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## STALIN CAPITULATES TO HITLER

by LEON TROTSKY

First reports on Stalin's speech at the current Moscow congress of the so-called Communist Party of the Soviet Union show that Stalin has hastened to draw conclusions from the Spanish events, as far as he is concerned, in the direction of a new turn toward reaction.

In Spain Stalin suffered a defeat less direct, but no less profound, than that of Azana and Negrin. It is a question, moreover, of something infinitely greater than a purely military defeat or even of a lost war. The whole policy of the "republicans" was determined by Moscow. The relations that the republican government established with the workers and peasants were nothing but the translation into wartime language of the relations existing between the Kremlin oligarchy and the peoples of the Soviet Union. The methods of the Azana-Negrin government were nothing but a concentrate of the methods of the Moscow G.P.U. The fundamental tendency of this policy consisted in substituting the bureaucracy for the people, and the political police for the bureaucracy.

### FROM ONE SET OF BOOTS TO ANOTHER

Thanks to the war conditions, the tendencies of Moscow Bonapartism not only assumed in Spain their supreme expression, but also found themselves

rapidly put to the test. Hence the importance of the Spanish events from the international, and especially the Soviet, point of view. Stalin is incapable of struggle, and when he is forced to struggle, he is incapable of producing anything but defeats.

In his speech to the congress, Stalin openly shattered the idea of the "alliance of the democracies to resist the Fascist aggressors." The instigators of an international war are now neither Mussolini nor Hitler but the two principal democracies of Europe, Great Britain and France who, according to the speaker, want to draw Germany and the U.S.S.R. into conflict under the guise of a German attack on the Ukraine. Fascism? That has nothing to do with it. There can be no question, according to Stalin's words, of an attack by Hitler on the Ukraine and there is not the slightest basis for a military conflict with Hitler.

The abandonment of the policy of "alliance of the democracies" is supplemented at once with a humiliating cringing before Hitler and a hurried polishing of his boots. Such is Stalin!

In Czecho-Slovakia the capitulation of the "democracies" before fascism found expression in a change of government. In the U.S.S.R. thanks

to the manifold advantages of the totalitarian regime, Stalin is his own Benes and his own General Syrový. He replaces the "principles" of his policy precisely in order not to find himself replaced. The Bonapartist clique wants to live and govern. Everything else is for it a question of "technique."

In reality, the political methods of Stalin are in no way distinguished from the methods of Hitler. But in the sphere of international politics, the difference in results is obvious. In a brief space of time Hitler has recovered the Saar territory, overthrown the Treaty of Versailles, placed his grasp on Austria and the Sudetenland, subjected Czecho-Slovakia to his domination and a number of other second-rate and third-rate powers to his influence.

During the same years, Stalin met only defeats and humiliations on the international arena (China, Czecho-Slovakia, Spain). To look for the explanation of this difference in the personal qualities of Hitler and Stalin would be much too superficial. Hitler is indubitably cleverer and more audacious than Stalin. However, that is not decisive. The decisive things are the general social conditions of the two countries.

#### REAL DIFFERENCES EXIST

It is now the fashion in superficial radical circles to lump the regimes of Germany and the U.S.S.R. together. This is meaningless. In Germany, despite all the state "regulations" there exists a regime of private property in the means of production. In the Soviet Union industry is nationalised and agriculture collectivised. We know all the social deformities which the bureaucracy has brought forth in the land of the October Revolution. But there remains the fact of a planned economy on the basis of the statification and collectivisation of the means of production. This statified economy has its own laws which accommodate themselves less and less to the despotism, the ignorance, and the thievery of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Monopoly capitalism throughout the entire world, and particularly in Germany, finds itself in a crisis that has no way out. Fascism itself is an expression of this crisis. But within the framework of monopoly capitalism, the regime of Hitler is the only possible one for Germany. The enigma of Hitler's success is explained by the fact that through his police regime he gives highest expression to the tendencies of imperialism. On the contrary the regime of Stalin has entered into irreducible contradiction with the tendencies of dying bourgeois society.

#### SPEECH IS A TRIAL BALLOON

Hitler will soon reach his apogee, if he has not already done so, only to plunge thereafter into the abyss. But this moment has not yet arrived. Hitler continues to exploit the dynamic strength of an imperialism struggling for its existence. On the other hand, the contradictions between the Bonapartist regime of Stalin and the needs of economy and culture have reached an intolerably acute stage. The struggle of the Kremlin for its self-preservation only deepens and aggravates the contradictions,

leading to an incessant civil war at home and, on the international arena, defeats which are the consequences of that civil war.

What is Stalin's speech? Is it a link in the chain of a new policy in process of formation, basing itself on preliminary agreements already concluded with Hitler? Or is it only a trial balloon, a unilateral offer of heart and hand? Most likely the reality is closer to the second variant than to the first. As a victor, Hitler is in no hurry to determine his friendships and enmities once and for all. On the contrary, it is to his utmost interest that the Soviet Union and the western democracies accuse each other of "provoking war." By his offensive Hitler has, in any case, already gained this much: Stalin who only yesterday was almost the Alexander Nevsky of the western democracies is to-day turning his eyes toward Berlin and humbly confesses the mistakes made.

#### TOUGH JOB FOR COMINTERN LIARS

What is the lesson? During the last three years Stalin called all the companions of Lenin agents of Hitler. He exterminated the flower of the General Staff. He shot, discharged and deported about 30,000 officers—all under the same charge of being agents of Hitler or his allies. After having dismembered the party and decapitated the army, now Stalin is openly posing his own candidacy for the role of . . . principal agent of Hitler. Let the hacks of the Comintern lie and get out of this how they can. The facts are so clear, so convincing that no one will succeed any longer in deceiving the public opinion of the international working class with charlatan phrases. Before Stalin falls, the Comintern will be in pieces. It will not be necessary to wait for years before these things come to pass.

Coyoacan, March 11, 1939.

P.S.—After Hitler's entry into Prague rumours spread of a return by Stalin into the circle of the democracies. It is impossible to consider this excluded. But neither is it excluded that Hitler entered Prague with proof of Stalin's estrangement from the "democracies" in his hands. Hitler's abandonment to Hungary of the Carpatho-Ukraine, which did not belong to him, is a fairly demonstrative renunciation of plans for a Greater Ukraine. Whether this will be for any length of time is another question.

