could damage the U.S. and British imperialist designs. The Communist-led liberation movement in France was mushrooming as an effect of the resounding Soviet victories. French patriots saw German divisions shipped east, never to return.

On May 18, 1944, Maurice Thorez issued a radio call for a general armed uprising. The struggle for liberation waged by the French was gradually developing into a universal insurrection against the German occupation authorities. Reactionaries the world over were deeply alarmed.

When they ordered the landing in Northern France, the U.S. and British ruling quarters were bent on realising their imperialist plans with regard to Germany. They did not want to see fascism entirely crushed. It was their intention to save Europe's reactionary forces from total annihilation. What they also wanted was to prevent the democratisation of countries in Western Europe and to block the road westward for the Soviet Army. The American and British imperialists outdid each other jockeying for convenient positions in Europe for the next round in the battle for world power.

General Omar Bradley, who was in command of a large U.S. force, described the purpose of the Normandy landing thus:

"To avoid chaos on the continent it would have been necessary for us to mount such forces as we had, cross the Channel at once, move on into Germany, disarm its troops, and seize control of the nation."<sup>1</sup>

When the landing was made Eisenhower ordered the French to cease their armed resistance to the German occupationists. General König issued a similar demand on behalf of the French National Committee. A cable from him to representatives of the Committee in France said:

"Since it is impossible to supply arms and munitions at

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<sup>1</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

present, reduce, I repeat, reduce, to the minimum all guerilla activities."<sup>1</sup>

In effect, the French patriots were told to terminate their uprising and to obey the German authorities. This was an unmitigated betrayal of the French people, a secret war against the nation.

In the west of Europe Germany had no more than 60 divisions, of which only 9 infantry and 1 panzer division under Field Marshal Rommel were stationed in Normandy, that is, near the scene of the invasion. Furthermore, the German divisions in Western Europe were more than 30 per cent under strength, and most of their personnel were soldiers of the upper age brackets. They had a reduced supply of armaments and as little as 300 warplanes in Normandy. Subsequently, the air arm was doubled.

The United States and Britain, who had not yet engaged in any full-scale fighting, assigned a very large force for the invasion. Thirty-six divisions were to make the initial landing, and ten more were to land in Southern France, while 40 divisions were held at the ready in reserve. Eisenhower had 5,049 fighter planes, 1,467 heavy bombers, 1,645 medium and light bombers, 2,316 transport planes and 2,591 gliders. A fleet of 6,483 warships and transports—British, American, Canadian, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, French and Greek (including 6 battleships and 25 cruisers)—was consigned for the crossing.

The landing was to begin in the Seine estuary between Cherbourg and Le Havre on a frontage of 70 miles—from the town of Quineville to the estuary of the Orne. The U.S. troops were to operate on the western, and the British on the eastern sections of the beach.<sup>2</sup> The area was picked, because it had no large ports, which was to ensure the surprise factor. U.S. and British planes did not fly over the area for some time, and there was complete radio

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Massiet, *La préparation de l'insurrection et la bataille de Paris*, Paris, 1945, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army*, June 6, 1944-May 18, 1945.

silence. The fleet set out on the operation from far removed ports. German radar stations were destroyed from the air. Operational Headquarters had no contact with the outer world for two months and all civilians were removed from areas in Britain where ground forces were being concentrated for the assault.

The invasion began at 01.30 hours on June 6 under cover of darkness. There were just two German divisions of the 7th Army in the immediate vicinity of the landing. The first to land were three airborne paratroop divisions. At 06.30 hours these were followed by five divisions.

Admiral Ramsey, who commanded the Allied fleet, said that "the Channel crossing was fantastically unmolested". On the first day of the landing the Germans made only 50 plane sallies. German ground resistance was weak. The German Command assumed in view of the vast numerical superiority of the Anglo-American force that the Allies would not confine their operation to the beachhead, and would at once set out for Paris. "The German Command," Tippleskirch wrote later, "expected a larger landing north of the Seine and considered all that had come before as something of a prelude and diversion."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this the landing operation was behind the time-table. The beachhead was developed at the close of the seventh instead of the originally planned second day, when the Anglo-Americans finally managed to merge the five landing areas, forming a frontage of 80 kilometres, 10 to 18 kilometres deep.

French patriots who defied the orders of Eisenhower and König rendered the Anglo-American landing in Northern France effective assistance. Forty-two towns and hundreds of villages were liberated by the Communist-led francs-tireurs in the proximity of the Anglo-American Normandy beachhead. This helped the Allies consolidate and extend their staging area. Eisenhower admitted grudgingly that the partisans had been "of inestimable value in the

<sup>1</sup> Tippleskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 419.



campaign. They were particularly active in Brittany, but on every portion of the front we secured help from them in a multitude of ways. Without their great assistance the liberation of France and the defeat of the enemy in Western Europe would have consumed a much longer time and meant greater losses to ourselves.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the favourable conditions, the Anglo-American advance was very slow, averaging no more than four kilometres a day. The U.S. and British policymakers were reluctant to launch a large-scale offensive, for that would have prejudiced German-fascist resistance to the Soviet advance. This Anglo-American procrastination enabled the German Command to deploy its troops freely from the west to the Soviet-German front.

For this reason, too, coupled with the desire to spare Anglo-American property in Germany, Allied air raids did not strike at the war industries, but at the inhabitants of the German cities.

German war production in 1944 was 180 per cent higher than in 1942. Here is how it rose from year to year:<sup>2</sup>

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Rifles and carbines, thousands . .	1,352	1,359	1,370	2,244	2,586
Automatic infantry weapons, thousands . . . . .	171	325	317	435	787
Minethrowers, thousands . . . . .	4	4	10	23	31
Guns over 75 mm, thousands . .	5	7	12	27	41
Tanks and armoured cars, thousand tons . . . . .	37	83	140	369	622
Warplanes, thousands . . . . .	10	11	15	25	38
Munitions, thousand tons . . . . .	865	540	1,270	2,558	3,350

<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, New York, 1948, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Промышленность Германии в период войны 1939—1945 гг.*, стр. 270—271.

British and American propaganda went out of its way to exaggerate the effect of Allied strategic air raids on Germany. In effect, these bombings were not crucial to the outcome of the war. The impact of the air attacks, as Fuller points out, fell almost entirely on the civilian population.<sup>1</sup> The German war industries were left unharmed and increased production until 1944 inclusive. And this despite the U.S.A. and Britain dropping more bombs on Germany and the Nazi-occupied countries in the first six months of 1944 than in the preceding years of the war, up to January 1943.<sup>2</sup>

At the Nuremberg trial Nazi Armaments Minister Speer testified that even Hitler was surprised at such U.S. and British air tactics.

However, after everything has been said and done, air raids on Germany were militarily beneficial. They diverted a considerable segment of Germany's manpower to air defence. Suffice it to say that Germany's anti-aircraft artillery engaged 439,000 men in 1942, 600,000 in 1943 and 900,000 in 1944.

In retaliation, Germany employed guided missiles to strike at Britain from the air. The pounding began on June 13, 1944, and in the following 80 days the Nazis fired 8,000 such missiles, of which 29 per cent hit the target, 46 per cent were shot down and 25 per cent went off course.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fuller, *The Second World War*, p. 228. "This appalling slaughtering, which would have disgraced Attila," Fuller goes on to say, "was justified on the plea of military necessity."

<sup>2</sup> *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on the German War Economy*, October 31, 1945, p. 4.

While pulling their punches in the war theatres, the U.S. and British governments were engineering fresh anti-Soviet intrigues and treacherous acts of political diversion in the capitalist countries of Europe against the democratic movement.

U.S. intelligence in Europe, directed from Switzerland by Allen Dulles, the master spy, was clearing the ground for a big conspiracy. Its ultimate purpose was to safeguard Hitler Germany from total defeat and bar the road westward to the Soviet Army with fascist troops. *Einheit*, the theoretical journal of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, described the purport of the plot thus:

"The conspiracy was not motivated by a desire to overthrow the fascist dictatorship and to replace it with democratic authority, nor by a desire to abandon piratical imperialist policy and replace it with a policy of peace. It was motivated by a desire to salvage the militarist imperialist system."<sup>1</sup>

The conspirators were quite prepared to sacrifice Hitler. They intended to put him out of the way, but to preserve his policy, to preserve the fascist system. There was to be only one alteration in German policy—a reversion from war against the U.S.A. and Britain, to peace. As soon as Hitler would be overthrown, an attempt was to be made to speed the conclusion of an armistice without sending a German emissary to Eisenhower's headquarters to negotiate surrender. By that time the United States and Britain would have troops ready for an air-lift to Germany to help a new government of confirmed reactionaries and militarists retain power against possible actions by the German people and mass forces in the east to continue the war against the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Einheit*, N. 12, 1947, S. 1173.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wheeler Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power, the German Army in Politics. 1918-1945*, London, 1954.

Allen Dulles reported to Washington that the conspiracy would lift the "threat to German territory in the East and ... save as much of Germany as possible from Soviet occupation".<sup>1</sup> Field Marshal Rommel who was one of the conspirators, said it would be far better for Germany to end the war and be a British dominion than to be wiped out after a hopeless struggle.<sup>2</sup>

The conspirators entertained plans of continued, still more embittered resistance to the Soviet Army. Dulles said "the essence of the plan was that the anti-nazi generals would open the way for American and British troops to occupy Germany, while the Russians were held on the Eastern Front".<sup>3</sup>

In a coded message dated July 13 Dulles reported to Washington that German troops would make an orderly withdrawal in the west if the plot succeeded, while Germany's best divisions would be sent to hold the Eastern Front.<sup>4</sup>

This was not the first conspiracy in Germany. But unlike the previous plots it was thoroughly worked out. Both Washington and London, Dulles notes, were "fully advised beforehand on all the conspirators were attempting to do".<sup>5</sup> Banker Hjalmar Schacht and a group of German industrialists and financiers were among the most prominent members of the conspiracy. Schacht visited Switzerland, where he negotiated with Dulles and sundry American bankers on the future of the fascist dictatorship in Germany. Schacht promised the U.S. millionaires a considerable slice of the German economy, including the Ruhr industries, as a reward for their help. In a way, the negotiations were a continuation of the talks held between Schacht and John Foster Dulles in 1924, at the time of the Dawes Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Allen Welsh Dulles, *Germany's Underground*, New York, 1947, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Tagesspiegel*, February 24, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.

Hans Gisevius, a prominent German intelligence officer, was among the top conspirators. Another active conspirator was the German industrialist, Karl Goerdeler, who had close connections with British quarters.

A large group of German generals had a hand in the plot. This applied to Field Marshal Erwin von Witzleben and the Generals Alexander Falkenhausen, Ludwig Beck, Erich Hoepfner, Sepp Dietrich, etc. A few former Right-wing Social-Democrats, such as Wilhelm Leuschner, were involved as well. Also involved were some German diplomats of the "old school"—Count Werner von der Schulenburg, ex-Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Ulrich von Hassell, ex-Ambassador to Rome and son-in-law of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, Gottfried Bismarck, grandson of Otto Bismarck, Count Helmuth von Moltke, ex-Ambassador to Warsaw and Madrid, etc.

The conspirators had a headquarters ready in Berlin and distributed offices in the future government. Witzleben was to be President, the Chancellor's office was reserved by the British Government for Goerdeler, Leuschner was to be Vice-Chancellor, Hassell the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Beck the War Minister and Hoepfner the Chief of the General Staff.

It was quite clear by the summer of 1944 that Hitler Germany would be smashed by the Soviet Union without outside assistance. That explains the Anglo-American landing in Normandy, and Allen Dulles's ordering the conspirators to go through with their *coup d'état*.<sup>1</sup> Dulles's agents sent out the pertinent instructions. Gisevius wrote Beck, "time will not wait . . . we must act." The *coup* was scheduled for July 20, 1944. That day Gisevius arrived in Berlin on Dulles's instructions, carrying the final orders.<sup>2</sup>

The attempt on Hitler's life was made on July 20, 1944, by Klaus von Stauffenberg, a German army colonel. He

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<sup>1</sup> Fabian von Schlabrendorf, *They Almost Killed Hitler*, Macmillan, New York, 1947, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

placed a briefcase containing a time-bomb a few yards from Hitler's armchair in the conference hall at Hitler's headquarters. The bomb went off, just as General Heusinger, who was reporting on the war situation, was saying that if urgent measures were not taken there "would be a disaster".<sup>1</sup> There were a few killed and wounded. But, miraculously, Hitler escaped with a few minor bruises and burns. Instantly he pounced on the conspirators.

The conspiracy fell through, but not because the attempt on Hitler's life was unsuccessful. The reasons for the failure went much deeper. To begin with, the conspirators were spiritually alien and hostile to the people of Germany. They did not have mass support and could not rely on anybody's assistance. This alone presaged failure. Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to carry out the conspiracy at a time when the Soviet Army was advancing. The attempt on Hitler was made while Hitler's headquarters was still in East Prussia, at Rastenburg. In view of the approach of Soviet troops, the headquarters was moved. After short stops at various points it was finally installed in the imperial Chancellery, which had reliable air-raid shelters. The whereabouts of the German Government and military headquarters was declared a state secret.

But the rulers of the United States and Britain did not abandon their backstage moves after the abortive conspiracy. John Gilbert Winant, U.S. Ambassador in London, said that in British official circles there was a school that "wanted to build Germany as a bulwark and buffer against Russia, believing that communism would be more evil than a reborn Germany".<sup>2</sup>

The British Government was still bent on realising its "Balkan strategy". In August 1944 Churchill went to Italy to prepare an invasion of South-East Europe. He discussed with Pope Pius XII plans of salvaging the Italian monarchy

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<sup>1</sup> L. Snyder, *The War*, New York, 1960, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *New Times*, Moscow, No. 19, 1947, p. 26.

and preventing Italy's democratisation, and the role of the Catholic Church in the realisation of imperialist plans in South-East Europe.

In his memoirs, Churchill writes that the Pope and he had no lack of topics for conversation. "The one that bulked the largest in this audience," he writes, "as it had done with his predecessor eighteen years before, was the danger of communism. I have always had the greatest dislike of it; and should I ever have the honour of another audience with the Supreme Pontiff, I should not hesitate to recur to the subject."<sup>1</sup>

After his audience at the Vatican, Churchill held a series of secret meetings in Rome with representatives of East and South-East European reactionary groups. There was the Horthy crowd of Hungary, the Hapsburgs of Austria, the anti-Soviet Anders Poles, the Bulgarian monarchists, the Rumanian National-Tsaranists, the Yugoslav chetniks, the royalist Greek fascists and the Albanian Ballists.<sup>2</sup> He told them to prepare the ground for a British invasion of their countries.

The Polish émigré government seized upon these anti-popular reactionary plans and suggested to the British and U.S. governments that it would undertake "political actions" in Poland and execute a rising in Warsaw.<sup>3</sup> The blueprint of the Warsaw rising was thrashed out in a private talk between Mikolajczyk and Churchill. The uprising was not meant to embarrass the German-fascist invaders. It was part of a political game to show that the Polish émigré government had due influence in Poland. It was a reckless undertaking aimed against the burgeoning People's Poland and the Soviet Army. The Polish reactionaries went into a huddle with London and Washington diplomats. What they eventually did was

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Adamic, *Dinner at the White House*, Harper, New York, 1946, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 11, p. 1316.

tantamount to a deliberate slaughter of Polish patriots and the destruction of Warsaw. Surely they knew that the nazis had a considerable panzer force in the area.

Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, related to Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, a member of the SS and Hitler's vicegerent in Warsaw, was charged by the émigré government to head the uprising.

In provoking the insurrection, which was foredoomed to failure, the Polish reactionaries paraded as champions of national liberation and hoped thereby to assume leadership of the popular liberation struggle, in order ultimately to betray it. What they wished was to establish the rule of the émigré government in Warsaw, if only for a few hours.

The Warsaw uprising began on August 1, 1944, when the Soviet Army was still a considerable distance from Warsaw. It still had to cross the Vistula, where the Germans had a substantial force and a honeycomb of fortifications. A Soviet bridgehead was developed on the western bank south of Sandomir. It was as late as September 14 when Soviet troops reached the Vistula opposite Warsaw, liberating Praga, a Warsaw suburb on the eastern bank of the river. But the nazis had blown up the bridges connecting Praga with the Polish capital.

The uprising was begun by detachments of the Armia Krajowa, which took orders from the anti-popular émigré government. But the units were composed of patriots consumed by a desire to visit vengeance upon the German occupation forces. Little they knew of the political designs of their leaders. Communist-led detachments of the Armia Ludowa joined the uprising.

Members of the National Liberation Committee of Poland who were in Warsaw to direct underground activities and the chiefs of the Armia Ludowa partisan units thought the insurrection premature, and described its organisers as people who ignored the true interests of the Polish nation. But they did whatever they could to help



the uprising. The Armia Ludowa and Armia Krajowa agreed on united action and set up a Warsaw Defence Headquarters.

When the uprising broke out, Mikolajczyk demanded from the Krajowa Rada Narodowa that members of the anti-popular émigré government get most of the top posts in the prospective Polish Government and wanted Pilsudski's fascist constitution reinstated. His demands were rejected.

The U.S. and British governments made no secret of their involvement in the organisation of the premature Warsaw uprising. Replying to a message from Churchill, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. wrote:

"Sooner or later the truth about the handful of power-seeking criminals who launched the Warsaw adventure will out. Those elements, playing on the credulity of the inhabitants of Warsaw, exposed practically unarmed people to German guns, armour and aircraft. The result is a situation in which every day is used, not by the Poles for freeing Warsaw, but by the Hitlerites, who are cruelly exterminating the civil population."<sup>1</sup>

In the first few days the uprising was quite successful. "At first," writes Tippelskirch, "the success was staggering. Most of the German military and civil offices in this big city were cut off from the outer world. The railway stations were occupied by the insurrectionists, who had minethrowers, 20-mm anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. The main roads in the city were blocked. Only the bridges across the Vistula were still held by the German troops."<sup>2</sup>

The Warsaw population showed utmost devotion to the cause of freedom, having been led to believe that the uprising was begun by an accord with the Soviet Command. But the strength was unequal. The U.S. and British

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. I, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 47.

governments failed to extend any assistance to the uprising. "Two planes appeared on the night of August 4, and three four nights later," was all Churchill could report.<sup>1</sup> The planes dropped arms, but most of them fell in places controlled by the Germans. The Soviet Command, in the meantime, parachuted arms and munitions over areas held by the insurrectionists.

The nazis sent a big force to destroy the city and its inhabitants. They drove Polish children in front of their tanks as cover for their armour, and advanced behind a living shield of helpless Polish women. German sappers blew up house after house, block after block.

The Polish émigré government did little or nothing to help the uprising. But it sent a memorandum to the U.S. Government, pleading for the salvation of the bourgeois and landlord system in Poland. When forwarding the memorandum to President Roosevelt, State Secretary Cordell Hull said he backed it to the hilt.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet advance to the bank of the Vistula relieved the situation somewhat. On the night of September 16 Polish Army units crossed to the west bank of the river under Soviet artillery and air cover, and reached Warsaw. But they did not manage to widen their narrow bridgehead and make contact with the insurrectionists. The Armia Krajowa commanders prevented the latter from joining the landing force. On September 23, the bridgehead had to be abandoned. This was the time the émigré government ordered the insurrectionists to lay down their arms and surrender to the Germans. Some of the insurrectionists did as they were ordered, and were wiped out by the nazis.

The Polish people paid dearly for the Warsaw uprising. The loss in life ran into 250,000, and the figure would have been still greater if the Soviet Command had not extended what help it could to the insurrectionists and

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> See Cordell Hull, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 1317.

the Warsaw civilian population. The Soviet and Polish armies helped many Polish civilians escape from the besieged and burning city and cross to the eastern bank of the Vistula.

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In spite of the reactionary intrigues, the armies of the United States and Britain finally joined the main battle against fascist Germany. The second front in Europe expedited the victorious conclusion of the war against Germany, whose main strength had been crushed on the Soviet-German front. The British and American men and officers were spoiling for a fight against the nazi aggressors and attacked the enemy bravely. The workers of Britain and the United States assisted the Anglo-American troops by stepped up production. The alliance of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Britain, joined in the struggle against fascism, was sealed by the blood spilt jointly in the battlefields.

## *Chapter Sixteen*

### **SOVIET ARMY LIBERATES EUROPE**

#### **1**

The future of the nations was decided by the Soviet troops that delivered crushing blows to the nazi invaders. The dawn of liberation rose in the East. In 1944 the great liberative mission of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces was largely accomplished. In August and September the Soviet Army liberated Soviet Moldavia and brought about the withdrawal of Rumania and Bulgaria from the fascist bloc in a series of offensive operations against the southern wing of the German forces. The Soviet advance altered the political and military situation in South-East Europe.

In the circumstances, the American and British landings contemplated by the two Western governments in the Balkans were strategically unnecessary and politically harmful.

The Soviet Jassy-Kishinev operation, which tilted the scales on the southern end of the Soviet-German front, was the chief military development of this period. The German troops there were pounded into pulp by the Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian fronts, the Black Sea Fleet and the Danube Naval Flotilla. The objective was to annihilate a massive enemy group in the Kishinev area, to wipe up Hitler's Balkan rear, and to liberate the peoples of South-East Europe.

The Soviet forces engaged the nazi Army Group South Ukraine of two German and two Rumanian armies of 50 divisions, whose morale was by then at a low ebb.

The plan was to deliver two powerful converging blows in order to invest and destroy the main nazi force. The offensive, which opened on August 20, 1944, proceeded in two directions. The Second Ukrainian Front thrust at Focșani and the Third Ukrainian Front at Galatz-Ismail. The two fronts merged south-west of Kishinev, enveloping a large enemy force in the Kishinev area. By August 29 the pocket was mopped up, ending the first stage of the strategic operation.

In its second stage the Soviet Army liberated Rumania and Bulgaria. About the Soviet assault in Rumania Tippelskirch said: "The front turned into chaos.... The enemy troops rolled over the German troops like ocean waves."<sup>1</sup>

On August 23, 1944, armed detachments of patriots organised by the Rumanian Communist Party arrested Antonescu, the fascist dictator, his government, the military command, and the German and Italian officers in Rumania.

Eager to salvage his reactionary system, King Michael who had by then contacted the British and U.S. governments, announced Rumania's withdrawal from the war. He entrusted Constantin Sanatescu, a reactionary general, with forming a new government. Many prominent bourgeois politicians, including Maniu and Bratianu, were given appointments in his cabinet. The bourgeois National-Tsaranist and National-Liberal parties headed by the two ministers gravitated towards the United States and Britain, and resisted the democratisation of Rumania tooth and nail. The reactionary Rumanian bourgeoisie clung to power at the price of a new national betrayal.

On August 25, 1944, the Soviet Government announced that it had no intention of acquiring any part of Rumania's

<sup>1</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

territory, or of altering its social order, or yet of prejudicing in any way its independence. "On the contrary," the Soviet statement said, "the Soviet Government considers it necessary to restore, jointly with the Rumanians, the independence of Rumania by means of the liberation of Rumania from the German-fascist yoke."

"The assistance of the Rumanian troops to the forces of the Red Army in the task of liquidating the German troops," the statement went on to say, "is the only means leading to the speedy cessation of military operations in the territory of Rumania."<sup>1</sup>

On August 26, 1944, Rumania declared officially that it accepted the armistice terms offered by the Soviet Government in spring. The nazis bombed Bucharest from the air and attempted to seize the Rumanian capital. But the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front swept across Rumania, captured Ploesti, the heart of the Rumanian oil industry on August 30, and entered Bucharest on the following day. The offensive continued across Transylvania, thrusting into the rear of the German and Hungarian troops defending the passes across the Carpathians. In the meantime, troops of the Third Ukrainian Front advanced along the Danube southward across Rumania to Dobruja and the Bulgarian border.

Rumania declared war on Germany, and then on Hungary. It put twelve divisions into the field, which joined in the operations against Germany and Hungary under Soviet Command.

On September 12, 1945, an armistice agreement with Rumania was signed in Moscow by Marshal of the Soviet Union Rodion Malinovsky on behalf of the United Nations and by authority of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S.A.

The armistice agreement testified to the generosity of the Soviet Government. The Soviet demands on defeated Rumania were confined to the bare essentials for the final defeat of the fascist bloc and the completion of the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 103.

mission of liberation. It envisaged that Rumania, which discontinued military operations against the Soviet Union at 4 a.m. on August 24 and withdrew from the war against the United Nations, would participate under the general leadership of the Soviet High Command in the war against Germany and Hungary with the purpose of restoring Rumanian independence and sovereignty. The border between the U.S.S.R. and Rumania was re-established in conformance with the Soviet-Rumanian agreement of June 28, 1940. The armistice stipulated the return to Rumania of Northern Transylvania, which Hitler had given away to Horthy Hungary.

Rumania undertook to hand over as trophies into the hands of the Soviet High Command all war materiel of Germany and her satellites possessed on Rumanian territory. Rumania's compensation for part of the losses caused to the Soviet Union by its troops and the occupation of Soviet territory was fixed at \$ 300 million, payable in commodities over a term of six years. Rumania also undertook to return to the Soviet Union in complete good order all valuables and materials removed from Soviet territory during the war, belonging to state, public and co-operative organisations, enterprises, institutions or private persons. The Rumanian Government undertook to collaborate with the Soviet Command in the apprehension of war criminals, the dissolution of fascist organisations and the prevention of their re-appearance in the future. The agreement envisaged the establishment of an Allied Control Commission to regulate and control the execution of the armistice terms.<sup>1</sup>

On August 25, 1944, the Finnish Government sought Soviet consent through its diplomatic representative in Sweden to open armistice negotiations. On August 29 the Soviet Government restated its terms, announced earlier in the year.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, pp. 124-25.

However, Finland's attitude crystallised only after the Soviet offensive in the Baltic area. The offensive unfolded in August 1944. End of August and beginning of September Army Group North was flung back and assumed new defensive positions along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland and the western shores of lakes Chudskoye and Vortsjärvi, the rivers Gauja, Memel and Lielupe, and, farther south, along the Venta and Dubissa to the Niemen.

This spurred the Finnish Government to action. Early in the morning of September 4 it announced acceptance of the Soviet armistice terms and a cease-fire.

On September 19, 1944, an armistice agreement was signed with Finland in Moscow by Colonel-General A. A. Zhdanov on behalf of the United Nations and by authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R. and Britain.

Finland withdrew its troops to the 1940 Soviet-Finnish border and disarmed all German armed forces on its territory. It turned over all German personnel as prisoners of war to the Soviet Command. The Soviet-Finnish peace treaty of March 12, 1940, was restored.

Finland undertook to return to the U.S.S.R. the Petsamo (Pechenga) area, which the Soviet Union had voluntarily ceded to Finland under the treaties of October 14, 1920, and March 12, 1940. The Soviet Union renounced its rights to the lease of the Peninsula of Hangö and Finland undertook to make available on lease the territory and waters of Porkkala-Udd for a Soviet naval base. Reparations to the U.S.S.R. were fixed at \$ 300 million, payable in commodities over six years.<sup>1</sup> The other terms were similar to those of the Rumanian armistice.

The Finnish armistice agreement again evidenced the generosity of the Soviet Union and its respect for the national rights and sovereignty of other countries and peoples. However, the Finnish Government attempted to sabotage the fulfilment of some of the armistice terms. It

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, pp. 129-30.



sought to retain some of the fascist organisations, curbed the democratic aspirations of the masses and had a distinct inclination towards anti-Soviet propaganda. The Finnish working class and the progressive groups in the country censured this reactionary line. Paasikivi said on December 6, 1944, in behalf of the bulk of the Finnish nation:

“Suspicion must be eliminated and friendship developed. I am convinced that in the interest of our peoples Finland’s future foreign policy must never be directed against the Soviet Union. Peace, concord and good-neighbour relations based on trust should prevail as the prime standard of our political activity with regard to the great Soviet Union.”<sup>1</sup>

In September 1944 the Soviet Army launched a fresh offensive in the Baltic area. In a fortnight it crashed through the enemy defences along a frontage of 400 kilometres, freed Soviet Estonia and flung the enemy back to within 25-60 kilometres of Riga. In the second stage it liberated most of Soviet Latvia, including Riga, and pressed the remnants of 35 German divisions, of Army Group North, against the sea between Tukums and Liepaja.

In the meantime, the Bulgarian people, still languishing under the nazi yoke, faced a new threat of foreign domination.

On July 24, 1944, the United States submitted its draft of the surrender terms for Bulgaria to the European Advisory Commission. It suggested that Bulgaria be occupied by Anglo-American troops. The Soviet Union was to be left out of the picture.

On September 2, 1944, a new cabinet was formed in Bulgaria under Muraviev. Dmitri Gichev and Stoicho Mushanov, both Ministers in Muraviev’s Cabinet, went to Cairo, where plans were worked out for an Anglo-American and Greco-Turkish occupation of Bulgaria. Bulgaria

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<sup>1</sup> Pravda, December 15, 1956.

was to be invaded in mid-September 1944 in order to establish an occupation regime and crush the popular anti-fascist movement. While Gichev and Mushanov negotiated in Cairo, Dimitrov-Gemeto negotiated in Istanbul. A secret British military mission came to Bulgaria early in September 1944. The head of the mission conferred with spokesmen of the Bulgarian Government in Plovdiv. He told them that in view of the rapid Soviet advance to the Bulgarian border, the British Government had reached an understanding with the Turks, who would immediately enter Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian Government did not hope to withstand popular pressure without outside help and maintained close relations with the nazis. In a series of diplomatic notes, the Soviet Government exposed the anti-national policy of the Bulgarian Government, and its part in the Hitler aggression. The notes indicated that the reassurances of neutrality issued by the Bulgarian rulers had been false throughout. The Soviet Government qualified Bulgaria's policy as direct assistance to Germany, amounting in effect to actual prosecution of the war on Germany's side. "Not only is Bulgaria in a state of war with the U.S.S.R.," said a Soviet Note of September 5, 1944, "inasmuch as in actual fact she was already in a state of war with the U.S.S.R., but . . . the Soviet Union likewise will henceforth be in a state of war with Bulgaria."<sup>1</sup>

On September 8, 1944, the Soviet Army crossed the Bulgarian frontier from Rumania along a big front. The people of Bulgaria, whose independent statehood was won by the Russian army in the Turkish War of 1877-78, welcomed the Soviet Army, the army of liberation, and gave it all the help they could. Not a single soldier was killed in the Soviet-Bulgarian "war" by either side. "The entry of Soviet troops into Bulgaria," said Georgi Dimitrov in one of his speeches, "helped overthrow the fascist dictatorship in our country and guaranteed the future of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 119.

Bulgarian people, the freedom and independence of our state."<sup>1</sup> The daily *Otechestvenen Front* wrote on September 12 that "the road of the Red Army into the heart of the country and its capital is strewn with flowers".

Soviet entry into Bulgaria delivered that country from an Anglo-American-Turkish intervention and from domination by Wall Street and City monopolists, from the sad fate that was soon to befall the people of Greece. Vasil Kolarov wrote:

"The gallant Soviet Army prevented Bulgaria's reduction to the state of booty for hostile imperialist forces. Otherwise Bulgaria would have suffered a fate worse than the fate of Greece."<sup>2</sup>

The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party had been preparing an armed uprising against the German occupationists and their Bulgarian menials ever since June 1941. The Home Front organised by the Communists was a strong, nation-wide anti-fascist force. The Bulgarian partisans inflicted heavy losses on the enemy with arms and ammunition dropped from Soviet planes. There were 63 big partisan detachments in Bulgaria in early 1944. Official German statistics indicated that 687 partisan engagements had taken place in June 1944 alone. Dimitrov said that the years of struggle waged by the Bulgarian people against the invaders would for ever remain inscribed "in golden letters in the history of our Party and our people, who may be legitimately proud of the tens of thousands of heroic partisans and their helpers organised and rallied by the Communist Party to armed struggle against the German occupationists and the Bulgarian fascists".<sup>3</sup>

Early in the morning of September 9, 1944, the National Committee of the Home Front began the final assault. The joint forces of the people, the partisans and the progres-

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Rabotnichesko Delo*, April 2, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, September 9, 1954.

sive section of the armed forces overthrew the fascist dictatorship, eliminated the influence of German agents, and put the country's administration under a Home Front government. The glorious Communist Party of Bulgaria and its Central Committee was the heart and soul of the armed uprising, which ushered in a new era in Bulgaria's history.

The victorious advance of the Soviet Army merged with the popular anti-fascist uprising. The Bulgarian masses took advantage of the favourable situation and performed a people's democratic revolution. Its victory paved the way for further revolutionary development towards socialism.

On September 9, 1944, the Soviet troops ceased military operations in Bulgaria. The people's democratic government of Bulgaria declared war on Germany and Hungary. Bulgaria engaged an army of 500,000 against the German invaders. It fought for over eight months in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria and reached the foothills of the Austrian Alps. The conduct of the Bulgarian soldiers and officers was highly commended by the Soviet Supreme Command. The Bulgarians helped clear South-East Europe of the nazis and contributed appreciably to the final defeat of Hitler Germany.

