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TWOPENCE

HITLER WILL MARCH AGAIN-AND SOON

After an uneasy half-year following the "agreement" at Munich last September, the armies of Europe are once more on the move. Swift moves by German imperialism have been followed by swift counter-moves by its rivals and by its allies, and every day reports are being published concerning movements of Italian and German troops to the borders of surrounding small states while a new crop of Balkan frontier incidents has appeared to furnish a shower of sparks any one of which might easily set the fuses alight for the final explosion of the monstrous imperialist ammunition dump.

The crisis has intensified the trade-war, cutting across the former trend of attempting to reach agreements by negotiation. Arrangements already reached between British and German industrial interests have been denounced, projected French and British trade missions to Germany cancelled, German orders refused in Britain and payments on Czech balances in British banks suspended by authority of the British Government, while crushing penalty tariffs on German goods have been imposed by the United States. The intensified economic warfare merges with the international crisis and is once more bringing humanity to the verge of a universal blood-letting.

The capitalist regime in Germany is hard pressed. The coffee-famine created by the breaking down of

trade relations with Brazil in the past weeks is being paralleled by the threat far more serious, of a cotton shortage occasioned by the decision of the Brazilian Government to suspend cotton shipments to Germany. This is only one item on a long list of shortages during the past months due to the fundamental weakness of German economy, the inadequacy of foreign exchange controlled by the Reich. Industrial activity has been intensified by Government policy during the past months to the point that a deficiency of half a million workers is announced in the German press. Serious internal financial difficulties are indicated by, for example, the decree of March 25th which compels firms to accept, in payment for government orders, tax-bonds for 40 per cent. of their receipts. Unable to finance its policy of setting the nation to work, unable to secure raw materials in sufficient quantities for its needs, unable to find markets in a world of increasing slump, the Hitler regime is heading for financial disaster and social upheaval in Germany.

The boldness of Hitler's moves is the boldness of desperation. Terrifying though the armaments of rival imperialism which confront Germany with the prospect of certain defeat in the event of war, the rumblings of internal crisis, presaging the destruction of German capitalism, are still more terrifying. The only chance for survival of German imperialism

lies in the fact that its rivals, realising that even a victorious war will precipitate revolutions in their own territories, are compelled to make concessions otherwise unthinkable.

But there is a limit to the concessions that those rivals can make, and that limit has almost been reached. Beyond lies war.

The seriousness of the situation is indicated by what is described as a "re-orientation" of British foreign policy: the offer of "guarantees" to Poland and Roumania by Britain.

The British offer was made in equivocal terms, but when the *Times* in an inspired leader on April 1st attempted to castrate the British undertaking and pave the way for further territorial concessions, a storm broke loose among the spokesmen for those sections of the British capitalist class who still cling to the illusion that it is possible to coop up and immobilise German imperialism by encirclement with the help of a pact that includes the Soviet Union.

In face of the outcry the Foreign Office was compelled to contradict the *Times* interpretation. But it must be recollected that during the September crisis, the revelation made in a similar inspired leader in the *Times* met with a similar outcry and a similar repudiation by the Foreign Office, but nevertheless accurately foreshadowed the policy of British imperialism. It may be taken for granted that since it is still only Poland's "independence" that is the subject of the British guarantee and not her territorial integrity, the maps are being re-drawn behind the scenes.

German imperialism must either expand or explode. The policy of Chamberlain, who speaks for monopoly capitalism in its most naked form, seeks to orient itself to this basic fact, and exhibits far more realism than the wishful-thinking dreams of the rest of the capitalist class. As the slump progresses and the pressure on Hitler mounts up, Chamberlain, the self-styled "man of peace" seeks to clear the path for him into the Soviet Ukraine. By prolonging the hostilities with surreptitious intervention until both protagonists are sufficiently weakened, the "neutral" British vulture will be able to descend upon the battlefield and gorge itself.

The alternative, to encircle the Reich, would be to sit on the safety valve, and would produce the usual consequences of such a procedure. War with Hitler Germany may indeed be ultimately forced on Britain, but will by no means be deliberately sought by Chamberlain through encirclement.

British policy has therefore by no means been re-oriented, no new chapter in diplomatic history has been opened by the "guarantees" offered to Poland and Roumania. British monopoly capitalism still remains the judge of whether Germany's next move constitutes a mere frontier incident or an attempt to "dominate the world by force." If it facilitates Hitler's drive into the Ukraine, it will undoubtedly be dismissed as a minor incident, a small price to

pay for "peace." But if it threatens the position of Britain in the eastern Mediterranean and the near East by facilitating a joint German-Italian conquest of Balkan resources, the moral indignation of Chamberlain's masters will again know no bounds, and what is far more to the point, this time they will be prepared to take military action.

The placing of the Territorials on a virtual war footing by the huge increases in their number and corresponding equipment, the acceleration of war preparations generally in Britain are accompanied by the drawing together of the politicians of capitalism in "national unity." The present foreign policy of British imperialism meets with complete support from the parliamentary representatives of Labour who criticise, not its purposes, but its spokesmen. Labour stands ready to lead the working class into war or to hold them back when Hitler attacks the Soviet Union, as the case may be.

The Communist Party has been torn with uncertainty since the crisis of last September. Dimitrov's article in *Pravda* of November 7th, 1939, struck the keynote of Communist policy in attempting to speak in two tongues at once. The phraseology of "peace-loving democracies" threatened by "aggressive fascism" was placed side by side with a revival of former phraseology denouncing imperialist war. From the two sets of phrases flow two different lines of action, for if a war between Germany and Britain is to be accepted by the working class of Britain as an attack by German fascism on "peace-loving British democracy," the conclusion is that the workers must take up arms on Britain's side in that war. But if it is to be represented as it really is, an imperialist war for the re-division of the world, the Leninist conclusion must be drawn of preparing the defeat of their own ruling class, British imperialism. Thus in one breath Dimitrov speaks for and against support for the "democracies" in the coming war.