In any case, one must consider it likely that Stalin knew in advance the fate of the Carpatho-Ukraine and that is why he denied with such assurance the existence of any danger from Hitler to the Soviet Ukraine. The creation of a common frontier between Poland and Hungary can also be interpreted as a manifestation of Hitler's "good-will" toward the U.S.S.R. Whether this will be for long is still another question.

At the present pace of development of world antagonisms, the situation can change radically. But to-day it would seem that Stalin is preparing to play with Hitler.

Coyoacan, March 25, 1939.

# What Next for the I.L.P.

During the Easter holidays the I.L.P. held its Annual Conference at Scarborough. This was the culminating event of a series of internal crises lasting over a period of nearly ten years. The main issues under discussion were: the attitude of the I.L.P. parliamentary group during the Munich crisis and the question of affiliation to the Labour Party. So engrossed was the conference with these two issues that, during the whole three days it did not find time to discuss either Mussolini's rape of Albania, the activities of the I.R.A., one of the most important factors in the anti-imperialist struggle at the present time, or even the section of the National Administrative Council's report which dealt with its international activities through the London Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity. By not repudiating the attitude of its M.P.s on the Munich issue at this conference, the I.L.P. has declared to the outside world, its political bankruptcy as a party. After the first discussion on this issue the conference degenerated into a complete farce, nobody caring what happened.

Since it disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932 the I.L.P. has attempted to travel along two roads, the road of pacifist-reformism and the road of social revolution. At certain periods, due to the tireless activities of its most advanced members, it has appeared in the role of the revolutionary party for a while, but such successes as have been achieved in that direction have been laid in ruins by the reactionary pacifist attitude of its leaders at every period of crisis. The attitude of Maxton and McGovern at the outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian war, the failure of its leaders to demand from the British workers support for the P.O.U.M. in Spain, McGovern's support of the Palestine Mandate, the disgusting debacle of Maxton wishing Chamberlain "God speed" to Munich in September and on his return congratulating him, together with McGovern, for "preventing" war, Campbell Stephen's advocacy of sharing out the colonies amongst the rival imperialist robbers, which he described in the House of Commons as a return to the policy of Jesus Christ. Such disgusting betrayal of socialist principles and the failure of the rank and file membership of the I.L.P. to take any action against its leaders, are the milestones on the road to disaster.

What will be the consequences of this failure on the part of the I.L.P. membership to face up squarely to its self proclaimed task of leading the

class struggle in this country? Its failure to make a bold stand against its leadership and even to make a decision either for or against affiliation to the Labour Party, at the Scarborough conference, is already having effect. The parliamentary group is already split, Buchanan has declared his intention of accepting nomination as a Labour Party candidate, Campbell Stephen and McGovern are likely to follow suit in the near future. The militant members, who have been vainly striving to transform the I.L.P. into a revolutionary organisation, now completely disillusioned, are attempting to organise themselves with a view to entering the Labour Party apart from the I.L.P., whilst C. A. Smith, the new Chairman, and one or two others in the leadership are completely opposed to Labour Party affiliation.

All these tendencies are an inevitable result of the heterogeneous composition and consequent lack of policy and programme of the I.L.P. Confusion reigns supreme. It must not be allowed to continue. There must be no splits amongst the rank and file.

The left wing of the I.L.P., having at last arrived at the position of realising the necessity of building a new revolutionary party from the broad mass movement, must not, by splitting the I.L.P., doom itself to failure from the beginning. The militants and potential revolutionaries at present in the Labour Party and particularly in the youth movement can be gained for revolutionary socialism by a clear and determined leadership operating in the I.L.P. within the Labour Party. This necessitates two things: firstly that the I.L.P. must enter the Labour Party intact if it is to be of any use from an organisational standpoint and secondly that the lead must be given, not by the present politically bankrupt leadership, but by the revolutionaries already in the I.L.P. together with those whom it will draw into its ranks on its entry into the Labour Party, united on a programme of working class demands, which must lead to the inevitable destruction of the existing capitalist order of society and its replacement by workers' rule. Such a programme, if it is to receive mass support, without which it will, of course, be useless and futile, must be suited to the needs of the working class at the present time.

Deep economic depression now threatens the masses with starvation and is only being staved off by colossal preparation for a world imperialist war

which has now become not only a dangerous probability but absolutely inevitable. It only remains for the line-up to be finally settled and then at any moment a spark can ignite the gigantic ammunition dump upon which we are sitting. The Labour Party leadership and the Stalinist popular-fronters, whilst serving different paymasters and superficially differing in their policies, are at one in their traitorous objective of collaboration with the ruling class in order to lead the masses to slaughter in defence of their imperialist masters' profits, when the rival predatory powers finally come to grips, and to canalise the militancy of the masses which must inevitably arise from the worsening of their conditions during the intervening period.

The immediate task of the revolutionaries is to fight the ruling class and their allies, the Labour and Popular Front leadership. This can only be done on a clear and positive programme. Foremost among the demands must be: a job and a decent wage for every worker, by sharing out the work on the basis of a sliding scale of hours with a fixed maximum of 40 hours a week and a sliding scale of wages to combat the rising cost of living with a fixed minimum calculated to give the workers a decent standard of life; open up the idle factories under workers' control whilst unemployment remains; the expropriation of war funds to maintain the unemployed, the aged and the disabled at a decent standard of life. These are the day-to-day issues. On the broader field, we must stem the

advance of fascism by organising workers' defence corps; organise resistance to military and industrial conscription on a class basis; demand the publication of all secret treaties and agreements—an end to secret diplomacy.

United on such a programme, it will be possible for the revolutionaries to expose the treachery of the present leadership of the working class and to rally around them sufficient numbers of class-conscious workers to enable a positive lead to be given to the organised and the unorganised masses. That is the task which faces us to-day. It can be greatly facilitated by the early entry of the I.L.P. into the Labour Party as a body and will only be hampered by useless splits and the entry of isolated groups and individuals with no organisation around which the revolutionaries can orient themselves. Therefore, the perspectives for the I.L.P. militants must be, not the splitting of the party and the entry into the Labour Party of only a part of its left wing, but to maintain such unity as still exists among the rank and file members and the early entry of the I.L.P. as a body. If a section of the leadership are barred from such a course by "ideals" or "ethical conceptions," then there can be no place for them in the revolutionary vanguard of the working class; they can only lapse into obscurity. The genuine socialists will be at their posts, within the broad mass movement, and carrying forward the real work.