The governments of the United States and Britain refused to recognise Bulgaria's legitimate rights as a cobelligerent. Speaking in the Commons on September 28, 1944, Churchill said the Bulgarians "may want to be treated as cobelligerents, but so far as Great Britain is concerned they must work their passage for a long time and in no uncertain fashion."<sup>1</sup>

The armistice talks, begun after Bulgaria's liberation, were marked by acute clashes between the spokesmen of the Soviet Union and the United States and Britain. Annoyed over the failure of their plans, the U.S. and British rulers were bent on saddling Bulgaria with unfavourable

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, September 29, 1944.

terms and insisted on huge reparations. On September 8-10 U.S. bombers bombed residential districts in Sofia.

The Soviet Union stood firm for the rights and interests of Bulgaria, frustrating the United States and British plan. However, Western resistance prevented an understanding concerning reparations. The armistice merely provided for indemnities whose proportions would be determined later.<sup>1</sup> In assuming this commitment, the people of Bulgaria were certain that the Soviet Union would not let the imperialists burden Bulgaria with excessive indemnities. In all other respects the Bulgarian armistice agreement was the same as that signed with Rumania.

The Bulgarian armistice was signed in Moscow by Soviet Marshal Tolbukhin on behalf of the United Nations and by authority of the governments of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and Britain on October 28, 1944.

The people's democratic government of Bulgaria implemented all the terms of the agreement in good faith. But the U.S. and British imperialists treated new Bulgaria, like all the other People's Democracies, with extreme disfavour. They tried to interfere in Bulgaria's domestic affairs and to impose their own conditions for the general elections. Backed by the Soviet Union, the people's Government of Bulgaria stood its ground firmly to protect the country's sovereignty.

## 2

After the Soviet Army liberated Rumania and Bulgaria, a new large-scale strategic offensive was built up to crush the southern wing of the German-fascist army with the objective of liberating the Transcarpathian Ukraine, helping the peoples of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, cutting German communications to Albania and Greece and putting Hungary, Germany's last remaining ally, out of action.

The offensive was directed south-westward, involving

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy*. . . , Vol. II, p. 172.

troops of the Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian fronts, which engaged the Heinrici Army Group (20 divisions), Army Group South (over 36 divisions) and Army Group South-East (over 26 divisions).

In the first stage of the offensive, which lasted from September 28 to October 28, 1944, the troops of the Second and Fourth Ukrainian fronts liberated the Transylvanian Alps and all Transylvania. This reduced the length of the front appreciably. Troops of the Second Ukrainian Front occupied Debrecen and thrust on towards Budapest. The Rumanian troops, especially the volunteer Tudor Vladimirescu Division formed in 1943 in the territory of the Soviet Union, showed supreme valour in the battle for Debrecen.

Troops of the Third Ukrainian Front approached the border of Yugoslavia, whose population awaited liberation with extreme impatience. In spite of the partisan movement, the Yugoslav people were not able yet to fling out the German occupationists. Most of the cities and about three-quarters of the country were still under nazi control.

The Soviet High Command requested the Yugoslav authorities to allow Soviet troops into the country temporarily to crush the German and Hungarian troops. Yugoslavia's National Liberation Committee and the Command of the Yugoslav Liberation Army gave their consent at once.

Troops of the Third Ukrainian Front crossed the Danube near the town of Turnu-Severin and lunged across the East Serbian Mountains. By October 9 they reached the Morava Valley. On October 14, 1944, they mounted the attack on Belgrade. A large German force retreating hastily from South-East Yugoslavia to Belgrade was surrounded south-east of that city. It was totally annihilated by October 19. On the following day the Soviet troops operating in close contact with the Yugoslav partisans, crushed the enemy in Belgrade and liberated the Yugoslavian capital. By that time the Bulgarian troops liberated the

city of Niš. The fraternal alliance of the Soviet Army, the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia and the Bulgarian Army helped the peoples of Yugoslavia to fling off the fascist yoke.

The armed struggle of the peoples against the German-fascist invaders expanded from day to day. The nazis were too weak to withstand the masses in the European countries, inspired by the Soviet war effort.

The liberation movement in Czechoslovakia spread fast. Early in the war fascist Germany had sent forcibly mobilised Slovaks to the Soviet-German front. The Slovaks were so reluctant to fight against the Soviet Union that they were withdrawn in August 1941. But heavy losses in the Battle on the Volga compelled the nazis to send the Slovaks east once more.

Slovak soldiers and officers crossed the battlelines and joined the Soviet Army or the Soviet partisans. The First Slovak Infantry Division crossed the lines *en masse* at Melitopol on October 30, 1943, bringing all its arms. In the Ukraine and in Byelorussia Slovak soldiers formed partisan groups and fought shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet partisans. More than 500 ex-soldiers of the Slovak army joined the Byelorussian partisans, 800 joined partisan groups in the Ukraine and 150 in the Crimea. The Slovak partisan detachment under Captain Jan Nálepka, for example, won the gratitude of the Soviet people by its valour in battle.

Jan Nálepka's detachment joined the partisan formation under the command of A. Saburov on May 18, 1943. On November 16, 1943, Saburov's units assaulted the town of Ovruch, to facilitate the Soviet Army advance to Korosten and Ovruch. Jan Nálepka's unit fought bravely and performed its assignment meritoriously. Nálepka himself was killed in battle, and was posthumously conferred the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. He was also decorated with the Order of the White Lion, Czechoslovakia's highest award. Other Czech partisans were also decorated.

The Slovak partisans fought their way across the German rear to their homeland, where other partisan groups were already operating. By the end of August 1944 Slovakia had over 40 partisan formations. Soviet men sent to Slovakia from the U.S.S.R. and those who escaped from Nazi concentration camps played a prominent part in the Slovak partisan movement. On August 8, 1944, Captain Yegorov and a party of 22 men were dropped from Soviet planes in Slovak territory. Subsequently, Yegorov's brigade had 5,000 men of 22 nationalities—Slovaks, Czechs, Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Hungarians, etc. The partisan detachment of Hero of the Soviet Union Lt.-Col. Karasyev-Stepanov arrived in Slovakia from Minsk, fighting its way across Poland. It formed the nucleus of what later became the Nitra Partisan Brigade.

Emigré groups in London tried to weaken the Slovak people's struggle against the Nazis. Agents of the Slovak émigré government headed by Lt.-Col. Golian joined the military council of the Slovak partisan movement. In his reports to London, Golian wrote that the partisan operations against the Germans "were a terrible bother to us" and asked for a government order banning partisan operations.

On August 29, 1944, Hitler troops invaded Slovakia for a punitive campaign against the partisans. The Slovak patriots responded with a nation-wide uprising. This facilitated the Soviet advance across the Carpathians. On the following day the uprising spread throughout Central and, partially, Eastern Slovakia from the state border in the south to Malaya Tatra, the High Tatra Mountains and the town of Levice in the north, and from the rivers Nitra and Račanka in the west, to Spišská Nová Ves in the east. The insurgents set up their headquarters in Banská Bystrica.

The uprising was a natural sequel, and culmination, of the national-liberation struggle of the Slovak people,



which had begun right after Munich. The Slovaks threw in their lot with the progressive democratic forces fighting fascism under Soviet leadership.

The Communists were the heart and soul of the uprising. They headed it and were a model of courage and bravery. The partisan groups consisted chiefly of workers and the village poor.

The Soviet Union helped the Slovak insurgents as best it could. Soviet aircraft brought them arms, munition and medical supplies. They evacuated the wounded and sick, the women and children. They airlifted a Czechoslovakian paratroop brigade formed in Soviet territory to help them.

The Soviet Government framed an operation to support the Slovaks. On September 8, 1944, troops of the First Ukrainian Front and the Czechoslovakian Corps attacked the German fortifications north of the Polish town of Krosno. On October 6 they reached the Czechoslovakian border at the Dukla Pass and hoisted the national Czechoslovakian flag. That day, October 6, is now celebrated as Czechoslovakian Army Day.

The task force crossed the Carpathians and entered Slovakia. This prevented the bloodbath which the nazis had planned for the Slovakian population and the partisans in the mountains. The Slovak and Czech patriots continued to help the Soviet Army.

The popular uprising is an unforgettable chapter in the history of the Slovak nation. It did a lot to rally the people of Czechoslovakia against fascism, and helped establish People's Democracy in Czechoslovakia. The Dukla operation was part of the mission of liberation the Soviet Union had undertaken in the fight against Hitler. It was also a demonstration of the friendship of the Czechoslovakian and Soviet peoples. It was at Dukla, Klement Gottwald said, that the popular slogan "For ever with the Soviet Union!" was born.

The uprising wrought havoc with the fascist plans. It eliminated an important rear area. The insurgents pinned

down eight crack fascist divisions in Slovakia, and put 55,800 fascist soldiers and officers out of action. Vital armaments and war vehicles were destroyed.

The uprising showed the Czechoslovakian people that they had a loyal and dependable friend, the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the émigré government cast off the veil. It demonstrated hostility to the true interests of the nation, and went to the length of protesting against the Soviet Army operation in the Carpathians.

The second stage of the Soviet offensive on the south wing of the front started on October 29, 1944, and lasted until February 13, 1945.

On October 29 troops of the Second Ukrainian Front began their assault on Budapest. On November 8 they reached the city's outer defences. In subsequent battles a section of enemy troops was cut off from the Hungarian capital, enveloped in a bend of the Danube, and annihilated by December 30. On December 26 the enemy force at Budapest, of some 180,000, was completely surrounded. German attempts to relieve Budapest were squashed. On February 12, 1945, when the Budapest force was on its last legs, it made an attempt to break out of the pocket. Some detachments did manage to reach the forest north-west of Budapest, but were trapped there and destroyed.

A Provisional National Assembly of Hungary was convened in Debrecen on December 21, 1944. It formed a provisional national government. Acting on the wishes of the Hungarian people, this government withdrew from the war. Germany lost the last of its satellites. On December 28, 1944, Hungary declared war on Germany and joined the anti-fascist coalition. The Soviet Army, which smashed the German forces in Hungary, thus saved the Hungarian people from disaster and restored Hungarian independence and sovereignty.

Though under tremendous strain in effecting its big offensives, the Soviet Union rendered appreciable help to the liberated countries in rehabilitating the economy and

normalising living conditions. Medicine, food and other vital commodities, including 10,000 tons of flour, were sent from the Soviet Union to the liberated part of Poland in August and September 1944. The shipments were a gift. The first Soviet-Polish trade agreement was signed in October 1944. The Soviet Union undertook to supply Polish industry with raw materials and fuel. Similar aid was given to Bulgaria and Rumania.

The Soviet Government also sent food to Yugoslavia. In less than a year after liberation, the living standard in Yugoslavia rose substantially thanks to Soviet assistance. The Soviet Army built a big railway bridge (over 2 kilometres long) across the Danube near Belgrade, a bridge across the Morava near Jagodina, and many other facilities. Liberated Hungary also had the benefit of extensive Soviet aid in 1945.

The armistice agreement with Hungary was signed in Moscow on January 20, 1945 on behalf of the United Nations by K. Voroshilov. It was much the same in content as all the previous ones. Article 12 stipulated compensation of losses inflicted on the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to the tune of \$300 million payable in commodities in the course of six years. Of this sum the Soviet Union was to get \$200 million.

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The victorious advance of the Soviet Army in 1944 was the unmaking of the nazi bloc. Hitler Germany was alone, a circumstance that naturally expedited the triumphant culmination of the war in Europe.

The vassal armies had at first tipped the balance strongly in favour of the fascist aggressors. The satellite economies were prominent suppliers of Hitler Germany.

In the latter half of 1944 Germany's war production had begun to shrink. Between May 1944 and January 1945 German industry lost 15 per cent of its production plant.

Nearly every seven of Germany's industrial workers were in territories occupied by Soviet troops, such as East Prussia, Danzig, West Prussia and Poznan.<sup>1</sup>

The following table shows the disastrous drop in Germany's war production:<sup>2</sup>

### Output

	Thousand million marks	Per cent of January-February 1942
<i>1944</i>		
July . . . . .	2.99	322
August . . . . .	2.76	297
September . . . . .	2.80	301
October . . . . .	2.54	273
November . . . . .	2.49	268
December . . . . .	2.45	263
<i>1945</i>		
January . . . . .	2.11	227
February . . . . .	1.62	175
March . . . . .	1.34	145

Yet even in March 1945 Germany's war production was nearly 50 per cent higher than in early 1942. In spite of its terrible losses Germany still had formidable armed forces. An all-out effort was still required to crush Hitler once and for all, and to complete the liberation of the European nations.

The Soviet people and their Army were preparing the final blow.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Die deutsche Industrie im Kriege 1939-1945*, S. 91

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The liberation of Western Europe from the Hitler yoke was a direct result of the Soviet victories. "Every honest Frenchman knows," wrote Jean Cathala, "that it is the Red Army to which he owes his liberation."<sup>1</sup> The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union merged with the struggle of the European nations for freedom and national independence.

The Soviet Army, which engaged the main Hitler forces, and the French patriots, assisted the Anglo-American advance in France.

French patriots attacked German garrisons along the route of the Anglo-American advance, clearing the path for the Allies. Yet the armies of the United States and Britain, those of Operation Overlord in Normandy and those that landed in Southern France on August 15, advanced solely along the main roads. They by-passed the greater part of France. U.S. and British ruling quarters were in no hurry to destroy the nazi forces on French soil. Far from it. They intended to use them to curb the French masses, whose liberation efforts were mounting from day to day. Secret talks were held between the Anglo-American and Hitler commands in France to map joint actions against the French patriots. To disorganise the liberation movement, official U.S. and British quarters stopped broadcasting radio information about Soviet victories and their own military operations. At a crucial moment an attempt was made to withhold information about the military situation from the leaders of the underground Resistance Movement and the population of France.

British and American aircraft raided working-class districts in the French cities. Militarily unnecessary, these raids struck most painfully at the French people. American aircraft also destroyed ports, airplane factories and

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Cathala, *Ils trahissent la paix*, Moscow, 1951, p. 85.

other plants, aiming to weaken French industry and to put it out of the running as a competitor. In autumn 1944 American planes bombed workers' quarters in Marseilles at a time when the French partisans were approaching the city.

Inspired by the heroic example of the Soviet Union, the French patriots took their liberation into their own hands. Though poorly armed, poorly clothed and poorly fed, they struck terror into the occupationists, liberating big cities and entire departments. "We witnessed a mass uprising from Brittany to the Alps and from the Pyrenées to the Jura," wrote Maurice Thorez. "Whole departments were liberated. It was veritably a nation-wide insurrection... And again the Communists were in the van of the fighting."<sup>1</sup>

At least half a million took part in battles for the country's liberation in just the organised detachments of the French "home forces". In addition, millions of patriots participated in the national uprising and in the liberation effort. The mass patriotic movement, unprecedented in the history of France, was led by the French Communist Party.

The U.S. and British imperialists, and the French émigré groups, were deeply alarmed by the growing influence of the Communists. International reaction lined up against the fighting French patriots. This is illustrated by its treatment of the uprising in Paris.

On August 14 the workers of Paris began mass strikes to discomfort the German occupation forces. On August 18 an appeal signed by Maurice Thorez, Jacques Duclos, Marcel Cachin and other Communist Party leaders, was disseminated in Paris. It called for a mass uprising in the capital. The following day the Paris insurgents began a general offensive against the nazis. Rol-Tanguy was placed at the head of it by the Paris Liberation Committee. A

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Thorez, *Fils du peuple*, pp. 153-54.

Communist worker, he had had considerable military training in the Spanish war against fascism. A group of Soviet prisoners of war who had escaped from German concentration camps took part, hand in hand with the Paris proletariat. They liberated the Soviet Embassy building and hoisted the Soviet flag over it. Political prisoners in Fresnes Prison were freed by armed patriots.

Pétain, Laval and other ministers of the Vichy government fled to Germany.

The Paris insurgents were more than a match for the German garrison, though it was numerically strong and well armed. Right-wing Socialist Daniel Mayer and Georges Bidault, a Catholic reactionary, hastened to the nazis aid. To prevent a total German defeat they suggested that the insurgents conclude an armistice with the German garrison. When the French patriots rejected this idea, Mayer and Bidault gathered a group of disguised policemen and told them to paste announcements of an armistice on the walls of Paris, and to shout in the streets, "Stop firing, an armistice has been signed!" This enabled the enemy to cross the capital and withdraw.<sup>1</sup>

The nazis made the most of this *coup de grace* by Mayer and Bidault. On August 21 they evacuated the remnants of their troops from Paris. In retreat, they attempted to destroy the city, especially the factories, bridges and monuments. The German Commandant of Paris, General Dietrich von Choltitz had "received orders from Berlin to destroy all Paris factories on August 10".<sup>2</sup> But the insurgent Frenchmen nipped the nazi plan in the bud.

After the arrival of reinforcements, the Germans assaulted Paris once more. U.S. troops were about 80 kilometres from the city at that time, and could easily have come to its relief if the top American Command had wished so. But General George S. Patton had orders to temporise.

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<sup>1</sup> *France d'Abord* on August 19, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> *Figaro*, July 21, 1951.

He admits in his memoirs that he could have taken Paris "had I not been told not to".<sup>1</sup> The U.S. and British ruling quarters were giving the nazis a chance to return to the capital of France and settle scores with the insurgents. But the Paris patriots stood firm.

When the U.S. and British governments saw that the nazi attacks were abortive, they negotiated with the German Command for passage to Paris for their troops. The Germans were represented at the talks by General von Choltitz. Raoul Nordling, Swedish Consul-General in Paris, was the mediator. He sent his brother, Rolf Nordling, whom he used for liaison, to American field headquarters.<sup>2</sup> The German troops enveloping Paris allowed the Leclerc police division to enter the French capital first. It was a division specially formed to combat the French democratic forces. On its heels Paris was entered by U.S. and British troops. All this time, on the strength of the Anglo-American-German understanding, the German armies continued to blockade Paris.

The French Communist Party won still greater support among the French masses by its tireless and devoted struggle for the country's liberation. Its heroic stand for French national independence testified to the high-minded patriotism of the Communists, to their devotion to the people and loyalty to the principles of proletarian internationalism. "Of all the old parties," wrote de Gaulle's *La France Libre* in its September 1944 issues, "the Communist Party is the only one to have won added prestige, added strength and new followers. It was highly prominent in propaganda, in struggle, in the people's war, especially after 1941."

A Provisional Government of the French Republic was formed in Paris under de Gaulle. On October 23 it was offi-

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<sup>1</sup> General George S. Patton, *War As I Knew It*, Boston, 1947, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 388-90.



cially recognised by the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and Britain. Yet the U.S. and British attitude towards renascent France was quite different from that of the Soviet Union. In view of the heavy losses suffered by France in the war, the governments of the United States and Britain declared candidly that they did not want France to rise again as a Great Power.

Soviet policy, on the other hand, was based on deep respect for France's national rights. The Soviet Union was eager to help the French people to revive France as a truly independent and sovereign power. In giving the French friendly aid and support, the Soviet people believed that their country and France had traditional common interests, deriving from the fact that the danger of German aggression had always hung over both the countries, the Soviet Union and France, alike.

The Soviet Union had recognised the French National Committee of Liberation in 1943. In a message to the British Prime Minister, the head of the Soviet Government said, "I am for having the French National Committee of Liberation represented on the commission for negotiations with Italy."<sup>1</sup>

It was on the insistence of the Soviet Union that the French were invited to Dumbarton Oaks, where the United Nations Charter was being drawn up. This assured the French a place among the five Great Powers with permanent seats in the Security Council. On November 11, 1944, again on Soviet insistence, the French Provisional Government was invited to the European Advisory Commission as the fourth permanent member. This meant that it would participate in the occupation of Germany and in the Control Council for Germany.

French patriots demanded close Soviet-French allied relations, moved by gratitude to, and respect for, the Soviet Union. De Gaulle could not afford to ignore their

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 152.

demands. "I claim that the attitude so favourable towards us for a long time adopted by the Government of the Soviet Union," said de Gaulle on July 25, 1944, "whose role in the war is as big as it will be in the peace, gives us reason to hope that France and Russia may as soon as opportunity presents determine between them the modalities of close collaboration on which, I believe, the security and equilibrium of the future of Europe depends."<sup>1</sup>

In November 1944, in the context of its friendly aid to France, the Soviet Government invited a French mission to Moscow to negotiate a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance.

In view of the identical national interests of the two countries in the sphere of security and the prevention of a new German aggression, the Soviet Government signed a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance with France on December 10, 1944. The treaty contained pledges of mutual aid and alliance in the war against Hitler Germany and pointed out that the parties would not negotiate with the German invaders, save by mutual consent. Provisions were made for the promotion of friendly relations after the war. The signatories promised to join no coalitions or alliances aimed against either party, to act jointly in disarming Germany, and to render each other help, military help included, in the event of a new German aggression. The treaty was concluded for a term of 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-French treaty ministered to the peace and security of Europe. It conformed with the basic national interests of the two countries and was enthusiastically received by the French people. Yet the ruling quarters of France had no earnest intentions of living up to its terms. After the war France formed a military alliance with West Germany, facilitating its remilitarisation and the revival of German militarism and revanchism.

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<sup>1</sup> De Gaulle, *Memoirs de guerre, L'United. 1942-44*, p. 586.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet Foreign Policy. . .*, Vol. II, pp. 193-95.

In 1963 the ruling circles of France took the dangerous step of concluding a military agreement with West Germany against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. This formalised the politico-military alliance of the French and West German imperialists, creating a grave threat to the peace of Europe and operating against the vital national interests of the French people.

In September 1944 a general armed uprising of Belgian patriots began under the leadership of the Communist Party. A partisan brigade, "For the Homeland", formed by Soviet p.o.w.s who had escaped from nazi camps, took part in it. The uprising helped to bring about Belgium's liberation. During the German break-through in the Ardennes early in 1945, the partisans stood their ground tenaciously and held up the nazi advance.

In early 1944 the partisan movement in Italy gradually gathered momentum. The Italian partisans co-ordinated their operations with partisans in the neighbouring countries. In May 1944 they concluded an agreement with the French partisans and the Slovenes.

On December 31, 1944, the Krajowa Rada Narodowa convened in Lublin. The chairman, Boleslaw Bierut, noted in his address that "Poland would never have liberated itself from Hitler slavery without Soviet help". Poland, he said, which was in a ghastly state of ruin, had received aid to restore its armed forces and its independence.<sup>1</sup> The Krajowa Rada responded to numerous communications from workers, peasants and the intelligentsia by converting the Polish Committee of National Liberation into the Provisional Government of Poland. The rulers of the United States and Britain tried to intervene. But the Polish people stayed calm, for their independence and their right to settle domestic affairs as they thought best, were being safeguarded by the Soviet Union.

Soviet-Polish friendship developed. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognise the Provisional National

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, January 1, 1945.

Government of Poland. It did so on January 4, 1945, and at once established diplomatic relations with it.

In October 1944 the Soviet Army and the Northern Fleet launched an offensive in the Arctic. The object of the offensive was to destroy the enemy group entrenched there and to liberate the Petsamo area. The Soviet troops crashed through the ramified, deep enemy fortifications. The Germans were smashed and the Petsamo area freed. On October 22 the Soviet troops crossed the Norwegian border. After liberating a considerable section of Northern Norway, the Soviet Army gave fraternal aid to the Norwegians. Germany lost a number of convenient ports, and its navy was compelled to abandon the Barents Sea and the Norwegian naval bases. This gave the Norwegian patriots the chance they were waiting for to complete the liberation of their land from the German occupation late in 1944 and early 1945.

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The developments of 1944 revealed the divergent trends pursued by the Soviet people, on the one hand, and the ruling quarters of the United States and Britain, on the other. The United States and Britain did their utmost to saddle the European nations with reactionary regimes, and did not shrink from using nazi services for that end. The Soviet Union, in the meantime, fought the German-fascist army tooth and nail, paving the way for the liberation of the peoples from the fascist yoke.

Every step made by the Soviet Union along the path to victory over fascist Germany evidenced the liberative and just war aims it pursued, and its deep respect for the sovereign rights of other nations. The Soviet Army was imbued with a strong sense of solidarity in relation to the progressive, democratic forces. The road of triumph travelled by the U.S.S.R. in the war testified to the advan-

tages of socialism and its superiority over capitalism. Little wonder that the prestige of the U.S.S.R. and the influence of communist ideas mounted swiftly in all countries.

The Soviet Union paved the way for popular victories in some of the East and South-East European countries. The heroic Soviet effort for freedom and independence, for the great gains of socialism, was to the nations an inspiring example.

#### 4

Soviet operations in 1944 created favourable conditions for the liberation of Greece. In October the Soviet Army was engaged against the enemy in Yugoslavia and Hungary. The German-fascist Command deployed all the forces it could muster in South-East Europe to stem the tide in Hungary. In the circumstances, the German troops occupying Greece were compelled to beat a hasty retreat. The retreating Germans were harassed every yard of the way by the ELAS, the Greek People's Army of Liberation. The latter had considerable strength and had invaluable experience gained in continuous combat against the nazis.

The gate seemed to swing open for the independent, free and democratic development of the Greek nation. Most of Greece, including Athens, its capital, was liberated. But the British and American reactionaries were not inclined to tolerate the prospect of a democratic Greece. In August 1944 the British Government assigned a task force to intervene against the people of Greece.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the war the British Government had maintained close contacts with the fascist-minded Greek monarchists both outside the country, in North Africa, and within Greece itself. The Greek royalists called the attention of the British to the fact that the ELAS was locked in combat with the Germans in the northern part of the

<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 252.

country, while its southern part was undefended. One of these reactionaries, George Papandréou, sent a dispatch to Churchill well beforehand, containing a direct invitation for British intervention and interference in Greek domestic affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the morning of October 4, 1944, British troops landed without obstruction in Southern Greece. In two months the British Government built up its armed forces in that country, and on December 3, 1944, provoked a conflict in Athens, launching a military operation against the Greek nation. Churchill showered General Scobie, the British commander in Greece, with orders urging extreme measures. "Do not however hesitate," he said in one dispatch, "to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress."<sup>2</sup> In another dispatch Churchill wrote:

"We have to hold and dominate Athens. It would be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary."<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere Churchill recalled Arthur Balfour's celebrated telegram in the eighties to the British authorities in Ireland:

"Don't hesitate to shoot."<sup>4</sup>

The British occupation in Greece roused indignation throughout the democratic world. The people of Britain, too, were incensed. But the Tories and Liberals, and the Labour leadership too, backed the infamous British policy in Greece in Parliament. Bevin spoke fervidly in defence of Churchill's Greek policy at a Labour Party congress in 1944. "The British Empire," he said, "cannot abandon its positions in the Mediterranean."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. Chevrier et A. Marin, *Démocratie ou Fascisme, en Grèce*, 1946, Paris, 1946, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> D. Chevrier et A. Marin, *Démocratie ou Fascisme en Grèce*, 1946, Paris, 1946, p. 58.

By intervening in Greece, the British ruling quarters laboured against time to outstrip their American rivals. Yet, in spite of the obvious imperialist contradictions involved, the U.S. Government welcomed the intervention. It hoped that the United States would subsequently elbow out the British from Greece and seize control of the situation.

The British interventionists waged a dirty war against the Greek people for 33 days, employing methods very similar to those of the nazis. Wholesale arrests and assassinations of unarmed people combined with brutal air raids on Greek towns and villages, and bombardments from warships.

On February 12, 1945, Britain thumbscrewed the EAM into concluding an agreement with it in Varkiza. The Greek People's Army of Liberation was to be disarmed, while the position of the British occupation forces and their Greek monarchist protegés was consolidated.

The British and American imperialists also tried to gain control of Albania. The Soviet Army advance in South-East Europe compelled the Germans to flee that country. In hot pursuit, the People's Liberation Army of Albania all but liberated the whole of the country. The U.S. and British imperialists, aided by their local agents, struck the Albanian patriots from behind. Specially formed detachments of the imperialists' agent Abaz Kupa, commanded by General Fitzroy MacLean, started a shooting war against them.

When the conflict broke out, Field Marshal Alexander, British Commander in the Mediterranean, sent a sharply worded ultimatum to the Provisional Government of Albania, demanding that the Albanian People's Army cease operations against Abaz Kupa. A demonstration of force was staged with British paratroopers arriving in Albania en masse while a British landing party occupied the Albanian port of Saranda.

Yet the Albanian patriots stood firm. They rejected Alexander's ultimatum and launched far-flung operations against the Kupa detachments. They issued an emphatic demand that British troops withdraw from Saranda. The British Government, fearful of a major conflict, complied. By November 29, 1944, the gallant Albanian people completed the liberation of their country, helped greatly by the Soviet victories.

The American and British rulers set their sights on Rumania as well. They plotted a fascist coup d'état in that country with the connivance of King Michael. General Sanatescu's government was replaced for that purpose on December 6, 1944, by the government of General Radescu. A reactionary extremist, Nicolae Radescu had spent many years in London as Rumania's military attaché. His relations with the British Government were very close. Now the British insisted on his nomination.

The Radescu government lost no time in assaulting the democratic forces in Rumania. Editorial offices of Communist newspapers were raided and smashed, numerous terrorist acts were committed against Communists and progressive working-class leaders. Fascist detachments organised by Radescu went to the length of attacking Soviet soldiers and officers. In anticipation of his fascist coup, Radescu massed a big military force officered by fascists around Bucharest.

The Rumanian reactionary bourgeoisie, which had betrayed the interests of the nation to the nazis earlier on and was now doing the same vis-à-vis the U.S. and British imperialists, expected to crush popular resistance with brute force. With U.S. and British consent Radescu started his bloody reprisals in February 1945.

Army lorries and tanks appeared in the streets of Bucharest on February 11. The reactionaries were poised for the kill. On February 20 a group of fascist "legionaires"



tried to seize Malaksa, a Bucharest factory. The working people throughout the country reacted by demanding Radescu's resignation and democratic reforms. The Rumanian National-Democratic Front, organised in October 1944 on the initiative of the Rumanian Communist Party, held mass meetings in Bucharest and other big cities on February 24, 1945, to voice the demands of the masses once more.

The people resisted the fascist outrages of the Radescu cabinet. Hundreds of thousands crowded the central square in Bucharest on February 24, 1945, to call for a democratic government. The Radescu government responded with a hail of bullets from the windows of the royal palace and the Ministry of Interior.

But the legitimate rights of the Rumanian people were under the protection of the Soviet Army in accordance with the terms of the armistice. The Soviet Army Command in Rumania warned that it would not tolerate violence against the people. In mortal fear of the people and their wrath, Radescu chose to seek refuge in the British Embassy building in Bucharest. American diplomats shipped him from there to the United States. The U.S. and British governments did not risk an open intervention against Rumania.

After the demonstration was fired upon, a wave of popular manifestations rolled across the country. The working people demanded a National-Democratic Front government. Radescu's defeat was decisive. On March 6, 1945, Petru Groza formed a people's democratic government. The anti-imperialist revolution conquered. In its address to the Soviet Union, the new Rumanian Government declared that it was firmly resolved to banish the sinister past, to perform Rumania's obligations to the Allies in letter and spirit, and to maintain the closest and friendliest of relations with its great Eastern neighbour.

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Acting upon their selfish goals, the British and American imperialists tried to take advantage of the military situation to capture all South-East Europe. But the Soviet Army prevented this by liberating the Balkan countries from the fascist yoke in good time and created a favourable environment for the free expression of the peoples' will. Genuinely democratic governments were set up in some of the Central and South-East European countries by the peoples on the strength of the internal conditions prevailing in them.

*Chapter Seventeen*  
**THE CRIMEA CONFERENCE**

**I**

The Second World War was a gold mine for the monopoly capitalists. The American monopolists, especially, were making a fortune on it. Government orders for armaments and war materiel were coupled with new building. The U.S. Government spent as much as \$22,000 million on the construction of new plants. The monopolists supplied it building materials at inflated prices. Once building was completed, the fully equipped plants were leased by the state to private enterprises for the duration. The monopolists paid negligible rents and sold their products at high prices. After the war the U.S. Government sold the newly built plants to the same monopolies for next to nothing.

U.S. and British manufacturers used the war as a pretext for reducing real wages and cutting in on farmers' incomes. Maximum profits were derived from their stepped-up exploitation of working people at home and abroad.

At the end of 1944 the U.S. and British governments held a fresh series of secret talks with the German fascist leaders. Count Bernadotte, an offspring of the Swedish ruling dynasty, was the middleman in the negotiations between Eisenhower's headquarters and Himmler, a top nazi leader. They discussed the terms of a cease-fire between the United States and Britain, on the one hand, and

Germany on the other, with the motive of giving Nazi Germany a chance to concentrate fully on resisting the advancing Soviet Army.

In the interim, the U.S. and British governments ordered a respite on the front. By mid-December 1944 their troops had dug in along the western borders of Germany. British and American front-line officers and soldiers were granted short leaves.

The German fascist Command took advantage of the situation to counter-attack the Anglo-American forces. Guderian later wrote that Hitler "hoped in this way to win time and dash enemy hopes of a total victory, thereby to induce them to abandon their demand of unconditional surrender and bring them around to concluding an agreed peace".<sup>1</sup>

On December 11 and 12 top German army officers conferred at Hitler's headquarters. They decided on an offensive in the Ardennes.