This combination of conflicting lines and their corresponding phraseology is by no means the product of confused thinking on the part of the Kremlin spokesmen. It is a deliberate attempt to move to an intermediate position in readiness for the outcome of the uncertainties that arose after Munich. Stalin's speech of last month further emphasises the uncertainty of Soviet foreign policy and his readiness to strike a bargain with Hitler. The working class movement is cynically subordinated to the needs of Kremlin foreign policy for which the national Communist Parties are mere instruments.

The life interests of the workers are threatened not only by capitalist policy but by the treachery of the leadership of the working class parties.

The only path to the ending of wars, the defence of the Soviet Union and the smashing not only of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain, but the threat of fascism in Britain, France and America lies in the overthrow of world capitalism.

For the Irish Revolution

The attitude of the Marxist to acts of terrorism is tolerably well known, for Marxists have been at pains to carefully distinguish between terrorism as a weapon in the hands of a few conspirators, and terrorism, wielded as a weapon of coercion by a revolutionary class against the sabotage and counter-revolution of the dispossessed capitalist remnants. This opposition to individual terrorism is not of course, based upon any "moral" distaste but rather upon the effectiveness of terrorism as a political weapon. In other words the Marxist weapon of criticism is directed against terrorism as a criticism of weapons.

Thus, the recent campaign of bombings which the Irish Republican Army has directed against the English ruling class must be examined as to their effectiveness in obtaining the ends desired, and viewed in this light the whole campaign can only be sharply condemned as an adventurous and futile escapade which will—like all similar terrorism—ultimately defeat its own ends. Nevertheless, the struggle which the Irish people has waged for over two hundred years against the tyranny of English dominion must be supported with the utmost vigour by every class conscious worker in this country. Because of this we must address ourselves to the I.R.A. as sympathisers and protagonists in the struggle for Irish liberation.

To the I.R.A. we say: "Your terrorist methods are a reflection of the middle class methods of dealing with fundamental problems. Ireland is reduced to a state of impoverishment that is without parallel in the history of Western Europe. Preyed upon by English capitalists and their Irish lackeys, sucked dry by absentee English landlords, cruelly dominated by the mailed fist of English imperialism, divided and partitioned by English diplomacy—and Irish treachery—with a far greater number of Irishmen scattered abroad than in Ireland itself, poverty stricken, degraded, exploited, divided and repressed, the ruination of Ireland can only be attributed to the avarice and greed of the capitalist class of England and Ireland.

Against the armed might of imperialist Britain you now pit your gallant band of gunmen, the awesome power of the British Government you propose to demolish with your jam-jar bombs and dynamite explosions. Your whole campaign is redolent of childishness and futility, revealing a complete lack of understanding of the true issues.

A few weeks back, you proclaimed yourselves the Government of Ireland. You blissfully ignored the presence of DeValera, of the entire State apparatus of the Irish capitalist class which, backed up by the English landlords, has decreed the death penalty upon your members. Declaring a state of "armed neutrality" to DeValera—who, by the way, is not neutral—you transfer the war to English territory

and proceed to blast the English bourgeoisie into recognition of your aims.

You then succeed in blowing up certain pre-selected property of the English capitalists, meanwhile carefully and with middle class discretion, pointing out that you do not direct your bombs against human life but only against capitalist property. As this property is invariably insured against all possible damage, as the bourgeois gentlemen who own it are invariably tucked up in bed miles away, as the sanctity of human life does not extend to some poor devil of an English worker who is, as usual, the only one who gets blown up, as the terrorist is, if caught, imprisoned for a lengthy term, as finally all this is immediately condemned by the British worker—who has after all a perfectly natural antipathy to being blown sky high—you will see that all your efforts have resulted in a series of minor inconveniences for your enemies, the English bosses, and in alienating the otherwise sympathetic sentiments of your friends, the British workers. Thus terrorism which set out to unite Ireland, succeeds in uniting England—against Ireland. The boss class can now play on the anti-terrorist sentiments of the workers in this country and use them as a pretext for encouraging further the repressions of the DeValera Government in Ireland against the I.R.A.

You seem to imagine that the British Government will be scared into granting your demands. Do not deceive yourselves. The British Government is itself the most expert terrorist the world has seen. There is hardly a subject race on the face of the earth which has not at some time or other felt the lash of British imperialism, and Ireland has suffered with the rest. The cause of Irish liberation is inextricably bound up with the revolutionary movements of ALL colonial peoples, is truly defended only by the revolutionary MASS movements of the working class in this and other countries.

Is it not obvious to all but the most purblind of patriots, that the present state of Ireland is due in its entirety to the capitalist system?

Do you then, endeavour to rid the world of this iniquity by a bomb explosion?

Ireland occupies the position of being a "back door" to Britain. In the event of a war the rulers of Ireland are in a valuable strategic position; as the last war showed, the Easter rising of 1916 was the utilisation of that position. It was more than that however, it was the prologue to the mighty Russian Revolution.

The British imperialists learn very rapidly; the Irish Republicans would do well to imitate them in this. Realising the importance of Ireland, the British are determined to retain their hold on the country, and accordingly with their accustomed craftiness have partitioned the country into two

separate States, they deliberately foster the bitter religious feud which paralyzes the workers in Ulster, they alone of all the countries in the world, permit the sale of the infamous alcohol, "Red Biddy," among the working population of Northern Ireland, thereby hoping to dope the minds of the working class with religion and befuddle their brains with booze.

