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**Editor: A. DANILOV**

12 Kaleshny Pereulok, Arbat, Moscow, U.S.S.R.
The Crimea Conference of the Leaders of the Three Allied Powers

The Crimea Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers—Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill—is justly appraised by democrats in all countries as an event of the greatest political importance. It can scarcely be doubted that the decisions adopted in the Crimea will exercise enormous influence, not only on the course of the war in its present, concluding stage, but also on the organization of post-war world order.

Only fourteen months separate the Crimea Conference from the Teheran Conference. During this period cardinal changes have taken place in the entire military-strategical and international situation. The Red Army has not only saved the peoples of Europe from the Hitler plague, but has also brought fascist Germany to the brink of disaster. The piratical Hitler bloc has collapsed and Germany’s former satellites have turned their weapons against her. As a result of the execution of the Teheran decisions the British and American troops created a second front in Europe. The fascist beast is held in a vice between two fronts and the flames of war are now raging in the territory of Germany, which thrust this war upon the peace-loving nations. The Red Army, which was fighting in the regions of Gomel and Kiev at the time the Teheran Conference was in progress, is now striking the enemy crushing blows on the approaches to Berlin.

As victory over the enemy draws nearer the political problems that arise before the Allies increase in number and scope. It is no secret that the Hitlerites and also their advocates—tacit and avowed—in the Allied countries are basing their calculations on the hope that the growing number and complexity of the problems that confront the Allied Powers will cause increasing disagreement among them and in the long run lead to a split. The Crimea Conference and its results have shown the groundlessness and illusory nature of such calculations.

It is strikingly evident at the very first glance that the Crimea Conference discussed and settled a far larger group of questions than the Teheran Conference. The practical decisions of the Teheran Conference mainly concerned military questions, and, primarily, the question of forming a second front in Europe. The decisions of the Crimea Conference, however, in addition to the sphere of military affairs, deal with a large group of important political problems affecting the present situation as well as the post-war arrangement of the world.

This circumstance is the most incontrovertible proof of the growth and consolidation of collaboration among the Allies, the importance of which is enhanced by the fact that it is brought about in the process of overcoming the difficulties created by the inevitable difference in the points of view on the problems that arise held by representatives of Powers which differ in their respective social systems and ideologies. The results of the meeting in the Crimea have again, and still more strikingly, proved to the whole world that the Allies possess not only the will but also the ability to remove differences of opinion that may arise and settle questions in the spirit of mutual understanding and concerted action.

In the Crimea, in the present concluding stage of the war, when the final defeat of the common enemy is the Allies’ immediate military objective, a more precise co-ordination of military efforts was achieved than at any time before. The statement in the official communiqué that “the timing, scope and co-ordination of new and even more powerful blows to be launched by our armies and air forces into the heart of Germany from the East, West, North and South have been fully agreed and planned in detail” sounds like the pronouncement of sentence of death on Hitler Germany. It is now a matter of carrying out these plans, of the
armies of our Allies hurling themselves upon the enemy with the same crushing force as that with which the Red Army is destroying and pursuing him on German territory.

The rout of the common enemy—Hitler Germany—is at the present stage an extremely important but by no means the only object for the achievement of which the freedom-loving nations have united. The people who have borne the incredible sufferings of the present war want the longest possible era of peaceful existence to be ensured after it. In the light of the experience of history, and particularly the experience of the twenty years between the two wars, it is clear that the character and duration of the coming peace will depend upon how the war will end. This applies, firstly, to the way Germany is to be treated after her defeat and, secondly, to the guarantee of post-war collaboration among the peace-loving countries.

As regards both questions, history has imposed the main responsibility upon the three great Allied Powers which head the anti-Hitler coalition; and that is why democrats all over the world regard the decisions of the Crimea Conference on these questions as so hopeful.

The principles of the general policy of the Three Allied Powers towards Germany as enunciated in the Crimea document serve the definite aim of extirpating Nazism and destroying Germany’s military potential. The war which the Germans commenced, and which has cost the peace-loving nations so dear, must be ended in such a way that the German wild beast will be rendered absolutely harmless, and that Germany will never be able to disturb the world’s peace again. Such is the unshakeable determination of the freedom-loving nations; and the program outlined in the Crimea, which includes the occupation of Germany by the troops of the Allied Powers, including France, the military and economic disarmament of Germany, the just and swift punishment of the war criminals, compensation in kind for damage caused by the Germans, and the extirpation of fascist organizations and of the corrupting spirit of fascism and militarism, which had taken firm hold in Germany, is in harmony with this determination.

It is no secret that the problem of how Germany is to be treated after her defeat is one on which certain influential groups in Great Britain and the United States occupy a position which is dictated not by the nation-
special emphasis on the fact that the stern and emphatic language of the Crimea decisions is as far from the pompous and diffuse language of Wilson's fourteen points that were published before the conclusion of the First World War as heaven is from earth. At that time the German militarists who lost the war were able to create the legend that they had not sustained defeat but had been betrayed by the internal enemy. This time Germany will have occasion to convince herself in the most palpable manner of her defeat, from which nothing can save her.

The Allies' decision on the reparations question is not only just, but unquestionably expedient from the economic and political points of view. Germany must pay the Allied countries compensation in kind for the damage she has caused, and to the utmost possible extent. There can be no serious objection to such measures as a single transfer of a definite part of Germany's production apparatus to the countries which have been devastated by Hitler's hordes, and also regular deliveries in kind of a definite part of the output of Germany's national economy. Nor can there be any serious or reasonable objection to the Germans, and primarily those who have taken part in Hitler's invasion of other countries, restoring by the sweat of their brow as large a part as possible of what they so lightly destroyed during their piratical incursions. Of what value are the hypocritical lamentations of defenders of the Germans like Green, the head of the American Federation of Labour, about "forced labour" for Germans in the light of the boundless ocean of ruin, poverty and suffering into which the Germans plunged millions of people in Europe who are now homeless, and lack the elementary means of existence?