Many of the fascist ex-generals, eager to ingratiate themselves with the U.S. and British rulers today, disown blame for the Ardennes thrust. They go out of their way to show that Hitler had ordered the offensive against their unanimous objections. But Col.-Gen. Jodl refutes them. "I fully agreed with Hitler," he is quoted as having said, "that the Antwerp undertaking was an operation of the most extreme daring. But we were in a desperate situation, and the only way to ease it was by a desperate decision. By remaining on the defence, we could not expect to escape the evil fate hanging over us. By fighting, rather than waiting, we might save something."<sup>2</sup>

The German operational plan boiled down to repeating the break-through Hitler had accomplished in May 1940. Once more it was planned to move rapidly to the coast and cut off and destroy the American and British expeditionary forces. The only difference was that the German

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<sup>1</sup> Guderian, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> Milton Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, London, 1947, p. 226.

troops were to make a smaller curve. The break-through was planned at the Ardennes between Monschau and Echternach, at the junction of British and American troops. The offensive was then to develop towards Dinant-Namur-Liège and then Antwerp, which was the main Allied supply centre. The Germans hoped to replenish their own supplies at the expense of the Antwerp stockpile. Three armies under von Rundstedt, including ten panzer and fourteen motorised and infantry divisions, were assigned for the operation.

The German counter-offensive began on December 16, 1944. It came as a total surprise for the Anglo-American Command. It was not the weakness of the Anglo-American intelligence that was to blame, but sooner the political considerations which made the Allied Command disbelieve Germany's counter-offensive capability. Fuller, in his book, censures Germany's fascist leadership for blundering. He says they did not do what they should in their own best interests. "Politically," he writes, "the best course would probably have been to have abandoned the Western Front altogether and have concentrated everything against the Russians. This would have handed the whole of Germany and Austria over to the Americans and British and have dealt a crushing blow to Russian prestige."<sup>1</sup> It was, indeed, this treacherous assumption of the U.S. and British rulers that constituted the chief reason for the success of the German Ardennes counter-offensive.

The United States and Britain possessed considerable numerical superiority. They had 90 divisions, including 24 armoured divisions. They had three times as much infantry and many times as many tanks, artillery and aircraft. Yet the German Ardennes offensive developed successfully. American and British strategy seemed to have boomeranged. The gross political miscalculation of the U.S. and British governments was quite obvious.

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<sup>1</sup> Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

The German Command succeeded in the first part of its plan. The break-through was accomplished with relative ease. The British and American forces backed away hastily. Control over them was lost. Omar Bradley recalls that Eisenhower's staff showed "symptoms of what we at group diagnosed as an acute case of the shakes".<sup>1</sup>

On the second day the German troops seized the towns of Malmédy and Vielsalm, and entered the city of Spa. By the end of the first week the front was breached along a frontage of 100 kilometres. The depth of the break-through was as much as 110 kilometres. On December 23 a German vanguard crossed the Maas at Dinant and reached the bank of the river west of Liège. In their confused retreat the Anglo-American forces abandoned large stocks of armaments, munition and fuel.

Differences arose between the governments and military commands of the United States and Britain. This, too, played into the hands of the Germans. They were allowed to make impressive headway. The northern, essentially British, group of armies was cut off from the southern, essentially American group. The German troops were poised to inflict a second Dunkirk. The German operations spelled disaster to a very big part of the Anglo-American expeditionary force in France.

The United States and Britain were obviously unable to halt the German Western offensive with their own resources. At this point, Churchill appealed to the head of the Soviet Government to relieve the Anglo-American forces with a new offensive on the Soviet-German front. The Soviet Army had only just completed its big winter offensive. The weather at the front was very unfavourable. However, the Soviet Government cabled the following day, January 7, 1945, that the Soviet Supreme Command had decided, in view of the difficult situation on the Western Front, to speed preparations and launch large-scale

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<sup>1</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

offensive operations regardless of the weather not later than the second half of January 1945, that is, much earlier than originally planned.<sup>1</sup> Yet the rapid deterioration of the situation on the Western Front compelled the Soviet Command to show still greater haste, for the Allies needed urgent relief. It was not in the second half of January, as earlier promised, but on January 12 that the Soviet Army launched an offensive all along the Soviet-German front from the Baltic to the Carpathians.

The timely Soviet blow in the East frustrated Germany's Western offensive and saved the Anglo-American troops from disaster. In face of the powerful Soviet thrust, Hitler decided to pass to the defensive in the west, and to deploy relief forces eastward.<sup>2</sup> By the end of January the German Command withdrew its Ardennes troops to their original positions, but it was as late as February that the Anglo-American troops resumed their slow advance to the Rhine.

The Soviet Army offensive, which extricated the U.S. and British troops from a grave predicament, showed once more that the Soviet Union approached its Allied duties much more earnestly than the American and the British rulers. The Soviet Union performed its obligations selflessly, consistently and honestly, rendering due assistance to its Allies.

Anglo-American historians, however, go to great pains to conceal the high-minded devotion of the U.S.S.R. to its Allied duties. They speak at length about the German offensive in the Ardennes and say little or nothing about the Soviet offensive in the east and the part it played in saving the U.S. and British expeditionary force from disaster. The West German war historians are not loth to join them in this falsification by omission, but Omar Bradley broke all the records. He ascribed the success of

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. I, pp. 294-95.

<sup>2</sup> Guderian, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

the Soviet offensive in January-February 1945 to what he called the "strategic effect" of the Allied stand in the Ardennes.<sup>1</sup>

But the facts speak for themselves. The *Dagens Nyheder*, for example, in comparing the scale of the Soviet offensive and the Anglo-American Western operations, wrote on January 24, 1945, that "the giant Russian offensive is lightning-like in speed, surpassing anything known in military history. The German blitz offensives of the beginning of the war are trifles compared to the present Russian offensive, which burst out with unheard of force all along the front."

U.S. and British leaders paid tribute to the Soviet Army and the Soviet people for their war effort against Germany. They recognized that the Soviet-German front was decisive even after their troops had landed in Western Europe. In February 1945 Churchill wrote:

"The Red Army celebrates its twenty-seventh anniversary amid triumphs which have won the unstinted applause of their Allies and have sealed the doom of German militarism. Future generations will acknowledge their debt to the Red Army as unreservedly as do we who have lived to witness these proud achievements."<sup>2</sup> This chimes in with a statement by President Roosevelt, who said, "The Red Army and the Russian people . . . have earned the lasting admiration of the people of the United States."<sup>3</sup>

## 2

The scintillating Soviet victories over fascist Germany brought near the end of the war. Timely Soviet assistance to the United States and Britain during the German Ardennes offensive and the mounting national-liberation

<sup>1</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 305-06.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 57-58.



movement in the nazi-occupied European countries provided the setting for a new conference of the heads of the three Great Powers in the Crimea, February 4-12, 1945. The fact alone that it took place in the Soviet Union was evidence of its grown prestige and international influence.

The first question examined at Yalta was that of fascist Germany as a warring state. Joint military plans were framed to achieve final victory. The European Advisory Commission had drawn up a Soviet-Anglo-American agreement on the zones of occupation in Germany and on the administration of Greater Berlin, signed on September 12, 1944. This was endorsed at the Crimea Conference, specifying the boundaries of what were originally three occupation zones.

France was invited to participate in the occupation of Germany on the initiative of the Soviet Union. A French zone of occupation had to be fixed. Discussions of this point lasted several months. A decision was finally reached on July 26, 1945. North-west Germany became the British occupation zone, south-west Germany the American, and west Germany the French.

The U.S. and British governments once more advanced their respective plans for Germany's partition, which distinctly mirrored their imperialist goals. U.S. and British Big Business viewed the German monopolists as dangerous rivals and was eager to destroy Germany's economic power, to oust Germany from the world market and extend its own domination. At the Anglo-American Conference in Quebec on September 15, 1944, Roosevelt and Churchill initialed an agreement, known as the Morgenthau Plan, which envisaged a partitioning of Germany, its deindustrialisation and agrarianisation. The signatories reached an understanding to put the Ruhr and Saar industries out of operation. In its concluding part, the Morgenthau Plan said that it was "looking forward to converting Germany into a country primarily agricultural and pastoral in its char-

acter".<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau declared that "two Germanys would be easier to deal with than one."<sup>2</sup>

It was a foregone conclusion that the German people would resist partitioning. Sumner Welles, U.S. Under-Secretary of State, wrote that "the Germans would soon find satisfactory means to get around it and prepare for a new attempt at unification whenever the moment seems propitious".<sup>3</sup> The London *Economist* suggested that there should be a period "of penal servitude for the German people, the conditions of which would be as sharp as anyone desires".<sup>4</sup> In the meantime the American *New Republic* noted, "the architects of British and American policy mean to destroy the Nazi system and the Nazi Party, but it will be no part of their purpose to further any change in the German class structure".<sup>5</sup>

Eager to see a democratic arrangement in the post-war world, the Soviet Union made a stand for the interest of the German nation and its independent national existence. Soviet international prestige had grown sufficiently to tilt the scales in favour of German unity and statehood. The Crimea Conference decisions were based on the recognition that the occupation would be temporary and should not break up Germany's unity. It was essentially the Soviet proposals for the democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany that were accepted in Yalta as a basis for lasting peace. The Crimea Conference adopted the political aims of the occupation and control of Germany. Naturally it was a compromise decision. Yet it reflected the Soviet proposals quite adequately. It provided for

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Neumann, *Making the Peace 1941-1945. The Diplomacy of the Wartime Conferences*, Washington, 1950, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Morgenthau, Jr., *Germany Is Our Problem*, New York and London, 1945, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision*, New York and London, 1944, p. 349.

<sup>4</sup> *The Economist*, March 31, 1945.

<sup>5</sup> *The New Republic*, July 10, 1944.

conditions that would rule out a new German aggression and direct Germany's development as a peace-abiding democratic state. To promote German unity during the occupation and pursue common policies in Germany, the Crimea Conference decided to set up a Central Control Commission with headquarters in Berlin for co-ordinated administration of the country.

It was only fair that there should be compensation of damage done to the Soviet Union by the treacherous German attack and the occupation of a part of Soviet territory. Yet the Soviet Union opposed the imperialist attempts to enslave defeated Germany economically, and took Germany's plight, the interests of the German people, close to heart in determining the extent of the reparations. The Soviet Government was willing, as it pointed out in its claims, to accept only a partial compensation of the damage it had suffered.

Acting on the interests of the European nations, the Soviet Union insisted on a Declaration on Liberated Europe, which reaffirmed the right of the nations liberated from the fascist yoke to destroy the vestiges of fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice, and, furthermore, to freely choose the form of government under which they will live.<sup>1</sup> This was a great help to the European nations in their just struggle for freedom and independence.

Later developments showed that the United States and Britain had adopted the agreed text of the Declaration against their will, and that they had no intention of living up to it. Their policy ran counter to it and to the many other commitments they made with regard to the rights of nations. In the countries they occupied, such as Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Greece, the United States and Britain instituted what was in effect an armed intervention, obstructing by brute armed force

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<sup>1</sup> *Внешняя политика Советского Союза в период Отечественной войны*, т. III, Госполитиздат, М. 1947, стр. 104—106.

the mass aspirations for People's Democracy. It was the Anglo-American armed intervention that prevented the triumph of the democratic forces in the West European countries.

The U.S. and British spokesmen in Yalta refused to discuss the situation in Greece, where the imperialist intervention was most undisguised and brutal.

The question of Yugoslavia, examined at the Conference, was solved favourably for the Yugoslavian people. The decision taken at the Conference provided for a Provisional United Yugoslavian Government, consisting of the leaders of the National-Liberation Movement and a few representatives of the émigré group.

The Polish question took most time. The Conference discussed both the future of Poland and the composition of the Polish Government.

An advocate of a strong and independent Polish state, the Soviet Government believed that Poland should be restored as a strong power not by seizing Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian land, but by getting back the traditionally Polish western lands which it had lost to Germany.

The British and United States spokesmen supported the claims of the Polish landlords to the Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands. Roosevelt was very insistent on letting Poland have Lvov and the adjacent territories. But in the long run the Yalta Conference determined that the Polish-Soviet frontier should, in conformance with the national characteristic, follow the so-called Curzon Line, with digressions from it in Poland's favour in some regions of five to eight kilometres. The question of Poland's western frontiers still hung fire. The United States and Britain said they did not want Poland to get back its traditional land in the west because the Poles would be unable to develop it, while Germany would be economically hard hit.

The Crimea Conference confined itself to the recognition "that Poland must receive substantial accessions of terri-

tory in the north and west", whose extent would be determined in due course.

A keen political struggle ensued over the composition of the Polish Government. At first, the United States and Britain tried to ignore the existence of the national Polish Government and considered the Polish émigrés in London as the sole representative body. But in face of determined Soviet resistance, put up in the interests of the Polish people who had elected the path of democratic development, the U.S. and British spokesmen were compelled to retreat. They made the proposal of a joint government. The Soviet Union accepted this principle as a satisfactory compromise. Yet it refused to accept the London émigré clique as the nucleus of such a joint government.

The insistent efforts of the U.S. and British spokesmen to establish a reactionary government in Poland under Stanislaw Mikolajczyk fell through. They were compelled to acknowledge the total failure of the Polish émigré government. The latter was not even mentioned in the decisions of the Crimea Conference. The Provisional Polish People's Democratic Government was accepted as the nucleus for a future Polish government, with the provision, however, that it would be extended to include "democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad. This new government was to be known as the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. The United States and Britain undertook to establish diplomatic relations with this government.

It was members of the Polish fascist clique that the U.S. and British ruling quarter implied by "democratic leaders". They scorned the actual situation and the relation of class forces within Poland, and presumed that with time the reactionaries would seize undivided power. The Soviet Union, in the meantime, trusted the strength of Polish democracy and was sure that it would triumph in the struggle against Anglo-American agents within the government. Subsequent developments showed that the Soviet estimate

of the Polish balance of class forces and of the outlook for Polish democracy was entirely correct.

But it was not as easy as it seemed to realise the Yalta decisions concerning the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. The governments of the United States and Britain did their utmost to foil the scheme. They abandoned the Crimean plan and tried to have the Provisional Polish Government disbanded, rather than reconstructed. Their efforts concentrated on setting up a new reactionary government.

The Soviet Government worked perseveringly for the faithful realisation of the joint Three-Power decisions, and did its utmost to safeguard the national interests and democratic gains of the Polish nation. The firm Soviet stand paid off. The Yalta decisions on Poland were implemented to the letter.

The Conference resumed discussions concerning an international organisation to ensure peace and security for all peoples. The question was first raised at the Three-Power Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow in the autumn of 1943, and the spadework for it was continued at Dumbarton Oaks in August-September 1944.

The United States ruling quarters wanted a post-war arrangement that would put world leadership into their hands. Earlier in the war they had suggested an "international police force". During his conference with Churchill in August 1941 Roosevelt said that "he himself would not be in favour of the creation of a new Assembly of the League of Nations, at least until after a period of time had transpired and during which an international police force composed of the United States and Great Britain had had an opportunity of functioning".<sup>1</sup> The British Government, on the other hand, wanted the League of Nations restored. Its proposal was given considerable play in the British press.

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941. A Study in Appearances and Realities*, Yale University Press, p. 473.

As for the Soviet Union, it suggested a new international organisation which, unlike the League of Nations, would not be an instrument of imperialist policy, but rather an effective body for the protection of peace. The idea of this new international organisation won out in the Dumbarton Oaks negotiations. But the Dumbarton Oaks discussion did not end after reaching this decision. It produced the draft of a charter for the projected organisation.

The Soviet Union prevailed that the draft Charter reaffirm the principle of sovereignty and equality for all its members and rule out interference by the organisation in their respective internal affairs, though against considerable imperialist opposition. The draft Charter focussed attention on the prime purpose of the organisation—the safeguarding of peace and security. The onus of responsibility for this task was put on the Security Council of five permanent members—the U.S.S.R., China, the United States, Britain and France—and six non-permanent members elected for biennial terms from among the other members of the organisation.

The Soviet Union advanced the principle of unanimity for the five Great Powers on the Security Council, for it obliged them to look for joint solutions acceptable to all the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The United States and British delegation could not present valid arguments against the Great-Power unanimity principle. What was more, the United States seemed to be decidedly interested in it. The American Association for the United Nations pointed out in 1945 that the unanimity rule would probably have been essential for U.S. Senate to ratify the Charter.<sup>1</sup> The British Government, too, declared officially that it favoured the principle of unanim-

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<sup>1</sup> *We, the People*, American Association of United Nations, New York, 1945, p. 36.

ity.<sup>1</sup> But attempts were made to limit the use of this principle in one very vital respect, namely, that it should not apply to the permanent Security Council member involved in a dispute under discussion. If this reservation were accepted, the imperialists would be likely to pronounce the Soviet Union party to any dispute that may arise and drag solutions most fancied by them through the Security Council. James B. Reston, a *New York Times* correspondent, recalled in this connection that "while the League never seemed to be able to get the necessary 'unanimity' to take action against Germany or Japan, it was able to get the necessary support to ease Soviet Russia out of the League at the time of the first Finnish war."<sup>2</sup> No agreement was reached on the voting procedure in the Security Council, and the matter remained open.

Then arose the question about the number of votes in the General Assembly of the projected organisation. The U.S. spokesmen said their country had so much weight in international affairs that it was entitled to claim three votes, but the ultimate decision was to afford one vote to each U.N. member.

In spite of the differences, the Conference at Dumbarton Oaks was highly important. It showed that international co-operation tended to strengthen the anti-fascist coalition. Last but not least, it was at Dumbarton Oaks that the project of a world organisation was tackled in practice, with a series of important questions being favourably solved in a spirit of unity and co-operation.

The British press lamented the fate of the League of Nations and recommended that its experience be used to the utmost. The *Times* of London urged negotiations with the leaders of the League of Nations. It printed a letter from Lord Lytton, the British Chairman of the League's Executive Committee. Lytton said in his letter that the

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<sup>1</sup> *A Commentary on the Charter of the United Nations*, London, 1945, pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, September 29, 1944.



projected organisation should not be created anew and that appropriate alterations should be made in the League's name and constitution, and that permission should be obtained to amend the League Covenant to fit the present situation. The League of Nations, he wrote, should be reorganised to suit the new organisation. But the disbandment of the League was imminent.

The question of the League of Nations did not arise any more at the Conference in the Crimea. A compromise was reached on the procedure of voting in the Security Council, which had hung fire since the Dumbarton Oaks negotiations, where the U.S. and British representatives, though they had consented to the unanimity principle, sought to introduce a variety of restrictions. At the Crimea Conference President Roosevelt submitted a new proposal, in which these restrictions were reduced to an acceptable minimum. Roosevelt's proposal was adopted, showing once again that, given good will, countries, like people, could solve all matters.

The work of the Security Council was based on the Great-Power unanimity principle, that is, all the more important decisions require the affirmative vote of the five permanent members, but with the proviso that procedural matters require a majority vote of not less than 7 out of 11, and that in disputes under consideration for peaceful settlement the state which is party to the dispute, albeit a permanent Security Council member, shall abstain from voting if the Security Council so decides by a unanimous vote.

It was decided in the Crimea to convene a United Nations conference in San Francisco on April 25, 1945, in order to complete the Charter of the organisation. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic were invited to San Francisco to participate in the projected international organisation as full members in view of their large populations and political importance, and the contribution they had made to the common war effort against Hitler Germany.

There was the unpublished decision made in Yalta, whereby the Soviet Union undertook to enter the war against Japan. This agreement was kept secret for a time for understandable reasons, and was published a year hence, on February 11, 1946. It provided that the Soviet Union would join the war against Japan two or three months after Germany's capitulation and the conclusion of the war in Europe on the condition that the *status quo* of the Mongolian People's Republic would be preserved, that Soviet rights to Southern Sakhalin and the Kuriles would be restored, that the Soviet Union would lease Port Arthur and that it would have priority interests in Dairen and operate the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway jointly with China.

The agreement concerning Far Eastern affairs indicated that at the time of the Yalta Conference the United States and Britain were conscious of their inability to smash imperialist Japan alone. In the interests of the Eastern peoples and international co-operation, the Soviet Union agreed to help crush the Far Eastern aggressor.

The agreement was considered quite acceptable in London and Washington so long as they were interested in the Soviet Union's entering the war against Japan. Sumner Welles said "the return to Russia of Southern Sakhalin and of the Kuriles . . . is essential if the Soviet Government is to obtain security for its Siberian provinces".<sup>1</sup> But as soon as Japan was smashed, U.S. and British reactionaries launched a campaign against the Far Eastern agreement reached in Yalta.

The Crimea Conference culminated in a declaration entitled Unity for Peace as for War. It extolled the international co-operation of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain during the war, as demonstrated at the Yalta Conference, and inferred the sacred obligation of govern-

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<sup>1</sup> Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?*, New York, 1946, p. 299.

ments to maintain and strengthen unity of purpose and of action in the peace to come.

The Conference itself and its decisions stand prominently in the struggle of the freedom-loving nations for the earliest conclusion of the war and an international democratic post-war arrangement. It furnished a programme for the post-war organisation of peace, based, in the main, on Soviet proposals.

The Crimea Conference also dashed the hopes of fascist Germany that conflict would break out between the members of the anti-fascist coalition. It confirmed the opinion of the Soviet Government that the Soviet-Anglo-American coalition would withstand the trials of the final stage of war. Working people in the Soviet Union and abroad rightly considered it an important milestone on the road to the final defeat of the German fascists and the arrangement of a durable democratic peace.

But ruling quarters in the United States and Britain thought differently about the Yalta decisions. Churchill admitted later that he had sought agreement with the Soviet Union for the sole reason that Britain needed the Soviet war effort against Germany. "What would have happened," he wrote, "if we had quarrelled with Russia while the Germans still had two or three hundred divisions on the fighting front?"<sup>1</sup> Though compelled to adopt joint decisions in the best interests of the nations, the U.S. and British governments had new slippery moves up their sleeve.

They thought that the war against Germany in Europe and that against Japan would last for still some time and would ultimately weaken the Soviet Union. This would give the United States and Britain a chance to subjugate Europe and Asia in defiance of the Yalta decisions. That was what Churchill said in so many words at Fulton, Missouri.

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 352.

"The agreement which was made at Yalta," he declared, "to which I was party, was extremely favourable to Soviet Russia—all through the summer and autumn of 1945, and when the Japanese war was expected to last for a further 18 months from the end of the German war."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union was and is the only member of the Yalta Conference who has undeviatingly, punctiliously and conscientiously upheld all its decisions. After the war, the effort for the complete and faithful realisation of the Yalta decisions became one of the main tasks of Soviet foreign policy.

Soon after the Crimea Conference, in defiance of its decisions, the British Command formed a special mobile force on Churchill's instructions to advance quickly into Eastern Germany and enter Berlin from the north-west before the Soviet troops reached that city. Churchill told his entourage that it was essential to reach the Elbe, or even Berlin, "before the Bear".<sup>2</sup> The British Government went to great pains to withhold its plans of taking Berlin not only from the Soviet Union, but also the United States. The American Government, in turn, ordered Eisenhower and Bradley to send its mobile forces against Berlin and Dresden from the south-west. This was an indication, once more, of the imperialist contradictions between the United States and Britain.

### 3

Early in 1945 the U.S. Government convened a new Inter-American Conference in Mexico City (it opened on February 21 and closed on March 8).

The Mexico City Conference backed the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference decisions concerning war criminals and the Yalta Conference decisions concerning a new inter-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, March 6, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 391.

national organisation. Concurrently, however, under U.S. pressure, the Conference resolved that American states would act jointly at the conference in San Francisco. This was step No. 1 by the rulers of the United States in constructing a mechanical "majority" in the United Nations Organisation, handicapping it before it was ever established.

More U.S. pressure was added to work out and conclude the Chapultepec Pact, one of the aggressive military treaties concluded by the United States towards the close of the war and in the post-war period. Under pretext of "defence", the Pact provided for a joint inter-American general staff for the duration and after war's end, for all signatories to make available resources and strategic raw materials to the United States and for the joint conduct of any war by all the states of the American continent. This consolidated United States domination in Latin America.

The American monopolies attached considerable importance to the natural wealth of Latin America. They advanced the Clayton Plan, which was realised through the Chapultepec Pact. Two years later the national Mexican bourgeoisie voiced the following opinion of the Clayton Plan in a formal report presented to the First National Congress of Transforming Industries at Mexico-City, in April 1947:

"The Clayton Plan ... means nothing but a plan for world dominion and for the abolition of competition and freedom. The role which the United States plays in it is that of a metropolitan country, while the other countries are on the level of satellite states. Only the United States is defending this neo-liberalism."<sup>1</sup>

To enhance its influence in the Middle East countries the United States applied the Lend-Lease Act to many of them—to Iraq as of May 1, 1941, to Iran as of May 11, 1941,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard F. Behrendt, *Inter-American Economic Relations. Problems and Prospects*, New York, 1948, p. 54.

to Turkey as of November 7, 1941, to Egypt as of November 11, 1941, Saudi Arabia as of December 7, 1942, and Ethiopia as of February 18, 1943.<sup>1</sup> Turkey benefited most from the lend-lease programme. Soon after the Crimea Conference, eager to be one of the victor-states and to participate in the San Francisco Conference, Turkey declared war on Germany, which it had zealously assisted earlier on. The rulers of Turkey hoped to annex big tracts of land in South-East Europe with U.S. and British assistance. But these plans were for them no more than castles in the air.

#### 4

At about the same time as the Great-Power Conference took place in Yalta, a World Trade Union Conference convened in London February 6-17, 1945. This was a highly representative conference, attended by the Soviet trade unions and by trade unions of colonies and dependent countries. There were 204 delegates, representing about 60 million members in more than 50 countries. The American Federation of Labour refused to participate. William Green, the A.F.L. President, who was closely associated with monopolists, urged the revival of the defunct Amsterdam Trade Union International, on which only a minority of organised workers had been represented, since the Soviet trade unions, the Latin American trade unions and the trade unions of colonies and dependent countries were not admitted to it. Green also urged that, contrary to working-class interests, the trade unions join the reactionary crusade against Communists.

The work of the Conference in London was greatly obstructed by the spokesmen of the other U.S. trade union organisation, the Congress of Industrial Organisations, and spokesmen of the British Trades Union Congress. Walter Citrine, the British trade unionist, opposed proposals that

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<sup>1</sup> *American Handbook*, Washington, 1945.

the Conference set up an organising committee. He opposed the agenda, he did not want trade unionists from Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary to be present and did not wish the Polish unions to attend either. He suggested that the Conference be of a merely consultative nature and that it prepare for amalgamation with the Amsterdam Trade Union International.

As the discussions proceeded, the British delegation departed from its original line, and the Conference concluded its work successfully. Thanks to the efforts of most of the trade unions, and especially the Soviet trade unions, it laid durable foundations for world-wide working-class unity in the struggle for peace and democracy. The Conference hailed the Yalta decisions. It appealed to the governments of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain to let spokesmen of the world trade union movement participate in the San Francisco Conference. In brief, it was a conference of historic impact, laying the ground for the powerful international association of organised working men, the World Federation of Trade Unions.

## 5

The spring of 1945 witnessed a historic change in the destiny of Czechoslovakia. This was a sequel to the Soviet victories and the roused mass revolutionary initiative of the people, just as in other countries of Central and South-East Europe. During the German-fascist occupation far-reaching alterations occurred in the political make-up of the Czechoslovakian working people. They realised that capitalists and landlords were not only brutal exploiters, but also traitors who abandoned their country to the tender mercies of the nazis. Headed by the Communists, the masses of Czechoslovakia rose in the liberation struggle not only against their German oppressors, but also against collaborators among the Czechoslovakian bourgeoisie. A new, revolutionary authority effected by national commit-

tees appeared in the towns and villages liberated by the Soviet Army and the partisans.

Acting upon the will of the people, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia drafted a programme of people's democracy. It worked for a broadly representative anti-fascist democratic front, and invited Beneš to side with it. Beneš objected to the communist proposals. He was true to his "western" outlook, his gravitation towards the United States and Britain, and true to the class interests of the Czechoslovakian bourgeoisie. He realised, however, that the people would not entrust him any leading office unless he accepted the programme. He therefore made a show of acquiescence. He broke relations with the other émigré leaders and went to liberated Czechoslovakia. It was his intention to assume leadership in the country and subsequently restore the power of the landlords and capitalists, and bend the country to the will of the Western imperialists.

The programme of people's democracy was signed in Košice and made public on April 5, 1945. It outlined the ways and means of completing the national-liberation struggle and defined the basic principles of people's democracy.

With reference to foreign policy, it called for a further development of Soviet-Czechoslovakian friendship as a basis of Czechoslovakia's national existence and independence. Since the First Congress of People's Committees of the Transcarpathian Ukraine had resolved on November 26, 1944, to realise its people's age-old dream of reunification with the Soviet Ukraine, the Košice programme said the matter "would be resolved in conformance with the will of the Ukrainian population of the Carpathian Ukraine expressed democratically, and in a spirit of complete friendship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, April 10, 1950.



Friendly Soviet sentiments for the Yugoslav people, liberated with Soviet assistance, were expressed in a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia, concluded on April 11, 1945. The two signatories undertook to continue joint war efforts against Germany until final victory and to render each other every possible assistance if any of the parties to the Treaty would be attacked by Germany or any other state that would join the latter in acts of aggression. The Treaty provided for broad political, economic and cultural contacts between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. It was welcomed both in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia.

A Soviet-Polish Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Co-operation was signed on April 21, 1945, in Moscow. It provided for joint Soviet-Polish efforts against Hitler Germany until final victory, and for friendly co-operation after the war. The Soviet Union and Poland undertook to act in concert for the prevention of aggression by Germany or any other state acting in alliance with Germany. If one of the parties were involved in hostilities against Germany or a state allied to Germany, the other party was to render military and other assistance to the partner involved in hostilities. The Treaty provided for extensive Soviet-Polish political, economic and cultural relations. It was concluded for a term of 20 years.

The Soviet-Polish Treaty marked a radical change in Soviet-Polish relations. The history of the Russian and Polish peoples indicates conclusively that the suspicion, alienation and enmity that had existed between Poland and Russia always played into the hands of their enemies. German imperialism had always taken advantage of this enmity, these strained relations. It was the inimical stand of Poland's rulers towards the Soviet Union that had been one of the main reasons for the disaster that befell Poland in September 1939. The absence of an effective Soviet-Polish

alliance had also facilitated Germany's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union. The Soviet-Polish Treaty was to act as a barrier against German imperialist aggression in the east and to be a big contribution to European security.

Not only did the Soviet Union help to liberate Poland and prevent an armed Anglo-American intervention against the Polish people. It undertook to render Poland very extensive political, moral and economic support. The Soviet-Polish treaty is an earnest of independence for the new Polish People's Democracy, an earnest of its might and prosperity.

## *Chapter Eighteen*

### **BERLIN OPERATION AND GERMANY'S SURRENDER**

#### **1**

When the new Soviet offensive began on January 12, 1945, few people in Germany itself, and in Britain and the United States, too, realised the full measure of Hitler Germany's predicament. Germany proper had not yet become a theatre of operations. Its army was still numerically very strong. German war production was still great. Yet four months hence fascist Germany was overpowered.

The decisive part in Germany's crushing defeat was played by the Soviet Union. It had borne the brunt of the fighting, and it struck back, routing the fascist Reich.

Polish, Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian and Rumanian armies took part in the Soviet offensives of the concluding stage of the war. They contributed to the victory over fascism. Fighting shoulder to shoulder with Soviet units against the common enemy, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian and Rumanian patriots showed supreme courage, bravery and combat skill. Their bravery in battle was frequently commended in the war orders of the Soviet Supreme Command.

Earlier defeats on the Soviet-German front and new painful setbacks sapped the morale of Germany's front and rear. The new Soviet offensive drove the nazis against the wall.

The German High Command took the callous decision of turning the country's eastern part into a dead zone. "Every region abandoned by the German troops," wrote Walter Görlitz, a West German war historian, "was to become a desert. Industrial plants, food supplies, bridges, railway facilities, dams, the telegraph, radio stations and mines were to be destroyed. . . . Field Marshal Keitel and Reichsleiter Bormann, respectively Chief of the High Command and Chief of the Party Chancellery, issued a strict order whereby every town was to be defended to the last man. Army tribunals had a field day trying commanders who failed to do so. The hangmen reaped a bumper harvest, for people who hoisted white flags as the enemy troops approached were killed. Soldiers who lost their units were hung in the streets. Death roamed the land in many disguises."<sup>1</sup>

The hour the Soviet offensive began, German resistance on the Western Front weakened considerably. On the Eastern Front it became still more desperate. The German imperialists toyed with the idea of capitulating to the capitalist West, while being resolved to fight the war against the socialist East to the bitter end. Late in February 1945 the Anglo-American forces crossed the line of German fortifications, the Siegfried Line, with relative ease. The Rhine, a difficult barrier, was crossed just as easily, for the retreating German troops did not blow up the bridges.

In early March 1945 the German Command authorised General Wolff to negotiate with U.S. and British spokesmen in Switzerland. The Soviet Government insisted that representatives of the Soviet Command participate in the negotiations. But the heads of the U.S. and British governments rejected this legitimate demand. They chose to conduct separate talks with the Germans in gross violation of their commitments as Allies.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Görlitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Band II, S. 543-44.