You of the I.R.A. are plentifully supplied with money. You have an organisation which must cost hundreds of pounds per week to maintain, you have a large staff of professional officers and gunmen.

Let us assume that you get your way. For a moment let us assume that you actually take over the Government of Ireland.

Could you solve any of the problems which now afflict the working class of Ireland, could you alleviate a tithe of the appalling distress which eats at the Irish nation, could you produce some plan which will energise agrarian productivity, some bold scheme to reorganise Irish industry, can you tell us how, even if you can do all this, you propose to compete on the world market with the great, long-established imperialisms of Britain and France or the financial oligarchy of the U.S.A.?

In a word can you separate the question of Irish independence from the life and death struggle of the working class against capitalism? If you are honest and sincere in your desire for Irish freedom—and such qualities are beyond doubt to be found in the rank and file of the I.R.A.—how can you avoid these questions? And how can you answer them? Can you hope to solve them by killing English workers and endangering the safety of English households? Can the Irish workers be won away from the established Government by a

mere paper proclamation, the very signatories of which are outlawed by that same Government?

The answers to these questions will be obvious to all Irish workers: terrorist activity can never replace the mass action of the workers and peasants.

Accordingly it is the duty of all the rank and files of the I.R.A. to fight a political battle against the rulers of their country and to this end the money which their organisation possesses must be used in the establishment of a powerful printing press. The misery of the Irish toiler calls for instant redress, the curse of religious strife must be denounced, and against the repressions of the Government the workers and small farmers must be mobilised under the banner of the Irish Revolution.

This way lies the path of the Irish people, for capitalism can offer no future to the struggling masses. Only Socialism, only the conquest of power by the revolutionary masses can smash down the walls of hated Partition, can unite the Irish nation.

Ireland must be represented within the Fourth International by a virile and energetic section of revolutionary fighters. Ireland can achieve her emancipation only by means of the Revolution and it is to this end that the workers in the I.R.A. can and must devote their energy.

The battle for the Irish Republic can only be fought on Irish soil for it is there that the crimes of capitalism are perpetrated; the fight of the Irish workers can only be linked with the similar struggles of the oppressed peoples of the world through the Fourth International, the masses of the Irish workers and farmers can only be allied on a common programme which provides for their common liberation from the shackles of English—and Irish—capitalism.

After the Fall of Madrid

On Sunday, March 5th, the military chiefs of the Spanish Republic took over the reins of office in Madrid, in the name of the "National Defence Junta."

At this stage in the conflict it is advisable to review briefly the methodical and logical process of the disastrous policies of the Spanish People's Fronts.

The Spanish Civil War broke out in June 1936 as an armed uprising on the part of the bourgeoisie. This does not mean, however, that the civil war actually commenced at this date. In actual fact the hostilities common to internal strife had long been established. Shootings, assassinations, imprisonment, torture, and repressions had long been inflicted upon the workers by the capitalist class while the workers for their part had responded to these attacks with vigorous and class-conscious measures. The economic factors that produced the Civil War had by 1936 reached a stage of such explosive potentialities that it was quite beyond the power of any democratic machinery to attempt to assuage the forces

that were ranged against each other. Spain was a weak capitalist state entering into the productive and manufacturing stage of development at a time when it was far too late to even dream of competing with the more advanced countries on the world market. The extreme poverty of her peasantry and the wretchedness of her working class—things in themselves due to the poor state of Spanish capitalism—robbed the manufacturers of even a slender internal market. This economic backwardness was aggravated by the existence of remnants of feudal society which in their economic form were to be found in the abnormally large number of small peasants, eking out a pitiful existence on the land and dominated by the tyranny of absentee landlords who inflicted a crushing burden of rent upon them and robbed countless thousands of their land altogether.

The Roman Catholic Church was the biggest of these landowners and was also the greatest capitalist concern in Spain. As the Church was also responsible for the "education" of the people and was an

extremely powerful political power, it will be seen at once that any hope of reform that did not somewhere involve the violent opposition of the Church was impossible.

Rather let us say that any hope of reform in any branch or sphere of social life was foredoomed to failure. The economic situation of Spain was—and is—such that parliamentary democracy was completely out of the question; the country was ripe—nay overripe—for Revolution and the liberals, democrats, socialists and others trembled at the approaching storm with at least as much apprehension as the bourgeoisie. Desperately they sought to canalise the boiling temper of the toiling masses and it was with feverish desperation that they hailed the Popular Front of the stalinists. The Popular Front in power gave to the bourgeoisie a long-awaited breathing space. Knowing that the Popular Front must inevitably fail, they prepared the reaction beneath the very noses of the “democratic” statesmen. Meanwhile, the Popular Front was unable to solve a single problem of fundamental urgency. The colonial policy of the ruling class was rigorously applied against the Moors; the land remained untouched in the hands of the landlords while the peasant sought in vain to distinguish between the Popular Front and any other bourgeois government. The worker who demanded the socialisation of industry and took steps to secure it was bludgeoned into his better senses by the “Poples” police, his newspapers were censored, his organisation proscribed, and his wages steadily sank: he looked in vain to this wonderful Government for speedy measures and was rewarded with windy speeches and honeyed platitudes about the benefits of democratic government. The armed forces remained wholly untouched and entirely in the hands of the ruling class with the result that in July, 1936, the army almost solidly supported the insurrection of General Franco.

In the face of an armed rebellion the Popular Front was helpless and it was left to the enraged masses to pit their unarmed and untrained numbers against the fascists. Due ENTIRELY to the action of the workers and peasants, the fascist sweep inland was checked and in countless instances their triumphant advances were turned into panicky routs by the infuriated toilers. The whole mass of the Spanish workers rose; with their fists clenched in determination never to be beaten, they proclaimed the Revolution. No demagogic wordiness for them, no talk of compensation or collaboration. For a few brief months the workers state came into existence, challenging the authority of and usurping the function of the Popular Front Government of Madrid.