The Crimea Conference has made a very substantial contribution to the cause of creating an international organization of security. This work was fruitfully commenced at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Secretaries and the Teheran Conference, and was continued during the unofficial negotiations at Dumbarton Oaks. As is known, during these negotiations the foundations were laid for an international organization of security, and nine-tenths of the problems connected with it were solved in the spirit of complete unanimity. The Crimea Conference has solved in the same spirit of complete unanimity the important problem of the voting procedure in the future Security Council of the United Nations, concerning which agreement was not reached at Dumbarton Oaks. As the foreign and, in particular, the American press reports, this problem was settled on the lines that in all cases not connected with the employment of punitive measures, the decisions of the Council will be adopted by a majority vote, and that the countries involved in the dispute should not take part in the voting on controversial questions. In those cases, however, which call for the employment of punitive measures, such as economic and military sanctions for example, the decisions of the Security Council will be regarded as adopted only if they are supported by a majority of the members of the Council, including all five permanent members, i.e., the Soviet Union, United States, Great Britain, China and France. The solution of the controversial problem of voting procedure made it possible to take the next important practical step towards creating an international organization for maintaining peace and security. This step is the decision to convene in San Francisco a Conference of the United Nations for the purpose of drawing up the statutes of this organization. It is to be hoped that this Conference will play an important role in laying the foundations of a firm and durable peace.

A number of urgent political and economic problems arose as a result of the liberation of numerous European countries from the fascist yoke. Sometimes disagreement arose among the Allies over these problems. On the other hand, the enemies of unity in the Allied camp did their utmost to inflame actual and fictitious disagreements, and freely scattered accusations of "one-sided action" and "dividing Europe into spheres of influence." The Declaration on Liberated Europe adopted at the Crimea Conference must be regarded as a severe blow to these designs of the enemies of firm collaboration among the Allies. In this document the leaders of the Three Allied Powers expressed their determination to conduct a concerted policy "in assisting the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany and the peoples of the former Axis satellite states of Europe to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems."

That the peoples of the liberated countries of Europe wish, in the present arduous conditions, to build their lives on a democratic basis by mobilizing all the sources of nation
al energy to overcome existing difficulties, to extirpate the remnants of fascism, and to destroy its base and disruptive influence, needs no proof. It is important for the future of Europe to prevent the preservation of concealed hotbeds of fascism, of fascist reservations. Thus, the domestic problems of the liberated countries of Europe are interwoven with the common task of extirpating fascism. In this matter the Three Allied Powers have undertaken to assist the peoples of liberated Europe in conformity with democratic principles, and have agreed to act jointly when circumstances demand such action.

Among the most important achievements of the Crimea Conference are the decisions adopted on the Polish question. The enemies of the common cause of the United Nations, and the bankrupt Polish reactionaries of the London émigré "government" in particular, hoped and believed that the disagreements among the Allies on this question would prove to be irremovable. Their calculations have proved groundless. The Polish problem was solved on the basis of realities that had arisen in the course of liberating the long-suffering Polish Republic from the German invaders. Obviously, only such a decision can have vitality, and those elements which refuse to understand this will be thrown overboard by history.

The agreement concerning the question of the Polish Government, as well as that concerning Poland's frontiers reached at the Crimea Conference starts out from the new situation that was created in that country as a result of its complete liberation by the Soviet troops. The existing Provisional Polish Government which is successfully functioning in Warsaw will still further consolidate and expand its democratic base by the inclusion of new democratic elements from Poland and from among Poles abroad. The thus reorganized Polish Provisional Government of National Unity will then be recognized not only by the Soviet Union, but also by Great Britain and the United States, and this will put an end to the anomalous situation in which the Soviet Union maintains diplomatic relations with the Provisional Government of Poland in Warsaw while our Allies maintain such relations with the London émigré "government." The latter must now leave the political arena for good.

As regards Poland's frontiers, the Allies have reached an agreement which conforms to their common desire to see a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland. The eastern frontier of Poland has been definitely fixed to follow the Curzon line, with slight digressions from it in some regions in favour of Poland. At the same time, the line has been definitely laid down for the solution of the problem of Poland's western frontier on the basis of substantial accessions of territory in the North and West. This solution of the problem of Poland's frontiers, creating as it does a firm foundation for friendly relations between Poland and her great eastern neighbour and for averting fresh German aggression against the Polish state, is in keeping with the vital interests of the Polish people. In daring to describe the Crimea decision as the "fifth partition of Poland," the political bankrupts in the émigré "government" utterly expose themselves as Hitler's hirelings. It is not surprising that this vicious statement was caught up by pro-Hitler journalists like the notorious Brown of the Washington Post. What else can they do after the agreement reached between the Allies on the Polish question has knocked the bottom out of all their efforts to sow dissension in the camp of the United Nations? What is surprising, however, is that an influential newspaper like the Yorkshire Post should on the morrow of the Crimea Conference express definite "uneasiness" and put a number of purely "philosophical" questions like the following:

"For example, has the Curzon line frontier been decreed by the 'Big Three' because it is just and proper or because it is expedient? If it is just and proper why the recognition that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the North and West? Many describe this as 'compensation,' although the communiqué does not expressly do so. But why should compensation be necessary? If it is not compensation what is it?"

The newspaper avers that such are the questions that arise in the minds of people who wish to determine the principles by which the leaders of the Three Powers were guided and to ascertain whether these principles lead. As a matter of fact questions like these arise in the minds of people who want to create new disagreements among the Allies immediately after the old ones have been settled.

The object of the decisions of the Crimea Conference on the Yugoslav question is to unite all the democratic forces of the Yugoslav peoples. The Conference deemed it necessary to recommend to Marshal Tito
and Dr. Šubašić immediately to put into effect the Agreement they have concluded. As is known, this Agreement, which was concluded over three months ago, and provided for the formation of a single democratic Government and a Regency Council, could not be put into effect up to now because of the opposition of the reactionary forces grouped around émigré King Peter and his entourage and backed by certain reactionary circles in the Allied countries. The Šubašić Government has now arrived in Belgrade, where, in conjunction with the Committee for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, it will form the Joint Government provided for in the November Tito-Šubašić Agreement.