The talks proceeded in Berne under a veil of secrecy. They lasted a fortnight, and the facts indicated that they "ended in an agreement with the Germans, whereby the German Commander on the Western Front, Marshal Kesselring, is to open the front to the Anglo-American troops and let them move east, while the British and Americans had promised, in exchange, to ease the armistice terms for the Germans".<sup>1</sup>

When Stalin thus interpreted the purport of the negotiations in a message to President Roosevelt, the latter came out with a denial. Yet the Germans fought no more than a "token" war in the west after the end of March, 1945. The small forces left on the Western Front abandoned their positions without any resistance to speak of, and surrendered *en masse*. On the Soviet-German front, in the meantime, the enemy resisted with desperate tenacity.

It is quite safe to say, therefore, that Stalin had sized up the situation correctly. "What we have at the moment," he wrote to Roosevelt, "is that the Germans on the Western Front have in fact ceased the war against Britain and America. At the same time, they continue the war against Russia, the Ally of Britain and the U.S.A."<sup>2</sup>

As the Soviet troops drove deeper into Germany its war production began to drop off. American and British historians contend that Germany's defeat was due to the confusion wrought in its industry by U.S. and British bombings. But in fact it was not reduced German war production that helped the Soviet Army victories, but, reversely, the Soviet victories that caused the decline in German war production.

Many factors contributed to this decline. Germany had lost the use of occupied territories and it had lost its satellites. Much more, it had lost many German provinces. Industry was evacuated from the eastern regions. What-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence*. . . , Vol. 2, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

ever was not evacuated, was destroyed. Germany's labour force dwindled, and sabotage by foreign and a section of German workers was widespread. There was a shortage of raw materials, for Germany had lost all the important sources of supply. The economy was generally disorganised due to the hostilities spreading to Germany proper.

But long before Germany's economy began to slide, the workers in the Soviet rear had already scored an economic victory over fascist Germany. Soviet industrial construction proceeded in high gear. Capital investments in 1942-44 totalled 79,000 million rubles. All in all, 2,250 industrial plants were built anew in the eastern regions of the Soviet Union. One hundred thousand machine tools, 24 blast furnaces and 128 open-hearth furnaces were put into operation.<sup>1</sup> The big plants built in the east began producing by early 1944. All of them had first-class domestically produced equipment. Aggregate output in the country's eastern regions was 180 per cent higher in 1944 than in 1940, and war production was as much as 560 per cent higher.<sup>2</sup> The Urals alone produced more aluminium than the entire Soviet aluminium industry had produced before the war. An enormous blast furnace was started up at the Magnitogorsk Steel Works in December 1943. A second new blast furnace was started up in 1944. Like the first, it was the biggest in Europe.

Also in 1944, a big blast furnace and the first Bessemer in the Urals were started up at the Chusovoy Works, the first open-hearth furnace began operating at the Uzbek Steel Works, and a new tractor works opened production in the Altai. The 1944 list also includes furnaces at the Chelyabinsk Steel Works, a blast furnace and coke ovens at the Novo-Tagilsk Steel Works, a big coal pit at Karaganda, the Urals Automobile Works, a series of aircraft works, a tank works in Siberia, the Kuznetsk Ferrous Alloys

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Н. Вознесенский, *Военная экономика СССР в период Отечественной войны*, стр. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Works, open-hearth furnaces at the Chelyabinsk Pipe-Rolling Factory, two sets of coke furnaces at the Gubakha Chemical Plant, and the country's biggest turbo-generator at the Chelyabinsk Thermal Power Station. Some 200 new mines and many other important projects were built in the eastern coal regions.

Furthermore, by decision of the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of People's Commissars, of August 21, 1943, the country began rehabilitating the economy of areas delivered from German occupation. Two restored blast furnaces at the Yenakievo Steel Works were re-started in December 1943. The turbines of the Zuyev Power Station in the Donets Basin, the hydro-technical installations of the Baksan Power Station, the first section of a dinas plant in Krasnogorsk (Donets Basin), the blooming mill of the Krasny Oktyabr Works in Volgograd, a blast furnace and coke ovens at the Donets Works, a series of coke furnaces and chemical workshops at the Rutchenkovo Chemical Plant, a rolling mill, an open-hearth shop at the Andreyev Works in Taganrog, open-hearth shops and rolling mills at the Mariupol Works, a blast furnace at the Frunze Works in Konstantinovka, and the mechanical workshops at the Novo-Kramatorsk Works were restored and restarted in 1944. The Lenin Hydropower Station in Volkhovo was rehabilitated, and the Moscow coal basin was also back in full operation. Some 6,000 industrial enterprises were restored in the country's liberated areas in 1942-44.<sup>1</sup> Transport and agriculture were also attended to in the recently-occupied regions.

The decisive advantages of the socialist economic system over the capitalist were thus demonstrated to the whole world. The successes of Soviet rehabilitation were more striking still when contrasted with the situation in the West European capitalist countries. The West European economy had suffered considerable war damage due

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<sup>1</sup> Cf., Н. Вознесенский, *op cit.*, стр. 46.

to the indiscriminate policy of the American and British political and military leadership. This added to the hardships of the peoples. The big U.S. and British concerns sabotaged rehabilitation in Western Europe, for it did not augur profit to them.

## 2

The Soviet 1944 offensive devastated the enemy front from the Barents to the Black Sea, and when fresh preparations were made on the Soviet-German front it was for the final lunge, the lunge that would end the war.

This final Soviet lunge, carried out jointly with Polish, Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian and Rumanian troops, began on January 12, 1945. It consisted of a series of inter-connected operations of immense strategic scale and impact. The first of them was the Vistula-Oder operation of the First Byelorussian, the First Ukrainian and the right wing of the Fourth Ukrainian fronts. Its objective was to smash Army Group "A", of 36 divisions, and liberate Poland and part of Czechoslovakia, ending on the Oder and the distant approaches to Berlin.

Troops of the First Ukrainian Front overstepped the main strip of enemy defences on the very first day of the offensive. On January 14 troops of the First Byelorussian Front joined in. By January 17 the enemy defences were breached along a frontage of some 500 kilometres. The main forces of Army Group "A" were annihilated and the road lay open for a swift thrust onward. Warsaw, Poland's capital, was liberated the same day, while troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front co-operated with the First Ukrainian Front in the Western Carpathians.

In the second stage of the operation, January 18 to February 3, the Soviet troops were in hot pursuit of the retreating enemy, reaching the Oder on a wide frontage. But the offensive did not stop there. Soviet units seized a number of bridgeheads on the western bank of the river, clearing



Polish territory completely of the enemy. Much of Czechoslovakia too was free again. The fighting was carried into fascist Germany proper.

Soviet troops captured the territory of the concentration camp in Oswiecim. Many sinister facts, carefully concealed by the nazis, came to light. In the camp's stockrooms the Soviet soldiers found 7,000 kilograms of hair clipped off the heads of 140,000 executed women, cases of powdered human bone and bales of clothes and footwear, and a vast number of gold teeth, spectacles, and other articles taken from people who died in the camp.

At Mauthausen, the nazis killed General D. M. Karbyshv in February 1945 by taking him out into the cold and pouring water on him until he turned into an ice pole.

The prisoners defied the inhuman treatment of the nazi brutes. Here is one of countless examples: In Penemünde ten Soviet patriots headed by airman M. P. Devyatayev captured a German bomber and flew across the lines to join the Soviet troops.

The Second and Third Byelorussian fronts were engaged in an East Prussian operation, linked with the Vistula-Oder operation, against Army Group Centre, which consisted of 38 divisions.

Troops of the Third Byelorussian Front began their assault on January 13, 1945. By the end of the month they enveloped Königsberg. In the meantime, troops of the Second Byelorussian Front, who began their attack on January 14, advanced north-westward and reached Marienburg by the end of the month. Army Group Centre was thus trapped in East Prussia, and was totally wiped out in a series of heavy battles.

On April 9 the Soviet troops captured Königsberg, and by April 25 they were in possession of Pillau, a nazi stronghold, having cleared the peninsula north of Königsberg and captured all of East Prussia. The north-west road to Berlin lay clear.

On February 10, 1945, troops of the First and Second

Byelorussian fronts launched a new offensive, known as the East Pomeranian operation, on the northern wing of the Soviet-German front. The First Polish Army was prominently engaged in it. The objective was to cover the right flank of the Soviet force advancing on Berlin by smashing Army Group Vistula, massed by the Germans to defend East Pomerania.

In the early stages, the Soviet troops advanced rapidly. After the operation began the enemy rushed in reinforcements, bringing his strength up to 42 divisions. These were dispositioned along a well-fortified line from the Vistula to the Oder and in the Gdynia-Danzig fortified area.

Bitter fighting brought the Soviet troops to the Baltic shore. They captured the town of Koszalin and bisected Army Group Vistula, completing its envelopment on approaching the town of Kolberg. The mopping up developed into a hard-fought battle. By March 13 the Soviet Army reached Stettin Bay, assaulted the town of Altdamm, and captured it on March 20. Kolberg was also taken, but the battle for Danzig and Gdynia lasted another fortnight. The Baltic Fleet helped the advancing Soviet troops substantially. It sank 151 transports and 98 enemy warships and support vessels.

In an attempt to block the Soviet offensive, the Nazi Command assayed a counter-attack. On February 20, 1945, the Soviet Government was informed by General George C. Marshall that U.S. intelligence had received word of projected German counter-assaults on two sectors of the Soviet-German front—one in Pomerania against Torun, and another in Moravská Ostrava against Lodž. The dispatch said that the Sixth SS Panzer Army was assigned for the Lodž operation.

This information did not conform to the actual course of developments. General of the Army Antonov, Chief of the Soviet Army General Staff, wrote on this score to Major-General Dean, head of the U.S. Military Mission in the U.S.S.R., on March 30, 1945:

"It may well be that certain sources of this information wanted to bluff both Anglo-American and Soviet Headquarters and divert the attention of the Soviet Supreme Command from the area where the Germans were mounting their main offensive operation on the Eastern Front."<sup>1</sup>

It was in the Lake Balaton area that the Germans mounted their counter-offensive against troops of the Third Ukrainian Front. The German Command hoped thereby to distract the Soviet forces thrusting at Berlin and to retain control of the few remaining sources of oil in Hungary. The Germans hoped that it would also stop the Soviet troops in the south, and compel them to regroup. The counter-offensive was a massive one, and the Sixth SS Panzer Army, deployed from the Western Front, did take part in it.

The big battle began on March 6, 1945. It lasted ten days, but the ferocious German onslaught failed to breach the Soviet and Bulgarian defences at Lake Balaton. On March 16 the Soviet troops were able to begin their Vienna operation. Its purpose was to destroy Army Group South, liberate Hungary and much of Austria, including Vienna, and clear all Czechoslovakia.

The Vienna operation involved the Second Ukrainian Front under Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, troops of the Third Ukrainian Front under Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin, and the Danube Flotilla. The Soviet troops made good progress in spite of fierce enemy resistance. On April 5 they reached the approaches to Vienna. On April 7 the steel ring closed round the Austrian capital. On April 13 Vienna was free. The Soviet Army thus squashed the Nazi plan of a war of attrition in Austria. Hungary and the eastern part of Austria were completely cleared of the enemy.

On April 9, 1945, the Soviet Government announced that it did not intend to possess itself of any part of Austrian territory, nor to alter the social system in Austria, and that

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence*. . . , Vol. 2, p. 211.

it would assist in abolishing the fascist occupation regime and in restoring Austria's democratic institutions. The statement was received with satisfaction by the Austrian population.

From March 15 to March 31 troops of the First Ukrainian Front under Marshal Ivan Konev carried through the Upper Silesian operation against Army Group Centre, which consisted of 43 divisions. The object was to smash the German army group and reach the Sudeten foothills. The enemy was annihilated south-west of Oppeln in a manoeuvre of envelopment. The Sudeten foothills were reached and the biggest strategic operation of the Second World War—the Berlin operation—was now next in line.

The starting points were on the Oder, 60 kilometres from the German capital. The enemy had a powerful force there. The terrain from the Oder to Berlin was part of the Berlin fortified area, which consisted of strong and deep defences.

The strategic offensive on Berlin was carried out by the Second and First Byelorussian and the First Ukrainian fronts on a frontage of more than 400 kilometres. Soviet striking power was at its strongest. The Soviet Army employed 41,600 guns and minethrowers, more than 6,300 tanks, 8,400 warplanes and many other war machines in breaching the enemy defences and in the ensuing battle for Berlin.

The Berlin operation began on April 16, 1945. By the end of the day the main defence line of the enemy was pried open. A battle began for the second line of defence. In the first four days of the offensive, the troops of the First Byelorussian Front advanced 30 kilometres along a front of some 70 kilometres. Troops of the First Ukrainian Front, who had attacked on the same day, also breached enemy defences after three days of fighting and started a flanking movement in the south. The nazi plan of holding the line along the Oder and Neisse until U.S. and British troops would reach Berlin was thus frustrated.

At this hour the former sluggishness of the U.S. and British commands gave place to extreme haste. To expedite the Anglo-American advance towards Berlin, the German generals weakened the central sector of the Western Front and deployed the relieved troops to the Soviet-German front. All along the 800 kilometres of the Western Front, from the North Sea to the Swiss border, Hitler Germany had as few as 35 under-strength and none-too-battleworthy divisions. The U.S. and British governments kept spurring their military commanders to enter the zone designated for occupation by Soviet troops. On March 31, 1945, Churchill wrote to Roosevelt:

"Russian armies of the south seem certain to enter Vienna and overrun Austria. If we deliberately leave Berlin to them, even if it should be in our grasp, the double event may strengthen their conviction already apparent, that they have done everything. . . . If the enemy's resistance should weaken, as you evidently expect and which may well be fulfilled, why should we not cross the Elbe and advance as far eastward as possible? This has an important political bearing."<sup>1</sup>

The above passage is visual evidence of what the American and British rulers aimed at in the concluding stage of the war. Their purpose was to minimise the Soviet contribution to victory and reduce the international influence and prestige of the U.S.S.R.

Churchill's telegram was met with understanding in U.S. government spheres. Churchill insisted on a rapid advance to Berlin. On April 2 he told Eisenhower, "I deem it highly important that we should shake hands with the Russians as far to the east as possible,"<sup>2</sup> and on April 5 he again approached Roosevelt about the same subject.<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. President died on April 12, and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman, until then Vice-President. On April

<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

22, at a special conference of prominent government leaders, Truman broached the subject of Soviet-American relations. Here is what Admiral Leahy, Roosevelt's and Truman's adviser, wrote in his diary about it:

"The consensus of opinion among the group Truman had called together was that the time had arrived to take a strong American attitude towards the Soviet Union."<sup>1</sup>

U.S. historian Fleming believes the decisions of this conference to have been a big factor in America's launching a cold war against the Soviet Union. He says the conference "cancelled out . . . years of labour by Roosevelt and Hull to build a basis of understanding with the Soviet leaders, which would last through the peacemaking."<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Government and its intelligence agencies went out of their way to obtain the services of the German fascist spy machine. More than a hundred American groups of agents were sent into Germany to seize the secret archives of the German Foreign Ministry, the German intelligence, and the Gestapo, to take possession of the files, lists of members of the nazi party and the secret patents of the German monopolists. A special group of agents known as Alsos was dispatched to capture all German papers concerning the atomic weapon, the pertinent laboratories, scientists and the technical personnel, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The plans nurtured by the U.S. and British leaders were an open secret to the fascist leadership. What is more, the latter was bent on assisting them. The nazis believed that if Berlin were taken by the British and American troops, they would be spared and would evade retribution for their dastardly crimes. They hoped that if the Soviet Army and Anglo-American troops entered Berlin at the same time, a conflict would break out between them, precipitating a third world war. War historian Werner Picht admits

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<sup>1</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, op. cit., p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and its Origins 1917-1960*, London, 1961, p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> Goldsmith, *Alsos*, New York, 1947.

the German soldiers were moved by the hope to the bitter end that they were "holding the shield for Germany, and thereby for Europe. This duty seemed to call for continued resistance, though the war was already lost."<sup>1</sup>

Hitler "intended to hold out until the expected split in the enemy camp would come about."<sup>2</sup> In the underground imperial Chancellery, where the fascist chiefs had installed themselves, Hitler kept repeating:

"After all, a war may break out between the Bolsheviks and the Anglo-Saxons any day or any hour."<sup>3</sup>

In furtherance of the Anglo-American plans, the German High Command stopped its resistance in the west, and opened the front to the Anglo-American troops. General Wenck's 12th Army, which faced the Americans, was withdrawn and sent east to engage the Soviet troops. The order for the redeployment of the 12th Army was deliberately published in the papers and broadcast over the radio by Goebbels. "The German troops on the Elbe," said Goebbels, "have turned their back to the Americans."<sup>4</sup>

Meeting no resistance, the British and American troops were fast approaching Berlin. On April 21, the day the Soviet troops were fighting in the streets of Berlin, the First and Ninth American armies reached the Elbe. The American Command meant to go on, but was somewhat apprehensive of the mood of its soldiers and some of its officers.

Troops of the First Byelorussian Front crashed into Berlin on April 21, 1945, from the north and north-east, and also drove in a wedge into the outer defensive line from the east. Some of the troops by-passed Berlin in the north moving on to Potsdam and the Elbe. In the meantime, troops of the First Ukrainian Front advanced on Berlin from the south and south-west. By April 20 they arrived at the first

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<sup>1</sup> Werner Picht, *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 566.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, December 31, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Tippelskirch, *op. cit.*, S. 573.

circular line of defence. A strenuous attack ensued to envelop a German fighting force south-east of Berlin, while moving on westward to the Elbe. In addition, the First Ukrainian Front also had to repel an attack by the 12th German Army, which was trying to clear the road for the American divisions.

On April 25, the Soviet troops completed the envelopment of the enemy at Berlin. An enemy force of 13 divisions was completely surrounded south-east of the German capital. On the same day, the forward forces of the First Ukrainian Front crossed the Elbe at Torgau, where the meeting of Soviet and American troops took place. A few days later, Soviet and British troops made contact on the Elbe at Schwerin and Rostock. Germany and its armed forces were thus broken up into several isolated portions. The American and British commands were compelled to halt their advance to Berlin.

The plan of the Soviet Supreme Command for the envelopment of the enemy army at Berlin was brilliantly executed. The precipitous Soviet advance to the German capital was consistent with the decisions of the Crimea Conference and upset the plans of the German-fascist leadership. Berlin's envelopment, thus, was not only militarily, but also internationally important. It spelled failure for the anti-popular plan of the U.S. and British leaders.

In those days the governments of the United States and Britain were negotiating secretly with Hitler's chieftains through several channels. One of these was the mission entrusted to Bernadotte when he visited Eisenhower's headquarters in Versailles on November 2, 1944. On receiving pertinent instructions from Eisenhower, Bernadotte went to Berlin, where he saw Ribbentrop, Kaltenbrunner and others on February 16, 1945. On February 19, Bernadotte conversed with Himmler. Their talk lasted two and a half hours. Himmler exploited the anti-Soviet sentiments of the U.S. and British leadership and harped on the need to "defend" Europe, which would fall to the



Bolsheviks "if the Eastern Front collapsed". The next time Bernadotte saw Himmler, on April 2, he urged him to get rid of Hitler as quickly as possible.

The last time Bernadotte and Himmler met was early in the morning of April 24, 1945, in Lübeck. The premises were dimly lit by two candles. Darkness had already descended over the fascist realm. Himmler said to Bernadotte: "It is very likely that Hitler is already dead, and if he has not died yet, he is sure to die within the next few days. Berlin is surrounded and its fall is a question of a few days. I admit that Germany is vanquished. In the present situation I may consider my hands free. In order to preserve as much of Germany as I can from a Russian invasion, I am willing to surrender on the Western Front to give the troops of the Western Powers a chance to move eastward with utmost speed, but I emphatically refuse to surrender on the Eastern Front."<sup>1</sup> Bernadotte forwarded Himmler's proposals via the Swedish Government to the governments of the United States and Britain.

On April 25 Truman, Marshall, Leahy and other U.S. political and military leaders conferred with Churchill by phone about Himmler's proposals.<sup>2</sup> But Himmler was too obnoxious a figure to strike a deal with. On the same day, the governments of the United States and Britain informed the Soviet Government about his proposals. They admitted that "Himmler's refusal actually to order surrender on the Eastern Front looked like a last attempt to sow discord between the Western Allies and Russia."<sup>3</sup> The head of the Soviet Government replied:

"I regard your suggestion for confronting Himmler with a demand for unconditional surrender on all fronts, including the Soviet front, as the only correct one."<sup>4</sup>

On April 28, 1945, Reuters issued an official report about

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<sup>1</sup> Bernadotte, *La Fin*, Lausanne, 1945, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. I, p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

Himmler's proposals.<sup>1</sup> When Hitler learnt about the conduct of his closest assistant he flew into a rage and ordered Himmler's expulsion from the nazi party.

On April 23 Hermann Göring, then in South Germany, radiogrammed Hitler that he intended to place himself at Germany's head, since Hitler's Government in besieged Berlin could no longer function adequately. Like Himmler, Göring wanted to contact Eisenhower and reach an understanding about a cease-fire in the west. He instructed General Karl Köller, Chief of the Luftwaffe Staff, to draw up a pertinent communication to the armed forces and the people. Köller quotes Göring as having said, "the Russians must think when they read the appeal that we will continue the fighting against East and West as before, but the Americans and British should be able to understand that we are no longer thinking of continuing the fighting in the West and intend to fight only against the Soviets. Our soldiers must grasp that the war will continue, but must get the impression that it is nearing its finish, and *with a more favourable outlook for us than heretofore.*"<sup>2</sup>

When Hitler was told about Göring's intentions, he expelled him from the nazi party and issued an order of arrest for Göring, Köller, and others.

In the meantime, the strenuous fighting in Berlin continued. The enemy force of some 200,000 men with 3,000 guns and minethrowers and 250 tanks, trapped in the city, turned the German capital into a fortified area. The leadership was, in effect, in Hitler's hands, although artillery General Weidling was formally in command. To make the soldiers and Berlin's population resist the Soviet troops to the last, the nazis embarked on a savage reign of terror. Bills were posted all over Berlin on April 24 with Hitler's order that anyone who suggested actions tending to weaken resistance and anyone who simply agreed with them

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, May 2, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Köller, *Der letzte Monat*, Mannheim, 1949, S. 39-40.

was a traitor. He would be instantly shot or hung, said the order. The bills said, too, that "the same fate awaited anyone who claimed that these actions were ordered by Berlin's Gauleiter, Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels or the Führer."

The world followed the Berlin battle with bated breath. "The torch that was lit in Berlin has come back to the city of its origin," wrote the *New York Times*. "The great conflagration which has spread across more than two thousand miles of Europe, and finally to the whole world, is now sweeping through the capital from which it started. And the ragged remnants of the once proud armies that marched out of it to strut through many lands, to murder, rape and loot, are now being buried under the falling walls of their own doomed capital."<sup>1</sup>

On April 27 the fighting had reached the heart of the German capital. The enemy was trapped in a narrow strip of land 15 kilometres long from east to west and two to five kilometres wide from north to south. The following day it was slashed into three isolated pockets and deprived of a unified command. Hitler ordered the flooding of the Berlin underground in disregard of the thousands of women, children and wounded German soldiers and officers who had found shelter there. In the meantime, the Soviet troops captured Potsdam on April 28.

In the afternoon of April 30 Soviet soldiers assaulted and captured the Reichstag building. The banner of victory was hoisted on it by the Soviet soldiers M. A. Yegorov and M. V. Kantaria. That was when Hitler finally realised that nothing would save him and the hour had come for him to pay for all his monstrous crimes. A shot resounded in his subterranean residence at 15.30 hours. The aides who rushed in at its sound, found the Führer dead. On Bormann's orders they carried Hitler's corpse into the yard of the imperial Chancellery. Hitler's chauffeur and personal aide poured gasoline over the body and put fire

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, April 23, 1945.

to it. "Hitler's funeral pyre," wrote Churchill, "with the din of the Russian guns growing ever louder, made a lurid end to the Third Reich."<sup>1</sup> Goebbels killed his wife and children, and then himself.

Hitler's cowardly end, his evasion of retribution for crimes done, was welcomed in London and Washington, which feared the undesired exposures that Hitler's trial would have involved. Churchill wrote candidly: "The course Hitler had taken was much more convenient for us than the one I had feared. . . . I have no doubt he would have shared the fate of the Nuremberg criminals."<sup>2</sup>

Secret Anglo-American talks with Himmler and other fascist leaders had determined Hitler's successor well in advance. The choice fell on Grand-Admiral Dönitz, who had headed the nazi navy after Raeder. It was thought Dönitz was best suited to salvage the fascist regime in the circumstances. Dönitz's headquarters, then in Plön, Schleswig-Holstein, received a telegram from the imperial Chancellery at 18.35 hours April 30 signed by Bormann. "In place of the former Reichsmarshal Göring," the telegram said, "the Führer appoints you, Herr Grand Admiral, as his successor. Written authority is on its way. You will immediately take all such measures as the situation requires."<sup>3</sup> An appearance of legality was thus created for the new fascist government by giving it authority in the name of Hitler, who was then already dead. Dönitz did not know anything about Hitler's death, and radioed back:

"My Führer, my loyalty to you is unshaken. I will therefore do my best to relieve your situation in Berlin. If, however, fate will compel me to lead the German Reich as your successor, I shall end the war as the heroic unrepeatable struggle of the German people requires."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 546.

<sup>3</sup> H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, New York, 1947, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Joachim Schultz, *Die letzten 30 Tage. Aus dem Kriegstagebuch*

At 10.53 hours on May 1 a second radiogram arrived in Plön from Bormann, saying, "the will has entered into force". Schleswig-Holstein radio stations announced that Hitler had committed suicide on May 1, 1945, having appointed Admiral Dönitz as his successor. Dönitz declared himself Führer of the German Reich and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. He formed a government of nazis such as himself.

The U.S. and British ruling quarters did their utmost to make the "Dönitz government" Germany's full-fledged authority. Dönitz and his entourage ensconced themselves in the small town of Flensburg on the Danish border. He and Montgomery, the British Commander, concluded an agreement that the Flensburg area would not be occupied, "establishing a demarcation of zones between Jodl and the British Commander in that area". Dönitz's former aide reported that the government and Wehrmacht headquarters were intact, immune and unobstructed in their actions. All officers and the guard battalion were allowed to carry arms. After the unconditional surrender signed May 9 entered into force, the situation remained the same for some time.<sup>1</sup>

Some 500 prominent fascist leaders, Dönitz, Jodl and Himmler among them, flocked to Flensburg. The new "German government" consisted of Foreign Minister Schwerin von Krosigk, formerly Hitler's Minister of Finance; Jodl, Chief of General Staff; Minister of Economics Speer; Agricultural Minister Backe; Labour Minister Seldte; Education Minister Stuckart; and Minister of Justice Klemm. None of these ministers were in any way abashed by the fact that the territory under their "authority" was limited to the Flensburg area. They hoped to extend it with American and British assistance. The nazi chiefs who waited on

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des OKW. *Dokumente zur Zeitgeschichte* herausgegeben von Jürgen Thorwald, Stuttgart, 1951, SS. 59-60.

<sup>1</sup> Walter Lüdde-Neurath, *Regierung Dönitz. Die letzten Tage des Dritten Reiches*, Göttingen, 1950, S. 75.

Dönitz hoped that British protection would save them from retribution for their countless crimes.

Dönitz went to great pains to conclude a deal with the United States and Britain, in order to obtain authority for continued hostilities against the Soviet Union. "We must go along with the Western Powers and work with them in the occupied territories in the west," said he in a speech intended for the officers' corps, "for only working with them can we have hopes of later retrieving our land from the Russians".<sup>1</sup> His radio speech to the people of Germany on May 1, 1945, was in the same vein. Dönitz's policy fell in with the designs of the British and American imperialists.

Towards nightfall on May 1, the fascist troops in Berlin began to surrender *en masse*. The following day Berlin's Defence Headquarters gave itself up as well. By 15.00 hours on May 2 the Nazi armies in Berlin laid down their arms. The Soviet Army thus completed the annihilation of Germany's armed forces in Berlin and gained complete control of the German capital, the heart of German imperialism and the seat of German aggression. It was a historic victory of the Soviet people and their army under the leadership of the Communist Party.

The fall of Berlin presaged the end of the war started by the German imperialists. It was well-earned retribution to the Nazi aggressors and a grim warning to all aspirers to world domination, all worshippers of a new world war.

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In April and early May 1945, while the Soviet Army had closed in on the remnants of the fascist Wehrmacht for the final stroke, a new powerful wave of armed popular uprisings against the German occupationists rolled across Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, August 17, 1948.

On March 12, 1945, the Communist Party of Italy appealed to the Italians to start an armed insurrection. "This uprising, the final battle, must rally the whole nation round the working class, the brave and noble vanguard of the nation full of trust, courage and energy."<sup>1</sup> On April 10, 1945, the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party adopted the historic Directive for Rebellion which said, "Now is the time not only to invigorate partisan warfare, but to prepare and start a real uprising."<sup>2</sup> The following day the partisans launched an offensive against the German invaders. They compelled a strong German garrison in Borgotaro to capitulate, and captured a considerable stock of armaments. On April 13 they cut the main lines of communication along which the fascist troops were withdrawing northward.

The signal for the armed uprising was given by actions in three big working-class centres—Genoa, Milan and Turin. The more than 30,000 German troops in the Genoa area were compelled to surrender.

The picture was much the same in Milan. The Milan workers smashed a big fascist garrison. Mussolini, who was in the area, tried to cross the Swiss border in a German soldier's uniform, but on April 27 the partisans captured him in a group of fleeing fascists. By decision of the Volunteer Freedom Corps and the Milan Committee of National Liberation, Mussolini and several other fascist chiefs were executed. Reactionaries the world over received word of Mussolini's inglorious demise with sorrow. Churchill could not resist the temptation of extolling the fascist dictator of Italy in his memoirs. "At least," he added by way of consolation, "the world was spared an Italian Nuremberg."<sup>3</sup> Pope Pius XII expressed his condolences to Mussolini's family and appointed a subsidy to them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Trenta Anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, Roma, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, pp. 542-43.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> *Pravda*, September 29, 1946.

Subsequently, de Gasperi's pro-American government fixed a monthly pension to Mussolini's heirs.

In Turin, the Italian workers' uprising ran into bitter nazi resistance. Yet the city was completely liberated on April 30.

Town after town was thus liberated in Northern Italy. The Italian partisans saved industrial plants, houses, and communications from demolition by the retreating Germans. The Committee of National Liberation assumed authority by the will of the people.

By May 2 all of Italy was free. Surviving German troops sought the protection of the British and American armies. General Kesselring testified that the German Command had negotiated on this score with the Anglo-American Command ever since late 1944 through the Catholic Church and Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

Altogether, 256,000 Italian partisans organised in 1,090 brigades took part in the war. Of these, 575 brigades were known as Garibaldi brigades, organised and led by Communists. Indeed, of the 350,000 people who took part in the struggle for liberation in all the years of the war, 210,000 were members of the Communist Party. Of the 70,930 partisans killed in action, 42,558 belonged to the Garibaldi brigades.<sup>2</sup> Luigi Longo notes rightly "that the popular Resistance Movement and the national-liberation war largely owe their scale, depth and success to the actions and policy of the Communist Party, its rank-and-file members and the popular masses".<sup>3</sup> The Italian Communists won the warm affection and trust of the people by their devoted struggle against the German invaders.

The influence of the Communist Parties, who invariably stood at the head of the democratic movements for liberation, had grown immeasurably in most West European

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, May 6, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> *Trenta Anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, *Rinascita*, N. 2, 1954, p. 173.



countries. It was only the direct intervention of the United States and Britain that prevented the peoples of France, Italy and Belgium from giving Communists the leading part they deserved in the administration.

Roberto Battaglia, historian of the Italian working-class movement, concludes his book, devoted to the Italian Resistance Movement, with the following words:

"No matter what reverses the future holds for Italy, it is beyond question that the road to the future lies through the Resistance Movement, that the popular forces have taken deep root in the country . . . and that never again will any attempt at foreign or domestic domination rob the people of Italy of the homeland they have won despite all difficulties."<sup>1</sup>

The workers of Trieste attacked the German garrison on April 28. They cleared the city in a matter of two days. The Yugoslav People's Liberation Army, which was approaching Trieste from the south-east, gave them a helping hand. But Trieste was too important a strategic point for the U.S. and British imperialists, and on May 2 British tanks tore into the city. American bombers raided workers' quarters. To gain a firmer foothold in the area, Churchill recommended Field Marshal Alexander "to have a solid mass of troops in this area, with a great superiority of modern weapons and frequent demonstrations of the Air Force".<sup>2</sup> He also wanted the British to have at hand an adequate naval force. Alexander re-enforced Mussolini's fascist legislation in Trieste and established a joint Anglo-American military dictatorship.

There was a number of uprisings in Germany proper, prominent among which was the heroic uprising of the Buchenwald prisoners on April 11, 1945. Soviet war prisoners headed the action, which ended successfully.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto Battaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 482-83.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Исторический Архив*, № 4, 1957, стр. 96.

In pursuance of their anti-popular and anti-Soviet plans, the U.S. and British leadership had their hands full at the time to save the most combat-worthy German formations from being smashed by the Soviet Army. They gave them shelter in their respective zones of occupation with an eye to ultimately restoring the Wehrmacht.