## France in Transition

The offensive of French finance-capital against the standard of living and democratic liberties of the masses is being carried out more and more openly. The aim of this offensive is to give French industrial interests the most favourable conditions possible for the piling up of profits and the perfection of the already tremendous war machine with which it is hoped to preserve the booty acquired in the last war from their less fortunate fellow gangsters, the German, Japanese and Italian financiers. This naturally can only be done by placing more and more burdens on the already heavily loaded backs of the French workers, peasants and small tradesmen.

The offensive is being pushed along two fronts, the economic, *i.e.* the pushing of all new expenditure on to those least able to pay, and the political front, by the gradual suppression of the right of free speech.

Let us first examine the economic sector. The decree loans which have appeared since April profoundly affect the masses of the French people. Reynaud hopes to obtain the fabulous sum of six milliards of francs for the upkeep of the French war machine. Where will the money come from?

Not from the Rothschilds, Schneiders, Creusots and the rich for whom the money will be spent, but from out of the very flesh of the impoverished masses.

The 1% sales tax which is applied at each sale of an article is applicable to all businesses who buy to resell, and since before reaching the consumer the article passes through the hands of many middlemen, each of whom increases his price to pass off the cost of the tax on to his buyer's shoulders, this will mean a considerable increase in the cost of living. The rise in the selling price of state-sold motor-spirit and petrol will also make it harder for many housewives to make ends meet.

Not only does Reynaud wish to increase the inflow of money to the treasury; he also sacrifices the social services to the war machine. The "economies" contained in the decree of laws of April include (a) The reduction in the numbers of the auxiliary staff on the state railways (b) the suppression of credits for public works, etc. (c) the virtual suspension of the Wheat Office. The disappearance of nearly three milliards of credit for public works not only aggravates the already severe unemployment in the building and allied trades but

puts a complete stop to the very slow electrification, sanitation and transport measures so far undertaken in the backward rural areas which are suffering from the lack of these things; thousands of villages have never heard of electricity, in many places the schools are so few that children have to walk several miles to the next village; the same applies to drinking water wells; in many parts of France the roads are in a desperate state; the sanitary system in many villages dates back to before the French revolution. By suppressing the already insufficient credits for the remedying of these ills, Daladier and Reynaud have helped to demonstrate once again that under capitalism there is no room left for progress.

By suppressing credits for the Wheat Office from 1940 onwards they have shown that not only is progress impossible but that the trend of imperialism is for the suppression of the very small advantages already attained by the people. The Wheat Office was created by the Blum Government in answer to the demands of the poorer peasants for the solution to the problem of the low prices offered for their wheat on a restricted market. The Wheat Office was supposed to buy up the surplus unsold wheat of the peasants at the average price for the harvest, but as the money with which the State bought the wheat was raised by two taxes hitting *producers and consumers themselves* the only achievement of the Office was, not to alleviate the lot of the peasants as a whole, but to spread the same burden over the peasants and the consumers. To-day capitalism is in such a predicament that it cannot afford even to maintain this paltry "reform." The money lent by the Treasury for the absorption of the surplus of the 1938 harvests must be paid back in the first months of the next harvest (most probably by another tax hitting the peasants). Moreover, the new decree states that the peasants whose surplus wheat is bought up by the Office will only get paid after the sale of the wheat by the State out of the net income to the State of that sale.

Besides this, the decrees suppress credits of 118,177,950 francs for public health and 468,987,735 francs meant for educational purposes. The money refused for the education and health of the French children will be spent on the construction of tanks and bombers.

Thus we see that the greater part of the six milliards which Daladier and Reynaud wish to raise will be obtained by taxes and economies hitting particularly the strata of the population having the lowest incomes. "But what about the progressive tax on war profits, the tax on wealth, the tightening up of measures against fraud? Are these not measures which hit the rich?" our critics will shout. "What about the 10% cut in license fee to be increased to 20% in 1940; doesn't that help the small tradesmen?"

Let us examine these measures. First the reduction of license fees. Examination reveals that the 1% armaments tax already mentioned more than nullifies any benefit a tradesman would get out of the reduction on license fees. Here is a typical example: the shopkeeper in question sells wines,

liquors, etc., in the 2nd arrondissement in Paris. His license fees for 1938 were 16,000 francs. The 10% reduction will save him therefore 1,600 francs. But the armament tax on his turnover of 32,000 francs will come to 4,320 francs and therefore he pays to the State in 1939 4,320 less 1,600, which comes to 2,720 more than in 1938 on the same turnover, that is, to say, nearly three times as much must be paid over.

As to the limitation of war profits to 10%, Maxists declare that the making of profits on arms should be abolished altogether and that the workers must demand the confiscation of all war profits. As to the tightening up of the anti-fraud measures, they are no novelty. These last few years have seen many such measures but still it goes on. Whereas the worker or peasant cannot escape his taxes, capital, thanks to the levies at its command, usually manages to evade paying a great deal of their taxes.

Let us now examine the political front. There the picture is just as gloomy—Daladier is taking full advantage of the present state of apathy and despair that reigns in the labour movement since the averted general strike of November 30th last year, and is aiming by police methods reminiscent of the Poincare-Clemenceau period after the war, to prevent any regroupment around a fighting programme. It is therefore natural that those most hit should be the Trotskyists, P.S.O.Pists and anarchists. These last few months *all* meetings organised by the Union Anarchiste have been forbidden. An important meeting of the S.I.A. (Solidarite International Antifasciste) called to support the struggles of the French colonial people for independence, at which Marceau Pivert and Fenner Brockway were among those scheduled to speak, was forbidden. The paper *S.I.A.* was seized by the police as well as *Libertaire*, Anarchist organ. Three leaders of the U.A., Vintrigner, Fremont and Francier have been sentenced to 18, 12, and 6 months respectively. The "Trotskyists" are also the objects of police pursuit; Comrades Molinier, Brausch, and P. Frank have been brought up before the courts for propaganda against the increased hours in National Defence industries (made punishable by the decree of 12th November, 1938); Jeanne Martin has been similarly accused as writer of an article against the "integrity of the territory of the French Empire" which appeared in the last (December 1938) number of *La Commune*. The 12th May issue of *Juin* 36, P.S.O.P. organ, has also been seized by the police. Many secretaries of the local sections of the P.S.O.P. report that they are visited by detectives who try to find out the names and addresses of members. Other arrests include those of Comrades Duvernet and Jourdain of the "Syndicalist Class Struggle Circles" (Left wing group in the C.G.T.).