Then the treacherous hand of the Stalinist showed through. As a condition for supplying arms to the Republic, the Soviet Union insisted upon the liquidation of the Revolution and the elimination of the “uncontrollables.” The bourgeois State reasserted its control; upon the plea of “the fight against Franco” it smashed down the embryo workers’ state and savagely repressed the revolutionary struggle of the workers.

The whole policy of the Popular Front was directed towards placating the big imperialist powers and assuring them that with the Revolution crushed,

there was no better guardian of Anglo-French Mediterranean interests than the Republican Government.

The imperialists knew only too well that the masses behind the Republican trenches were not concerned with the integrity of their imperialist interests and under the plea of “non-intervention” made it easy for Franco to march forward.

The military policy of the Republican General Staff was never brilliant as their whole line of action depended upon the necessity of placating the imperialists, and it comes as no surprise when we find that throughout the 33 months of the war, the Republican Navy was only commanded out to sea on three occasions and that the submarines in their possession, which could have worked havoc among Franco’s Moorish, as well as the Italian transports and troopships, were never allowed to leave the Republican waters. Can we wonder therefore at the wholesale collapse of the Catalonian front? That the Army chiefs, the Ministers of State, the Party bosses were leagued in a treacherous conspiracy is surely beyond doubt. The whole of Catalonia was yielded without struggle, the great and vital city of Barcelona was given over to the fascists without a serious blow being struck in its defence, huge stores of military equipment fell into the hands of the invaders without an attempt being made to destroy them.

Azana, Negrin, Del Vayo and Co. ran across the French border at lightning speed after the final retreat and announced from a safe distance their willingness to come to terms with Franco. At that moment the “bourgeois allies” so heartily recommended to us by the Stalinist overturned the Government and after shooting up their communist allies, announced that they too were prepared to surrender to Franco “on just and honourable terms.”

Col. Segismundo Casado at least has no illusions concerning his predecessors. Says he: “The Negrin ministers abandoned their posts and sought in shameful flight to save themselves . . . it is intolerable that that while demanding that the people resist, they are preparing for a lucrative and convenient flight.” Cipiano Mera, a leader of the C.N.T. and an army commander, said: “The loyalist ministers were thinking of gathering up the Treasury and fleeing with it while the Spanish people are abandoned to the enemy . . .”

The whole filthy crew of bourgeois parasites were willing to sell the entire working class to the fascists in exchange for their miserable skins. And these gentlemen were assured by means of the treacherous party bosses of the socialist, communist and anarchist bureaucracies of the support of the millions of workers and peasants. Nowhere more clearly than in Spain can the working class of the world see the utter rottenness of the Popular Front; it is a menace, a threat to everything the worker holds dear, and as such it must be the object of unremitting attack by the militants within the proletarian movement. Let us raise the slogan of workers unity, ever insistent upon the independent action of the workers, ever vigilant against the false and spurious arguments of class-collaboration.

The Middle Class in France

In the rise of German and Italian Fascism the peasantry and urban middle classes played a very important part. In France, a semi-agricultural country where they are still numerically very strong, they are destined to play just as important a part in the coming events. In these two countries, the middle classes, pauperised by the crisis of the capitalist system, provided a certain mass basis for Fascism which they believed would take them out of their *impasse*. In France to-day everybody from the Communist Party to Doriot, one of the would-be Hitlers of his country, recognises the importance of winning to his cause the masses of the petty bourgeoisie. The Communist Party cried out (quite rightly) for an alliance of the middle classes and the workers and under cover of this slogan, tied the revolutionary movement of 1935-36 to the Radicals, the classical exploiters of the middle classes' prejudices. Doriot for his part writes numerous pamphlets and articles destined solely for the middle class. The majority of the workers in Germany have never accepted Fascism and neither will their French brothers; that is why Doriot's P.P.F. and de la Roque's P.S.F. are paying special attention to the petty bourgeoisie.

Only recently the P.S.F. held an "Agricultural Conference" and put forward its plan for the "revitalisation of agriculture." It is true this conference did not arouse much comment but it is a dangerous warning that unless the peasantry is shown a real way to solve its problems (indebtedness to the banks, machinations of the powerful grain trusts, the disparity between the prices of agricultural products and manufactured goods, etc.) they will turn in despair to Fascism. It is precisely because the various Popular Front Governments did nothing to solve the peasant problem that the countryside remained completely passive during the strikes against the Daladier-Reynaud decree laws in November 1938.

Let us retrace briefly the events since 1934 in

relation to the petty bourgeoisie. For years the Radical Party had been the traditional party of the middle classes, which meant that it was the instrument that was best adapted to win the support of the middle classes for the maintenance of the capitalist system. The peasant and shopkeeper, even if he did not believe in his party's promises of reforms, voted for it through inertia much as many workers vote in England to-day for Labour "because everybody else here does." However, the financial and industrial crisis that hit France in the early nineteen thirties resulted in the bankruptcy of thousands of small shopkeepers and peasants and drove many more into the arms of the banks who naturally did not hesitate to take advantage of this situation. Under these circumstances the falsity of the Radicals' claims were laid bare and the middle class began to seek other saviours. Only two alternatives presented themselves—Fascism or Revolution, and we see that in the Municipal Elections the Radical votes drop while those of the Communist Party and Socialists rise, while at the same time, la Roque's *Croix de Feu* penetrates into the villages. The Stavisky scandal, which implicated many leaders of the Radical Party (including Chautemps, Premier of the second Popular Front cabinet) and showed its impotence before the fascist gangs (Daladier's resignation after February 6th), further accelerated the loss of prestige of the Radicals.