The German troops north-west of Berlin moved rapidly towards Schleswig-Holstein. Their command, headed by Field Marshal Busch, hastened to Flensburg. On the other flank of the Soviet-German front, in and around Czechoslovakia, a large fascist army stood at bay under Field Marshal Schoerner. The Germans took advantage of the terrain to hold the front against the Soviet Army and, in the meantime, negotiate surrender with Eisenhower's headquarters. Lt.-Gen. von Natzmer, Chief of Staff of Army Group Centre, was dispatched for this purpose to Flensburg. This fell in with the plans and instructions of Admiral Dönitz. "I assume supreme command over all units of the German Wehrmacht," he said in an order to the army of May 1, "with the purpose of continuing the struggle against the Bolsheviks. . . . I have to fight on against the British and the Americans just insofar as they hinder me in the prosecution of the struggle against the Bolsheviks."<sup>1</sup>

On May 2 the Dönitz government decided to speed the surrender of troops to the United States and Britain and to continue operations against the Soviet Army. The surrender was to be carried through secretly, without the Soviet Command knowing anything about it.<sup>2</sup> On the following day emissaries from Field Marshal von Busch arrived in Montgomery's headquarters near Lüneburg, south of Hamburg. They were headed by Admiral Hans von Friedeburg. Montgomery objected at first to acting behind the back of the Soviet Army, which should rightly have

<sup>1</sup> Joachim Schultz, *op. cit.*, S. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> Lüdde-Neurath, *op. cit.*, S. 57.

accepted Busch's surrender. Later, however, he consented, and said he would accept the surrender of all other units, formations and individual soldiers who prefer British captivity to capitulating to the Soviet troops.<sup>1</sup>

Friedeburg reported on his parleys with Montgomery at a conference in Flensburg on May 4, attended by Dönitz, Schwerin von Krosigk, Keitel and Jodl. He was given authority to sign a pertinent instrument, and went back to Montgomery's headquarters. On May 5, at 8 o'clock in the morning, the Busch surrender instrument entered into force. Elated, Dönitz and his entourage issued a fresh order to the Wehrmacht on the same day, saying:

"We lay down our arms in north-west Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands because the struggle against the Western Powers has become senseless. In the east, however, the battle continues."<sup>2</sup>

At the May 4 conference, Friedeburg was instructed to go on to Rheims after his talks with Montgomery and to negotiate at Eisenhower's headquarters the surrender of the southern group of German troops to the U.S. Army. To clear the path for this new deal, Dönitz issued orders at once to stop the submarine war against the Western Powers and prohibited the underground fascist Werewolf groups to act against the United States and Britain.<sup>3</sup>

At Eisenhower's headquarters Friedeburg was received by Lt.-Gen. Bedell Smith, the Chief of Staff. That day the U.S. Command, represented by General Patton, took the Nazi Military Academy under its wing after it was evacuated from Berlin.<sup>4</sup>

Fearful of public censure, the U.S. Government refused to conclude any sort of written agreement with the individual capitulating German formations, and insisted on a

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<sup>1</sup> Lüdde-Neurath, *op. cit.*, S. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *New Times*, Moscow, No. 39, 1950.

general capitulation. The matter was thrashed out in the White House by President Truman and his advisers. The point of view supported by Churchill that a general German surrender to U.S. and British troops would add to their prestige and reduce that of the Soviet Army, prevailed.<sup>1</sup>

Dönitz objected. Colonel-General Jodl was sent to Rheims to assist Friedeburg. A keen struggle ensued. Finally Dönitz realised that an instrument of general surrender signed in Rheims would preserve the German-fascist army and, concurrently, bolster the position of his government. At 01.30 hours on May 7 Jodl received Dönitz's instructions to sign the surrender instrument. A radio order was sent out at once to the commanders of all German army groups, which said:

"Troops are to be withdrawn from all fronts facing the eastern adversaries as quickly as possible to the west. If necessary you are to fight your way out against the Soviets."<sup>2</sup>

The surrender instrument was signed in Rheims by Bedell Smith and Jodl. The instrument said that General Jodl, Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces, was authorised by the Dönitz government to surrender all German Armed Forces to the U.S. and British troops and simultaneously to the Soviet troops. The Rheims instrument was meant to legalise Dönitz government and thus preserve the German-fascist clique in power. It was also meant to belittle the Soviet contribution to Germany's defeat. It served the anti-Soviet ends of the U.S. and British governments. Early May 1945 was marked by visibly mounting anti-Soviet trends in the United States and Britain. This was particularly evident in what Churchill said and did. In his diary he wrote: "The Soviet menace, to my eyes, had already replaced the nazi foe."<sup>3</sup> He tele-

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<sup>1</sup> Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Schultz, *op. cit.*, S. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 495.

graphed Montgomery to collect "the German arms to stack them so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers".<sup>1</sup> Churchill cabled Eisenhower with reference to German arms that "even now they might be of use, both in France and especially in Italy".<sup>2</sup> The only possible conclusion is that the American and British rulers were planning to use German arms and troops against the people's movements in France and Italy.

The Soviet Government refused to recognise the deal concluded in Rheims, all the more so since it departed from the principle of unconditional surrender proclaimed in Casablanca. It insisted that an official instrument of unconditional surrender be signed in vanquished Berlin. Their plans foiled, the United States and Britain were compelled to agree.

The instrument of Germany's unconditional surrender was signed in Berlin early in the morning on May 9, 1945. It opened with the following words:

"We, the undersigned, acting in the name of the German High Command, agree to unconditional capitulation of all our armed forces on land, sea and air, and also all forces at present under German Command, to the Supreme Command of the Red Army and at the same time to the Allied Expeditionary Forces."

The instrument was a formal culmination of the war in Europe. The Soviet Union had won a historic victory over Hitler Germany and its satellites. By crushing the German Army the Soviet Army also liberated the German nation from the Hitler yoke.

The Soviet Union's treatment of the Germans, particularly the people of Berlin, was in keeping with the mission of liberation it had undertaken. On the instructions of the Soviet Government, A. Mikoyan went to Germany with the express purpose of helping Germany's population with

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Herald*, November 24, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 499.

food and other materials. The Soviet Government allotted nearly 6,000,000 poods of flour and grain and a large quantity of other products from army stocks for this purpose. By the end of May the Soviet Command had issued ration cards to the 3,000,000 people living in Berlin and organised the issue of food, anti-epidemic injections, and restored the city to normal. By the beginning of June the Berlin underground was back in operation, the tram service was working, and the bridges were repaired. The city was supplied water, gas and electricity.

Wherever underground Communist organisations had survived and combated fascist propaganda, the German population welcomed the Soviet troops. This was the case in the town of Eisleben, where the people had safely hidden a banner presented by Krivoi Rog miners, and where a monument to Lenin was erected in welcome when the Soviet troops entered. Eyewitnesses reported:

“There was a red ocean of banners on the market-place. A new, democratic authority, a representative body of workers, had assumed office in the ancient city hall. The glorious banner of Krivoi Rog miners, which the veteran Communist, Otto Brozowski, had preserved and not betrayed to the fascists even when tortured in prison, flew over it. On the square stood a statue of Lenin, dependably hidden away during the fascist reign and the American occupation. Lenin’s monument is visual proof that even in the darkness of the fascist night, here, in this part of Germany the torch of proletarian internationalism had not gone out, and proof that we have not disgraced the banner of Ernst Thaelmann’s party and have always held it aloft.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Otto Winzer, *Zwölf Jahre Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg*, S. 259.

Word of the surrender signed in Berlin was received with mistrust at Schoerner's headquarters. Schoerner himself made the following statement, prompted by the policy of the U.S. and British governments:

"Enemy radio broadcasts allege that the imperial government has unconditionally surrendered to the Soviet Union. This cannot be true. It is obviously a case of enemy propaganda, seeking to break the spirit of resistance in our troops. The imperial government has ceased the struggle only against the Western Powers."

The United States and British military commands decided to send their troops to Czechoslovakia to accept Schoerner's surrender and to occupy Prague. Churchill was particularly insistent. He urged Truman on April 30 to take "Prague and as much as possible of the territory of Western Czechoslovakia".<sup>1</sup> In a telegram to Eisenhower on May 7 he again urged an advance to Prague.<sup>2</sup>

In early May 1945 General Patton's Third Army moved into Czechoslovakia. The National Committees in the towns it occupied, Plzen among others, were disbanded. The U.S. Command established an occupation regime with the help of Czechoslovakians who had earlier collaborated with the Germans. Before the U.S. troops entered Plzen, the city was bombarded and two-thirds of the dwellings were either totally or partially demolished.

On May 6, 1945, officers of the American Command came to the health resort of Velichovka, where Schoerner had his residence. They obtained Schoerner's consent to suppress the revolutionary movement in Czechoslovakia and to protract his resistance to the Soviet Army, with subsequent surrender to the American Command.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 442-43.

<sup>3</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, January 16, 1953.

Eager to liberate their capital and block the retreating Germans, Czechoslovakian patriots under Communist leadership started an armed uprising against the Hitler occupationists on May 5, 1945. Units of the Revolutionary Guard and combat groups of Prague citizens engaged the enemy. Everywhere, the Communists stood in the van. Schoerner's troops drove into the Czech capital. Unable to withstand the enemy onslaught, the Prague patriots appealed for urgent assistance by radio.

When the German-fascist troops began their attack on Prague, the U.S. Command stopped its advance on that city. The U.S. rulers wanted the Prague patriots annihilated by the Hitlerites, so they could implement their agreement with the German Command and accept its surrender in the Czech capital.

It was the Soviet Union that brought relief to the Czech patriots.

By early May 1945 Schoerner's army group of 900,000 men and officers was the only big German fascist formation still able to put up a resistance. The Soviet Supreme Command had therefore decided to engage it before completing the Berlin operation. Acting on this decision, the troops of the First, Fourth and Second Ukrainian fronts were redeployed for a decisive assault on Schoerner. The Czechoslovakian Corps was part of the Fourth Ukrainian Front armies. The developments in Prague spurred the Soviet Army to haste. It began its offensive on May 6.

On May 7 the German defences were breached and the armour of the First Ukrainian Front made a swift crossing of the Ore Mountains, reaching Prague at 04.00 hours, May 9.

The swift Soviet attack foiled the German and American plans. Close on the heels of the retreating enemy the Soviet troops advanced westward and came in contact with the U.S. troops in Czechoslovakia on May 10 and 11. General Schoerner's troops were surrendering all along the front. The Soviet Army took more than 800,000 prisoners in the



Prague operation. Only a small group of enemy troops managed to escape to the west. On May 12, 1945, Field Marshal Schoerner surrendered himself to the Americans, having flown to their headquarters in an airplane.

The lightning Soviet attack saved Prague from destruction and the insurgents from certain death. It completed Czechoslovakia's liberation and thwarted the plans of the American imperialists, who wanted to capture Prague and occupy Czechoslovakia. The brilliant Soviet Prague operation and the rout of Schoerner's army group ended the fighting in Europe.

Once again the radical difference between the policies of the Soviet Union and the United States came to the surface. "The Command of the American troops, preoccupied by the end of the war together with the remnants of the nazi militarists in intrigues against the Soviet Union," wrote Czech historians, "had no intention at all to liberate our city from the Hitler occupation and showed no concern for the matter. On the strength of an agreement with the Hitler Command, it wanted to give Schoerner, the nazi executioner in Moravia, every opportunity of resisting the Soviet Army, which advanced fighting all the time. It gave Schoerner a chance to adopt 'scorched earth' tactics and suppress the revolutionary wave rising all over the country. It gave K.G. Frank an opportunity to keep his promise, made to the Americans, to do the 'dirty work' for them and exterminate the arrested Communist leaders."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union fulfilled its mission of liberation and its internationalist duty to the people of Czechoslovakia and all other peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Bartošek a K. Pichlik, *Hanebná Role Amerických Okupantů v Západních Čechách v Roce 1945*, Praha, 1951, S. 6.

Militarily, German fascism was smashed. But to smash it politically, it was essential to eliminate the Dönitz "government", the successor of German fascism. Dönitz had considerable Anglo-American support, something that was distinctly reflected in Western behaviour in the Allied Control Commission, which began to function in Flensburg as of May 13. The Dönitz "government", historian Lüdde-Neurath, its inveterate advocate, wrote, "welcomed the appearance of an Allied Control Commission in Flensburg".<sup>1</sup>

The British and American members of the Commission hastened to strike new deals with Dönitz before the Soviet members arrived. They agreed to co-operate with the Dönitz government and had Jodl appointed Chief of Staff of the German High Command in place of Keitel. In this office Jodl settled organisational matters concerning the Wehrmacht with the Anglo-American Command. Last but not least, the American and British spokesmen in the Allied Control Commission paid an official call on Dönitz, who assured them that he would be true to his "Western outlook".<sup>2</sup> He tried to prevail on his visitors that joint struggle against the Soviet Union was absolutely essential. "This obviously made a strong impression on the two generals," reported Lüdde-Neurath.<sup>3</sup>

On May 16 Churchill officially declared in violation of the Yalta agreements that "Britain had no intention of undertaking the burden of administering Germany."<sup>4</sup> In other words, he was intending to let the Dönitz "government" administer Germany. On the same day Reuters transmitted the Allied Headquarters announcement that

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<sup>1</sup> W. Lüdde-Neurath, *Das Ende auf deutschen Boden. Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, S. 437.

<sup>2</sup> Lüdde-Neurath, *Regierung Dönitz*, S. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, May 17, 1945.

"Dönitz and other German officers are being employed only in connection with the feeding, disarmament and medical care of the German forces" under Allied control.<sup>1</sup> This announcement was a fresh attempt at legalising the activities of the Dönitz "government". The *Labour Daily Herald* described U.S. and British conduct vis-à-vis Dönitz as "sinister", and felt that it was aimed at creating a sort of quisling government in Germany.

The situation changed radically when the Soviet members of the Allied Control Commission arrived in Flensburg on May 17. The Soviet spokesmen stated categorically that the Dönitz "government" should be dissolved. The firm Soviet stand, outraged public opinion in the United States and Britain, and the absence of popular support in Germany for the Dönitz "government", which the Germans described as a "ghost government", sealed Dönitz's fate. On May 23, 1945, the Dönitz "government" was dissolved and its members arrested as war criminals. Another 300 nazi officers in Flensburg were arrested with them. Among these was Himmler. While under arrest, he demanded to see Montgomery, saying that he and the British Commander had reached an understanding about preparing a new war against the U.S.S.R. and that he, Himmler, had already mustered several SS divisions for this purpose. However, on seeing that he would not escape retribution for his crimes, Himmler took poison on May 24.

No sooner had Germany surrendered than the U.S. and British governments tried to split the country and do their will in Western Germany. Their object was to build up a military staging area in Europe. Acting upon the Crimea Conference agreements, the Soviet Union worked tirelessly for Germany's unity and for the joint administration of Germany by the Four Powers.

While the war was still on, U.S. and British troops entered the part of Germany that was to have been occupied by Soviet troops under the Yalta decisions. The So-

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Herald*, May 17, 1945.

viet Government demanded that the Anglo-American troops withdraw from that area. Churchill was prepared to risk a far-reaching conflict with the U.S.S.R. to retain Anglo-American control over as great a part of Germany as possible. On May 4 he sent a telegram to Eden, who was at the San Francisco Conference, saying, "the proposed withdrawal of the United States Army... would mean the tide of Russian domination sweeping forward 120 miles on a front of 300 or 400 miles. This would be an event which, if it occurred, would be one of the most melancholy in history."<sup>1</sup> Churchill spurred Eden and people of like mind in the U.S. Administration towards settling the matter quickly. "Now, while the British and American armies and air forces were still a mighty armed power, and before they melted away under demobilisation and the heavy claims of the Japanese war," he declared, "now, at the very latest, was the time for a general settlement."<sup>2</sup>

Reading between the lines we see that Churchill did not shy from armed force in the realisation of his plans for post-war Europe. Advocates of aggression called for war against the Soviet Union, which had done so much for the common victory over Germany.

On June 5, 1945, representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France signed a declaration "On the defeat of Germany and the assumption of supreme power with regard to Germany by the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Provisional Government of the French Republic". The Declaration established that the Four Powers assume "supreme authority with respect to Germany, including all the powers possessed by the German government, the High Command and any state, municipal or local government or authority". Germany's armed forces were to be completely disarmed, and all weapons and war industries were to be placed under

<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 438.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 522.

Four-Power control. The Declaration required the immediate release and repatriation of all p.o.w.s and civilians of the United Nations in Germany. The top nazi leaders and all other war criminals were to be arrested without delay. According to Article 12, "the Allied representatives will station forces and civil agencies in any or all parts of Germany as they may determine".

Two other agreements were signed, one on the Control Machinery in Germany, and the other on Zones of Occupation. The first provided that "in the period when Germany is carrying out the basic requirements of unconditional surrender, supreme authority in Germany will be exercised on instructions of their Government, by the Soviet, British, United States and French commanders-in-chief, each in his zone of occupation, and also jointly, in matters affecting Germany as a whole. The four commanders-in-chief will together constitute the Control Council." The Control Council, which operated on the principle of unanimity, was to ensure uniformity of action by the commanders-in-chief in their respective zones of occupation, and to reach agreed decision on the chief questions affecting Germany as a whole. The administration of the Greater Berlin area was entrusted to an Inter-Allied Governing Authority, which operated under the general direction of the Control Council and was composed of the four commandants.

The Zones of Occupation Agreement established the boundaries between the occupation zone of the Soviet Union and the zones of the Western Powers, the struggle between whom for the demarcation of the occupation zones was not yet over. The Soviet zone of occupation consisted of Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia. Other lands, too, had been part of the Soviet occupation zone before the Berlin Conference, but later, by decision of this Conference and in pursuance of historical justice, they were transferred to their legitimate Slav owners, the U.S.S.R. and Poland.

The agreement signed in Berlin also provided for the undelayed withdrawal of Anglo-American troops from the Soviet occupation zone and for the division of Berlin into four sectors of occupation.

In early July, the British and American occupation troops were withdrawn from the zone set aside for occupation by Soviet troops. At the same time, the United States, Britain and France assumed control of their respective sectors of occupation in Berlin. On July 30, 1945, the first official sitting of the Allied Control Council took place in Berlin, and the first sitting of the Inter-Allied Governing Authority for Greater Berlin took place on July 11.

The Austrian question was just as keenly contested. The American imperialists were eager to realise their long-time ambition of a big Catholic state in South-East Europe under their influence. The British rulers, on the other hand, wanted to unify Austria and part of South Germany in a Danube Federation.

The Soviet Government firmly rejected the U.S. and British plans, which conflicted with the national interests of the Austrian and other peoples of Europe.

On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France published the Agreement on Zones of Occupation and Control of Machinery in Austria. It recognised the right of the Austrian people to independent national existence within their own integral state. Austria was divided into occupation zones. The Soviet occupation zone consisted of north-east Austria, including Lower Austria, part of Upper Austria on the left bank of the Danube, and Burgenland. Vienna was divided into 4 sectors of occupation. An Allied Commission for Austria was set up to deal with matters concerning Austria as a whole.

The relations between the Soviet Union and the East European countries embarked on the path of democratic development made good headway. In the latter half of June 1945 Soviet-Czechoslovakian negotiations took place in Moscow. The talks proceeded in an atmosphere of sin-

cere friendship and restored historical justice with regard to the Transcarpathian Ukrainians, who had unanimously expressed their desire to join the Soviet Ukraine. The negotiations culminated on June 29, 1945, in a Soviet-Czechoslovakian Treaty on the Transcarpathian Ukraine. The Treaty provided that the Transcarpathian Ukraine "shall be reunified in accordance with the wishes of its population and on the basis of a friendly agreement between the two High Contracting Sides with its long-time homeland, the Ukraine, and shall become part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic".

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The Soviet Union worked perseveringly in the interests of a durable democratic peace, the interests of the unity and national independence of Germany.

The Soviet occupation policy was effected by the Soviet authorities in close contact with, and with the support of, the people in the occupied territories. It promoted the spirit of national independence and democracy among the population. The Soviet occupation authorities supported the various democratic undertakings of the masses, and assisted them extensively in effecting socio-economic reforms.

Thus, the occupation by the Soviet Union of parts of Germany and Austria signified selfless assistance to the people in the realisation of their national and social aspirations. This assistance, which conformed in full with the public interest, was aimed at consolidating peace and the security of nations.

## *Chapter Nineteen*

### THE SAN FRANCISCO AND POTSDAM CONFERENCES

#### I

On April 25, 1945, while battles still raged in the European Theatre, representatives of 46 countries gathered in San Francisco to discuss the organisation of the post-war peace.

The U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Britain and China, who were the initiators, decided to include in the invitation list all the countries that had signed the United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942, and all that joined it later.

In agreeing to invite a large number of countries, the Soviet Union was moved by a desire to develop international co-operation. It believed that the new international organisation should be as representative as possible and that it should embrace the greatest possible number of countries, save countries with a fascist regime. The Western rulers, particularly those of the United States, had other ideas. What they wanted was to make the organisation a vehicle of American foreign policy, whereby the United States could more easily further its aims of world domination.

In pursuance of this plan, as we have already mentioned, the U.S. Government sponsored a conference in Mexico City earlier in 1945. The group of Latin American delegates, who comprised nearly half the conferees at San Francisco,



acted in close contact with, and on the instructions of, the U.S. delegation. Shortly before the San Francisco Conference opened, the U.S. Government, jointly with the governments of Great Britain and France, advanced a new criterion for the invitation list. It declared that countries which did not have diplomatic relations with the United States and Britain could not be admitted to the Conference.

This was an act of discrimination against the Mongolian People's Republic, Albania and Poland, an act of gross injustice. The three countries had done much to help defeat the common enemy. Poland had made great sacrifices and participated in the war against the fascists. The Polish Provisional Government protested. "Holding the San Francisco Conference without Polish participation," said the Polish protest, "would be an injustice and a totally unjustified injury to the Polish people, a people that seeks to secure its independence and has assumed the high-minded mission of guarding European peace and civilisation against fascist barbarity and German aggressive aspirations."<sup>1</sup>

The question of inviting Poland was raised at a plenary meeting of the Conference. The Soviet delegation made a firm stand for Democratic Poland's lawful rights. But when the voting came, the "voting machine" built up by the U.S. delegation did its job and the Soviet proposal to invite Poland was rejected. The Conference decided, however, on Soviet insistence, that Poland would be one of the founding members of the United Nations and that a place would be reserved in its documents for Poland's signature.

The United States and Britain recognised the Polish Government in early June 1945, after representatives of the reactionary forces, including Mikolajczyk, who was made Vice-Premier and Minister of Agriculture, were inducted into the cabinet.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, March 27, 1945.

The San Francisco Conference discussed the request of the World Trade Union Conference to allow trade union representatives to participate in the United Nations Organisation. This request, hotly supported by the Soviet Union, was rejected by the voting "majority" on U.S. and British orders. When the Economic and Social Committee resolved to invite a representative of the international trade union movement to its sitting, the British and American delegations had the motion rejected.

The Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics were invited to the San Francisco Conference as founding members.

The Soviet delegates presented their opinion of how the new international organisation would best cope with its responsibilities. They stressed the unchanging Soviet wish for peace.

The Soviet Government warned that the United Nations would not succeed, unless it were founded on democratic principles providing for the equality of all U.N. members, honest international co-operation and the consistent application of the principle of Great-Power unanimity. The Soviet Union called on the new international organisation to work assiduously for peace and world security in the best interests of working people throughout the world, and warned against complacency in the struggle for peace.

The American delegation exploited the idea of bourgeois cosmopolitanism in demanding that the United Nations Organisation become a "world parliament" that would abolish the national independence and sovereignty of its member states. This was really an attempt to use the United Nations to suppress the revolutionary, democratic and national-liberation movements, to trample upon the rights of nations and to establish world domination.

The Soviet Union opposed this reactionary plan of the American monopolists. It advanced its own programme,

making the United Nations an organ of peace and security through democratic international co-operation.

It suggested fundamental amendments to the United Nations Charter, designed to add to its international prestige and to prevent the possibility of imperialist aggressors using the organisation for their own ends. The amendments were designed to make the U.N. a body in defence of democracy, the rights of nations, and basic human rights. In submitting these amendments, the Soviet Union was protecting the independence of the peoples, universal peace and security.

At times the struggle at the San Francisco Conference grew very acute and involved all the participants. There were 282 delegates and more than 1,500 advisers, experts and members of secretariats of the various delegations, etc. Besides, the Conference attracted 3,500 correspondents, radio commentators, photographers, members of the Conference Secretariat and, last but not least, representatives of diverse organisations, national and political groups. The bourgeois newspapermen went out of their way to distort the procedures, and forecast failure.

As many as 1,200 amendments, additions and changes were submitted at the San Francisco Conference to the proposals adopted at Dumbarton Oaks and the Yalta Conference. The battle centred chiefly on three questions—the principles and purposes of the new international organisation, the role of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the system of international trusteeship. The most acute of these was the question concerning the Security Council and General Assembly.

The Soviet delegation made two basic proposals concerning U.N. principles and purposes: 1) friendly relations between countries should be based on “respect for the principle of the equality and the self-determination of nations”, and 2) international co-operation should be expressed in the “encouragement of respect for the rights of man, especially the right to work and the right to

education, and the basic freedoms of all men, irrespective of race, language, religion and sex".<sup>1</sup>

A struggle ensued. Some delegations, those connected with the United States, objected to the principle of equality. The bulk of the bourgeois delegates, and the delegates of the United States and Britain most of all, objected to references in the United Nations Charter to the right to labour and education. In spite of this, the first Soviet proposal was included in Paragraph 2 of Article 1 without change. The second Soviet proposal was included in Paragraph 3 of the same Article, although the references to the rights of men to labour and education were deleted. The Article made only vague mention of respect "for human rights and for the fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion".

The purpose of the Security Council and the voting procedure in it being spelled out in earlier Soviet-Anglo-American agreements, the Soviet delegation confined itself to just two amendments in this respect. The first of these said that the settlement of international disputes liable to lead to a breach of peace should be effected by peaceful means "in accordance with the principles of justice and international law". The second amendment provided against coercive acts under regional agreements or bodies without authority from the Security Council, excluding measures stipulated in already existing treaties designed to combat any resumption of aggressive conduct by the aggressor-states of the present war.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. amendments were designed to weaken the Security Council and, conversely, to strengthen the General Assembly, where the U.S. Government reckoned to have greater advantages, accruing from its "voting machine". But, committed as it was to the Crimea decisions, the United States could not afford to oppose provisions already

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<sup>1</sup> С. Б. Крылов, *Материалы к Истории Организации Объединенных Наций*. Издательство АН СССР, 1949, стр. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, стр. 90.

made at Yalta, which defined the role and significance of the Security Council. So it let other delegations dependent on the U.S.A. perform for it. The Peru delegate, seconded by a few others, attacked the principle of Great-Power unanimity in the Security Council.

The British and U.S. delegates were quite willing to depart from the decisions taken on this score by the heads of the Big Three governments in the Crimea. But the Soviet spokesmen succeeded in squashing the attempt. As a result, the purpose of the Security Council and the voting procedure in it were reaffirmed at the San Francisco Conference in the wording earlier agreed. Both Soviet proposals concerning the work of the Security Council were adopted, the first in somewhat altered form, and the second in full.

The discussions concerning international trusteeships dragged out. Drafts were submitted on this score by the Soviet, American, British, French, Chinese and a few other delegations. The Soviet draft defined as the main purpose of trusteeship for the United Nations to prepare the peoples deprived of self-government, with their active participation, "for self-government and self-determination with the object of achieving early and full independent statehood".<sup>1</sup>

The American, British and French proposals, on the other hand, defined trusteeship as the unrestricted authority of the trustee over the population of the trust territory. In other words, they meant to preserve the old colonial system under the signboard of "international trusteeship". Furthermore, the American proposal envisaged a revision of the distribution of trust territories. This was aimed against the colonial positions of Britain and France.

As expected, the colonial powers objected to the Soviet proposal. But they did not succeed in dragging through their own drafts. A compromise was reached, reflected

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<sup>1</sup> С. Б. Крылов, *op. cit.*, стр. 153.

in Clause "b" of Article 76 of the United Nations Charter. The basic objectives of the trusteeship system shall be, this Clause says, "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement".

The positive aspect of this compromise decision was that it mentioned independence as a basic objective of trusteeship. However, it was accompanied by numerous reservations.

All in all, the outcome of the San Francisco Conference was a favourable one. Thanks to Soviet efforts, principles of democratic international co-operation were made the basis of the United Nations. The Conference closed on June 26, 1945, after the United Nations Charter, built on these principles, was adopted unanimously.

By the end of 1945 the Charter was ratified by all the countries that attended the San Francisco Conference.

## 2

The Soviet Union promoted the principles of democratic international co-operation and worked for joint solutions of the post-war problems. It was thanks to the Soviet Union that a new meeting was held in Potsdam between the leaders of the Great Powers, despite U.S. and British efforts to break off international co-operation.

The foreign policy of the United States had grown considerably more reactionary by that time, and this naturally affected international relations. The end of the war was in sight, and the American monopolists, eager to realise their plans of world domination, rallied the aggressive

forces of the United States. The Soviet Union was the main obstacle they had to contend with, for, contrary to the expectations of the U.S. and British imperialists, it emerged from the war more powerful than ever. This was why the hatred of the imperialist reactionaries was focussed upon the U.S.S.R. and the patriotic forces in other countries. The Truman administration, which ministered to the desires of the monopolists, spearheaded its policy against the U.S.S.R. and the national-liberation and working-class movements in other countries.

In consenting to the Potsdam Conference, the U.S. Government intended to mount a fresh attack on Soviet interests and those of other freedom-loving countries. The American imperialists pinned their hopes for world domination on the atom bomb, to them a means of intimidation and blackmail. The first atomic bomb was to be tested on July 15 in Alamogordo, a desert area in New Mexico, and the U.S. Government insisted emphatically that the Potsdam Conference open on that day.

Churchill, who had not been informed of the American plan, wondered why the Americans laid so much accent on that date. He expressed his bewilderment to the heads of the Soviet and U.S. governments in a message of June 1, 1945, ending it thus:

"I have proposed June 15, repeat June, the month before July, but if that is not possible, why not July 1, July 2, or July 3?"<sup>1</sup> However, as soon as Churchill learned the reason from the U.S. Government, he instantly agreed to July 15.

Reports of the atom bomb blast reached the American delegation in Potsdam on July 16, 1945, shortly before the Conference opened. From that hour members of the American delegation, which included President Truman and America's leading politicians, were absorbed in a discussion of what advantages the possession of atomic

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence. . .*, Vol. 1, p. 362.

arms would reap for them in the scramble for world domination. Truman recalls in his memoirs that U.S. State Secretary Byrnes said "the weapon might be so powerful as to be potentially capable of wiping out entire cities and killing people on an unprecedented scale".

"He added," Truman writes, "that in his belief that bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war."<sup>1</sup> Secretary of War Stimson shared Byrnes's opinion. The atomic bomb, he said, is "certain to have a decisive influence on our relations with other countries".<sup>2</sup>

At Truman's request Stimson wrote in Potsdam a paper headed "Reflections on the Basic Problems Which Confront Us". In his "Reflections" Stimson urged using the atomic bomb without delay in combating the Soviet Union, preparing a new world war, and carrying through unprecedented political blackmail. A section of Stimson's paper was aimed specifically against the idea of the peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems.

"It also becomes clear," Stimson wrote, "that no permanently safe international relations can be established between such two fundamentally different national systems. With the best of efforts we cannot understand each other."<sup>3</sup>

Stimson suggested using the atomic "secret" in order to "win concessions from the Russian leaders as to their cherished . . . state".<sup>4</sup>

But the American political and military leaders were not quite sure that the Soviet leaders would knuckle under to their atomic blackmail. By way of reconnaissance they decided to let President Truman inform Stalin about the

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<sup>1</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, New York, Doubleday, 1955, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York, 1948, p. 639.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 641.



United States possessing an atomic bomb, and to observe his reaction. Truman put the plan into action at the Potsdam Conference, but saw his communication received with cool indifference.<sup>1</sup> This reaction dampened the spirits of the U.S. leadership. The calmness of the Soviet leader derived from the undeviating firmness of Soviet policy with regard to any and all attempts by the imperialists to dictate their will to the Soviet Union and from confidence in the powers of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people.

Since it was clear that the Soviet Union would not be intimidated, the question of a direct aggression against the Soviet Union arose among the American delegation. British and American delegates discussed various plans of a third world war in full earnest. In one of these conversations it developed that U.S. General H. Arnold, known for his theory of a decisive air blow, and British Air Marshal Charles Portal held identical views, as Arnold himself testified in his book, *Global Mission*.

"We both believed," he wrote, "our next enemy would be Russia, and a common line of thought emerged from our talk." The two generals arrived at the conclusion that to use their strategic air power successfully they "must have bases so located around the world that we can reach any target we may be called upon to hit".

Members of the British and American delegations had a soft spot for Hitler and lamented that he had failed against the Soviet Union. Averell Harriman went to the length of describing as Hitler's "greatest crime" that his actions resulted in opening "the gates of Eastern Europe to Asia".<sup>2</sup> Matters at Potsdam came to a point where "there was secretly circulated among the top leaders of the British and American delegations a memorandum prepared by certain top officials in the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph E. Lapp, *The New Force, The Story of Atoms and People*, New York, 1953, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, New York, The Viking Press, 1951, p. 79.