But the reaction in its triumph is not content with hitting out at revolutionary elements of the working-class movement. It has even felt strong enough to forbid the pink Communist Party meetings. In April, a C.P. meeting to be addressed by Thorez and the Stalinist deputy for the region, was for-

bidden; the C.P. changed it into a private meeting and sent out personal invitations to thousands of militants thus hoping to get around the interdiction, but on arriving at the place of the meeting they found that a company of Senegalese Troops had been installed there. Similarly a C.P. meeting scheduled for June 3rd at Grenoble was forbidden, "in view of the present international situation" said the prefect of police! The right of assembly in the department of the Pyrenees Orient has been withdrawn; excuse given—the Spanish refugees!

Just as reactionary are the means whereby the French bourgeoisie hopes to solve the problem of the Spanish refugees. Notices have been put up in the concentration camps harbouring the refugees, proposing to the soldiers that they go and build roads in French Equatorial Africa. The climate in these regions, Congo, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, is so unhealthy that even the South Algerian labourers now refuse to go there. To the Spanish soldiers it means yellow fever, dysentery, sleeping sickness. They might as well go back to face Franco's tribunals; at least it would be a quicker death.

And yet with the freedom of the press, the right of free speech and assembly rapidly disappearing, the Blumites and Stalinists beg the Daladier Government to unite with Chamberlain and Stalin for the defence of a fast vanishing democracy. In the face of this repression the Socialists and Stalinists are completely inactive in every sphere except

the verbal. The leaders hope, no doubt, that Daladier will not notice them. That's what the German social democrats thought—before Hitler came to power!

Last year, as a reaction against the opportunist and cowardly policy of the Socialist Party, the left wing separated and formed the P.S.O.P. Although this party is composed of heterogeneous elements it holds out the hope for a regroupment of the dispersed revolutionary elements. That is why the majority of the "Trotskyists" have joined it. While the leadership pursues a hesitating policy (alliance with petty bourgeois pacifists, etc.) the membership pushes for a firm Marxist policy. Recently, the Paris region of the J.S.O.P. (youth) passed a unanimous minus 2 votes resolution condemning the signing by the party of a leaflet on the war danger got out by a united front of bourgeois pacifist and reformist organisations because of its lack of concrete directives. The J.S.O.P. is actively organising the vanguard of the youth in preparation for the coming war. Their slogan is: "Turn the imperialist war for profits into a social war for the liberation of mankind and socialism." We English revolutionaries hail the J.S.O.P.'s struggle and hope the P.S.O.P. will follow their example. Meanwhile, we will pay our tribute to the militants in Daladier's prisons by struggling in England against those political doctrines and organisations that aim at turning the struggle of the working-class into support for imperialist war and capitulation to the bourgeoisie.

## Again, Sir Stafford Creeps

After the Socialist Party conference at Southport had, by an overwhelming majority, confirmed the expulsion of Sir Stafford Cripps and his associates, the expelled leader of the British Popular Front added another item to the list of surrenders that have marked his political career. He offered, in effect, to sign any undertaking placed before him by the victorious Executive.

His entire case was based on the argument, a very sound argument, that it was his right to circulate to the members of the party any statement which sought to persuade them to his own point of view. The bureaucratic Executive tried to gag him, and when he would not accept the gag they expelled him. The all-powerful card vote in the hands of the big trade union functionaries has now confirmed the expulsion. And Sir Stafford, after passionately defending his democratic rights to address his fellow members almost to the last, now knuckles under and tamely submits to the gag.

This miserable truckling attitude further emphasises his claim to be the leader of a British Popular Front. The Popular Front is in its essence a capitulation to the boss class and Sir Stafford has once more proved how adept he is in the art of capitulation.

The card vote was again swung into operation

to inflict a crushing defeat on the Popular Front. But the Labour leaders, who prate so glibly about their adherence to the principles of "pure" Socialism, immediately proceeded in the debate on Defence and Foreign Policy to prove that their attitude in no way differs from that of the Liberals and the dissident Tories. They outshone these avowed defenders of capitalist Britain in patriotism. They refused to put up any struggle whatever against conscription. They reasserted their determination to give all assistance to National Service. In practice, their "pure" Socialism boils down to the defence of the profits, the markets, the colonies, the plunder of British imperialism. With unparalleled cynicism, Mr. Ernest Bevin identified himself and his brother bureaucrats with the imperialist bandits. "We pinched most of these territories, either for raw materials or for strategic purposes," said Mr. Bevin, "and all the talk about the interests of the natives is just a lot of bunk."

In speaking in this sense of "we," Mr. Bevin reveals that all the talk about pure Socialism is just a lot of bunk. The truth is that the Labour leaders have no need at this stage for a Popular Front. Until the masses start to move they are quite content to go on enjoying the power and the privileges they hold.

But when the masses *do* get on the move, (and the series of unofficial strikes are the warning signs of mass restiveness) they will be prepared to use the Popular Front as a strike-breaking instrument. In preparation for that day, avowed Popular Fronters have been voted back into the Executive, and there can be no doubt that Sir Stafford Cripps will be re-admitted into the party once he has assigned a promise not to get too much in advance of the others again.

The Southport conference has shown that, in spite of the apparent crushing defeat of the Popular Front, the struggle is only beginning. The disasters which Popular Frontism brought upon the Spanish and French workers still threaten their brothers in Britain. Revolutionary socialists must continue the fight to force the Labour Party on to the path of militant working class struggle for Socialist demands. This is the only alternative to capitalist reaction and Popular Front treachery.