The Crimea Conference indicated measures for further reinforcing collaboration between the Allied Powers. It was decided that the Foreign Secretaries of the Three Allied Powers should meet periodically, about every three or four months, for regular consultation on political questions that arise.

Wide democratic circles all over the world have welcomed the results of the Crimea Conference with very great satisfaction. The democratic press and leaders of public opinion unanimously admit that the Conference was a great success, which has surpassed all expectations. The Crimea decisions are appraised as a constructive document of immense historical importance, which lays down not only the lines for a consummation of the war that will satisfy the hopes and aspirations of the freedom-loving nations, but also for the most practical methods of safeguarding world peace proposed up to now. It is not surprising, on the other hand, that the Conference’s decisions have displeased those circles which based their political calculations on disagreements among the Allies. These circles, whose mouthpieces are, for example, the most reactionary American senators, the pro-fascist press of the Hearst and Scripps-Howard type, and certain organs of the English press, have already hastened to express their “doubts” and “suspicions,” or their “reservations” concerning the Crimea decisions. For example, to these people, the question of Lvov has remained “unclear,” although a most cursory glance at the map is sufficient to remove all lack of clarity on this question. Insidious questions are asked and statements are made in these circles about the Baltic Soviet Republics, although it is perfectly clear that the Crimea Conference, like any meeting of the representatives of the Allied Powers, past or future, had as little grounds for discussing the “problem” of the Baltic region as, say, the “problem” of California. The reactionary and pro-fascist elements in the Allied countries will undoubtedly offer the most strenuous resistance to the implementing of the Crimea decisions. This resistance must be resolutely broken in the common interests of the freedom-loving nations.

The Crimea Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers will go into history as a memorable milestone, on the road to the complete defeat and extirpation of the brown plague of fascism, on the road to ensuring world peace and security in the interests of all the freedom-loving nations, big and small. The Soviet public is unanimous in its appraisal of these decisions and regards them as unquestionable proof of the growing mutual understanding between the Allies. This understanding is the pledge of the successful accomplishment of the great tasks that confront them, as regards the final and complete rout of the common enemy as well as the organization of a just and lasting peace all over the world.
The Red Army's Military Art

Major General M. GALAKTIONOV

So many astonishing events and abrupt changes have taken place in this greatest of all wars that one would think it held no more surprises for anyone. Nevertheless, in the sixth year of the war the world was amazed when, in January, the Red Army developed its grand offensive. With fabulous speed and titanic power the Soviet troops shifted the fighting line from the Vistula to the Oder. Poland is liberated. East Prussia is surrounded and intersected by mighty thrusts in all directions. A most important industrial region, German Silesia, has been captured. The Red Army is fighting at the approaches to Berlin.

All foreign observers who are at all conscientious have an inkling that behind this powerful offensive which is sweeping all obstacles from its path lies planned organization and a profound strategical idea, which runs through the whole chain of complex and diverse operations that are taking place in the vast area between the Baltic and the Carpathians. Nevertheless, even thoughtful observers sometimes fail adequately to understand the principles upon which the Soviet art of war is based and, as a consequence, are unable to explain the Red Army's amazing achievements in its offensive operations.

It seems to us that the root of this failure to understand lies in the somewhat biased judgment that is characteristic of many foreign observers. In waging an arduous and fierce struggle against a powerful opponent the Red Army makes constructive use of the experience gained in the present war. The Red Army is marching towards its twenty-seventh anniversary covered with the glory of victories unexampled in history, and equipped with the most advanced military art. The brilliant operations the Soviet troops have conducted in the most complex situations testify to the high military skill of every unit of the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Fighting is now proceeding in complex and diverse forms. It may be said that the war is simultaneously manifesting itself in different forms, all constituting a single whole.

We shall start with the problem of the utilization of air forces in modern warfare. In the Red Army the role of aviation rightly receives high appreciation. Both in quantity and in quality the Soviet air force excels the German, which previously had dominated the battlefield. Our air force possesses the necessary organizational and operative independence which enables it to bring its whole power into play.

The war has revealed the immense potentialities of aviation, as well as the limits of its effectiveness. In order to draw correct conclusions we must find the proper criterion for the one and the other. To this day, however, we hear palpably fallacious opinions expressed abroad on this question, and note a tendency to exaggerate the role of aircraft in the present war. Thus, according to the Rome correspondent of the United Press, Lieutenant General Ecker, Commander of the Allied Mediterranean Air Forces, stated:

"Without the crushing work of the R.A.F. and of the American bombers the Eastern front would at present probably be only a little west of the Moscow-Stalingrad line. ... If the Germans possessed long-range bombers, the landings in Italy, France and North Africa would have been impossible, and today the Germans would be inside Moscow and Stalingrad."

In expressing queer views of this kind, General Ecker imposes upon the air force a burden that it is unable to bear. Before the experience of the present war had been gained the overrating of air war might have been attributed to overenthusiasm or lopsided thinking. But who now, after the immortal feats performed by the defenders of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad, after the Red Army's victorious advance from the Volga to the Oder, can seriously ascribe all this to the operations of bombing aircraft? In 1940 the Germans hurled their aircraft against London, but failed to achieve the desired results. If General Ecker intended his observations to be heard by the Londoners it is doubtful whether he has convinced them of the almighty power of bombing aircraft. In 1941-42 the Germans, of course, had more long-range bombers than in 1940; nevertheless, their raids on Moscow in 1941 ended in complete failure, and the massed German aircraft assaults on Stalingrad in 1942 failed, in the long run, to avert the defeat of Hitler's troops.
It is well known that the German command, though strongly inclined to take gambling risks, placed its main stakes not on its air force, but on its mechanized land forces, and utilized aircraft merely as a supporting force in its offensives. This method brought the Germans a series of successes in the West European theatre of war in 1940. The Hitlerites proclaimed themselves the proponents of a new type of war, i.e., of blitz tank war; but the German tank armies were routed on the plains of Russia. Today, powerful Soviet tank armies are sweeping across German territory. This rapid march of our tanks has created a particularly powerful impression upon all foreign observers, for the connection between the Red Army's exceptionally high rate of advance and its skill in handling large masses of mobile troops is obvious. The Red Army has set brilliant examples of modern manoeuvring based on operations of tank and motorized units. The powerful tank thrust in the Frankfurt-on-Oder—Berlin direction, the swift arrival of our mobile troops on the shore of the Gulf of Danzig and the encirclement of the enemy's East Prussian grouping, and the enveloping manoeuvre in Upper Silesia—such are the most important achievements in the offensive of the Soviet mobile forces.

