

The Sickness of NATO

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

ALTHOUGH the Geneva conference is only a few weeks past, already the saber-rattlers and proponents of aggressive American imperialism are worried about what is happening to the enormous worldwide military machine which, during the cold war years, they were at such pains to build up with the people's money. Such worry is as it should be. Together with the soft-pedal put upon the war threat by Geneva, which has been the stock-in-trade of Wall Street in its ruthless bid for world domination, naturally there should also go a play down of the frantic militarization that has been carried out under American auspices and pressures throughout the period of the cold war.



The particular lament of the militarists now is regarding a weakening they see in the support of NATO. Among the many complaining on this score is Mr. Walter Lippmann (Herald-Tribune, Aug. 18). He deplores a rapidly growing indifference among European peoples towards NATO, especially since Geneva, and he warns that the organization is in danger. He declares that "if its strategic and political foundations are not strengthened it will fade and languish."

Lippmann says the reason for all this is that the European peoples, fearing an atomic war, never did have any great appreciation of NATO, with its great stress upon ground forces and other "conventional" methods of warmaking, and that since the breaking of the U. S. atombomb monopoly by the USSR, their feeble faith in it has sunk swiftly. Geneva has accentuated this

whole process of disintegration. This is why, he says, "The people with their governments close behind them, are quick to lay down a heavy burden (NATO) which they do not think of as necessary to their security and their survival."

BUT THE IMPERIALIST Lippmann greatly misreads European and world mass opinion when he concludes that the people's indifference (and hostility) to NATO has been based simply upon strategic considerations, upon a belief that it is not an effective military protection. Quite the contrary. They are against war, and their disapproval of NATO derives from this consideration. The tail goes with the hide, so to speak. In the main, the European masses, like hundreds of millions of people in other parts of the world, never swallowed the propadanda (made in Washington) to the effect that the USSR was all poised for a conquering march across Europe. Indeed, especially during the past few years, they have become increasingly conscious that the real threat of war was coming from the super-aggressive policies of Wall Street, a fact which explains the catastrophic loss of American diplomatic prestige universally during this time.

Also, the peoples never fell victim to the "position of strength" diplomacy of Dulles and company, with its accompanying air-bases around the world, its monster appropriations for the armed forces, and its constant threat of an atomic world war. This warlike doctrine was also defeated at Geneva, along with the general menace of war raised by the aggressive policies of Wall Street imperialism. The powerful NO given at Geneva by the world peace forces, included not only the threat of war, but the whole network of military operations for that war. Therefore, what Mr. Lippmann is complaining about

as undermining NATO, may be expected to take place also regarding SEATO and other phases of Wall Street's world-war machine, provided the people give active backing to see to it that Geneva is carried into effect.

MR. LIPPMANN is right, however, although not in the sense he wishes, when he says that the strategical and political concepts behind NATO must be changed. What the peoples want of NATO is not that it become a still stronger point of Wall Street imperialism, but (if it is not abolished altogether) that it be stripped of its aggressive character and transformed into a military understanding among all the powers of Europe. The new strategical and political concepts needed by NATO are that that body be based upon the principles of the peaceful co-existence of all the peoples, instead of, as hitherto, upon Wall Street's program of world conquest.

This is the real meaning of what the peoples said at Geneva. A correct step in making the people's mandate of Geneva come true was the announcement, a few days ago, by the Soviet Government that it intends shortly to decrease the size of the Red Army by 640,000 men. On the other hand, a step towards nullifying Geneva is the proposal to increase the United States Air Force by one-third—as stated by Hanson Baldwin in the New York Times of Aug. 19. The peace promise of Geneva can be realized only if the masses fight for it. Consequently, labor and the whole American people should actively protest against the expansion of the U. S. Air Force and demand instead that steps be taken by the United States, jointly with the USSR and other powers, to slash all armaments, especially the air force and atomic bomb setup. The way to end the cold war is to end it.

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