## International Crossroads

In the present complex international situation, one fact emerges with increasing clarity, and that is: Hitler has achieved the last of his bloodless victories. The further expansion of German imperialism can only take place by means of war. The immense scope of British rearmament, the adoption in Britain of pre-war conscription, the guarantees to small countries, all underline the fact that Germany has reached the edges of the British spheres of interest and any further step will be regarded as a positive violation of those interests.

Relentless pressure from within Germany continues to operate to force German imperialism into adventures. The returns for the first three months of this year reveal a further sharp contraction in Germany's foreign trade. The sudden immense leap in German note circulation during April has been followed by only a partial withdrawal of the new notes issued, and Germany continues on the dangerous path of unending inflation. Besides the havoc wrought by the world slump on her economic and financial structure, Germany has suffered a series of natural calamities—an anthrax epidemic, a poor whaling season, invasion by potato parasites—all of which further deplete her capacity to maintain the already low living standards of the population. Feverish war preparations, the accelerated arms race, the doubling of accumulated stores of grain over last year's figures, these add to the factors making for economic breakdown and social upheaval. Haunted by the spectre of revolution, German imperialism turns perforce to the lesser evil, the hazardous attempt to expand by means of war.

Chamberlain's policy of "appeasement" has been the attempt to direct Germany's attack towards the Soviet Ukraine, and the agreement concluded at Munich seemed to leave the door open to this outcome. But a section of the British bourgeoisie held grave doubts as to whether Hitler would consent to the role laid down for him by Chamberlain. These doubts were voiced by Eden, Duff-Cooper, Churchill and Lloyd George, and were triumphantly vindicated by Hitler's further move in seizing the remainder of Czechoslovakia and presenting demands to Poland.

If British policy to-day vacillates between "appeasement" and the encirclement of Germany, it is because German policy vacillates between the

attempted conquest of the Ukraine and the attack on the interests of the Western powers, involving ultimately a war with them.

The mounting pressure within Germany is rapidly diminishing Hitler's breathing space, and he is forced to take a decision one way or another in the coming weeks. Upon the nature of that decision depends the fate of the Rome-Berlin-Tokio axis. The partners in that axis have widely different aims, and the point has now been reached when Hitler must choose between Italy and Japan.

The Japanese interest in the axis is purely concerned with its possibilities as a medium of joint action against Russia. When Hitler absorbed Czechoslovakia, the Japanese press declared joyfully that Hitler's path to the Ukraine was now open. Since Germany had already begun an agitation for an independent Ukraine, and had set up a school for the training of Ukrainian leaders in Germany, Japanese hopes ran high.

But the Italian press took a different tone, for Italy is by no means interested in the conquest of the Ukraine. Her interests lie in finding an ally against the western enemy and in seizing a slice of the Balkans to make up for her natural poverty in just those resources which the Balkans hold—coal, oil, grain, minerals. If Italy connived at the seizure of Austria and the Sudetenland it was, it is now clear, in the hopes that Hitler would then turn south-east. Viewing the possibility of a Ukrainian adventure with hostility, Italy held conversations with Poland from which Germany was excluded. Italy also backed up the Hungarian claim for a common frontier with Poland, and although this frontier slams the gate in the face of Germany in her march eastward, Hitler was forced to agree. And finally, Italy occupied Albania, the first step in the conquest of the Balkans. The Italian press emphasised the fact that Italy was waiting, was a past-master in the art of waiting, but could not wait too long.

The possibility that Germany would fall in with Italian wishes had the effect in Japan of producing at first uncertainly, followed by rumours that Japan was approaching the "democracies," and ultimately a Cabinet split which showed the bourgeoisie of Japan as definitely against the axis.

It is not excluded that Germany will swing back

to the plan to conquer the Ukraine. The British Government, by still hesitating to conclude a three Power Alliance to include Russia is doing all in its power to bring about such an outcome. In this case, as Japan draws back into the axis, Italy will draw further away, disappointed in her quest for gains in the Balkans. Whichever path German imperialism decides to adopt, the end of the axis is already in sight.

The dismissal of Litvinov marked the passing of Russian diplomacy in a phase of vacillation corresponding to vacillation in Germany and Britain, in Italy and Japan. Since it is Soviet territory that is marked off as one probable scene of Hitler's next move, Soviet diplomacy seeks an alliance with Britain and France on the one hand but does not neglect on the other hand to make overtures to Germany.

The bargaining goes on behind the scenes, and the toiling masses of the world are mere pawns in the treacherous diplomatic game, blindfolded by secret diplomacy. The uncertainties in the situation are reflected in the internal struggle that goes on within the rival camps, and the double policy that arises from the equivocal situation. Chamberlain, while approaching the Soviet Union reluctantly and with hesitation simultaneously continues to hold out hopes of "appeasement" and to make gestures towards Germany. In the columns of the *Times* the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie continue to debate the pros and cons of the two possible lines of action.

The conclusion of a British-French-Soviet Pact means as little as the conclusion of the German-Italian military pact. If they seem to indicate for

the moment that the Ukraine is safe from Hitler's attentions, it must be borne in mind that nothing is as yet decided and present trends can be reversed overnight.

While the materials for the explosion with Germany are still as yet accumulating and have not yet reached the point of detonation, diplomacy remains in a state of flux, and the shuddering peoples of the world observe the ebb and flow through the distorting medium of newspaper headlines, and try to guess at the strength and direction of the hidden currents below the surface. Mankind, about to be plunged into a new bloodbath by the exploiters and their servants, evinces a deep, silent distrust of their diplomatic manoeuvres. Even Hitler and Mussolini have now, in recognition of this fact, abandoned the bellicose glorification of warfare that formerly marked their speeches. On all sides the imperialists bellow truculently their determination to preserve peace no matter how many millions are shot and bombed to pieces in the process.

One the eve of the Great War there was an atmosphere of war preparations, of frenzied diplomacy, of uncertain pacts and treaties such as obtains to-day. There was also the same deep apprehension and longing for peace on the part of the toiling masses. It is true that the first waves of patriotism on the outbreak of war swept away the instinctive distrust of the masses but it reasserted itself in the form of revolution before long. Similarly, the bourgeois politicians who babble so glibly of peace to-day are unwittingly preparing the masses for the day when they will find the road to peace—through revolution.