Unlike the war of 1914-18, the present war is a war of manoeuvres. The Red Army has set fine examples of the art of modern manoeuvring. In victorious engagements unprecedented for their magnitude and the complexity of the situations in which they were fought, the Red Army utterly routed the Hitler mechanized war machine. We no longer hear the boastful claims of the German generals made at the beginning of the war that no power on earth was capable of checking the blunder of German tanks. Those generals are no more. If any of them have survived, it is only to witness the catastrophic rout of Hitler's tank forces.

What was the cause of the collapse of the Germans' plans to utilize mechanized forces and aircraft? Some incline to the view that the German command utilized its tanks and aircraft in too large masses. But today the Soviet Command puts into the field greater and more powerful tank forces, and achieves brilliant results. As regards swiftness and daring, the Red Army has far excelled the Germans in this respect. Consequently, the blunder the German command committed was that it failed to appreciate the role of defence in modern warfare and underrated the power of the Soviet defence, in particular.

It must be noted that certain observers in Allied countries also fail at times to see this aspect of modern warfare clearly. Either they overrate the strength of defence fortifications, and of German fortifications in particular, or they go to the other extreme. Thus, Liberator, the commentator of the London Observer, wrote at the end of January:

“There is nothing in modern strategy or modern engineering so far produced that can halt the first impetus of armoured assaults if they are backed in good time by massed artillery.”

The experience of the present war has demonstrated how this prejudice was swept away by the Red Army, which has displayed exceptional skill in parrying enemy tank assaults. In the battle of Kursk in 1943 the Red Army nipped in the bud assaults by huge German tank forces. The same thing was repeated at Kiev in the winter of 1943-44 and in the Kaunas direction in the autumn of 1944. Quite recently the Germans launched a counter-offensive with large tank forces southwest of Budapest and again suffered defeat.

This brings us to that side of Soviet military art to which foreign military observers obviously devote too little attention. The strength of modern defence lies in fire power. It is so strong that the opinion is often expressed that a transition to positional warfare is possible. Positional warfare is possible. The war in the Italian theatre, for example, has obviously assumed such a character. But the Germans' anticipation of positional warfare on the Soviet-German front proved utterly wrong.

This was due to the fact that the Red Army displayed enormous striking power at every strongly fortified position of the enemy it attacked. It displayed brilliant skill in breaking through the most strongly fortified lines, in overcoming natural barriers such as mountains, forests and marshes adapted for defence, in forcing rivers, and in capturing towns and other inhabited points. The present offensive of the Soviet troops has not been an easy march of tank units under conditions similar to those the Germans enjoyed during their operations in 1939-41. No, They were obliged to storm the enemy's powerful field fortresses on the left bank of the Vistula and in East Prussia.
The ability of our troops to overcome the most powerful fortifications is due primarily to the power of our Soviet artillery, which is the Red Army's principal striking force. The strength of the defense is broken by fire power. Artillery provides fire of the highest concentration. The tactics of the Soviet artillery, however, are entirely new, and differ from artillery tactics in the period of the First World War. The Red Army has successfully solved the extremely important problem of combining fire power with mobility. This is one of the most important characteristic features of Soviet military art; and this certain observers fail to grasp.

At the end of January the New York Times wrote concerning the Red Army's offensive:

"The development of the entire campaign wherein the Germans are freely retreating in the centre while resisting on the flanks in East Prussia and Silesia suggests the strategy pursued by Hindenburg and Ludendorff at Tannenberg."

That the Germans are not "freely retreating in the centre" needs no proof, of course. They are putting up a fierce resistance and are compelled to retreat by the blows struck by the Red Army. The Germans placed strong hopes on East Prussia, which they had converted into a huge fortress. They were doomed to disappointment, however. Today East Prussia is not only surrounded, but cut up into isolated fragments by the mighty thrusts of the Soviet troops. Tannenberg has become the grave of the Hitlerites' last hopes. There, too, lies buried the clumsy attempt to explain the course of the operations made by the New York Times, which praised "the strategy of Hindenburg and Ludendorff at Tannenberg."

We have spoken of the three forms the war has assumed: air war, tank war and war in fortified areas. These, however, form one whole. To ensure unified leadership of modern air, tank and infantry armies is the function of strategy. The effectiveness of Soviet strategy is inseparably connected with the great and indomitable strength of the Soviet system, which has come through the severest trials of the war with flying colours.

It is quite obvious that the Red Army's operations, conducted over an enormous area, are directed in conformity with a single strategical plan. This plan provides for a wise combination of unprecedented swiftness and blows of crushing power, of daring manoeuvres and farsighted circumspection, of boldness of design and effective support of operations. The success of the Red Army's operations rests on the inter-action of all arms. Its tactics provide for the utmost use of fire power, and also for the utmost use of the mobility of modern military technical appliances. They are flexible, manoeuvring tactics. The wedges of the Red Army's mobile forces were boldly thrust into the enemy's defences on the approaches to Frankfurt, Stettin and Elbing, and deeply into German Silesia. But closely behind these wedges, supporting and consolidating their successes, came the bulk of the troops — infantry and artillery — along the whole length of the vast front.