Government, saying in effect that the whole approach (in Potsdam.—G. D.) was wrong and that our real interest lay in rebuilding Germany as quickly as possible 'as a bulwark against communism'.<sup>1</sup> The idea, consequently, was to employ German militarism and revanchism as a means of implementing the anti-Soviet U.S. plans.

The U.S. monopolists and their government reckoned that a demonstration of atomic weapons would bludgeon the world into submitting to U.S. imperialist domination. It was for this purpose that the U.S. Government decided to use the atomic weapon against the peaceful population of Japan.

On the instructions of the U.S. President experts and consultants picked Japanese cities that had the densest populations. The choice fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was pointed out in the official bombing survey report that "Hiroshima and Nagasaki were chosen as targets because of their concentration of activities and population".<sup>2</sup>

President Truman bragged in his diary:

"The final decision of where and when to use the atomic bomb was up to me... I had made the decision... This is the greatest thing in history."<sup>3</sup>

The Potsdam Conference opened on July 17, 1945, with the last of its first nine sittings ending on July 25. A recess was then called in view of the elections to the British Parliament, in which the Labour Party triumphed. As a result, the British delegation was no longer headed by Churchill, but by the new British Prime Minister, Clement Richard Attlee. This change did not bring about any alteration in the policy of the British delegation, nor in Britain's foreign policy as a whole. "Churchill had few closer and no more loyal colleagues than the leaders of the

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<sup>1</sup> Josiah E. DuBois, *The Devil's Chemists*, Boston, The Beacon Press, 1952, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> P.M.S. Blackett, *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, London, 1948, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs. Year of Decisions*, New York, 1955, pp. 419, 421.

Labour Party," writes Roy Jenkins, Attlee's close friend and biographer.<sup>1</sup>

After the Labour Government was formed in Britain and Attlee came to Potsdam as head of the British delegation, four more sittings took place between July 28 and August 2, 1945.

The Potsdam Conference proceeded in an atmosphere of bitter controversy. The Anglo-American delegates showed little or no desire to consider the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union and the democratic countries.

For this reason, many important questions were left unsolved. But some matters were agreed upon, for the American and British delegates hoped that in due course, by wielding the atomic weapon, they would be able to scrap the Potsdam decisions. Furthermore, the American and British rulers still expected the war between the Soviet Union and Japan to weaken the Soviet Union, after which it would be not too difficult to review earlier decisions.

The Potsdam Conference instituted a Foreign Ministers' Council and assigned it to draft peace treaties with the defeated countries. The Council was to consist of the Foreign Ministers of the powers that had signed the armistice agreement with the enemy country concerned. There was only one exception, with France being considered as a co-signatory to the surrender terms imposed on Italy.

The German question naturally took pride of place at the Potsdam Conference. The U.S. delegation came to Potsdam with a new plan for partitioning Germany, worked out by representatives of U.S. monopolies and banks. The plan provided for a South German state with its capital in Vienna, consisting of the three German provinces of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden, and of Austria and Hungary. It also envisaged a North German state with its

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Jenkins, *Mister Attlee. An Interim Biography*, London, Heinemann, 1948, p. 230.

capital in Berlin, and a West German state consisting of the Ruhr and the Saar.

"The President believed," wrote William Leahy, "that the separation of Germany into several sovereign states would be advantageous to future peace and security."

"It was the President's opinion," Leahy went on to say, "that the Rhineland, including the Ruhr and the Saar... should be placed under international control... with the announced intention of granting it independence and sovereignty as a separate state at some future time."<sup>1</sup> The new U.S. proposals revealed more graphically than any others the true designs of the U.S. Government. Separate German states would fall more easily under U.S. domination and would more easily become breeding grounds of revenge-seekers spoiling for new armed adventures. As for international control over the Ruhr, it was conceived as American control.

But thanks to Soviet efforts this new plan of partitioning Germany fell through. On Soviet initiative, the Potsdam Conference adopted decisions for the preservation and development of Germany as an integral democratic and peaceful state. The Conference re-affirmed the right of the German nation to independent national existence and the remoulding of its life along democratic and peaceful principles.

An agreement was signed at Potsdam on the Political and Economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period. It was a broad programme for the denazification, democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany, and for the pertinent controls. It defined the purpose of the occupation as Germany's complete disarmament and demilitarisation, the dismantling of all industries usable for war production, convincing the German people that they have suffered a total military defeat, destroying the National Socialist Party

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<sup>1</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 390.

and all nazi institutions, preventing all nazi and militarist activity or propaganda and preparing for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful German co-operation in international life.

The agreement laid primary emphasis on the development of the civilian industries and agriculture. It was also decided to shut down the German monopoly associations. Measures were worked out to treat Germany as a single economic unit in spite of the existing zones of occupation. The agreement also worked out the procedure on reparations.

The Conference ordered the arrest and judgement of war criminals and the organisation of an international trial for the chief German war criminals.

A struggle ensued at the Conference once more over Poland's western frontiers. A Polish Government delegation came to Potsdam to participate in the discussions. Bierut and Gomulka provided an exhaustive historical, social and economic justification of Poland's lawful claims to the lands in question. Mikolajczyk, who was present, was aware that the Polish people were vitally interested in the western areas. He could not therefore oppose the transfer of these lands to Poland. He made no comment when Churchill reminded him that the Polish émigré government had never made such claims.<sup>1</sup>

Justice was restored in the matter of Poland's western frontiers. This was done on Soviet insistence, establishing the Polish-German boundary along the rivers Oder and Neisse. Part of East Prussia adjoining the Baltic Sea and including Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) went to the Soviet Union. The rest of East Prussia and the territory of the former free city of Danzig (Gdansk) were transferred to Poland. The Berlin Conference also ruled that the German population would be resettled from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to their homeland.

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, November 25, 1947.

The old-time Slav lands, captured by German conquerors, were thus restored to their legitimate owners.

The Potsdam decisions were a new triumph for the democratic principles of post-war peace promoted by the Soviet Union. Faithful to its international obligations, the U.S.S.R. observed the Potsdam decisions conscientiously in letter and spirit.

The United States and Britain, in the meantime, followed an entirely different policy. Their consent to the Potsdam programme was no more than formal. They had from the first decided on a course that was far removed from what ever was ruled at Potsdam.

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Acting on the decisions of the Crimea and Potsdam conferences, a Soviet-Polish border treaty was signed in a spirit of sincere friendship and cordiality on August 16, 1945. The treaty established the frontier along the so-called Curzon Line with deviations at some points of 5-8 kilometres in Poland's favour. The Soviet Union also gave up territory south of the town of Krylov to Poland with deviations of some 30 kilometres in Poland's favour, and part of the Byelovezhskaya Pushcha, with deviations of some 17 kilometres in Poland's favour. A border was also established across former East Prussia.

A Soviet-Polish agreement was concluded concerning reparations for damage done by the German occupation. The Soviet Government gave up claims in Poland's favour for German property and other assets in Polish territory, including the western German lands transferred to Poland. Furthermore, the Soviet Union agreed to let Poland have 15 per cent of the Soviet reparations.

The Soviet-Polish accord was a token of growing friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Poland.

## Chapter Twenty

### JAPAN SURRENDERS. THE WAR ENDS

#### I

The United States and Britain began offensive operations in the Pacific in 1943. The Soviet victories over the chief member of the fascist bloc, Hitler Germany, created a favourable climate for them. But the U.S. and British governments did not concentrate their efforts against Japan's main striking force. They operated in strategically secondary sectors, namely, against Japanese garrisons in colonies earlier seized from the British, Americans and Dutch. Ousting the Japanese was not the only aim. The operations were also meant to crush the national-liberation movement.

One of the objects behind the Anglo-American "island-hopping" was to consolidate colonial rule in the Pacific Ocean. U.S. author Fred Eldridge wrote, "wars are fought by countries such as Britain, China, and the United States, to preserve economic and political sovereignty and the empire".<sup>1</sup>

The American master plan in the Pacific was to occupy and consolidate the key strategic positions and thereby create dependable bases to combat the national-liberation movement in East and South-East Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Eldridge, *Wrath in Burma. The Uncensored Story of General Stilwell and International Manoeuvres in the Far East*, New York, 1946, p. 314.

In November 1943 U.S. troops landed on Tarawa and Makin islands of the Gilbert group to clear the ground in the central part of the Pacific Ocean. In 1944 they occupied support points in the Marshall, Mariana and Palau islands. The Japanese did not put up a strong resistance. In the following stage, the United States projected their operation to the Philippines. The very first thing done by the U.S. Command on landing was to arrest the leadership of the resistance movement, who had organised far-flung guerrilla warfare against the Japanese and had sapped Japanese fighting strength, thereby considerably facilitating the U.S. invasion.

The American press did not beat about the bush concerning the importance of the Philippines for the ambitious plans of the American monopolies. "A circle which has Manila as its centre, and a radius of about 1,500 miles," wrote Walter Lippmann, "encloses the industrial region of Japan, all of Korea, practically all of China proper, French Indochina, British Burma and Malaya, and the Netherlands Indies. . . . The United States had placed itself at the geographical centre of the empires of Eastern Asia, and at the strategic crossroads of their lines of communication."<sup>1</sup>

In 1944 the situation in China deteriorated very sharply. This was due to Chiang Kai-shek's anti-popular rule and the total contempt which the Kuomintang showed for the national interests of the country and the people. General Stilwell, who was placed at the head of Chiang's general staff, described the Kuomintang regime as a mixture of "corruption, neglect, chaos, economy, taxes, words and deeds, hoarding, black market, trading with the enemy".<sup>2</sup> And about Chiang Kai-shek himself, whom he nicknamed "peanut", Stilwell wrote: "Peanut knows only what goes

<sup>1</sup> Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, Boston, 1943, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers. Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White*, New York, William Sloan Associates, 1948, p. 316.



on immediately around him, and the country is so big that he will not be able to control it. Obstinate, pig-headed, ignorant, intolerant, arbitrary, unreasonable, illogical, ungrateful, grasping."<sup>1</sup> But that was just the qualities that played into the hands of the American monopolists.

Kuomintang domestic policies, based on absolutely shameless plunder and corruption, brought about terrible famines in Kwantung, Honan and Chekiang provinces in 1942 and 1943. This did not prevent the Kuomintang authorities from carrying on their mass requisitions. Resistance by the starving population was quelled by force of arms. When the famine-stricken tried to move to neighbouring provinces they were stopped with gunfire. Kuomintang officers pocketed what rightly belonged to the soldiers, who were undernourished, poorly dressed, ill-treated and neglected.

Though he was closely associated with the American monopolists, Chiang Kai-shek's political outlook gravitated towards the fascist bloc. According to Stilwell he preferred "to see Germany win than to end up with a powerful Russia at his door".<sup>2</sup> His troops did not care to fight Japan, for *inter alia*, the U.S. leadership had advised the Kuomintang to stockpile strength for an eventual civil war. Eldridge says that Kuomintang strategy was fashioned for "hoarding whatever manpower and equipment were available to use against the Communists and other dissident factions after America had won the war in the Pacific".<sup>3</sup>

The Japanese Command decided to make the most of Chiang Kai-shek's attitude in a big China offensive in 1944. The object was to build up a big rear for Japan from which to fight a war of attrition, even after losing conquered territories in the Pacific. The Japanese offensive began in summer 1944 in Honan and along the Canton-Hankow

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph W. Stilwell, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Eldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

railway. The Japanese took possession of Honan Province and extended their foothold in Central China.

They held an uninterrupted front line from Peiping across Kweilin up to Kwangchowan, capturing the north-south trunk railway. The seaboard with a population of at least 100 million was thus cut off from the hinterland. The Kuomintang government lost control of much of the food and raw materials sources, and of the manufacturing industry. It had no more than 100 miles of railway. More than 1,000,000 fighting men were killed, wounded or taken prisoners, but the main loss was in men who had thrown down their arms and fled in confusion from the Japanese or had been cut off in enveloped territories. Kuomintang generals again turned coat and joined the Japanese.

However, in spite of the big Japanese advances in China the Soviet victories in Europe, which brought nearer the final defeat of the fascist powers, deterred the Kuomintang from surrendering to the Japanese militarists. U.S. and British objections had a lot to do with it as well.

The American imperialists took advantage of the difficulties faced by the Kuomintang government. U.S. Vice-President Henry Wallace visited China in summer 1944, and a special mission of U.S. monopolists headed by Donald Nelson, Chairman of the War Production Board, came to China in autumn 1944 to study the Chinese economy. This led up to important U.S. negotiations with the Kuomintang for key positions in the Chinese economy. A series of agreements giving U.S. tycoons a more or less free hand to exploit China were drawn up in 1944 and concluded in early 1945.

The swing in the fortunes of war brought about by the Soviet victories was well used by the Chinese People's Liberation Army. At a time when Chiang's troops reeled back under the Japanese onslaught, abandoning most important areas to the enemy, the People's Liberation Army kept advancing with success, although it had to contend with crack

Japanese troops. Throughout 1944, the People's Liberation Army, led by the Chinese Communist Party, liberated 24 cities and 13,000 other towns and villages. The liberated area expanded to 859 thousand kilometres with a population of 95,500,000 by the end of 1944.

The mounting prestige of the Chinese Communist Party and the successes of the People's Liberation Army in the war against the Japanese occupation made Chiang Kai-shek alter his anti-Communist tactics. The U.S. leadership, too, recommended a change. The idea was to shift the brunt of the anti-Japanese war on the People's Liberation Army, thus to weaken and exhaust China's democratic forces.

The Communist Party of China, which saw through the secret imperialist designs, suggested in the negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek in Sian early in May 1944, that the Kuomintang stop provoking armed clashes with the People's Liberation Army and agree to form a democratic coalition government that would settle China's burning political problems equitably.

The Communist proposals, which became widely known among the population, were received enthusiastically throughout China. But the Kuomintang kept evading the issue. It demanded that the people's governments in the Liberated Areas be dissolved and that the People's Liberation Army reduce its numerical strength. It is only natural that the Chinese Communist Party rejected these demands.

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The operations in Burma and the Philippines affected Japan's general situation very little. Its land armies were intact. The Japanese Navy, it is true, was greatly weakened, but that was not a decisive factor for the outcome of the war. At the time of the American landings in the Philippines in autumn 1944 the war's biggest naval battles took place in the adjacent waters. The Japanese Navy tried to attack the U.S. naval forces covering the landing opera-

tions. The battles culminated in disastrous losses for the Japanese. They lost 4 battleships, 3 aircraft carriers, 3 light carriers, 1 escort carrier, 14 cruisers, 32 destroyers and 11 submarines. U.S. losses added up to 1 light carrier, 3 escort carriers, 6 destroyers, 3 escort destroyers, 1 transport and 7 submarines. But this naval battle, too, was not decisive, although it gave the United States a chance to complete its operation in the Philippines without obstruction from the sea by the end of April 1945. The British Government seized the favourable opportunity of attacking in Indonesia with U.S. support. Here too the Allied operation was distinctly colonial in character.

U.S. air raids on Japanese cities grew in scale in autumn 1944 and became very massive in spring 1945. Sixty-six Japanese cities were raided, and 100,000 tons of explosives were dropped on them.<sup>1</sup> But the nature of the U.S. air raids on Japan was identical to that of the Anglo-American raids on German cities. Military targets were overlooked, while residential areas inhabited by the Japanese poor were mercilessly strafed. The Japanese Government reported that 2,200,000 dwellings were destroyed in the raids, with a toll of 260,000 killed and 412,000 wounded.

U.S. and British aircraft did not drop a single bomb on military and industrial objectives in Manchuria until the Soviet Union entered the war. It was only after the Soviet Union declared war on the Japanese and the Soviet Army drove into Manchuria that U.S. aircraft bombed Manchurian targets savagely.

The last operation in the Pacific by the U.S. forces was the landing in Okinawa, made on March 25, 1945. The Japanese garrison in Okinawa totalled 80,000 men. The United States landed an expeditionary force of 451,866. The fighting lasted until June 21, 1945. After that the U.S. Government, in effect, ceased all operations. The U.S. rul-

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<sup>1</sup> Hallett Abend, *Pacific Charter: Our Destiny in Asia*, New York, 1943, p. 50.

ing quarters did not want to wipe out the Japanese seat of aggression and fascism. All they wanted, jointly with the British, was to eliminate Japan as a dangerous competitor, and to assume domination in the South Seas and China. It was these objectives that shaped U.S. strategy in the Pacific Theatre.

Germany's defeat and surrender was a devastating blow to the Japanese imperialists. The Japanese war plan had been built on the presumption that Germany would triumph in Europe. The Japanese and German aggressors were closely connected by their common plans of conquest. But Germany had been the chief force in the German-Japanese fascist bloc. It was on its successes and failures that Japanese successes and failures depended.

The defeat of Hitler Germany was the chief factor in Japan's defeat. Germany's surrender doomed the aggressive plans of the Japanese imperialists, but the Government of Japan decided to continue the war.

The Japanese decision was based on the implications of U.S. and British policy. This policy, Tokyo thought, gave room for a wide range of manoeuvres and deals. The Japanese Government believed that it could fight the war for a considerable time, while looking for ways and means to strike a fresh anti-Soviet deal with its imperialist opponents.

The Japanese land forces had suffered only small losses in the Pacific campaign. The Kwantung Army in Manchuria, the strongest and most powerful portion of Japan's land forces, was intact and poised for action.

Japan's economy had not suffered heavily in the fighting. War production in Japan proper was still very high. The Manchurian industries, an important military and economic base for Japanese imperialism, were increasing production. Coal extraction in Manchuria had increased 150 per cent over 1935, and the production of iron 600 per cent. A set of war industries employing more than 50,000 men had been built in Mukden. There were war

plants in Antung, Liaoyang, Fushun and other cities. To escape air raids, many Japanese industrialists transferred their plants from Japan to Manchuria in 1944 and 1945. Japan also organised war industries in Korea, where it had moved some plants from Japan proper.

Seeing that Japan still had untapped resources, the U.S. and British governments expected the war against Japan to last many more months, years even.

The U.S. General Staff had worked out an operational plan under which a landing on the southernmost of the Japanese islands, the Island of Kyushu, was to take place late in 1945, and the landing in the Tokyo-Yokohama area as late as 1946. What is more, the plan contained the reservation that these dates were likely to be put off. The opinion was dominant in the U.S. War Department that "Japan could not be defeated before 1947 or 1948".<sup>1</sup> There was the following admission made by the U.S. Office of War Information:

"We have yet hardly scratched the surface in breaking down the Japanese power of resistance."

The report said that Japan had about 4,000,000 men in the army, and another 2,000,000 men available for military service, with yet another 1,500,000 men not yet subject to drafting.<sup>2</sup>

Churchill was not at all certain that Japan could be beaten. He said that the operations planned by the United States and Britain against Japan "involved an effort not surpassed in Europe, and no one could measure the cost in British and American life and treasure they would require. Still less could it be known how long the stamping out of the resistance of Japan in many territories she had conquered, and especially in her homeland, would last."<sup>3</sup>

Under the pretext of war against Japan, the U.S. rulers

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Eldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, September 28, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, Fifth Series, Volume 413. House of Commons. First Volume of Session 1945-46. London, 1945, p. 77.

prepared a far-flung invasion of China, with the object of occupying that country and subjugating it politically and economically. The threat loomed big for the Chinese people. Special U.S. representatives in China were busy setting the stage. There was General Patrick Hurley, the U.S. Ambassador to China and the President's personal representative, and General Albert C. Wedemeyer, Commander of U.S. Forces in China.

The U.S. imperialists were aware that the People's Liberation Army of China was an obstacle of no mean proportions to their policy of controlling the country. They called on Chiang Kai-shek for determined measures against China's Liberated Areas. In pursuance of their instructions, Chiang Kai-shek launched a massive offensive in June 1945 against the Eighth and Fourth People's Liberation armies and the partisan forces in the provinces of Honan, Hunan, Chekiang, Fukien, Kwangtung, etc. In July 1945 the Kuomintang troops, newly armed by the Americans, started a big operation against the Liberated Area of Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia. This was an undisguised trial of strength in a new civil war.

The People's Liberation Army repulsed the Kuomintang attacks. This failed to knock sense into Chiang Kai-shek, who began preparing a new, still more ambitious offensive against China's Liberated Areas on Hurley's advice and with U.S. material support.

In the circumstances, the Soviet Union's impending entry into the war against Japan was an international event of great impact. The U.S. and British governments, which had planned to weaken the Soviet Union through the Japanese, watched the developments with mounting alarm. After the brilliant Soviet victories in Europe, the plans of a long war against Japan were becoming more and more doubtful. The U.S. and British ruling quarters were therefore eager to divert world attention from the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, to belittle the impact of Soviet operations, and to minimise the Soviet role in

Japan's defeat. Thomas K. Finletter, U.S. Air Force Secretary, wrote in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 5, 1946, that the purpose of the atomic bomb was to knock out Japan before Russia entered the war, or at least before it had time to demonstrate its participation.

That was why the U.S. Government decided to time the atomic blasts to the Soviet entry into the Pacific war. The U.S. institutions developing the atomic weapon had emphatic instructions on that score. A date close to August 10 was named as the secret deadline and the people who handled the technical end were supposed to complete work at all costs, irrespective of risks, expenses and common sense.<sup>1</sup> The stock of fissionable materials at all the laboratories and projects was completely used up—of uranium for the first bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and of plutonium for the second bomb dropped on Nagasaki.<sup>2</sup>

The atomic bombing was not a military necessity.

"It is my opinion," wrote Admiral Leahy, "that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan."<sup>3</sup>

But old-time U.S. "big stick" policy was at this stage giving place to the policy of "atomic diplomacy", whereby the U.S. imperialists expected to subject the world to their diktat. Conscious of the role played by the Soviet Union as the champion of peace, democracy and the independence of nations, the ruling quarters of the United States were bent on undermining its influence and international positions. "So we may conclude," wrote P.M.S. Blackett, the British physicist, "that the dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the Second World War, as one of the first major operations of the cold diplomatic war with Russia."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Сторонники мира*, № 13, 1950, стр. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph E. Lapp, *The New Force. The Story of Atoms and People*, New York, 1953, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> William D. Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

<sup>4</sup> P.M.S. Blackett, *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, p. 127.



True to its usual tactics, the U.S. Government did not use the atomic bombs to destroy military objectives. It dropped them on the civilian population of two big Japanese cities. One atomic bomb was dropped on August 6 in Hiroshima on the hostels of Japanese children evacuated from Tokyo. This was not an error of judgement. The target had been the big reinforced concrete bridge situated between the hostels. Thereby the U.S. ruling quarters showed utter contempt for elementary universally recognised standards of international law, the customs of war and the principles of humanity.

The outburst of indignation that gripped the world was a major moral and political setback for the American imperialists. In recording this fact, Hanson W. Baldwin, military expert of the *New York Times*, wrote:

"The use of the atomic bomb, therefore, cost us dearly: we are now branded with the mark of the beast."<sup>1</sup> Small wonder that many of the people implicated in the decision to use the atomic weapon against Japanese towns, later shifted responsibility from themselves and condemned the crime, of which part of the guilt lies on them. Admiral Leahy, for example, writes:

"My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. . . . These new and terrible instruments of uncivilised warfare represent a modern type of barbarism not worthy of Christian man."<sup>2</sup>

Japanese authors testify that at least 247,000 people perished in Hiroshima, and that 200,000 were either killed or wounded in Nagasaki.

At the time when the Soviet Army had completed its redeployment and was in the act of assaulting the Japanese, the U.S. Government dropped the atomic bombs in

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<sup>1</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*, London, 1949, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> William D. Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

order to impute the victory over Japan to this new weapon.

In effect, however, the use of the atomic bomb had no military impact.

"It would be a mistake," wrote Churchill, "to suppose that the fate of Japan was settled by the atomic bomb."<sup>1</sup> And Hanson W. Baldwin chimes in. "Neither the people of Japan nor their leaders," he writes, "were as impressed with the atomic bomb as we were."<sup>2</sup>

The American press and radio, and the U.S. politicians, shouted their heads off trying to scare the world with the atomic weapon. The extremists demanded that all countries and nations surrender to American diktat. They toyed with the idea of a "world government", whereby to enforce American supremacy.

### 3

In spite of Germany's defeat and the resultant deterioration of Japan's international position, the Japanese Government stuck stubbornly to its aggressive anti-Soviet policy. Throughout the war, Japan had been rendering all the assistance it could to its German ally and, for one, diverted Soviet troops by massing Japanese forces on the Soviet-Manchurian border. Ribbentrop thanked Tokyo for this assistance, noting that at least Russia was compelled to keep troops in Eastern Siberia to ward off a possible Russo-Japanese conflict.<sup>3</sup>

The obstacles which Japan presented to Soviet shipping were another item in the assistance it rendered Germany. Through 1941-44 Japanese naval forces held up 178 Soviet merchant vessels, some of them with the use of arms. Japan supplied Germany with important strategic raw materials, which were shipped to Europe in submarines.

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, February 20, 1948.

That was how they transported rubber, tin, tungsten and quinine.

All through the war the Japanese Government employed its diplomatic staff in the Soviet Union to collect spy information for itself and Germany. The Japanese secret service was most interested in the state of the Soviet Armed Forces and Soviet industry.

Thus, at a difficult hour for the Soviet Union, when the Soviet Army was locked in single combat with fascist Germany, Japan's imperialist policy grossly violated the terms of the Soviet-Japanese Treaty of Neutrality signed on April 13, 1941. In view of this, the Soviet Government denounced the Treaty on April 5, 1945.

In an attempt to win time, the Japanese Government tried an intricate diplomatic dodge. In mid-July 1945, it approached the Soviet Union with the proposal to act as middleman between Japan, on the one hand, and the United States and Britain, on the other. The Soviet Government rejected the Japanese proposal and informed the governments of the United States and Britain about it.

In Potsdam the U.S. and British delegations discussed the question of Japan. By that time the prestige of the Soviet Union had grown immensely. Popular movements in Europe and Asia had gained momentum. This had its effect on the text of the Proclamation Calling for the Surrender of Japan. Signed by the leaders of the United States, Britain and China, it was published on July 26, 1945. The Soviet Government could not sign it at that time, because it was not in a state of war with Japan.

The Proclamation required of Japan that it surrender unconditionally at once. On the following day the Japanese Government declared that it would ignore the Proclamation and fight the war to the finish in accordance with its established policy.

The Potsdam Declaration also contained the general political principles that were to govern defeated Japan. These principles were as follows:

there must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest;

the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as shall be determined;

stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals;

all obstacles shall be removed to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights, shall be established;

Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and allow exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those industries which will enable her to rearm for war;

the Japanese military forces after being completely disarmed shall be permitted to return to their homes;

the occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established, in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a peacefully inclined and responsible government.<sup>1</sup>

Though they issued this programme, consistent in the main with the democratic peace advocated by the Soviet Union, the governments of the United States and Britain did not really intend to adhere to it. Secretary of War Stimson, speaking on behalf of certain groups, said the "constitutional monarchy with its present dynasty" should be preserved in Japan.

The U.S. Government decided to occupy Japan single-handedly. Even after the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan, it was impossible to get U.S. consent to a joint occupation policy in Japan. An understanding was

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, July 27, 1945.

reached, however, that the realisation of Japan's unconditional surrender in Korea would be controlled by the commands of the Soviet and American troops. The temporary line of demarcation between the Soviet and American zones coincided with the 38th parallel, with the Soviet zone to the north and the U.S. zone to the south of it.

On August 8, 1945, the Japanese Government was handed a Soviet statement saying that "after the defeat and surrender of Hitler Germany, Japan remains the only Great Power still intent on continuing the war". The Soviet Government, the statement said, was eager "to bring nearer the peace, to deliver the peoples of further sacrifices and hardships and to enable the Japanese people to avoid the dangers and destructions suffered by Germany after it declined to surrender unconditionally". Acting on this desire and in pursuance of its Allied duty, the Soviet Government declared that as of August 9, the Soviet Union would consider itself in a state of war with Japan. The Soviet Union thus performed the obligation it undertook at the Crimea Conference.

In declaring war on Japan, the Soviet Union was guided by the following aims:

To crush the Japanese aggressors and eliminate the seat of war and aggression in the East; to liberate the peoples of Asia from Japanese enslavement; to ensure the interests of the Soviet Union in the Far East; to prevent a long war in the Far East and thereby bring nearer world peace. These aims accorded with the best interests of the peoples and were received with enthusiasm and universal support.

On August 10 the Mongolian People's Republic, whose armed forces co-operated with the Soviet Army, declared war on Japan. The People's Liberation Army and the partisans of China also launched a general offensive against the Japanese invaders.

Military observers in the United States and Britain did not believe the Soviet Army would make any visible progress against the Japanese. Hanson Baldwin wrote in the

*New York Times* that the Soviet troops would have to cope with space and difficulties not quickly overcome. Lt.-Gen. H. G. Martin, the military observer of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, wrote on August 10, 1945, that "the campaign may well last six months or more before the Russians can gain a final decision". But all these forecasts proved wrong. The Soviet Army crushed the Kwantung Army in one powerful stroke and compelled Japan to surrender.

The offensive operations in the Far East proceeded under the general command of Marshal Vasilevsky and involved troops of the Transbaikal Front (Marshal Malinovsky), the First Far Eastern Front (Marshal Meretskov), the Second Far Eastern Front (General of the Army Purkayev), and units of the Soviet Pacific Fleet. The chief objective was to smash the main striking force of imperialist Japan, the Kwantung Army, deployed in Manchuria and Korea. The Kwantung Army consisted of eight field and one air army formed in three army groups. The biggest assignment was given to the Transbaikal Front, which delivered the main blow over the shortest distance, Chanchung-Mukden. Its troops had to cross desert steppeland and the Great Khingan Range. The Japanese Command did not expect an assault from there, for it believed the mountains to be a dependable barrier.

Troops of the First and Second Far Eastern fronts struck out at Girin and Harbin, aiming to dissect the Japanese formations and block the Kwantung Army's route of retreat to Korea. They did so jointly with the Soviet Pacific Fleet.

After Germany's surrender the Japanese Command tried to determine the probable date when the Soviet Union would be ready for operations in the Far East. It thought the spring of 1946 most likely. This is why the Soviet offensive, begun in August 1945, came as a total surprise.

The Soviet Army began its offensive in the morning of

August 9, 1945, all along the front. The Pacific Fleet cut the Kwantung Army's maritime communications. The Soviet naval airforce bombed Japanese naval bases in North Korea.

In six days troops of the First Far Eastern Front breached the Japanese defences and crushed enemy resistance along the East Manchurian frontier. By August 14 they advanced 170 kilometres into Manchuria and cut the Kwantung Army off from Korea. By that time troops of the Second Far Eastern Front breached the permanent Japanese fortifications and crossed the Little Khingan Range, advancing 120 kilometres and nearing Harbin and Tsitsihar. Troops of the Transbaikal Front, operating jointly with the Mongolian army, crossed the Great Khingan in the main strategic direction. Mobile forces emerged far in the rear of the main Kwantung Army force. They advanced 500 kilometres in six days. The Kwantung Army was chopped into isolated sections.

The day the Soviet Army began its operation against Japan, the Japanese rulers probed the possibilities of a deal with the United States and Britain against the Soviet Union. By the evening of August 9 reports from the Manchurian battlefronts reached Tokyo. It was evident that the Kwantung Army, strong though it was, was no match for the Soviet assault. On August 10, at 3 o'clock in the morning, the Japanese Government announced that it was ready to accept the terms of the Declaration of July 26 on the understanding that this would not prejudice the prerogatives of the Emperor, the sovereign ruler of Japan.

The Japanese statement, which reached the four countries on the same day, was no more than a manoeuvre. While it went through the motions of accepting the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, the Japanese Government really rejected its very core—the principle of unconditional surrender and the elimination of the reactionary militarist regime in Japan. The Japanese Government expected its statement to be welcomed by the governments of the United

States and Britain, and to be rejected by the Soviet Union. It banked on a split in the anti-fascist coalition.

The U.S. and British governments were, indeed, quite willing to accept the Japanese statement. But the firm attitude of the Soviet Union, which insisted on the realisation of the Potsdam principles in full, forestalled complications. On August 11, 1945, the governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and China pointed out in their reply that the Japanese terms were unacceptable. Japan was told it had to surrender unconditionally, accept all the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, cease resistance and surrender its arms.

Japan received the reply in the morning of August 13. It was discussed at a Cabinet meeting, which lasted all day and was resumed on August 14. Word of the disastrous situation of the Kwantung Army came to hand by that time, and the Japanese Government decided to broadcast the Emperor's general declaration of surrender over the radio. But the Kwantung Army was told to resist the Soviet Army to the last man.

On August 14, 1945, the Japanese Government informed the United States that it accepted the Potsdam Declaration. Like the nazis, the Japanese sought an understanding with the American and British ruling quarters that would enable them to step up resistance to the Soviet Union.

The U.S. Government welcomed Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. Fifty minutes after the report came to hand, President Truman called a press conference at the White House. He declared that he regarded it as Japan's unconditional surrender, and that he had accordingly ordered the Allied Forces to cease fire. Truman announced General MacArthur's appointment as Supreme Allied Commander authorised to accept Japan's capitulation.