Here was an unaparalleled opportunity for either the Communist Party or the Socialist Party to ally the middle classes to the workers by pointing out that the crisis of the Radicals was inseparable from the crisis of French capitalism which in turn was the cause of their misery. The peasant and shopkeeper if they saw that the working class parties were determined to overthrow the rule of the banks, grain trusts and industrialists whatever form it took (Democratic or Fascist) would have been drawn into the struggle. Instead the Communist Party answered February 6th by calling for an alliance between the workers and the Radicals precisely when the people

were turning away from the latter (and this in the name of an alliance with the middle classes!) This is how the Communist Party expected to win the middle classes for Socialism.

Nor are the records of the various Popular Front Governments since 1936 designed to make the peasant or small tradesmen dance with joy. Blum declared on coming to power: "We shall remain within the framework of the capitalist system", which meant to the small tradesmen "The banks will still be free to bleed you to death" and to the peasant "Sorry, but we can't help you against the grain trust." Moreover the rise in the cost of living by which the bourgeoisie took back the extra wages won by the factory workers, hit the middle classes even more as their income had remained stationary. The reactionary propagandists had an easy job. The middle classes came to identify the Popular Front with the high cost of living. The peasant in the village, gleaning his knowledge of the labour movement from the bourgeois daily press, came to identify the whole labour movement with the Blum and the Jouhaux who lived at luxurious rates (Jouhaux has a chateau at Nantes just like a country squire) and who betrayed the people just as did Daladier and the Radicals. In 1936 the peasant, influenced by the revolutionary sentiment of the workers hoped to a certain extent that his lot would now be improved. He was soon disillusioned.

Fortunately, although the middle classes are today very restless, Fascism has not yet won a sufficiently important influence and there is still time for the workers' organisations to get down to the task of proving to the petty bourgeoisie that only in alliance with the industrial workers can they successfully defend and improve their standard of living. The Communist Party is incapable of achieving this task since it is pledged to the defence of the Empire which puts such heavy taxes and burdens on the backs of the people. In the conferences of the Socialist Party there is usually a debate on agricultural problems, but it is conducted as if the speakers were bourgeois professors at the "Academie" and not socialists interested in supporting the peasants' demands.

Only the P.O.I (French section of the Fourth International) puts forward a programme that can solve the problems of the petty bourgeoisie. They call for workers and peasants control of the banks, free credit to peasants and small tradesmen, the abolition of the grain trusts that keep agriculture in a strait jacket. The revolutionists call upon the peasantry to join with the workers in the common struggle for the only government that can carry out such measures—a workers' government based upon the popular organisations of the masses which must

be forged in the struggle—factory committees bound together by a national congress, village committees, housewives' committees in the populous districts to control food prices—all these must be created and merged in a national body of Workers' and Peasants' Councils from which the Government will emerge.

The French middle classes must join up in the anti-war struggle as they suffer from it as much as the working class, if not more. The peasants' homes in the war zones are destroyed, the land ploughed by high explosives is rendered unfertile for many years to come, as witness the North of France which is still suffering from those results of 1914-18.

The Revolutionary Socialist Youth (J.S.R.) in France are carrying on a courageous anti-militarist campaign among the soldiers for the abolition of the two years obligatory service. One of their members, Steve was recently condemned by the bourgeois courts to six months imprisonment for the J.S.R. anti-war poster of last September which says "This war will not be ours". Their paper *Revolution* has been suppressed four or five times already by the "democratic" Daladier Government. Another of their comrades, Suzanne Charpy has been condemned to one year imprisonment for anti-militarist propaganda. In spite of these persecutions the revolutionary youth of France will carry on their struggle in the barracks where young workers and apprentices and peasant lads fight side by side. That is the way to forge the united front of the workers and peasants—by fighting Daladier's war machine, not by bowing before him as did Blum and Thorez.

Many sceptics will tell us: "All this is very well, but the middle classes will be frightened away by your extremist programme." Our answer to them is: "Were the Russian peasants frightened away by the programme of the Bolsheviks in 1917?" We would also like our critics to tell us how else the middle classes can be saved except by the expropriation of the banks and trusts that exploit them? They will not answer *because there is no other way.*

There is still time to avert Fascism in France if the workers regroup themselves for an onslaught against the Daladier Government and lead the peasants and shopkeepers onto a united onslaught against a decaying regime. The P.O.I. (French Section of the Fourth International) is agitating for fusion with the P.S.O.P. (French I.L.P.) on a Marxist programme and the constitution of a united front of working class organisations as a first step in the organisation of the struggle against Fascism. We wish them success, for only in this way will France be saved from Fascism.

H. R.

Paris, 22 March, 1939.

A Moscow Berlin Axis?

In recent months, the newspapers have printed a good deal concerning secret negotiations between Berlin and Moscow. It has been rumoured that a political and even a military agreement in the guise of an economic treaty is in preparation. It is difficult to judge as yet, just what is correct in these communications. At all events, there are quite unmistakable symptoms which testify to the fact that some sort of negotiations have been and are going on. In any case, the outcome of these secret negotiations, at the present stage, depends, not upon Stalin's loyalty to the principles of democracy nor upon Hitler's fealty to the banner of "anti-Marxism" but rather upon the international conjuncture. An agreement between Stalin and Hitler, if attained—and there is nothing impossible in that, could astonish only the most hopeless simpletons from among all the varieties of democratic "Fronts" and pacifist "Leagues".

A FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

We shall not dwell here on the question of how probable is an agreement between Stalin and Hitler, or, to put it more correctly, between Hitler and Stalin in the *immediate* future. This question would require a detailed analysis of the international situation in all its possible variants. But even if this were done, the answer would still have to be rigidly qualified, inasmuch as the players themselves could hardly state to-day with complete certainty just where the play will lead them. But even before the rapprochement between Moscow and Berlin has been factually attained, it has become a factor in international politics. for all the diplomatic centres of Europe and the world are now taking this *possibility* into account. Let us, too, briefly consider this possibility.

AN AGREEMENT WITH SLAVEHOLDERS.

An agreement with an imperialist nation—regardless of whether it is fascist or democratic—is an agreement with slave-owners and exploiters. A temporary agreement of such a nature may, of course, be rendered compulsory by circumstances. It is impossible to state once and for all time that agreements with imperialists are impermissible under all and any conditions, just as it is impossible to tell a trade union that it has no right under any conditions to conclude a compromise with the boss. "Irreconcilability" of such nature would be sheerly verbal.

So long as the workers' state remains isolated episodic agreements with the imperialists to one extent or another are inevitable. But we must clearly understand that the question reduces itself to profiting from the antagonisms between two gangs

of imperialist powers, and nothing more. There cannot even be talk of disguising such agreements by means of common idealistic slogans, for example, the common "defence of democracy,"—slogans which involve nothing but the most infamous deceit of the workers. It is essential that the workers in capitalist countries be not bound in their class-struggle against their own bourgeoisie by the empiric agreements entered into by the worker's state. This fundamental rule was rigorously observed during the first period of the existence of the Soviet republic.

However, the question of whether agreements between a worker's state and an imperialist state, including a Fascist one, are in general permissible, and if so, just under what conditions,—this question—in its abstract form—has lost all meaning to-day. In question is not a worker's state, in general, but a degenerated and putrifying workers' state. The nature of an agreement, its aims and its limits, depend directly upon *those who* conclude such an agreement. Lenin's government might have been compelled in Brest-Litovsk to conclude a temporary agreement with Hohenzollern—in order to save the revolution. Stalin's government is capable of entering into agreements only in the interests of the ruling Kremlin clique and only to the detriment of the interests of the international working class.

The agreements between the Kremlin and the "democracies" meant for the respective sections of the Communist International the renunciation of the class struggle, the strangulation of revolutionary organisations, the support of social patriotism and, in consequence, the destruction of the Spanish revolution and sabotage of the class struggle of the French proletariat.

KREMLIN CLIQUE CRUSHES WORKERS

The agreement with Chiang-Kai-Shek signified the immediate liquidation of the revolutionary peasant movement, the renunciation by the Communist party of its last vestiges of independence and the official replacement of Marxism by Sun-Yat-Senism. The semi-agreement with Poland signified the destruction of the Polish Communist Party and the annihilation of its leadership. Every agreement of the Kremlin clique with a foreign bourgeoisie is immediately directed against the proletariat of that country with which the agreement is made, as well as against the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.. The Bonapartist gang in the Kremlin cannot survive except by weakening, demoralising, and crushing the proletariat everywhere within its reach.

COMINTERN POLICY IN GREAT BRITAIN

In Great Britain the Comintern is nowadays conducting agitation in favour of creating a "People's Front" with the participation of the liberals. At first glance such a policy appears to be absolutely incomprehensible. The Labour Party represents a mighty organisation. One could easily understand an urge on the part of the social-patriotic Comintern to draw closer to it. But the liberals represent an utterly compromised and politically second-rate force. Moreover they are split into several groups. In the struggle to maintain their influence the Labourites naturally reject any idea of a bloc with the liberals, so as not to infect themselves with a gangrenous poison. They are defending themselves rather energetically—by means of explosions—against the idea of a "People's Front."

WHY INCLUDE LIBERAL SHADOWS?

Why then doesn't the Comintern confine itself to fighting for a collaboration with the Labourites? Why does it instead invariably demand the inclusion of the liberal shadows of the past into the united front? The crux of the matter lies in this, that the policy of the Labour party is far too radical for the Kremlin. An alliance between the Communists and the Labourites might assume some shade of anti-imperialism and would thereby render more difficult a rapprochement between Moscow and London. The presence of liberals in the "People's Front" signifies a direct and an immediate censorship exercised by imperialism over the actions of the Labour Party. Under the cover of such a censorship Stalin would be able to render all the necessary services to British imperialism.

STALIN TRADES THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The fundamental trait of Stalin's international policy in recent years has been this: that he *trades* in the working class movement just as he trades in oil, manganese and other goods. In this statement there is not an iota of exaggeration. Stalin looks upon the sections of the Comintern in various countries and upon the liberating struggle of the oppressed nations as so much small change in deals with imperialist powers.

When he requires the aid of France, he subjects the French proletariat to the Radical bourgeoisie.

When he has to support China against Japan, he subjects the Chinese proletariat to the Kuomintang. What would he do in the event of an agreement with Hitler? Hitler, to be sure, does not particularly require Stalin's assistance to strangle the German Communist party. The insignificant state in which the latter finds itself has moreover been assured by its entire preceding policy. But it is very likely that Stalin would agree to cut off all subsidies for illegal work in Germany. This is one of the most minor concessions that he would have to make and he would be quite willing to make it.