Recently the New York Sun wrote that military circles in the United States regard the Red Army's present offensive as a most brilliantly planned military operation, which will become classical and be recorded in future military textbooks. In particular it is noted that the offensive of every army group is conducted in such a way as to ensure success along the whole front and, if necessary, serve also as flank protection for another attacking army group.

This and many other comments in the Anglo-American press reveal an appreciation of the fact that the Red Army is a formidable force directed by the rules of advanced military art. Its high skill and heroism are properly appraised in Allied countries by all those who are directly engaged in the struggle against the common enemy. Only certain armchair strategists who philosophize about war in their editorial offices express a "dissenting" opinion. Thus, last December, the American observer Brown, claiming to express the opinion of "military circles in Washington," stated in the Evening Star that the war against Germany could have "ended in 1944" if the Red Army, which he called "the Russian steam roller," had operated according to his plans.

Our Soviet readers have probably not heard about the "Russian steam roller." I had not heard this term on commencing my military career in the old Russian army. The Russian men and officers who were fighting in the First World War were not aware that in foreign literature, even that of the Allied countries, they were called a "steam roller." It was only after the war, on reading foreign military literature, that I came across this "term." At first I failed to understand its meaning. The dictionaries, with stern im-
partiality, gave me only the literal translation. But gradually the meaning behind this term “steam roller” dawned upon me, and I think it is worth while—not only for educational purposes, as will be seen later—to acquaint our public with it.

We open an English military book which appeared as far back as 1931—Liddell Hart’s book on Foch. In Chapter XI the author describes the Russian armies’ operations in 1914. After observing that the Russians, on the insistence of the Allies, launched an offensive in East Prussia, he goes on to deal with the later Russian offensive on the left bank of the Vistula and says:

“A huge phalanx of seven armies began a ponderous advance through Poland into Silesia. Unable to hear the creaking of the machine, the French and British peoples gleefully spoke of the ‘Russian steam roller.’ It would have been a more apt simile to liken the Russian masses to ‘dumb, driven cattle.’ They were soon driven back, never again to approach German soil.”

(Vol. I, p. 159.)

Such then is the meaning of the term “Russian steam roller” that is employed in foreign literature on the First World War. There is no need to comment on Liddell Hart’s unbridled slander of the Russian army which was bled white while saving the Western Allies from the German offensive against Paris. The meaning of his sallies is clear. They express superciliousness towards the country which certain circles regarded as an ally today and as an object of colonial exploitation tomorrow...

Those times have passed away long ago. Our country, regenerated by the Great October Revolution, has displayed strength and might sufficiently eloquent to convince the most hidebound reactionaries who gaze down upon the world that surrounds them with a sense of their racial superiority. Now that the Russian troops are fighting on the approaches to Berlin there is no fun even in mocking at Liddell Hart’s prophesy that the Russian army would never approach German soil again. Nevertheless, Liddell Hart’s contemptible ideas are extremely tenacious. They appear in the columns of the foreign press in one form or another again and again. Thus, on February 1, when the Red Army’s great offensive was already in progress, Baldwin, the military observer of the New York Times, wrote that, like the Germans, the Russians are always ready to suffer heavy losses if something big is to be gained. The Americans are not like that, he averred. The Russians can and will if necessary make any sacrifice to achieve victory. The Americans are less realistic and not so ruthless as the “Asiatics.”

It is well known that this writer who is puffed up with the same superciliousness and smugness has earned unenviable notoriety as a prophet who invariably “puts his foot in it.” In his writings he has been utterly obsequious to the Germans, their “invincible” army and “unexcelled” military skill. But the Red Army has overthrown his idol, which is now rolling in the mud. Baldwin gives vent to his feelings by the means which have still remained at his disposal, forgetting that as the collapse of Germany draws near the demand for the race theory irresistibly falls.

The peoples of the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain are filled with determination to carry their joint struggle against Hitler Germany through until the complete rout of the enemy is achieved. The Red Army’s victorious offensive has brought the complete triumph of our just cause immeasurably nearer. The decisions of the Crimea Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers indicate that there will now be even closer co-ordination of the war efforts of the three Allies than there has ever been before. In the sum total of these efforts the share contributed by the Red Army’s operations, its military skill, courage and heroism, is enormous. Every attempt, prompted by prejudice, ignorance or malice, to belittle the part it has played is harmful to the common cause of the United Nations.
Democratic Forces Versus Anti-Democratic Forces in Rumania

VI. LINETSKY

Six months have already elapsed since Rumania broke off her pernicious alliance with fascist Germany and turned her weapons against the Germans. The events of August 23 represented something more than a "palace revolution." They were not due to the merits of particular individuals who now claim special credit for them; they were the result of the entire situation that arose. After the Red Army had routed the Germans on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front one could hardly help seeing that only a rupture with Hitler could save the Rumanian state. Of course, the popular masses in particular were well aware of this.

That attempts to exclude the people from the settlement of fundamental questions on which the future destiny of Rumania depends definitely militate against the political and economic revival of the country needs no proof. Nevertheless, far from ceasing, such attempts have been persisted in, and have brought about a political crisis which has long been ripening.

The Rumanian people, who have suffered centuries of foreign rule and have known the miseries of slavery, now feel, perhaps for the first time, their responsibility for the country. Their anxiety to find new paths that will lead to the satisfaction of the urgent needs of the country's political development is therefore quite understandable. Understandable, too, is the disgust aroused in the people by the obstacles artificially erected by individuals who have failed to realize the significance of the changes which have occurred and who are reluctant to draw the most elementary lessons from them.

In the different countries liberated from the fascist yoke the new life is shaping in different ways. Different, too, are the forms of resistance to this process, prompted by a desire on the part of definite political circles to effect a gradual return to the ante bellum situation. In Rumania this resistance has assumed a particularly stubborn character, chiefly owing to the existence of two parties, the so-called "historical parties"—the National Tsaranist Party and the National Liberal Party—which are still drawing interest upon their old political capital and which, thanks to the gracious favour of Antonescu, have preserved their central core, which now serves as a magnet for all reactionary forces.