On the following day MacArthur established two-way radio connections with the Japanese. A Japanese military



delegation was summoned to MacArthur's headquarters in Manila.

On the same day, MacArthur issued a directive ordering a cease-fire. The U.S. Command forwarded MacArthur's directive to the Soviet Command through Maj.-General Dean, head of the U.S. military mission in Moscow. MacArthur hoped the Soviet Union would stop military operations against Japan. But this clumsy diplomatic move did not yield the desired results. The Soviet Army continued its operations.

The attempt to induce the Soviet Union to stop its offensive was intended to salvage the Kwantung Army. But the U.S. Government also had other, more far-reaching aims. On August 13, Admiral Nimitz, commander of U.S. naval forces, "received a directive from President Truman to occupy the port of Dairen, near the former Japanese base at Port Arthur in southern Manchuria, before the Russians got there".<sup>1</sup> On August 16 American paratroopers were dropped north-west of Mukden. All this indicated that the U.S. Government wanted to seize Manchuria.

On August 16 the Soviet Government suggested to the U.S. Government that Japanese armed forces in the northern half of Hokkaido surrender to Soviet troops. This legitimate demand was turned down, showing once more that the U.S. Government had no respect for the lawful interests and rights of the Soviet Union.

President Truman declared at a press conference that day that Japan would not be divided into zones of occupation, as was Germany, and would be the responsibility of the U.S. authorities alone.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the U.S. Government asked the Soviet Union to let it establish air bases in the Kurile Islands. President Truman said he did not consider the Kuriles as Soviet, but rather as Japanese territory. This was an outright attempt to revise the Yalta

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Sherman, *Combat Command. The American Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific War*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, August 17, 1945.

decisions, which provided for the restoration of the Kuriles to their lawful owner, the Soviet Union.

The U.S.S.R. rejected the U.S. claim and announced that it would let U.S. commercial planes use a Soviet airfield on one of the Kurile Islands, provided Soviet commercial aircraft would reciprocally be allowed to use an American airfield on one of the Aleutian Islands.

Last but not least, on August 16 Chiang Kai-shek opened negotiations with General Okamura, Supreme Commander of Japanese forces in China, with the consent and on the initiative of the United States. The negotiations concerned Japanese participation in armed operations against the People's Liberation Army and other Chinese democratic forces.

All these U.S. moves were links of a chain. The U.S. imperialists meant to occupy the seat just vacated by the Japanese militarists and to consolidate their domination in the Pacific. Vera Micheles Dean, Research Director of the U.S. Foreign Policy Association, described the U.S. position in the Pacific as follows:

"The United States has acquired a strategic position in the Far East which, taken in conjunction with our unequalled industrial and financial resources, gives this country a potentially far greater opportunity to determine the destiny of the Asiatic mainland than Japan commanded at the peak of its military successes."<sup>1</sup>

U.S. imperialism was also in a hurry to saddle the European countries and to make the most of the difficulties they were experiencing at the close of the war. For this reason, the U.S. Government did not wait until the war ended to announce on August 21, 1945, in violation of existing bilateral agreements, that it was terminating lend-lease deliveries. This was meant to injure both the Soviet Union and Britain. The only exception made was Chiang

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<sup>1</sup> Vera Dean, *America's Future in the Pacific*, New Brunswick, 1947, p. 232.

Kai-shek, since he and the United States were hatching a new civil war in China.

The Soviet troops in Manchuria continued their mopping-up operation against the Japanese. Troops of the First Far Eastern Front co-operated with landing parties of the Soviet Pacific Fleet to liberate North Korea. Japanese naval bases in Korea were captured rapidly and the main force of the Kwantung Army was cut off. The Korean population gave the Soviet troops a rousing welcome. Korean partisans operating in the mountainous forest area of the north under Kim Il Sung helped to rout the Japanese armed forces and liberate North Korea.

On August 16 the Japanese counter-attacked fiercely.

Then, in an attempt to win time, the Kwantung Army Headquarters approached the Soviet Command in the Far East with a cease-fire proposal. The Japanese did not mention surrender. The Soviet Commander-in-Chief in the Far East, Marshal Vasilevsky, replied that the Soviet troops would cease fire as soon as Kwantung Army Headquarters issued an order to its troops to terminate resistance and the latter began to surrender their arms.

No such order was issued, and the Soviet offensive continued. On August 18, acting on the Yalta decisions, the Soviet Army effected landings in the Kuriles. On August 20 Soviet troops entered Harbin, Girin, Chanchung and Mukden, and on August 23 Port Arthur and Dalny (Dairen).

On August 19, conscious of their desperate plight, the Japanese troops in Manchuria began to surrender. The Kwantung Army Command agreed to capitulate. But some units resisted to the last man. It was not until another fortnight passed that Manchuria, North Korea, Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands were completely liberated.

In the Far Eastern operation the Soviet Army took some 600,000 prisoners of war.

The crushing defeat of the Kwantung Army and the loss of Manchuria and Korea undermined Japan's power

of resistance and forced it to surrender. In something like 30 days the Soviet Armed Forces smashed the core of Japan's fighting force, the highly-touted Kwantung Army.

The Soviet Armed Forces thus performed their internationalist duty and sealed with their blood the indestructible fraternal alliance of the Soviet and Chinese peoples.

The impact of the Soviet operation was acknowledged by top U.S. and British military leaders. Major-General Claire Chennault told the *New York Times* that "Russia's entry into the Japanese war was the decisive factor in speeding its end and would have been so even if no atomic bombs had been dropped.... The swift Soviet stroke completed the circle around Japan that brought the nation to its knees."<sup>1</sup>

On August 19 Lieutenant-General Kawabe Torasiro, Deputy Chief of the Japanese General Staff, arrived at MacArthur's headquarters. He was received by a colonel of MacArthur's entourage, who issued a series of instructions. Some of them concerned the coming occupation of Japan by U.S. troops. The others provided for the preservation of the Japanese military cadres and the use of Japanese troops to combat the national-liberation movement, especially in China. On his return from Manila, Kawabe Torasiro reported on his mission to the Japanese Emperor. The Japanese Government did everything it was told, for the instructions coincided with its own wishes.

U.S. troops landed in Japan on August 28. MacArthur ordered the trial and execution of the Japanese generals Homma, Sajima and Saito, who had defeated his forces in the Philippines in 1942, but put all the Japanese "Russian" experts under his personal protection.

On September 2, 1945, at 10.30 hours Tokyo time, the instrument of Japan's surrender was signed aboard the U.S. cruiser *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, August 15, 1945.

The war was over. The freedom-loving nations, inspired by the Soviet Union, had won a historic victory over the forces of aggression and fascism.

4

Towards the close of the war the diametrically opposed policies of the Soviet Union and the United States were most forcefully felt.

U.S. policy towards Japan was based on the ultimate intention of America's ruling class to use that country in a war against the Soviet Union. The more aggressive American groups believed that a conservative Japan was America's best ally in the coming struggle with Russia.<sup>1</sup> MacArthur was the man picked to turn Japan into a base of U.S. aggression against the Soviet Union and the Asian countries. This is why occupation policy in Japan was so designed as to prevent any radical democratisation likely to transform Japan into a peaceful and independent democratic state. "The policy is to use the existing form of government in Japan," said a White House statement.<sup>2</sup>

On September 8, 1945, American troops landed in South Korea. The landing was prompted by purely colonialist considerations, because the Japanese army in South Korea had long since laid down its arms and surrendered.

The Soviet offensive in Manchuria proceeded in close co-operation with the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The latter opened a general offensive in North China on August 11, 1945. The Eighth Route Army liberated nearly all of North China. The Japanese garrisons in Peking, Tientsin and Tsingtao were besieged. The Fourth Route Army, in the meantime, liberated a large section of Central China and reached the outskirts of Shanghai and

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary*, New York, 1948, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, September 23, 1945.

Nanking. All in all, the People's Liberation Army relieved more than 100 cities in North and Central China.

The Soviet Union had always supported the heroic struggle of the Chinese people. A Soviet-Chinese 30-year Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed on August 14, 1945. The signatories undertook to render each other military and other assistance in the war, not to enter into separate negotiations with Japan, and to act in concert after the war for the prevention of a new Japanese aggression. If one of the parties should be involved in hostilities through a Japanese attack, the other undertook to render it the necessary assistance.

But the Chiang Kai-shek government had no intention of observing its commitments. It negotiated with the Japanese Command in China behind the back of the Soviet Union. It signed an agreement under which Japanese troops were to resist the Chinese People's Liberation Army until the arrival of Kuomintang troops, and to launch operations with the object of recapturing towns liberated by the People's Liberation Army in the preceding weeks. This arrangement was a base act of betrayal, for it was an outright deal with the Japanese occupation forces against the people of China. General Wedemeyer, U.S. Commander in the China Theatre, put his weight behind the deal by ordering the Japanese to keep their arms until the arrival of American and Kuomintang troops. By decision of the U.S. Government, "American aircraft and ships started moving Kuomintang armies to strategic points, presumably to disarm the Japanese Army but actually putting them in a position to attack the Communists", and this before the war had ended.<sup>1</sup>

The United States was in a hurry to provoke a new civil war in China against the Liberated Areas. But its scheme backfired. It sowed the wind and reaped a storm that swept the Americans out of China.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Eldridge, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

Professor Fleming notes rightly that "as in Russia after 1918, it had been proved once more that foreign troops used to suppress communist revolution rouse the people against the invaders and aid the revolution. In both cases the position of the conservative groups whom we tried to save was made worse."<sup>1</sup> How right he is!

The war of liberation waged by the Soviet Union against imperialist Japan stimulated the national-liberation movement throughout South-East Asia and the islands of the Pacific. The Indonesian Republic was inaugurated on August 17, 1945, by the will of the people, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was founded on September 2, 1945. Hundreds of millions of people oppressed by the colonialists rose against them.

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In the final stage of the war, 1944-45, the heroic Soviet people, jointly with the peoples of the anti-fascist coalition, brought the war against fascist aggression to a victorious end. The war against the fascists culminated in the unconditional surrender of Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> D. F. Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 5180-181.

## THE SUMMING UP

### 1

Great hardships fell to the lot of mankind in the two world wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45. Millions of people lost their lives, incalculable cultural wealth was destroyed, immense property was demolished. The aftermath will live long in the memory of the nations.

The First and Second World wars broke out in different historical circumstances. When the First World War began capitalism ruled the world undividedly. When the second began, there were two social systems—the capitalist, and the socialist represented by the Soviet Union. Yet the origin of the two wars was much the same.

The sameness springs mostly from the fact that the First and Second World wars were engendered not solely by subjective factors. The subjective factors arose on the economic basis of modern capitalism. It was not only the arbitrary will of individuals at the helm of the capitalist countries—Hitler and Mussolini, and the British, French and American Munichites—who gave rise to these wars. Their arbitrary acts were induced by their imperialist mentality, the state of modern capitalism, and we know that imperialism generates wars. Both these wars were an upshot of the struggle among the Great Powers of the capi-



talist world for markets, spheres of investment, sources of raw materials and manpower, and world domination.

The alignment of forces in the armed clash of the powers was clear long before the First World War began. In the case of the Second World War, the chief characteristics were somewhat different. To begin with, there existed the Soviet Union, the first socialist state. The policy of peace pursued by the U.S.S.R. was a barrier to war and the aggressive ambitions of the imperialists. The imperialist governments searched for agreement and wanted to turn the spearhead of the looming war against the Soviet Union, to destroy the world's only socialist country, to crush the working class and national-liberation movements, and to consolidate the positions of capitalism. It was they that fostered German fascism, that gave it the arms for aggression and opened the road to it. German fascism was the mailed fist of world reaction. The world's imperialists associated their key projects with it.

But while the imperialists of the United States, Britain and France wanted to unite the capitalist world against the Soviet Union by a *compact* with Germany, the German imperialists sought such a union through the *subjugation* of other capitalist countries. This was how the imperialist contradictions came to the surface, dividing the capitalist countries into different groups.

It was the intention of the U.S., British and French ruling class to settle their contradictions with the Soviet Union at Germany's expense, and their contradictions with Germany at the expense of the Soviet Union. They prodded Germany on to attack the U.S.S.R., hoping to be the "third party". But the German imperialists wanted to reap the fruits of war by themselves. They were out to strengthen their economy and their war machine at the expense of Britain and France, and to crown the establishment of Germany's world hegemony by a victory over the Soviet Union. It was the conflict of these divergent plans, bound

up with the impending world conflagration, that constituted the purport of the keen political struggle which preceded the outbreak of the Second World War.

But while the United States, Britain and France, on the one hand, and Germany, Italy and Japan, on the other, were immersed in squabbles over the possible variants of a second world war, the Soviet Union and all the world's progressives headed by the Communist Parties were opposed to all of these variants, and to world war generally.

The pre-war political crisis culminated in September 1939 in Germany's attack on Poland. The attack had far-reaching aims. Poland's defeat was to deprive Britain and France of their only ally in Eastern Europe and, at once, create a staging area for an ultimate assault on the Soviet Union.

In the circumstances, the governments of Britain and France declared war on Germany, but not to save Poland, which they had long since written off. They meant to obstruct Germany's excessive expansion, to prevent an aggression against the Western Powers, and to force Hitler's hand. They hoped he would then alter his war plans and turn his guns against the Soviet Union. That was the only way Britain and France would have got a maximum of results at a minimum of outlays.

This was why the war waged by Britain and France against Germany got to be known as a "phoney war", a war without warfare, whose object it was to eliminate the threat of a German-fascist campaign in the west of Europe, by steering Germany eastward. This was the aim that lay behind the Munich policy of Britain, France and the United States and, to be sure, the "phoney war" was no more than a projection of the Munich policy.

In effect, the Western Powers were leading with their chin. Theirs was a disastrous *error of judgement*, with the result that military collapse and abject surrender became the lot of many a European country.

But the official line of the capitalist governments in Germany's rival countries encountered mounting popular resistance. The masses made the most of the opportunities presented by bourgeois democracy to turn the war against Germany into an anti-fascist war. The objective trend of events followed the same course.

Having successfully accomplished the first part of their plan for world hegemony, the German imperialists thought themselves fit to start in on the second key part of it—war against the Soviet Union. They felt sure that the Western countries, though formally at war with theirs, would not stay out of a war against the U.S.S.R. This is the reason why the German Government said in a statement made after the assault on the Soviet western border had begun, that the war aim was “to save the civilised world from the deadly peril of Bolshevism”.<sup>1</sup> The wolf put on a sheep's clothing, the enemies of civilisation paraded as its champions.

Ignorant of the objective laws governing historical development, the German leaders presumed that the Soviet Union would be isolated from the rest of the world. But that was a *mistake*.

The plans of a “crusade” against the U.S.S.R. collapsed like a house of cards. The imperialist contradictions and the struggles of the masses were objective factors which the Soviet Union recognised and employed in its foreign policy, and which gave shape to a formidable anti-fascist coalition, whose existence paved the way for the victory over Germany.

The United States and Britain, much against the subjective wishes of their ruling quarters, were partnered with the Soviet Union, to destroy which they had been arming Germany for all of 17 years (beginning with the Dawes Plan). Many American and British authors are still wondering how it happened. Some reactionaries, like the

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<sup>1</sup> *Archiv des Gegenwart*, 22, Juni, 1941, Berlin, S. 5079.

American fascists, reach the height of absurdity in alleging that the heads of the U.S. and British governments of that time were secret communist sympathisers.

It was not the Soviet Union that was isolated in the war against Germany and its allies, but, reversely, Germany and its allies that were. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, the West German war historian, admits this. "One might say without fear of exaggeration," he writes, "that the war (against the U.S.S.R.—G. D.) had been politically lost before it ever began militarily."<sup>1</sup>

There are many who make these admissions at present, people even who had long defied the facts. But in doing so, reactionary historians, as a rule, deplore it as a historical accident. Some blame this accident on the personal qualities of the capitalist leadership. Others blame Germany's rashness, and still others blame the one and the other. But all of them believe that it was purely an accident that in its war against the Soviet Union Hitler Germany ran into an unfavourable international situation. Former Hitler generals and their political aides go to great pains to spell out the accidental causes of Germany's defeat. Their favourite dodge is to shift all the blame on their former idol, Adolf Hitler.

But the international situation at the time of the Great Patriotic War fought by the Soviet Union did not develop fortuitously. Nor may it be legitimately explained away by Germany's errors, or anybody's personal qualities. It was governed by the inexorable laws of history, whose effects it was impossible for anyone to evade.

The basic historical law of the present epoch, ushered in by the Great October Socialist Revolution, lies in the transition of mankind from capitalism to socialism and communism. Germany's assault on the Soviet Union was a maniacal act of desperation by bellicose international

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<sup>1</sup> H. A. Jacobsen, 1939-1945. *Der zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik und Dokumenten*, Darmstadt, 1960, S. 502.

reaction. It was an attack on socialism, social progress, and, hence, on world civilisation.

The heroic war effort of the Soviet people, who crushed the mailed fist of world fascist reaction, liberated the peoples from the plague of fascism and saved world civilisation and man's finest accomplishments, constituted an internationalist duty to the world proletariat and the peoples of the world. The interests of the Soviet Union in the war against Germany merged with the interests of all nations, the interests of the German people included.

These Soviet war aims were a big factor in the establishment of the anti-fascist coalition. They were the groundwork on which it sprang up and developed. It was the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union that made the Second World War just, anti-fascist and liberative.

It was the liberative nature of the war that rallied all the progressive forces to the struggle against the German aggressors, stimulated the spirit of the troops fighting fascism, and added to their capabilities, encouraging the initiative of the fighting men in the regular armies and the partisan units. The liberative nature of the war furthered the powerful Resistance Movement in the nazi-occupied countries of Europe, and sapped the morale of the German army and rear.

It was the Soviet Union that asserted and upheld the just liberative aims of the war against Germany and its allies. This was why the anti-fascist coalition of peoples and governments was ranged behind the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was its leading member. This could not be otherwise. The Soviet efforts to promote this coalition, to make it effective, were efforts to promote the victory of democracy and socialism over fascism and reaction, to promote the freedom and independence of all peoples, to speed the defeat of the fascist countries, to shorten the war and to alleviate its hardships.

No country could safeguard its national independence against the fascist invaders, unless it joined the anti-fascist coalition either formally or factually.

It was not at all likely that the socialist state would be abandoned to face the armed fascist invasion alone. And it was not alone. The struggle of the peoples for their national independence and freedom during the war was, indeed, national and international in character, because it merged with the efforts of the Soviet Union and of all the other freedom-loving nations. The support which the people gave the Soviet Union, above all the support of the working class in the capitalist countries, was internationalism in action with respect to the socialist state, citadel of the revolutionary forces of all countries, vanguard and stronghold of the international revolutionary and national-liberation movement.

The just character of the war against fascism exerted an immense influence on Britain and the United States. Their peoples, whose national independence was imperilled by German fascism, were inspired by the liberative war aims so vigorously and consistently promoted by the Soviet Union. The anti-fascist struggle of the American and British peoples was a struggle for freedom and democracy within and without their countries. The policy-makers had no choice but to accept the situation. It would have been foolhardy and dangerous for them to oppose the will of the peoples. Furthermore, they themselves wished the defeat of fascist Germany and militarist Japan.

They harboured the intention, however, of consolidating their class domination, which they veiled with professions of loyalty to the liberative aims of the anti-fascist war. Yet their political profiteering on the liberative nature of the war was an obvious sign of the general crisis of capitalism. No longer could the champions of capitalism, that moribund social system, come out into the open with their true aspirations. They were forced to disguise their aims and operate in the guise of liberators.

Though allied with the Soviet Union, the rulers of the United States and Britain pursued their own, imperialist war aims. There was a secret side to all their wartime dealings, for they were still looking for a new compact with the fascist aggressors. Especially so in the closing stage of the war. While eager to sap the power of Germany, Japan and Italy, their imperialist rivals, they wanted these countries to retain reactionary regimes. They wanted to strengthen and extend the system of imperialist oppression, and, last but not least, to weaken the Soviet Union.

The U.S. and British governments realised very well that the existence of their own countries depended on whether or not the Soviet Union would withstand the fascist onslaught. For all this, they were still thirsting to see their Soviet Ally weakened.

British, American and Canadian supplies could have been a great help to the Soviet Union. The people in those countries knew it. The monopolies made the most of these general sentiments to enlarge production, increase their capital and multiply their profits. The deep-going contradiction between the liberative nature of the war, which was an objective feature, and the imperialist war aims of the capitalist governments gave bias not only to the foreign policy but also the domestic policy of the United States and Britain.

Western economic assistance to the Soviet Union was negligible. In 1941, for example, the two Western Allies sent the Soviet Union 750 aircraft (of which only five were bombers), 501 tanks and light anti-aircraft guns, while the Protocol provided for a total of 1,200 aircraft (including 300 bombers), 1,500 tanks and 50 anti-aircraft guns in just the three months of October-December.<sup>1</sup>

Ivan Spector, an American historian, admits that at

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<sup>1</sup> *История Великой Отечественной войны*. Москва, т. II, стр. 365-366.

least until the late spring of 1943 "the Red Army had to rely almost entirely upon Soviet resources".<sup>1</sup> The wartime deliveries to the Soviet Union added up to some 4 per cent of Soviet war production.<sup>2</sup> Important scientific and technical information was kept from the Soviet Union, while it was "made available to the U.S. corporations that before the war maintained the closest cartel ties with the German trusts".<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. and British governments helped the Soviet Union very unwillingly and skimpily. In the meantime, they were always ready to jeopardise its interests, to weaken and bleed it, and to give Germany a chance of massing its forces on the Eastern Front. This, too, lay at the bottom of the systematic sabotage by the U.S. and British governments of their Allied commitments, most conclusively evidenced by the deliberate delay of the second front in Europe.

"It was at that juncture—when the entire course of the Second World War had changed fundamentally," said N. S. Khrushchov, "when events had taken such a turn for the Western Powers that if they were late in opening the second front, the Soviet Army might reach not only Berlin, but Paris as well—that our Allies took speedy action. That was when the second front was opened. It looked as if our Allies were in a hurry to open it in order to prevent the peoples of Western Europe from crushing the occupation forces themselves, with the aid of the Soviet Army."<sup>4</sup>

The history of the Second World War is not only a story of heroism, bravery and dedication, not only a story of the

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<sup>1</sup> I. Spector, *An Introduction to Russian History and Culture*, Toronto, New York, London, 1950, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Вознесенский, *Военная экономика СССР в период Отечественной войны*, Москва, 1948, стр. 74.

<sup>3</sup> James S. Allen, *World Monopoly and Peace*, New York, 1946, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> N. S. Khrushchov, *World Without Arms, World Without Wars*, Moscow, 1961, Vol. I, p. 180.



deep sense of civic and military duty shown by millions of people, not only a story of honest and conscientious observance of national and international commitments. It is also a story of meanness, dishonour, betrayal and deliberate deceit.

It is not surprising at all that the guilty parties have done their utmost to cover up their tracks. Bulky and numerous are the post-war "memoirs", historical "investigations" and other publications aimed at obscuring the truth.

What is this truth? What, in this respect, are *the results of the war*? The war has shown most strikingly that countries of the two opposite social systems can and should co-operate. The war has shown that it is impossible to isolate the Soviet Union from the peoples. The war has shown, too, that all attempts to go against the objective laws governing historical development are bound to fail.

This is why, together with German imperialism, a crushing defeat was suffered in the war also by the reactionary forces who had inspired it and helped the nazis in their aggressions. The United States and Britain were in a peculiar position when the war ended. They were victors, inasmuch as they had fought against Hitler. But they were also losers, in so far as the imperialist war aims of their ruling quarters were concerned, because the war resulted in defeat for the imperialist order that had caused the war.

Many bourgeois authors acknowledge this defeat. Carlton J. H. Hayes, an American historian, writes:

"The Second World War, from 1939 to 1945, was the decisive factor in the waning of Western imperialism. This war was more truly a *world war* than the First, and its effects were correspondingly more far-reaching."<sup>1</sup>

The war was indeed *more truly a world war* than the First, and not just because more countries and far greater armed forces were involved in it. It was more truly a world war because of the scale and depth of the social

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<sup>1</sup> Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Contemporary Europe Since 1870*, New York, 1958, p. 748.

processes it induced, which, in turn, exercised a far more decisive influence on its course and outcome. It was more truly a world war because the peoples played a far greater role in it than in the First World War.

## 2

The scale of the fighting in the Second World War was much greater than in the First. Most countries of the world were drawn into it, and armed operations affected three continents—Europe, Africa and Asia, including the basin of the Pacific Ocean.

There were scarcely any neutral countries left by the end of the war. Only Afghanistan, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden and Eire were formally neutral. But some of these, such as Spain and Portugal, helped fascist Germany throughout the war to so great an extent that they could well be considered co-belligerents.

The comparative scales of the First and Second World wars are illustrated by the table below, which is based on official figures. This means that the list of belligerents accounts for countries which declared war, and that the strength of the armies accounts for only regular troops, and does not include the Resistance fighters.

	First World War	Second World War
Belligerents . . . . .	33	72
Inducted into the army (mil- lions) . . . . .	74	110
Killed (millions) . . . . .	10	about 50 <sup>1</sup>
Crippled (millions) . . . . .	20	28
Direct military expenditures (000 mil- lion dollars) . . . . .	208	935

<sup>1</sup> These include the 12,000,000 people killed in German-fascist death camps.

There were many reasons for the greater scale of the fighting. The German imperialist itch for world domination and colonial conquest roused the resistance of hundreds of millions of people. International economic and political relations, with their attendant contradictions, had expanded considerably. But the most important factor was that hostilities spread to far greater areas, involving greater numbers of countries, both their front and rear, as the weapons of war became more deadly. The development of new means of annihilation added to the loss of life and property, and made the war all-embracing.

Hundreds of millions of people participated in the Second World War. One hundred and ten millions were inducted into the armed forces and 10 to 12 millions joined the Resistance and partisan movements in Europe and Asia. Furthermore, there were four or five men and women working in the rear for every soldier to produce the materiel of war, this adding at least 500 millions to the number of people involved in the conflagration.<sup>1</sup> This makes a total of about 600-620 million people, who were either enlisted in the fighting forces or working in the rear.

The people, by no means passive executors of the will of their governments, participated to a far greater extent in the Second World War than in any war before it. The people were articulate and active throughout, and that was something that compelled attention. It was the mighty will of the peoples that blocked the projected deal of the U.S. and British governments with the fascist aggressors. They compelled them to prosecute the anti-fascist war to the finish. The anti-Soviet and anti-popular plans of the reactionaries foundered. The mighty will of the peoples stimulated the Resistance Movement and promoted conditions for the national and social liberation of many European and Asian countries. The course of events was

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<sup>1</sup> The calculations are by the author.

governed by objective laws much stronger than the wishes and designs of the imperialist policymakers.

Millions of people in the battlelines and in the rear sided with the national movements for liberation, democracy and socialism against the main assault force of world reaction. The peoples of the United States, Britain, China, the enemy-occupied countries, and the true patriots of Germany, Italy and Japan who fought underground against the fascist regime, were all allies of the Soviet Union.

No appreciation of the Second World War, its course and outcome, its results and lessons, will be correct if it overlooks the role played in it by the people. This is why the story of the greatest war in history is not a story of military operations alone.

The history of the anti-fascist war is above all the history of nations fighting for liberation, which they won. It is the history of nations who displayed the greatest of determination, firmness of spirit, courage and heroism in the battle against the imperialist pretenders to world domination. The lessons of this war show that the masses play an immense and continuously growing role in the making of history, that rising political activity and awareness is an irreversible law of our time. It is due to the peoples that the defeat of imperialism, the defeat of decayed political regimes affected not only military affairs, but also the *domestic* pattern in many European and Asian countries.

A big place in the history of the war belongs to the Resistance Movement and the Soviet partisan movement. These were distinctly popular movements, anti-fascist in purpose and internationalist in spirit. Their emergence and powerful development was totally unexpected by the fascist invaders. In countries where the fascists tried to set up their "new order", formidable popular forces rose up to break down its very foundations. The champions of freedom, democracy and national independence mounted

a powerful assault on fascism, that most repulsive offspring of imperialism.

Although the Resistance Movement and the partisan struggle of Soviet patriots had many features in common—mainly the common purpose of combating the fascists—there was also a difference between them because of differences of the socio-political structures. The Resistance Movement was the only form of struggle against foreign invaders in the territories of the countries concerned,<sup>1</sup> while the Soviet partisan movement combined its operations with those of the Soviet Armed Forces, which were the chief striking force against the enemy. The bourgeois governments, most of which were in exile, as a rule opposed the development of the Resistance Movement (wait-and-see policy). The Soviet partisan movement was closely connected with the general war effort guided by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government. The Resistance Movement, aimed against the reactionary forces which supported the occupation regime, undermined the positions of the latter, who hoped to seize power after war's end. The Soviet partisan movement, on the other hand, helped the further consolidation of Soviet power and served to extend its bonds with the masses.

The Soviet partisan movement was organically a movement of the whole Soviet people. They had given it birth, and helped it to the utmost of their resources.

The Resistance and the Soviet partisan movement also had great impact internationally. They were a powerful expression of the people's determination to crush the fascist "new order".

The international nature of the Resistance Movement and the Soviet partisan movement was best expressed in their spirit of international co-operation and comradeship. Nearly all the nationalities of the Soviet Union were rep-

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<sup>1</sup> This does not apply to the closing stage of the war.

resented in the Soviet partisan detachments, and, besides, many of their number came from other lands—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, etc. This comradely union was sealed forever by the blood they shed together. The Soviet partisans, too, carried on as the war rolled back to the neighbouring countries of Europe. They fought shoulder to shoulder with the partisans of Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, helping to liberate them from the invaders. Many Soviet patriots, escaped p.o.w.'s and others, fought with the partisan units in Western Europe. Their courage will always be remembered by their brothers-in-arms and the peoples of France, Italy, Belgium, Norway, Greece and other countries. Soviet men and women in the Armed Forces and in the partisan movement knew they were fighting not only to deliver the Soviet Union of the deadly fascist peril, but also to liberate all peoples menaced by nazi enslavement.

The bravery shown by Soviet fighting men carried freedom to all mankind. To some it meant liberation from nazi occupation, to others deliverance from enemy invasion, and to all the peoples of the world it meant a more favourable environment for national and social liberation.

The heroic effort of the Soviet soldiers and partisans was an inspiring example to all the allied armies, and for all members of the Resistance Movement. Fighting units in France, Italy and other countries took the names of Soviet patriots.

Today, some historians of the Resistance Movement are again giving pride of place to bourgeois parsimony. They wonder whether or not the partisan and Resistance movements had been in vain, since they were no more than auxiliary, while the outcome of the war depended on multi-million armies. A thousand times "no", say we to these attempts to belittle these natural and patriotic movements. The Resistance and partisan movements did much to arouse the national sentiments and international aware-

ness of millions of people, stimulating their initiative and energy, to say nothing of their big contribution to the victory over fascism.

It is only too true that the decisive acts of the war were played off on the front and, most of all, on the Soviet-German front, which was the main war theatre.

Two forces clashed on the Soviet-German front—the forces of fascism with their savage racial theory and man-eating philosophy, and the forces of socialism with their principles of liberation from slavery and oppression. Hitlerism had poisoned the minds of the men and officers of the German army. The Soviet soldiers, on the other hand, were deeply conscious of their liberative mission, of their humanist and internationalist ideals. The outcome of the conflict was of utmost significance to the future. It was not a fortuitous outcome. “In the Great Patriotic War,” Khrushchov said, “the unconquerable might of socialism stood revealed in all its greatness.”<sup>1</sup> The Soviet victory over Germany demonstrated quite conclusively the great advantages of socialism over the capitalist system, and the historic invincibility of socialism.

Raised by the Communist Party on the lofty ideals of communism and loyalty to their Soviet land, the men and officers of the Soviet Army and Navy amazed the world with deathless deeds of valour, bravery and tenacity.

According to information issued on June 1, 1946, more than 7,000,000 soldiers, sailors, officers, generals and admirals were decorated with Orders and Medals of the Soviet Union. As many as 10,942 fighting men were conferred the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The Soviet soldiers lived up to the confidence of their people and the peoples of the world, and fulfilled their historic mission of liberation honourably.

The people in the Soviet rear performed an unforgettable feat of devotion and courage. With the enemy in con-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, June 22, 1961.

trol of a large section of the U.S.S.R., where many of the industries had been concentrated before the war, they succeeded by their dedicated labour in equipping the army with all modern weapons of war and in outstripping Germany's war industries. The Soviet socialist economy won an important victory over the German economy, thus laying the foundation for the subsequent successes of Soviet arms. That, too, demonstrated most impressively the superiority of socialism.

The war showed the strength and endurance of the alliance between the Soviet working class and peasants. This alliance withstood all the hardships of war. The working class, the peasants and the intelligentsia did not flinch in face of the difficulties, stood up to all the ordeals and privations of war, and fought heroically in the battlefield and in the workshop.