## The Jews Abandoned

During the last war there was keen competition between the British and the Germans for the allegiance of the Jews, principally the American Jews, who constitute in the United States a factor not to be neglected. The Germans offered a Chartered Company in Palestine to the Zionists, the British offered them a National Home. These offers were made, as Lloyd George cynically put it, for "propaganda purposes," and for similar propaganda purposes, both sides offered the Arabs the same territory they were holding out to the Jews.

At the present moment there is no question of German imperialism competing against British for the support of the Jews in the coming war. Hitler for "propaganda purposes," built Jewbaiting into the fundamental structure of the Nazi state and by so doing, eliminated the possibility of Jewish war support. For the Jews, there is only one side that can possibly be taken in the coming conflict if any side is taken at all, and the recent White Paper on Palestine of the British Government has tacitly

taken that fact for granted in concentrating its attention entirely on placating the Arabs. The Jews are callously abandoned, just as callously as the Arabs will in their turn be abandoned once they have served their purpose in the next war of protecting Britain's Near Eastern connections and interests.

Jewish immigration is to be ended, Jewish land purchase to be restricted, the Jewish population to be stabilised as a permanent minority. The publication of the paper has been followed by protest demonstrations and a renewed outburst of fighting between Arabs and Jews, threats of rebellion and plans for non-co-operation and passive resistance.

The Arab nationalist leaders, in spite of the sharp lesson they received on the treachery of the imperialists in the last war, are once again intriguing with Germany, seeking to play one rival against the other, and demanding complete control of Palestine as the price for their acquiescence in the plans of the imperialists.

The Jewish nationalist leaders, deprived of simi-

lar opportunities to indulge their taste for intrigue, are forced now to contemplate the results of their previous intrigues.

They have made the Jewish people into instruments of imperialism, to be used against the Arabs and then tossed aside as soon as they had served their purpose. Having helped to safeguard British pipelines to supply oil to the navy, having maintained Britain's strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean, they are now relegated to the position of reserves, to be kept in the background

until needed by the imperialists.

Once again the lesson is forced upon Jews and Arabs alike—there is no possibility for the preservation of the culture and the traditions of small nationalities within the framework of imperialism.

The national aspirations of Jew and Arab alike are callously utilised for the protection of the interests of the British bourgeoisie, which plays one against the other in order to keep both enslaved. The problem of Palestine is one that can only be solved by the victorious socialist revolution.

## Conscription

The decision of the British bourgeoisie to conscript youth reveals that they are consciously preparing for the outbreak of hostilities in a matter of months. Because they wish to handle the pre-war diplomatic arrangements by means of the National Government, they have limited the scope of conscription to a small sector of the population—the 20-year olds.

The Tories have cunningly prepared the way by throwing the onus on to German imperialism. It was rumoured first that the announcement of conscription hinged on the answers Hitler gave to the peace proposals of the British ambassador sent to Germany for that purpose. In this way the British working-class has been induced to believe that Hitler, not Chamberlain, has conscripted their sons.

The other capitalist powers who oppose the axis have unanimously hailed conscription as the organisation *before* the war of another British Expeditionary Force to be thrown in the path of a German advance in Europe just as in the last war. French imperialism in particular, which has been agitating over a long period for British conscription, is jubilant; they are joined in their rejoicings by the French "Socialists" who reproach British Labour for its opposition, in spite of the fact that it was by means of using the conscription laws that Daladier broke the general strike in France last November.

But the Labour Party continues in its "opposition" to the conscription measure. The Labour leaders reproach Chamberlain for breaking his repeated pledges not to introduce such measures in peace-time. This opposition is utterly hypocritical and meaningless, because the Labour leaders, by supporting "National Service" on a "voluntary" basis, have themselves endorsed the capitalist war-plans and paved the way to their present actions. They have endorsed conscription by hunger, they have supported a "voluntary" system of National Service knowing full well that pressure is consistently used by the bosses to force workers to "volunteer," and now, having swallowed these camels, they strain at the gnat of Chamberlain's "broken

pledge." The opposition of the Labour leaders is a fake opposition designed to save their faces in front of the masses.

The Communist Party too, raises a great howl about conscription, about broken pledges. They, too, have never opposed "National Service" except under Chamberlain. They have asked as the price for their support of conscription that "Chamberlain must go." They oppose, not conscription, but Chamberlain, as if British youth preferred being cannon-fodder for Churchill and Lloyd George.

In their present form, the cautious measures of regimenting the youth for the coming world slaughter are part of a long term plan. The National Government has one eye on the electorate, and wishes to face the next general election before the full brunt of conscription has fallen on the population. It has the other eye on the small powers in Europe and the colonial bourgeoisie. For them, conscription is, like the huge rearmament plan, an inducement to ally themselves with Britain in the coming war. The thin end of the wedge has been inserted, the old men have decided that the young shall as usual, be the first to die. And neither "Communist" nor "Labour" leaders have put up a genuine opposition to their war-plans. On the contrary, the rival sets of bureaucrats compete with one another in patriotic fervour, in waving the Union Jack, in demanding more sweeping measures of "defence," in picturing the war to preserve British profits as the struggle for "democracy."

The pacifists have lifted their voice against conscription and a "No Conscription" League is in existence. But the programme of this League is limited to the resistance of conscription, and as its name indicates, is entirely negative in character. The duty imposed on its members is that of refusing to participate in war or the preparation for war. While it is necessary to recognise that this attitude proceeds from a profound distrust of the system which breeds war, it is also necessary to point out that the fight against war is inseparable from the fight for socialism. Only the class war for the overthrow of capitalism can end wars by ending the cause of war—capitalism.

# The Problem of the Ukraine

by Leon Trotsky

The Ukrainian question, which many governments and many "socialists" and even "communists" have tried to forget or to relegate to the deep strongbox of history, has once again been placed on the order of the day and this time with redoubled force. The latest aggravation of the Ukrainian question is most intimately bound up with the degeneration of the Soviet Union and of the Comintern, the successes of fascism and the approach of the next imperialist war. Crucified by four states, the Ukraine now occupies in the fate of Europe the same position that was once occupied by Poland; with this difference—that world relations are now infinitely more tense and the tempos of development accelerated. The Ukrainian question is destined in the immediate future to play an enormous role in the life of Europe. It was not for nothing that Hitler so noisily raised the question of creating a "Greater Ukraine" and likewise it was not for nothing that he dropped this question with such stealthy haste.