The consolidation of the reactionary forces around these parties, and chiefly around the National Tsaranist Party, is intended as a counterpoise to the powerful accession of strength of the National Democratic Front, which is composed of the Communist Party, the Social-Democratic Party, the federated trade unions, the Agricultural Workers' Front and the Patriotic Union.

This crisis has once again brought the country to the crossroads. It has to choose between reverting to the system which once before led to the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in Rumania, and resolutely eradicating the fascist heritage and reactionary ballast and creating conditions which will facilitate the further political development of Rumania as a country that has joined the front of the United Nations.

There is no other alternative. The struggle in Rumania is consequently a very stern one. It centres around the fundamental problems of the internal political life of the country, the settlement of which one way or another will determine Rumania's position in a Europe liberated from the Hitler tyranny. These problems are: the fulfilment of the armistice terms, the punishment of the war criminals, the purge of the administration, and agrarian reform.

The attitude of the National Democratic Front towards the fundamental questions affecting Rumania's present and future is expounded in due detail in the documents of this broad federation of the progressive democratic forces of the Rumanian people. The program of the National Democratic Front published towards the end of January clearly outlines the fundamental policies of the democratic government on whose formation wide sections of the Rumanian public are now insisting. In the sphere of foreign policy, this program demands a maximum exertion of effort in the fight against Hitlerism side by side with the United Nations, the
punctilious fulfilment of the terms of the armistice agreement, the establishment of ties based upon sincere and durable friendship with the Soviet Union and all the other democratic countries, and also of regular trade relations with these countries. In domestic affairs, the program of the National Democratic Front insists upon a reasonable policy towards the national minorities of Rumania, upon an immediate agrarian reform, upon the ejection of fascist elements, supporters of Antonescu and saboteurs from leading posts in public and private institutions, upon the arrest and trial of war criminals, and upon the democratic reorganization of the army.

This program of the National Democratic Front for the solution of the problems confronting Rumania offers the prospect of Rumania's conversion into an equal member of the great family of democratic countries, which would ensure the independence, stability and economic progress of the Rumanian state. This prospect is in conformity with the grand aims of the fight for liberation from Hitlerism and for the establishment of stable and enduring peace in a post-war Europe, emancipated from the fascist yoke. The resolute expurgation of the fascist scum and the political regeneration of Rumania would create all the conditions for the stabilization of peace on the Soviet Union's southwestern frontier and on the major routes to the Near East. On the other hand, her economic reconstruction, and in particular an immediate agrarian reform, as outlined by the National Democratic Front, would create a firm foundation for the wider participation of Rumania in the post-war economic collaboration of the democratic countries.

Another way of solving the cardinal problems with which Rumania has been confronted by the very course of events is to restore the old order, to suppress the resurgent democratic forces and to convert Rumania into a new hotbed of disorder and intrigue. That precisely is the purport of the malicious insinuations with which the Rumanian reactionaries replied to the program of the National Democratic Front.

The National Tsaranist Party, that asylum for unsaddled legionaries, has once again taken the lead in the campaign of slander against the progressive democratic camp. The mere publication of the program of the National Democratic Front was enough to open all the sluices which temporarily retained the venom seething in this cauldron of Rumanian reaction. The poisoned arrows launched by the newspaper Dreptatea confirmed that the National Tsaranists have definitely lost all sense of reality and, evidently mistaking the year 1945 for 1937, have plunged into a big gamble cloaked by false, demagogic slogans and clothed in democratic garb.

Such a disguise is the hypocritical concern Dreptatea displays for the fate of Rumanian democracy.

"It is obvious from past and present events," writes Maniu's pet organ, "that the country trusts the National Tsaranist Party. Nevertheless, the party does not demand power for itself alone and is striving to create the possibility of cooperation with other democratic forces in the great work which lies before us. Under present conditions the rule of one party would be tantamount to a denial of the democratic idea."

Passing off their enforced manoeuvre as a virtue, the National Tsaranists pay lip service to the union of democratic forces which they are actually combating with a fury which has been mounting for the past six months. In this gesture of hypocritical magnanimity we clearly detect an intention on the part of Maniu's party to represent the struggle of the National Democratic Front against the reactionary fronde as an attempt to establish the "dictatorship of one party." By this intrigue Maniu and his staff of conspirators in Sibiu hope to restore their fallen credit. They are trying to replenish their depleted ranks, to intimidate Rumania and to mislead public opinion in the Western countries by holding up the bogey of the "dictatorship of one party," and thus to inspire mistrust of the National Democratic Front, which, as we know, represents not one party, but a broad federation of all the democratic forces in Rumania.

Juggling with democratic catchwords and even asserting, as does the unscrupulous Curtierul, that "despite superficial impressions created by the controversy the National Tsaranist Party is in the arena of the struggle for the satisfaction of the demands of the broad masses side by side with the groups of the National Democratic Front," Maniu's party is activating its struggle against democracy. This party has never had any affinity with democracy. Its political complexion in the past is characterized by its election bloc with the fascist
Iron Guard, its bloody repression of the workers’ strikes in Grivița and Lupeni, and its actions in paving the way for Antonescu’s dictatorship. Its political complexion today is characterized by its subversive activities against the unity of the democratic forces, its adoption of terrorist methods of struggle, and its mobilization of all the reactionary dregs of society for the restoration of the regime of conspiracies against the vital interests of the Rumanian people, a regime which has long been condemned by history.

Speaking in Cluj on December 1, 1937, on the anniversary of the incorporation of Northern Transylvania into Rumania, Maniu said:

“We have as examples Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany, who, thanks to their unbending will, have succeeded in arousing the consciousness of their nations, which have achieved successes that are today the envy of the whole world. Adolph Hitler in Germany, who was able to implement his bold will, has not only saved his country from certain dangerous tendencies: he has focused upon himself the attention of the whole world. When Mussolini, and then Hitler, appeared in the international political arena we greeted them with a certain distrust. However, their deeds have eloquently justified their appearance and they are worthy of our admiration.”