Boundless love of country, patriotism, ideological and political unity, the friendship of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and a consuming hatred of the foreign invaders—all these induced so mighty an upsurge of strength that the Soviet Union was able not only to withstand the fascist assault, but also to crush the vast heavily armed nazi forces. The Soviet people showed unexampled stamina and unity throughout the war. The Soviet social and political system triumphed, standing the grim test of war and displaying unusual vitality.

The great upsurge of the spirit and energy of Soviet people, their mass heroism on the front and in the rear, were stimulated by the tireless activities of the Communist Party. Communist leadership was the main condition for victory.

When the war started the Soviet Union lost no time in spelling out its war aims, unlike many other countries. Subsequently, it was the Soviet Union that first advanced a programme for the post-war peace, attaching prime importance to the democratic purport of its goals.



In its efforts to ensure a democratic pattern for the post-war world, the Soviet Union trusted that the Allies were bent on liberating the peoples of Europe from the fascist invaders and on helping them rehabilitate their national states, dismembered and ravaged by the enemy; giving the liberated peoples every right and freedom to choose their political system; seeing to it that all the fascist criminals were strictly punished; establishing a world system in which any new aggression by Germany or Japan would be totally ruled out; and building up long-term economic, political and cultural co-operation among nations based on mutual trust and assistance. The struggle for this programme, formulated in a series of Soviet documents and in the speeches of Soviet statesmen, was waged by the Soviet people and their government with an unfaltering sense of purpose and devotion.

### 3

The Soviet Union suffered immense losses during the war. Many millions of Soviet men and women lost their lives in battle, in the occupied territories, and doing forced labour in Germany. "Hitler Germany's treacherous attack," Khrushchov said, "inflicted on the national economy of the U.S.S.R. a damage which, combined with the military expenditure and the temporary loss of the income provided by the industry and agriculture of the occupied areas, amounted to 2,569,000 million rubles. Had this colossal sum been spent on peaceful development—that is, the construction of factories, railways, electric stations and housing and on increased output of consumer goods—then we would long ago have achieved an abundance of material goods."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N. S. Khrushchov, *Forty Years of the Great October Socialist Revolution*, 1957, pp. 22-23.

Any capitalist country, even the biggest, would not have survived such immense losses. It would have lost its independence and fallen into the thrall of either its capitalist adversaries or its capitalist allies. But this was not true, and never could have been true of the Soviet Union. Soon after the war ended, the Soviet people advanced and developed the socialist system and paved the way for successful progress to communism.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Soviet people mustered their truly colossal strength to meet the challenges of post-war rehabilitation and further economic development. They accomplished their set task by their own labour, unassisted and in an amazingly short time. The pre-war level of industrial production was attained in a mere two years. War-ravaged cities were raised from the ashes, and Soviet socialist culture advanced still higher.

The Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. effected a great historic change in the life of the Communist Party and the Soviet people, and in that of the international communist movement. It condemned the cult of the individual, which had done great damage to the Soviet Union, restored the Leninist standards of Party life and the Leninist principles of Party and government leadership. It gave immense room for the activities and initiatives of the people. It plotted a bold solution of pressing internal and external problems, swept out outworn dogmas, and promoted a further creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory in the new historical environment that sprang from the war and early post-war development.

By 1959 the Soviet people had, under Party leadership, effected breath-taking changes in all spheres of economic, social and political life, reaching out for new horizons. The Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U., held early in 1959, noted that the Soviet Union had entered upon a new, highly important period of development—the period of the full-scale building of communist society.

The main task in this period is the building of the material and technical basis of communism. The most developed capitalist countries shall be outstripped in production per head of population, ushering in a new historical stage in the economic competition of the Soviet Union and the United States. The distance separating these two countries in production per head of population is shrinking fast, and the number of fields in which the Soviet Union ranks first in the world is increasing.

The Twenty-Second Congress of the C.P.S.U., held in October 1961, was a congress of builders of communism. It adopted a new Party Programme, the Communist Manifesto of modern times, a philosophical, economic and political substantiation of communist construction in the Soviet Union. It is the first to provide a comprehensive picture of the communist society that is already being erected in the Soviet Union, and indicates the ways and means of building communism. The theoretical propositions of the Programme are justified and backed by concrete targets, based on the experience of socialist construction and the heroic labour of the people.

In the short space of time since the Second World War, the Soviet Union has attained amazing results. These are built on the patriotism of Soviet people and their boundless loyalty to the cause of the Communist Party, the cause of socialism and communism. The economic development of the Soviet Union and the further consolidation of its internal unity and integrity was complemented by the successes of Soviet scientists, designers and workers in science and technology, to tilt the balance of world forces in favour of socialism. Soon after the war the Soviet Union moved ahead in modern science and technology, and eventually achieved outstanding successes, emerging in the lead in some of the fields.

The Soviet Union holds priority in the field of nuclear physics, some important sectors of electronics, and in

rocketry. This has enabled it to pioneer outer space. The trail in space was blazed by Soviet men, by Communists.

Socialism's emergence outside the frontiers of one country has been the biggest historical development since October 1917, the main factor that altered the balance of strength on the world scene.

Revolutions in Europe and Asia had been burgeoning for a long time. The Second World War accelerated the march of history. The national betrayal of the landlords and the big bourgeoisie, who were only too glad to serve the occupation forces—the Germans in Europe and the Japanese in Asia—came into conflict with the people. Many reactionary and defeatist parties broke up. The Resistance Movement fought the foreign invaders, and also combated the traitors and collaborationists. While the "historical" parties, as the old parties of the bourgeoisie and landlords were called, went off the scene, and former authorities were discredited, the Communists stood the test of fire and steel. It was they who headed the struggle of the nations for liberation.

The national-liberation struggle against invaders and collaborationists, which in many countries assumed the form of armed conflict, developed as time went on into a revolutionary struggle. On the one hand, there were the landlords and the big capitalists, who fawned upon the occupation authorities, and, on the other, there were the masses of people united in close-knit popular fronts. In the concluding year of the Second World War, and especially after it ended, there were truly popular revolutions in some European and Asian countries, which rapidly developed into socialist revolutions.

That was how the path of socialism was taken by the peoples of Albania, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and, still earlier, the Mongolian People's Republic.

As the socialist revolutions proceeded, an objective process brought the socialist countries together. "*There emerged a world socialist system,*" says the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "a social, economic and political community of free sovereign peoples pursuing the socialist and communist path, united by an identity of interests and goals and the close bonds of international socialist solidarity."<sup>1</sup>

The development of socialism into a world system and its rapid progress is the main distinctive feature of modern time. A new international situation has arisen, differing from the past in that the world capitalist system is opposed not by one socialist country, but by a powerful and continuously growing community of socialist countries. Today, it is the struggle of the two opposed world systems that constitutes the main pivot of world politics and economy.

The advantages in the struggle of the two world systems are tilting towards socialism, because socialism is the only system that paves the way to human progress and to the solution of the social problems that have since time immemorial troubled the minds of men. The day is not far distant when the world socialist system will account for more than half the world's industrial output and thus gain absolute priority in world industry.

The balance of strength depends largely on the rates of economic development, the state of science and culture, the training of economic personnel, the sweep of economic planning and the proper utilisation of available resources, the mode of distribution, the political and moral factors and, lastly, the state of the country's defences. The cumulative effect of all these factors, and their interconnection, shows beyond a shadow of doubt that the world socialist system surpasses the imperialist camp in strength. A new balance of strength has thus

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism, Documents of the 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U., Moscow, p. 464.*

emerged in the world with socialism holding a distinct lead.

The radical change in the relation of world forces is so utterly obvious that it is acknowledged by prominent Western leaders. The first of the U.S. statesmen to say so was the late John Foster Dulles. "There has been a very definite shift in the balance of power in the world," Dulles said, "and that shift has been in favour of Soviet Communism."<sup>1</sup>

The late U.S. President John F. Kennedy said during the 1960 presidential election that "Communist power has been and is growing faster than our own, at a greater rate of growth."<sup>2</sup>

The role of socialism and imperialism in the world has changed substantially. The day when imperialism ruled the world and settled all-important international matters as it saw fit, when it arbitrarily decided matters of war and peace, is long since over.

Imperialists have always been beasts of prey. They still are. Their concupiscence and hatred of social progress may still spur them to bloodshed, as in the two world wars. They are a strong and cunning enemy of socialism, and the working class and national-liberation movement. They are capable of the most vicious of crimes against humanity. Take the Caribbean crisis induced by the U.S. imperialists in October 1962. A grim danger hung over the world. It was the firm and flexible policy of the Soviet Union that averted a thermonuclear war. The crisis was dissipated by the resolute action of the Soviet Union and the people of Cuba, the support of the whole socialist community and all friends of peace. The resolution of the Caribbean crisis showed that imperialism no longer has the former resources to act as it pleases with impunity. In the present world environment there are real-

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<sup>1</sup> John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, New York, 1957, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, August 27, 1960.

istic opportunities, born of the supremacy of socialism over imperialism, to avert new wars, and, in the close future opportunities will surely arise to exclude world war from the life of society.

The Twenty-Second Congress of the Soviet Communist Party noted that the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor of world development. It is no longer imperialism with its wolfish ways, but socialism with its ideals of peace and progress that is the force which shapes the future of mankind. There are realistic opportunities to make the imperialists heed the new relation of strength, to head socialism's role in the modern world, to compel them to abandon their policy of strength and follow a policy of reason, to abandon their policy of diktat and aggression and to embark on peaceful co-existence. The Twenty-Second Congress noted rightly that long-range prospects have arisen in the contemporary environment for the peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems until the social and economic problems racking mankind will at last be solved.

During the Second World War the people in the colonies and dependent countries saw by their own political experience that imperialism is intent not only on consolidating and extending its system of colonial oppression, but also on making the most of it for profit. They saw that the imperialist oppressors are not as strong by far as they profess to be. The war revealed the senility and impotence of Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, those major colonial powers. It brought about the crushing defeat of the German claimants to colonial hegemony, led to the down fall of the Italian and Japanese colonialists, and bared the predatory nature of U.S. imperialism.

The colonialist policies of the imperialist powers during and after the war had to contend with the liberative policies of the Soviet Union. The Soviet victory over the fascist invaders was rightly appraised by the peoples as a victory for the idea and policy of liberation. The liberative

war aims of the Soviet Union were received by the peoples in the oppressed countries as an earnest of their national and social liberation, as a support of their national aspirations and hopes. It was in the name of these liberative aims that the masses entered upon the struggle against fascist aggression.

The courageous struggle of the Chinese patriots against the Japanese aggression during the war, and against Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. interventionists after the war, was also a model for the peoples in the colonies and dependent countries.

The Resistance Movement, the popular armed struggle against the Japanese invaders, did much to pave the way for the national liberation of the Asian peoples. The peoples of Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, and the Philippines learned the use of firearms, and various methods of armed struggle. They were hardened in their armed campaigns, and mastered the art of harassing and defeating their oppressors.

It was thus that a new, more favourable situation arose for the national liberation of the Afro-Asian peoples. The peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies could not and would not live on as they had before. They were prepared for supreme sacrifices to win a radical improvement in their living conditions. The colonialists, too, had lost their teeth and could no longer rule by their old methods. After the movement for national independence spread to embrace hundreds of millions of people, the usual methods of coercion could no longer cope with it, and all the more so, since the peoples had seized arms and were ready to meet force with force.

Imperialism resisted desperately, trying to retain control of its colonial system by fire and sword. Yet it was too weak to prevent the historic turn in Asian and African destiny, the destiny of the colonial world. Capitalism's colonial system broke up. This break-up was one of the characteristic progressive developments of our time. It



was a chain reaction of far-flung battles between the ascendant countries fighting for political and economic independence and the imperialist powers, who fought with bitter desperation against the rising tide. Bent on maintaining its dominance, imperialism now resorts to new forms of colonial policy.

The struggle for freedom spread like wildfire throughout the colonial world. The age-old rule of the colonialists, long engulfed in a painful crisis, was swept out of over fifty countries with a population of over 1,500 million after the war ended. This would have been impossible had socialism not become a mighty world force.

The break-up of capitalism's colonial system wrought far-reaching changes in the realm of international relations. Many nations embarked upon the path of national revival, where for centuries they had been kept by the colonialists away from the highway of progress. The peoples of what was only recently the colonial part of the world are now a new and powerful factor of world politics. International relations are no longer relations between the states of Europe and America. They are now truly world-wide. The peoples of the former colonies and semi-colonies are now creators of a new life, a revolutionary force sapping imperialism and championing peaceful relations between countries.

Most of the young sovereign states risen from the ruins of former colonies and semi-colonies follow a national policy of their own, based on non-alignment with military blocs. Though neutral in that sense, they are far from neutral in their attitude towards the problem of war and peace. They are firmly opposed to imperialist aggression and war, and work assiduously to safeguard world peace. In that respect, their policy dovetails with the policy of the socialist countries.

The First World War and the October Revolution rang in the general crisis of capitalism. During the Second World War and after the victory of socialist revolutions

in some of the European and Asian countries, this general crisis of capitalism entered its second stage, and then a new, third stage in the fifties.

The crisis of world capitalism is a far-flung, all-embracing process involving all aspects of life in bourgeois society—its economics, its internal and external policies, and its ideological superstructure. The second and third stages of capitalism's general crisis witnessed a considerable sharpening. Its chief factors were the existence and prosperity of the world socialist system, the break-up of the colonial system, loss of control by capitalism over most of the world, its inability to provide for the peoples an outlook of peaceful creative labour, the development of militarism in the imperialist countries and its dogged attempts to precipitate a new world war, and the disastrous ideological bankruptcy of the ruling classes in the imperialist countries. Among all these factors pride of place goes to the successes of socialism, which demonstrate most impressively capitalism's inability to further a rapid development of the productive forces and radically improve the condition of the people.

It is important to note that the third stage of capitalism's general crisis did not arise in connection with a world war, but in an environment short of such a war, an environment of economic, political and ideological struggle between the two world systems. In this struggle capitalism suffered painful setbacks.

The economic struggle, that central theatre in which the class struggle, the struggle between socialism and capitalism, proceeds on a world-wide scale, is decisive. On the political scene the Soviet Union and all the forces of peace have every time thwarted imperialism's attempts to precipitate a world war. Socialism is also scoring important victories in the ideological field, and exercising a telling influence upon the minds of men.

The rockbottom contradictions of capitalism are much more acute. Never before has the conflict been as bitter

between the productive forces and the relations of production in capitalist society. The capitalist economy is unstable. The problem of markets has grown to immense proportions. And to top this, the ideology of imperialism is in the midst of a grave and hopeless crisis. In this latest stage of capitalism's general crisis the colonial system has entered the phase of complete and final collapse.

The development of the capitalist countries is much more uneven than ever before, which is another striking feature of the general crisis. Most of the capitalist countries are increasing production at a faster rate than the United States. As a result, the U.S. share in the industrial production of the capitalist world is shrinking continuously. Of America's rivals, Japan, Italy and West Germany, that is, the countries that headed the fascist bloc in the war, are developing at the highest rate.

State-monopoly capitalism, marked by direct intervention of the capitalist state in the economy on behalf of Big Business, is gaining ground. The modern bourgeois state effects measures to adjust economy and goes to the length of controlling some of its branches. The Right-wing Socialists are elated by these measures and describe them as socialist in nature. But, in fact, they do no more than increase monopoly control over society, add to the monopoly profits and work not for the welfare of the people but for the enrichment of the monopolists. A handful of millionaires and multi-millionaires does whatever it pleases with the wealth of the capitalist world. \

State-monopoly capitalism combines the strength of the monopolies with the strength of the state, forming a single mechanism for the enrichment of the monopolies, the suppression of the working-class movement and the national-liberation struggle, the salvation of the capitalist system and the preparation of aggressive war. The capitalist state has developed into something of a committee for the management of affairs in behalf of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In the main capitalist countries Communists

and progressives are persecuted and bourgeois-democratic freedoms are gradually suspended, while fascist organisations are gaining prominence.

4

The crisis of world capitalism adds to the warlike mood of the ruling element in the imperialist countries. They want a new world war to re-establish capitalist rule throughout the world and to destroy socialism. They have not grasped, nor wish to grasp the lessons of the Second World War and of its aftermath.

The United States and Britain believed that the Second World War would culminate not only in a victory over fascism, but also in a victory of Anglo-American imperialism over all peoples, over the idea of national independence and the universal urge for freedom and democracy. They wanted to have their pudding, and eat it.

In their efforts to re-establish imperialist predominance, U.S. statesmen started in to undermine international cooperation with the U.S.S.R. some months before the war ended. It was the new U.S. President Harry S. Truman, who took this course the hour he moved into the White House.

In a series of messages to Congress, President Truman outlined a plan for seizing world leadership and placing the world under the diktat of U.S. monopoly capital. On December 19, 1945, the President's message on the reorganisation of the armed forces envisaged an unusually large peace-time force to promote the policy of U.S. finance capital. Truman specified "world leadership" as the prime aim of American foreign policy, couching this preposterous programme of over-ambitious and power-crazed imperialism in demagogic figures of speech about the "American people", "its responsibility", "its mission and burden".

"The victory which we have won," Truman said, "has placed upon the American people the continuing burden of responsibility for world leadership. The future peace of the world will depend in large part upon whether or not the United States shows that it is really determined to continue in its role as a leader among nations."<sup>1</sup>

But these arrogant statements, inflated a hundred-fold by the reactionary press, met with a frigid reaction in a world that had not the slightest desire to submit to the diktat of U.S. monopoly capital. The march of history did not follow the path towards U.S. world rule, but rather stimulated the further deterioration and weakening of the imperialist positions. The objective laws governing historical development were much stronger than the wishes of the U.S. monopolists. Though their plans tumbled about their ears, the latter clung to their cherished dream. They chose to intensify the aggressive trend in U.S. policy.

The U.S. Government and its closest allies framed the policy of cold war the moment the war was over. The United States embarked on an arms race of unprecedented proportions. It began thumbscrewing nations into aggressive military blocs and building war bases in different parts of the world. It refuses stubbornly to this day to eliminate the remnants of the Second World War, which serve U.S. aggressive policy best. Eighteen years since the war in Europe ended, no peace treaty has been signed with Germany and the situation in West Berlin, which could be normalised on the basis of such a treaty, remains what it was.

The defeat of fascism and the destruction of the Hitler dictatorship opened the way to Germany's democratic development. The people were determined to wipe out the legacy of fascism, to destroy its roots and to ensure peaceful and democratic progress for their country.

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<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record*, December 19, 1945, Vol. 91, Part 9, pp. 12398-12399.

But it was only in the eastern part of Germany that opportunities were presented for the construction of a new society. After the war ended the process began there of abolishing fascism and militarism, and of tearing out their economic and social roots.

The German Democratic Republic represents the democratic and peace-abiding forces of the German nation. The G.D.R. Government applies all its efforts to fortify the peace, to solve the national problems of the German people and to ease international tension. The existence of the G.D.R. is an important factor of world peace and international security.

Not so West Germany. The democratic aspirations of the masses there ran head on into bitter resistance by the occupation authorities of the United States, Britain and France. Not only did the latter take defeated German imperialism under their protection. They promoted the revival of extreme political reaction, militarism and chauvinism, stoked by the fuel of revanchism. This policy of the Western Powers brought about Germany's bisection.

The initiative of Germany's split lies with the governments of the United States, Britain and France. It was they who paved the way in their zones for the emergence of a separate German state. The German Democratic Republic was not founded until the Federal Republic of Germany had become a fact. This was how two independent German states appeared and began to develop in diametrically opposite directions.

The Federal Republic of Germany, which sprang up as a militarist and revanchist state, has, in pursuance of its aggressive aims, joined the other members of the North Atlantic Alliance. What is more, its armed forces are gradually becoming the main force of the aggressive NATO armies and impose their will upon the bloc as regards its policies. The F.R.G. goes out of its way to obstruct each and every settlement of urgent international issues.

There is a striking resemblance between the policy of West German remilitarisation and the pre-war Munich policy. It is built upon the same premises, inferring that a remilitarised West Germany that is part of the North Atlantic bloc will at the desired hour serve as an obedient tool in the hands of the United States and Britain.

The United States militarists intend to use strategic air forces and rockets as a means of delivering nuclear weapons to target for their aggressive ends. The Pentagon is devising barbaric plans of sudden attacks on big cities with populations of many millions. Early in 1962 President Kennedy declared that in certain circumstances the United States may assume the initiative in a nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union. This was a public admission that the U.S. ruling quarters are planning a sudden nuclear assault on the peace-loving countries. But in modern times, with the Soviet Union holding superior nuclear weapons and rockets, these plans are extremely dangerous. None but maniacs can hope that only one side will use modern weapons. It would be a good thing for them to recall how Hitler and Goebbels swore that not a single bomb would ever drop on Germany. Yet a few years later many German towns and villages lay in ruins. To be sure, at that time distances were still an obstacle for military operations. Today no seas or oceans, no distances, however great, will shelter the aggressor from retribution.

The aggressive policy of the United States and its followers is spearheaded against the peace-abiding socialist countries. U.S. imperialism went to the length of calling its aggressive policy towards the socialist countries a policy of "liberation". That was not novel at all. It is one of the oldest and shabbiest dodges of the imperialists to say that the predatory wars they wage in the interests of their monopolies are fought for the "liberation" of someone or another. That was how the imperialists "liberated" various peoples of their independence, turning them into colonial slaves. That was how at the close of the nine-

teenth century, the United States "liberated" the Hawaiian Islands, and then the Philippines. Now and again imperialists "liberate" the peoples of colonies from the rule of the imperialists of other countries, only to make them their own bondsmen. That was how, during the Second World War, Japan "liberated" Indonesia, Burma and other countries.

At the time of the First World War each of the two imperialist coalitions declared hypocritically that it was fighting in the name of "liberation". "The bourgeoisie of each country," wrote Lenin, "tries to elevate the purport of its 'own' national war with spurious declarations and to persuade everybody that it wants to defeat its adversary not for the sake of plunder and conquest, but for 'liberating' all the other peoples, save its own."<sup>1</sup>

The new elements injected by the American imperialists into this time-worn practice of conquerors are, firstly, that they seek to justify on spurious grounds their policy of aggression in peacetime, while waging a cold war against the socialist countries. Furthermore, in the past the imperialists harped on their professed intention to "liberate" land belonging to their adversary, also an imperialist, while now this shabby imperialist slogan is employed against the socialist countries. Modern imperialism is itching to "liberate" the socialist countries from socialism and national independence, and to impose a foreign yoke on them. It is itching to "liberate" the peoples of the socialist countries from their national statehood, their economic achievements and their national culture.

But let us ask: Did not Hitler want to do the same thing? Did not German-fascist propaganda harp on Germany's intention to "liberate" the peoples of the U.S.S.R.?

The peoples of the Soviet Union had an object lesson of what the invaders understand by "freedom". They had a taste of this "freedom", as administered by the German

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<sup>1</sup> В. И. Ленин, *Сочинения*, 4-е изд., т. 21, стр. 12.



army. To them this "freedom" was represented by death camps, mass executions, monstrous plunder and violence, destruction of cultural monuments and public wealth. The Soviet people, in turn, gave an object lesson to the aggressors of what true proponents of freedom, democracy and national independence can do. The German imperialists had this brought home to them, and the lesson should not be lost on the war architects across the Atlantic.

Not only did the American imperialists launch a cold war, making it the alpha and omega of their policy. They are clinging to it doggedly, and devote much effort to justifying it.

Slanderous charges against the Soviet Union and the aims of its policy served from the first as the ideological groundwork of the cold war. An imperialist aggressor always protests that he is an innocent lamb whom the big bad wolf wants to devour. But time shows that the self-styled innocent lambs are really beasts of prey, that nobody threatens them and that, conversely, they threaten everybody else. One has to be very gullible and naive to believe the specious contention that the cold war is being waged in self-defence.

West German reactionary writers joined the campaign to vindicate and justify the cold war. They have the axe of F.R.G. imperialism to grind, and hence contribute their own specific propositions to the matter. Having joined the United States, Britain and France in aggressive policy, Bonn did not want to be treated as the loser lacking equal rights by its enemies of yesteryear. It was the West German reactionary historians who first said that the Second World War was lost not only by Germany, but also by its post-war friends and allies. The West German authors, always ministering to the will of the monopolies, decided to make the most of the fact that the ruling class of the United States and Britain had failed to realise its imperialist aims in the past war.

That was how, first in newspapers and magazines, and later in the "papers" of reactionary West German, British, U.S. and French historians, the false version appeared that the United States and Britain, though they won the past war, were deprived of the fruits of victory by the "evil" Russian Bolsheviks. Hence, the United States and Britain were among the losers alongside the F.R.G. This "explanation" of the course of events, which conflicts with the facts, has since formed the groundwork of most Western historical investigations.

But the fact is that objective conditions both during and after the war ruled out the establishment of world hegemony by the ruling quarters of the United States. Reality showed that claims of this sort were totally unrealistic. As for the attempts of the U.S. rulers to use West German revanchism and militarism for a new aggression and a new world war, they bear a very close resemblance to the foolhardy Western policy pursued before the Second World War, which ultimately backfired. The revival in the centre of Europe of a dangerous seat of war is a menace to many countries, and above all to France, which has more than once been the object and victim of German aggression.

Not only have the ruling circles of the United States, Britain and France entered into an alliance with the West German revenge-seekers and militarists. They are helping the Federal Republic to rearm, and look dispassionately at the far-reaching expansionist plans of the forces that started two world wars and are now being helped into positions of leadership in the aggressive North Atlantic bloc. At a meeting in Ottawa, May 1963, the Council of this bloc passed the resolution to establish a nuclear-rocket NATO force, to which the generals and officers of the Bundeswehr would have access. This is a dangerous resolution, because experience has shown most conclusively that the German aggressors do not stop at provocations in inciting war in Europe.

The cold war, initiated by the United States against the socialist countries is now more than eighteen years old. But what are its results? It has not yielded any tangible gains to the imperialists. On the contrary, it entailed a further loss of international prestige by the imperialist countries, it has augmented hatred of capitalism among the masses, and has brought about serious setbacks for the United States and its allies. "Our policies are failing and our influence in the world is shrinking," write Edmond Stillman and William Pfaff, two American sociologists. "Our European allies doubt our prudence and our will; the new nations of the Southern Hemisphere are increasingly indifferent to our claims (when they do not despise them). Our enemies treat us with a rough contempt; and among us there is a sense of futility, of vain effort."<sup>1</sup>

Therein lies the reason why the more far-sighted politicians, industrialists, bankers, sociologists, historians and commentators, apprehensive for the future of capitalism, insist that the governments of the U.S.A. and other imperialist powers abandon the cold war policy. "Since cold war methods are self-defeating," writes D. F. Fleming, "there remains the much harder task of accepting competitive co-existence with the Communist world and of working into policies first of toleration and then of friendliness and co-operation with all peoples."<sup>2</sup>

But sober utterances such as these are all too often obscured by the utterances of cold war warriors. These resort to crude and dishonest methods. One of them, Hugh Seaton-Watson, a British historian, has beaten all records in this respect. There is no difference, he says, between cold war and peaceful co-existence. Here is how he put it:

"The phrase 'the cold war', invented by Western journalists to describe the state of permanent war without

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<sup>1</sup> Edmond Stillman and William Pfaff, *The New Politics: America and the End of the Post-war World*, New York, 1961, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960*, London, 1961, pp. 1073-1074.

bombs came to be interpreted as a description of an essentially aggressive Western policy, while the phrase 'peaceful co-existence', invented by Lenin many years earlier to describe the state of war without bombs between the 'capitalist world' and Soviet Russia, came to be interpreted as a description of an essentially pacific Soviet policy. The truth is that 'cold war' and 'peaceful co-existence' are two different names for a single state of affairs."<sup>1</sup>

The reactionary historian managed to "overlook" the basic differences between the policy of imperialist aggression and the policy of peace. Webster's dictionary defines cold war as a "sharp conflict in diplomacy, economics, etc., between states, regarded as potentially leading to actual war". Quite right. Cold war is the road to world war. Peaceful co-existence, on the other hand, is a course for the maintenance and strengthening of peace, a course for excluding wars from the life of society. There are just two ways open for the development of modern international relations—thermonuclear war is one of them, and peaceful co-existence is the other.

That is why the emergence and development of the peace movement is so immensely important. It appeared as a response of the peoples to the aggressive conduct of the imperialist powers. Appropriately, the First World Peace Congress took place in April 1949, soon after the founding of NATO, that prime weapon of modern imperialist aggression.

The peace movement is a broadly democratic movement embracing people from different walks of life, different social groups and different convictions. They are brought together by their devotion to peace, their urge to deliver mankind from a world-wide thermonuclear disaster. It is representative of the trend of modern development. It opposes a firm will for peace to the imperialist policies of aggression and war.

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Seaton-Watson, *From Lenin to Khrushchov. The History of World Communism*, New York, 1960, p. 384.

The World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace, convened in Moscow on the initiative of the World Peace Council in July 1962, was a highlight among the events of our time. It was the biggest international peace forum ever held, attended by over 2,000 delegates, guests and observers from 121 countries. Speakers at the Congress stated their belief that the menace of nuclear war hanging over every country and every nation, may well be eliminated. Mankind is grown to the task of effecting a transition from the epoch of wars to an epoch of enduring peace on earth.

The question of war and peace is the main question of our time, a question of life and death to hundreds of millions of people. Imperialism is the only and, what is more, the most dangerous source of war danger. It is hatching the most frightening crime against humanity in history—a world thermonuclear war. In contrast, socialism is working for universal peace, being the most consistent and the most powerful champion of peace.

The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted at its Twenty-Second Congress, concentrates the efforts of Soviet people on the full-scale building of communism. It is a programme of peaceful endeavour. Peace is absolutely essential to the Soviet Union if it wants to build communist society and realise man's age-old dream of the most perfect social system. Peace furthers the objective laws and advantages governing socialist and communist development. It helps to win the economic competition with capitalism in the shortest possible historical term.

To destroy wars, to establish eternal peace on earth—that is the historic mission of communism. So the Programme of the C.P.S.U. says:

“The C.P.S.U. considers that the chief aim of its foreign-policy activity is to provide peaceful conditions for the building of a communist society in the U.S.S.R. and developing the world socialist system, and together with

the other peace-loving peoples to deliver mankind from a world war of extermination."<sup>1</sup>

The Programme is there for all to see, and it reveals beyond a shadow of doubt that the grand tasks of building communist society, set for a term of 20 years, envisage and require peace. The Party Programme is imbued with the spirit of peace from beginning to end. It shows with fresh impact that communism and peace are indivisible.

Communism and peace are indivisible because communism and labour, communism and the creative endeavours of hundreds of millions of working men, are indivisible. Communism is built by human labour, its building demonstrates the immense forces released by the creative efforts of the masses, inspired by the foremost ideals of mankind, the communist ideals. Communism is proving its advantages over capitalism in peaceful ways—by victories in economic construction, by the development of the productive forces and the improvement of the peoples' living and cultural standards. Labour for the glory of man is its main and most effective weapon.

The Soviet Union and all the peace-abiding countries oppose the cold war waged by imperialism with their growing might, their realism, their confidence, tenacity and stamina. The forces of war and aggression have in the last few years brought world peace precariously near to disaster on a few occasions. If no world war has begun, thanks are due for this to the Soviet Union, the world socialist system, to all the forces of peace, which have compelled the imperialist aggressors more than once to retreat from the "brink of war".

The Soviet Union is waging a historic struggle for the triumph of human reason over imperialist madness. It is a difficult struggle. But socialism and communism are bound to win this high-minded cause in the name of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, p. 502.

humanity and happiness of the peoples. The Programme of the C.P.S.U. says:

*"The Soviet Union has consistently pursued, and will continue to pursue, the policy of the peaceful co-existence of states with different systems."*<sup>1</sup>

The Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, Under Water and in Outer Space, signed in August 1963, has been a triumph for the peace champions. It is an important step in the right direction, and could pave the way to an enduring accommodation. But in working for peace on earth, the socialist countries do not lose sight of the fact that imperialist aggressors still exist in the world. The international situation calls for top-level defences, utmost vigilance and war preparedness. In the present world situation the aggressive plans of the imperialist powers are liable to turn against them, against the whole system of capitalism. "If the imperialists, contrary to all common sense, venture to attack the socialist countries and hurl mankind into the abyss of a world war of annihilation," Khrushchov told the Twenty-Second Congress of the C.P.S.U., "that mad act will be their last, it will be the end of the capitalist system."<sup>2</sup>

The lessons of history show that Khrushchov's words are right. Imperialism started two world wars. And the results and consequences of both were adverse to imperialism. The First World War precipitated the victory of the greatest socialist revolution in Russia. After the Second World War socialist revolutions triumphed in a number of European and Asian countries, and the break-up of the colonial system of capitalism gained momentum. It is therefore clear that if the imperialists challenge mankind once more, it will be their last act, followed by the final downfall of the system that procreates world wars.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Such are the results, consequences and lessons of the Second World War. They show that the plans of world conquest by an imperialist power, whichever power it may be, are unrealistic and futile. They show that historically socialism is unconquerable. They show that in our time the masses are grown to the task of solving the problems of historical development and progress.

The Soviet Union has come out the victor in the grim ordeal of war and is advancing unswervingly along the road of progress and the full-scale building of communism. Never before has it been as strong as now. Never before has it had the vigour and the creative energy that it has today. Its precipitous advance to communism is breathtaking and magnificent, and no force on earth can stop it.



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