THE FEBRUARY 20 ANTI-NAZI DEMONSTRATION

One should also assume that the noisy, hysterical and hollow campaign against Fascism which the Comintern has been conducting for the last few years will be stily squeaked. It is noteworthy that on February 20th when our American section mobilised considerable masses of workers to fight against the American Nazis, the Stalinists refused point-blank to participate in the counter-demonstration which had nation-wide repercussions, and did everything in their power to minimise its importance, thereby giving aid to the American followers of Hitler. What is there behind this truly treacherous policy? Is it only conservative stupidity and hatred of the Fourth International? Or is there also something new, for example, the latest instruction from Moscow—recommending to Messrs. "Anti-Fascists" that they muzzle themselves so as not to interfere with the negotiations between Moscow and Berlin diplomats? This supposition is by no means far-fetched. The next few weeks will bring their verification.

WHAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD MEAN

We can state one thing with certainty. The agreement between Stalin and Hitler would essentially alter nothing in the counter-revolutionary function of the Kremlin oligarchy. It would only serve to lay bare this function, make it stand out more glaringly and hasten the collapse of illusions and falsification. Our political task does not consist in "saving" Stalin from the embraces of Hitler but in overthrowing both of them.

L.T.
March 6, 1939.

The Coming World War

By LEON TROTSKY
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Towards an INDEPENDENT Revolutionary Art

It may be said without exaggeration that human civilisation has never been assailed by so many dangers as it is to-day. With the help of barbarous, that is to say, most precarious means, the Vandals destroyed ancient civilisation in a restricted area of Europe. At the present time reactionary forces armed with all the weapons of modern technique threaten to undermine the whole trend of world civilisation as evinced in the very unity of its historical destiny. It is not only the impending war we have in view. From now onwards, in time of peace, the position of both science and art has become absolutely intolerable.

In so far as it preserves an individual character at the time of its birth, in so far as it displays subjective qualities in order to produce a certain result leading to an objective enrichment, a philosophical, sociological, scientific or artistic discovery appears as the fruit of a rare *chance*, that is, as a more or less spontaneous manifestation of *necessity*. It would not do to neglect such a contribution either from the standpoint of general knowledge (which aims at a continuous interpretation of the world) or from that of the revolution (which, in order to bring about the transformation of the world, demands a clear notion of the laws governing its movement). More especially, we cannot be indifferent to the mental conditions under which that contribution continues to be made and, with that end in view, we cannot fail to insist upon a guarantee that the specific laws governing intellectual creation should be respected.

The present state of the world leads us, however, to conclude that the violation of these laws is becoming increasingly widespread, and that it is necessarily accompanied by a more than ever manifest debasement not only of the work of art but also of the "artistic" personality. After eliminating from Germany all artists who were in any degree—even formally—lovers of freedom, Hitlerian Fascism forced those who could still agree to wield a pen or brush to become the lackeys of the regime and to sing its praises to order, within a framework of the

narrowest conventionality. An almost identical situation has arisen in the U.S.S.R. during the period of intense reaction which has now reached its apogee.

I need hardly say that, whatever its present success may be, we do not for an instant support the slogan, "Neither Fascism nor Communism!" which is that of the conservative and frightened philistine clinging to the vestiges of his "democratic" past. True art—that which is not satisfied with variations of ready-made models but which endeavours to give expression to the inner needs of present-day man and humanity—cannot help but be revolutionary, that is, it cannot help but aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society if only to free intellectual creativeness from its shackles and to allow the whole of humanity to rise to heights which only geniuses have scaled in the past. At the same time, we know that only a social revolution can clear the way to a new culture. If, however, we dissociate ourselves from the ruling caste of the U.S.S.R., we do so precisely because in our eyes it does not represent Communism, but is its most treacherous and dangerous enemy.

Under the influence of the totalitarian regime of the U.S.S.R., and that of the so-called "cultural" organisms which it controls in other countries, a deep twilight has fallen upon the whole world impeding the rise of any sort of spiritual value. It is a twilight of blood and mud in which, under the mask of intellectuals and artists, there flounder men who have made a pivot of servility, a perverse game of their renouncement of their own principles, a habit of false venal testimony and an enjoyment of an apology for crime. The official art of lead, and to conceal their real mercenary rôle.

The muffled reprobation excited in the world of art by this brazen negation of the principles which art has always obeyed, and which even States founded on slavery had not thought to challenge so completely, must give way to implacable condemnation.

The Communist revolution has no fear of art. It knows that, within the limits of the researches into the artistic vocation in dissolving Capitalist society, the determination of that vocation can only be regarded as the result of a clash between man and a certain number of adverse social forms. This conjunction alone, within a degree or so of the consciousness still to be achieved, makes of the artist a predisposed ally. The mechanism of *sublimation* which intervenes in such a case and which psychoanalysis has brought to light, has as its object the re-establishment of the disturbed equilibrium between the coherent *ego* and the inhibited elements. This readjustment works out in favour of the *ideal ego*, which opposes to the unbearable present reality the forces of the inner world, of the *self*, *common to all men* and constantly in the process of expanding into the future. The need of the mind to emancipate itself has but to follow its natural course in order to be fused in and refreshed by that primordial necessity—man's need of emancipation. An artists' *opposition* is one of the forces to-day that can usefully contribute to discredit and ruin regimes which disfigure, at the same time, the right of an exploited class to aspire to a better world, every sentiment of greatness, and human dignity itself.

It follows that art cannot acquiesce, without at the same time degenerating, in any outside dictation or meekly restrict itself to certain fixed objectives of a pragmatic nature and of extremely short view. It is more worthwhile to trust the gift of (virtual) prefiguration, which is the attribute of every authentic artist, implying the beginning of a (virtual) resolution of the deepest contradictions of the age and orientating the thought of his contemporaries to the urgent necessity of establishing a new order.