Maniu’s admiration for Hitler and Mussolini bore, as we know, anything but a platonic character. And the traces of it determine Maniu’s policy today. Protection of the legionaries, suspicious negotiations with Vaida-Voevod, organizer of the Iron Guard, and active resistance to the arrest and punishment of the war criminals all go to show that in the new situation the Maniu clique remain the sinister force they have always been. They only rouge their cheeks to conceal the pockmarks of old vices. But the mask will not deceive the popular masses.

In their endeavours to drive Rumania into the maelstrom of new rash adventures, the National Tsaraniast leaders are hampering and sabotaging the solution of the major political and economic problems confronting the country. Latterly they have intensified their efforts to prevent the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by Rumania under the armistice agreement with the Governments of the Three Allied Powers. It was the National Tsaraniasts who first complained about the “harshness” of the terms of this agreement, whose generosity towards a vanquished country is universally acknowledged. Even the Rumanian press has repeatedly admitted that the armistice agreement was no hindrance to the country’s progress.

“If we bear in mind,” wrote the Tribuna poporului, “that our war expenditures in past years amounted to $500,000,000 per annum and that the reparations average only $3.50 per capita per annum, it is easy to conclude that the fulfilment of the armistice terms should present no difficulty.”

The agreement signed on January 16, in Bucharest, for the delivery of goods in compensation for the damage caused by Rumania to the Soviet Union as the result of hostilities and the occupation of Soviet territory was very favourably received by broad sections of the Rumanian public. The Jurnalul de dimineață pointed out that in the course of the negotiations “care was taken that Rumania’s deliveries to the Soviet Union should not damage or dislocate Rumania’s economy.” According to the Timpul the volume of deliveries stipulated by the Bucharest agreement “will enable Rumania to revive her industry and provide wages for the majority of the workers.” Timpul further pointed out that “the annual deliveries of wheat do not exceed 7.7 per cent, maize 4 per cent, and barley 6.5 per cent of Rumania’s annual production...”

Such are the facts. Only the reactionary circles grouped around the National Tsaraniast Party continue to assert that the armistice terms are “unbearable.”

At the signal for the campaign against the armistice agreement sounded in Maniu’s speech in Sibiu, the newspaper Viitorul delivered itself of what amounts to a programmatic statement which gives us a comprehensive idea of the political aims pursued by the Rumanian reactionaries and the deliberate blackmail to which they are resorting.

“Let us take a state,” Viitorul writes, “of which, for the encompassing of definite aims, indemnities and sacrifices are demanded from all its spheres of life. That state or nation pledges all its human and material forces to discharge these obligations. However, its efforts and sacrifices are not compensated by any rights. The efforts exhaust the state’s forces and reserves, but do not bring it any rights or any improvement in its conditions in return... The sacrifices borne without return result in the disorganization and destruction of the spiritual forces capable of maintaining the effort. At this stage of the crisis the obligations cannot be discharged, inasmuch as they have no ethical foundation.”
As we see, Rumania's reactionary circles are openly threatening to nullify the armistice agreement. The growing sabotage in industry and agriculture and the resistance to the agrarian reform, which is of essential importance to Rumania's entire economy, give us an idea of the methods by which the reactionaries are endeavouring to carry out their threats. The National Tsaranist clique are leading this campaign against the interests of the Allied Powers, with whose Governments Rumania concluded an armistice agreement five months ago.

The leaders of the National Tsaranist Party are closely associated with the General Union of Rumanian Industrialists (Uniunea Generală a Industriiștilor din România), which is sabotaging the establishment of even elementary order in the country's economy. Behind the leaders of this "peasant" party stand the banks and industrial firms of Northern Transylvania, powerful joint stock companies and monopolies, which are concentrating their efforts, not on resuscitating the country's economy, but on destroying it, not on carrying out the armistice agreement, but on nullifying it.

The National Tsaranist clique are also the ringleaders of the landowners' plot against the measures which promise to promote Rumania's agriculture, and against the agrarian reform in particular. Masking their reactionary attitude towards the agrarian question by demagogic phrasemongering, the National Tsaranists are now endeavouring to bury this question altogether, and to erect a gravestone over it in the shape of a commission of saboteurs headed by Ion Hudită, Minister of Agriculture.

The agrarian reform of 1918 in Rumania did not abolish the feudal survivals in land tenure but perpetuated the semi-feudal method of exploitation of peasant labour. Today, out of 19,750,000 hectares of arable land, 13,385,000 hectares belong to 3,255,000 peasants, and 6,365,000 hectares to only 25,000 big landlords. This distribution of landed property provides the big landlords with a powerful lever for influencing the economy of the country. And the Rumanian landlords, united in the Landowners' Syndicate, convert this lever into a tool of their sinister political machinations.

Professor Stoianovici, a representative of this syndicate, recently declared that the "expropriation and break-up of the landed estates would aggravate the situation created in the country after 1916, and would lead to the expropriation of the national wealth and to universal impoverishment." The Rumanian landlords assert that agrarian reform would result in famine, when as a matter of fact they themselves are pushing the country towards famine by sabotaging the sowing campaign.

Since the fall of Antonescu the Rumanian reactionaries grouped around Maniu's party have come out in their true colours. The reactionary elements in the Radescu Government mustered all their forces to get the war criminals bill and the trade union bill shelved and to prevent the purge of government institutions. It is significant that the act to legalize the trade unions was signed only after the workers convened trade union congresses without waiting for the blessing of the authorities. It is also significant that the brouh of the so-called purge of the government institutions leaves garbage like ex-leaders of the Iron Guard, chiefs of legion detachments, close relatives of Antonescu, initiators of "racial laws," and the like.

Rumanian newspapers quite rightly characterize this "purge" as a malicious travesty. The fact is that the Rumanian reactionaries are out to keep their subversive agency absolutely intact. This is precisely the purpose of the National Tsaranists, who have started an open struggle against Rumanian democracy.