## A QUESTION THAT MUST NOT BE IGNORED.

The Second International, expressing the interests of the labour bureaucracy and aristocracy of the imperialist states, completely ignored the Ukrainian question. Even its left wing did not pay the necessary attention to it. Suffice it to recall that Rosa Luxemburg, for all her brilliant intellect and genuinely revolutionary spirit, found it possible to declare that the Ukrainian question was the invention of a handful of intellectuals. This position left a deep imprint even upon the Polish Communist party. The Ukrainian question was looked upon by the official leaders of the Polish section of the Comintern as an obstacle rather than a revolutionary problem. Hence the constant opportunist attempts to shy away from this question, to suppress it, to pass over it in silence, or to postpone it to an indefinite future.

The Bolshevik party, not without difficulty and only gradually under the constant pressure of Lenin, was able to acquire a correct approach to the Ukrainian question. The right to self-determination, that is, to separation, was extended by Lenin equally to the Poles and to the Ukrainians. He did not recognise aristocratic nations. Every inclination to evade or postpone the problem of an oppressed nationality he regarded as a manifestation of Great Russian chauvinism.

After the conquest of power, a serious struggle took place in the party over the solving of the

numerous national problems inherited from old Czarist Russia. In his capacity as People's Commissar of Nationalities, Stalin invariably represented the most centralist and bureaucratic tendency. This evinced itself especially on the question of Georgia and on the question of the Ukraine. The correspondence dealing with these matters has remained unpublished to this day. We hope to publish a section of it—the very small section which is at our disposal. Every line of Lenin's letters and proposals vibrates with an urge to accede as far as possible to those nationalities that have been oppressed in the past. In the proposals and declarations of Stalin, on the contrary, the tendency to bureaucratic centralism was invariably pronounced. In order to guarantee "administrative needs," *i.e.*, the interests of the bureaucracy, the most legitimate claims of the oppressed nationalities were declared a manifestation of petty-bourgeois nationalism. All these symptoms could be observed as early as 1922-1933. Since that time they have developed monstrously and have led to outright strangulation of any kind of independent national development of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

## THE BOLSHEVIK CONCEPTION OF SOVIET UKRAINE.

In the conception of the old Bolshevik party Soviet Ukraine was destined to become a powerful axis around which the other sections of the Ukrainian people would unite. It is indisputable that in the first period of its existence Soviet Ukraine exerted a mighty attractive force, in national respects as well, and aroused to struggle the workers, peasants, and revolutionary intelligentsia of Western Ukraine enslaved by Poland. But during the years of Thermidorian reaction, the position of Soviet Ukraine and together with it the posing of the Ukraine question as a whole changed sharply. The more profound the hopes aroused, the keener was the disillusionment. The bureaucracy strangled and plundered the people within Great Russia, too. But in the Ukraine matters were further complicated by the massacre of national hopes. Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine in the struggle against the powerful, deeply-rooted, longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence. To the totalitarian bureaucracy, Soviet Ukraine became an administrative division of an economic unit and a military base of the U.S.S.R. To be sure, the Stalin bureaucracy erects

statues to Shevchenko but only in order more thoroughly to crush the Ukrainian people under their weight and to force it to chant paeans in the language of Kobzar to the rapist clique in the Kremlin.

Towards the sections of the Ukraine now outside its frontiers, the Kremlin's attitude to-day is the same as it is towards all oppressed nationalities, all colonies, and semi-colonies, *i.e.* small change in its international combinations with imperialist governments. At the recent 18th Congress of the "Communist Party," Manuilsky, one of the most revolting renegades of Ukrainian communism, quite openly explained that not only the U.S.S.R. but also the Comintern (the "gyp-joint," according to Stalin's formulation) refused to demand the emancipation of oppressed people whenever their oppressors are not the enemies of the ruling Moscow clique. India is nowadays being defended by Stalin, Dimitroff and Manuilsky against—Japan, but not against England. Western Ukraine they are ready to cede forever to Poland in exchange for a diplomatic agreement which appears profitable at the present time to the bureaucrats of the Kremlin. It is a far cry from the days when they went no further than episodic combinations in their politics.

#### STALIN, HITLER AND THE UKRAINE.

Not a trace remains of the former confidence and sympathy of the Western Ukrainian masses for the Kremlin. Since the latest murderous "purge" in the Ukraine no one in the West wants to become part of the Kremlin satrapy which continues to bear the name of Soviet Ukraine. The worker and peasant masses in the Western Ukraine, in Bukovina, in the Carpatho-Ukraine are in a state of confusion: Where to turn? What to demand? This situation naturally shifts the leadership to the most reactionary Ukrainian cliques who express their "nationalism" by seeking to sell the Ukrainian people to one imperialism or another in return for a promise of fictitious independence. Upon this tragic confusion Hitler bases his policy in the Ukrainian question. At one time we said: but for Stalin (*i.e.* but for the fatal policy of the Comintern in Germany) there would have been no Hitler. To this can now be added: but for the rape of Soviet Ukraine by the Stalinis bureaucracy there would be no Hitlerist Ukrainian policy.

We shall not pause here to analyse the motives that impelled Hitler to discard, for the time being at least, the slogan of a Greater Ukraine. These motives must be sought in the fraudulent combinations of German imperialism on the one hand, and on the other in the fear of conjuring up an evil spirit whom it might be difficult to exorcise. Hitler gave Carpatho-Ukraine as a gift to the Hungarian butchers. This was done, if not with Moscow's open approval then in any case with confidence that approval would be forthcoming. It is as if

Hitler had said to Stalin: "If I were preparing to attack Soviet Ukraine to-morrow I should have kept Carpatho-Ukraine in my own hands." In reply, Stalin at the 18th Party Congress openly came to Hitler's defence against the slanders of the "Western Democracies." Hitler intends to attack the Ukraine? Nothing of the sort! Fight with Hitler? Not the slightest reason for it. Stalin is obviously interpreting the handing over of Carpatho-Ukraine to Hungary as an act of peace.