The writer's rôle as defined by the young Marx, needs to be vigorously recalled in our day. It is patent that this idea should be extended on the artistic and scientific plane to the various categories of producers and investigators. "The writer", he says, "must naturally earn money in order to be able to live and write, but in no circumstances must he live and write in order to earn money . . . The writer does not in any sense regard his works as a *means*. They are *ends in themselves*, they are so negligibly a means for him and for others that, if need be, he will sacrifice his life for them . . . *The first condition of a free press is that it should not be a profession.*" This statement is more than ever apposite in reply to those who would subordinate intellectual activity to external ends and who, in defiance of its peculiar historical determinations, would impose themes upon art on the pretext of reasons of State. A free choice of themes and absolute freedom from interference in the sphere of his research are an advantage which the artist has every right to claim as inalienable. In the matter of artistic

creation it is essential for the imagination to escape from constraint, to prevent it from being "roped in" at all costs. To those who would urge us, whether to-day or to-morrow, to acquiesce in an art subjected to a discipline which we judge to be radically incompatible with its means, we oppose an irrevocable refusal and our resolute will to uphold the formula, *every liberty in art*.

We grant the revolutionary State, of course, the right to defend itself against aggressive bourgeois reaction even when it covers itself with the banner of science and art. But there is a gulf between such forced and temporary measures of revolutionary auto-defence and the claim to exercise a control over the intellectual creation of society. If, for the development of the material productive forces, the revolution has to establish a planned and centralised *Socialist* regime, then in the sphere of intellectual creation it should from the very beginning set up and assure an *anarchist* regime of individual freedom. There must be no authority, no compulsion, no trace of command! The various associations of scientists and the collective groups of artists, who will concentrate on the solution of problems the scope of which has never been so great, can emerge and devote themselves to fruitful work uniquely on the basis of a free creative friendship, without the least vestige of external compulsion.

It is clear from what we have just said that by defending the freedom of creation we have no intention of justifying political indifferentism, and that we have no idea of wishing to revive a so-called "pure" art, which usually serves the more than impure ends of reaction. No, we have a far too exalted idea of the function of art to deny it an influence on the fate of society. We consider that the supreme task of art in our age is to participate consciously and actively in the preparation of the revolution. However, the artist cannot assist in the struggle for emancipation unless he has become subjectively permeated with its social and individual content, unless he has made its meaning and drama a part of his nervous system, and unless he seeks to incarnate his inner world freely and artistically.

In the present period, which is characterised by the agony of both democratic and fascist Capitalism, the artist, without even being manifestly a social dissenter, finds his right to live and to work threatened by the diminishing possibilities of distributing his work. Naturally, he then turns to the Stalinist organisations which offer him an opportunity of escaping from his isolation. But the implied renunciation of his own message, and the terribly degrading compliances exacted from him by these organisations in exchange for certain material advantages, forbid him to adhere to them if the demoralising influence is just not strong enough to get the

better of his *character*. He must understand at once that his place is elsewhere, not among those who betray the cause of the revolution as well as, of necessity, the cause of man—but among those who give proof of their unshakable loyalty to the principles of this revolution, among those who by this very fact are alone qualified to help to bring it about and to assure through it the free ulterior expression of all the modes of human genius.

The aim of the present appeal is to find a meeting ground for the revolutionary defenders of art, to serve the revolution by the methods of art, and to defend the freedom of art itself against the usurpers of the revolution. We are deeply convinced that this platform can bring together the representatives of tolerably divergent aesthetic, philosophical and political tendencies. Marxists can march here hand in hand with anarchists on condition that both set their faces resolutely against the reactionary police spirit whether represented by Joseph Stalin or by his vassal Garcia Oliver.

Thousands and thousands of thinkers and isolated artists, whose voice is drowned in the hateful tumult of regimented falsifiers, are actually scattered throughout the world. Numbers of small local reviews attempt to group around them young forces which are in need of new directions and not of subsidies. The whole progressive tendency in art is stigmatised by Fascism as degenerate. All free

creating is labelled Fascist by the Stalinists. The independent revolutionary art must gather its forces to struggle against reactionary persecutions and to proclaim loudly its right to existence. Such a muster is the aim of the *International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art (Fédération Internationale de l'Art Révolutionnaire Indépendant—F.I.A.R.I.)* which we judge it necessary to found.

We have no intention of imposing each one of the ideas contained in this appeal, which we ourselves regard as merely the first step along a new path. We ask all the representatives of art, all its friends and defenders who cannot fail to understand the necessity of the present appeal, to raise their voices immediately. We also address the same injunction to all independent left wing publications which are prepared to join in the foundation of the International Federation and in an investigation of its proposed tasks and methods of action.

After establishing the first international contacts through the press and by correspondence, we shall proceed to organise modest local and national congresses. Then will come a world congress which will officially consecrate the foundation of the International Federation.

We want an independent art—for the Revolution, the revolution—for the definitive liberation of art.

André BRETON, Diego RIVERA.

Mexico, 25th July, 1938.

The Right to Work

The strategical task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. The political aim: the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat, all its layers, professions and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution.

The Fourth International does not discard the programme of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the frame-work of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial "minimal" demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be

directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime. The old "minimal programme" is superseded by the *transitional programme*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution.

Under the conditions of disintegrating capitalism, the masses continue to live the meagerized life of the oppressed, threatened now more than at any other time with the danger of being cast to the pit of pauperism. They must defend their mouthful of bread, if they cannot increase or better it. There is neither the need nor the opportunity to enumerate here those separate, partial demands which time and again arise on the basis of concrete circumstances—national, local, professional. But two basic economic afflictions, in which is summarized the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system: that is *unemployment* and *high prices*, demand generalized slogans and methods of struggle.

The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists which, to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crisis, the disorganisation of the monetary system and all other scourges stemming from capitalism's death agony upon the backs of the toilers. The Fourth International demands *employment* and *decent living conditions* for all.