#### FOR A FREE, INDEPENDENT SOVIET UKRAINE!

This means that sections of the Ukrainian people have become so much small change for the Kremlin in its international calculations. The Fourth International much clearly understand the enormous importance of the Ukrainian question in the fate not only of Southeastern and Eastern Europe but also of Europe as a whole. We are dealing with a people that has proved its viability, that is numerically equal to the population of France and occupies an exceptionally rich territory which, moreover, is of the highest strategical importance. The question of the fate of the Ukraine has been posed in its full scope. A clear and definite slogan is necessary that corresponds to the new situation. In my opinion there can be at the present time only one such slogan: *A united, free and independent workers' and peasants' Soviet Ukraine.*

This programme is in irreconcilable contradiction first of all with the interests of the three imperialist powers, Poland, Roumania, and Hungary. Only hopeless pacifist blockheads are capable of thinking that the emancipation and unification of the Ukraine can be achieved by peaceful diplomatic means, by referendums, by decisions of the League of Nations, etc. In no way superior to them of course are those "nationalists" who propose to solve the Ukrainian question by entering the service of one imperialism against another. Hitler gave an invaluable lesson to these adventurers by tossing (for how long?) Carpatho-Ukraine to the Hungarians who immediately slaughtered not a few trusting Ukrainians. Insofar as the issue depends upon the military strength of the imperialist states, the victory of one grouping or another can signify only a new dismemberment and a still more brutal subjugation of the Ukrainian people. The programme of independence for the Ukraine in the epoch of imperialism is directly and indissolubly bound up with the programme of the proletarian revolution. It would be criminal to entertain any illusions on this score.

#### SOVIET CONSTITUTION ADMITS RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

But the independence of a United Ukraine would mean the separation of Soviet Ukraine from the

U.S.S.R., the "friends" of the Kremlin will exclaim in chorus. What is so terrible about that? we reply. The fervid worship of state boundaries is alien to us. We do not hold the position of a "united and indivisible" whole. After all, even the constitution of the U.S.S.R. acknowledges the right of its component federated peoples to self-determination, that is, to separation. Thus, not even the incumbent Kremlin oligarchy dares to deny this principle. To be sure it remains only on paper. The slightest attempt to raise the question of an independent Ukraine openly, would mean immediate execution on the charge of treason. But it is precisely this despicable equivocation, it is precisely this ruthless hounding of all free national thought that has led the toiling masses of the Ukraine, to an even greater degree than the masses of Great Russia, to look upon the rule of the Kremlin as monstrously oppressive. In the face of such an internal situation it is naturally impossible even to talk of Western Ukraine voluntarily joining the U.S.S.R. as it is at present constituted. Consequently, the unification of the Ukraine presupposes freeing the so-called Soviet Ukraine from the Stalinist boot. In this matter, too, the Bonapartist clique will reap what it has sown.

But wouldn't this mean the military weakening of the U.S.S.R.? the "friends" of the Kremlin will howl in horror. We reply that the weakening of the U.S.S.R. is caused by those ever-growing centrifugal tendencies generated by the Bonapartist dictatorship. In the event of war the hatred of the masses for the ruling clique can lead to the collapse of all the social conquests of October. The source of defeatist moods is in the Kremlin. An independent Soviet Ukraine, on the other hand, would become, if only by virtue of its own interests, a mighty south-western bulwark of the U.S.S.R. The sooner the present Bonapartist caste is undermined, upset, crushed and swept away, the firmer the defence of the Soviet Republic will become and the more certain its socialist future.

#### AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND MOSCOW BONAPARTISM.

Naturally an independent workers' and peasants' Ukraine might subsequently join the Soviet Federation; but voluntarily, on conditions which it itself considers acceptable, which in turn presupposes a revolutionary regeneration of the U.S.S.R. The genuine emancipation of the Ukrainian people is inconceivable without a revolution or a series of revolutions in the west which must lead in the end to the creation of the Soviet United States of Europe. An independent Ukraine could and undoubtedly will join this federation as an equal member. The proletarian revolution in Europe, in turn, would not leave one stone standing of the revolting structure of Stalinist Bonapartism. In

that case the closest union of the Soviet United States of Europe and the regenerated U.S.S.R. would be inevitable and would present infinite advantages for the European and Asiatic continents, including of course the Ukraine, too. But here we are shifting to questions of second and third order.

The question of first order is the revolutionary guarantee of the unity and independence of a workers' and peasants' Ukraine in the struggle against imperialism, on the one hand, and against Moscow Bonapartism, on the other.

The Ukraine is especially rich and experienced in false paths of struggle for national emancipation. Here everything has been tried: the petty-bourgeois Rada, and Skoropadski, and Petliura, and "alliance" with the Hohenzollerns and combinations with the Entente. After all these experiments, only political cadavers can continue to place hope in any one of the fractions of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie as the leader of the national struggle for emancipation. The Ukrainian proletariat alone is capable not only of solving the task—which is revolutionary in its very essence—but also of taking the initiative for its solution. The proletariat and only the proletariat can rally around itself the peasant masses and the genuinely revolutionary national intelligentsia.

At the beginning of the last imperialist war the Ukrainians, Melenevski ("Basok") and Skoropis-Yeltukhovski, attempted to place the Ukrainian liberation movement under the wing of the Hohenzollern General, Ludendorff. They covered themselves in so doing with left phrases. With one kick the revolutionary Marxists booted these people out. That is how revolutionists must continue to behave in the future. The impending war will create a favourable atmosphere for all sorts of adventurers, miracle-hunters and seekers of the golden-fleece. These gentlemen, who especially love to warm their hands in the vicinity of the national question, must not be allowed within artillery range of the labour movement. Not the slightest compromise with imperialism, either fascist or democratic! Not the slightest concession to the Ukrainian nationalists, either clerical-reactionary or liberal-pacifist! No "People's Front"! The complete independence of the proletarian party as the vanguard of the toilers!

#### FOR AN INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION.

This appears to me the correct policy in the Ukrainian question. I speak here personally and in my own name. The question must be opened up to international discussion. The foremost place in this discussion must belong to the Ukrainian revolutionary Marxists. We shall listen with the greatest attention to their voices. But they had better make haste. There is little time left for preparation!

April 22, 1939.