This policy of Maniu and his representatives in the Radescu Government has resulted in the moral and political isolation of the National Tsaranist leaders. An opposition is springing up within this party against Maniu, and certain branches of the party have announced their endorsement of the program of the National Democratic Front. This has furnished the newspaper România liberă with grounds for assuming that the "democratic elements within the National Tsaranist Party will put an end to the influence and to the disingenuous policy of Maniu and his clique."

The offensive launched by the Rumanian reactionaries is being vigorously resisted by the democratic sections of the population, united in the National Democratic Front. Broad sections of the Rumanian people demand the formation of a National Democratic
Rumania has again to make a choice. It is to be presumed that the National Democratic Front will rally all the live forces of the Rumanian people in the struggle against the reaction that has been raising its head. The establishment of a genuine democratic government will open the way to the resurgence of Rumania, which, as events have shown, is inconceivable except within the framework of democracy.

The Political Situation in Belgium

IMMEDIATELY after the Pierlot-Spaak Government returned to Belgium it became evident that a profound government crisis existed in that country. Subsequently, far from subsiding, the crisis assumed a protracted and even more acute character. Hence, the report that Prime Minister Pierlot had handed the resignation of his Cabinet to Prince Charles, who is acting as Regent in the absence of King Leopold, carried away by the Germans, did not come as a surprise to world public opinion. On the contrary, the English and American press had long before expressed serious doubts about the ability of the Belgian government to cope with the tasks that confronted it.

What is the cause of this obvious failure of the Pierlot Cabinet? The following laconic formula, published in the last issue of the London New Statesman and Nation, may, perhaps, be taken as a generalization and summary of opinions expressed on this point:

“Pierlot is paying the penalty for endeavouring to re-import into his country the political tactics and outlook of pre-war days, instead of drawing on the resistance movement for new men and methods.”

Indeed, anybody who has objectively watched the activities of the Pierlot-Spaak Government during the five months that have elapsed since it returned from exile must, willy-nilly, arrive at the conclusion that this government has been guided by the motto: “Back to the past!”

Pierlot, however, who is reputed to be a man of very stubborn character, immediately came up against even more stubborn facts. Firstly, he came up against—not only in the figurative but also in the literal sense of the term—the resistance movement, the Belgian patriots. For four years these people, ignoring the counsels reaching them by radio from London to adopt a passive waiting policy, waged a heroic, armed struggle against the German invaders and native traitors. Pierlot came up against the fact that the consciousness of the people had grown immensely in the course of the struggle. It transpired that the people did not want to return to the past, if only for the reason that the policy pursued by pre-war governments, the keynote of which was appeasement of Hitler Germany, had led Belgium to shameful capitulation. It turned out that the resistance movement had brought to the forefront new men, who had not played a particularly conspicuous role in political life before the war and, at all events, had not belonged to the ruling upper circle but, on the other hand, had during the stern years of occupation, proved themselves fearless fighters and talented organizers of the resistance movement.

In Belgium, as in France and in a number of other countries which have borne the yoke of German occupation, the resistance movement unites people who belong to different social groups and hold different political views. This profoundly patriotic movement is distinguished for its spirit of consistent democracy. It considers that the main task that confronts the country is to take the fullest and most active part in securing the speediest rout of Hitler Germany, to elimi-
In the weeks that followed, the people of Belgium were closely acquainted with the German occupation and its effects on daily life. The German army occupied Brussels and other towns, and evidence of sabotage and terrorism was widespread. General van Overstraten, the King’s adviser, was said to be closely connected with Hitler Germany, exercised decisive influence on the organization of Belgium’s defence. By von Overstraten’s orders, shortly before the war, General van den Bergen, one of the most capable and energetic officers in the Belgian army, was removed from the post of Chief of the General Staff and that nonentity Michiels was appointed in his place.

Even when the menace of German aggression became obvious to the ordinary man in the street the Belgian government obstinately refused to establish any contact with England and France for the purpose of drawing up concerted measures of defence against this aggression. On the eve of the German attack on Belgium the armed forces of the country were not concentrated on the Ger-
man frontier, but were distributed along all the frontiers because it was considered the most important thing to show Hitler that Belgium was loyally maintaining neutrality and that she was ready to offer equal resistance to the English and French troops, as well as to the German troops.

This peculiar policy of "neutrality," which obviously ran counter to the vital interests of Belgium, was dictated by the anti-popular forces represented by the reactionary leaders of the Catholic Party, who were closely connected with the Court. Virtually, the function of the Liberal and Socialist representatives in the government was to neutralize the resistance to this policy of the memberships of their respective parties. This function was fulfilled with exceptional zeal by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Spaak. Evidently he is trying to fulfill it even now, but the situation in the country is entirely different from what it was before the war. The old game of coalitions of the traditional parties with the elimination of those who are really connected with the masses of the people is meeting with sharp condemnation even in moderate circles of Belgian society. Very characteristic in this respect is the criticism of the Pierlot-Spaak Government uttered by the Brussels Liberal newspaper Dernière Heure.

"This government," wrote that newspaper, "is not a government of national unity. Actually it is not even a government of three parties. It is a reactionary government, directed by the reactionary Right Party with the conscious or unconscious complicity of Spaak."

The resignation of the Pierlot-Spaak Government can scarcely be regarded as an admission of defeat on the part of the anti-popular circles. The Belgian reactionaries (and not only the Belgian) do not readily surrender their positions. They are distinguished for their tenacity, and flexibility when the latter is called for. It is characteristic that the Catholic group in the Senate stated that it did not agree to the formation of a Cabinet to which Communists would belong. Evidently, force of circumstances has compelled the Catholic senators to yield. A new government, headed by the Socialist van Acker, has been formed, consisting of six representatives of the Catholic Party, five Socialists, four Liberals, two Communists and one non-party. The fact that Spaak was included in the new government is regarded as an unfavourable omen by the press.

The new government is faced with difficult political and economic tasks. The country is in a state of severe economic ruin; the food situation is very acute. Urgent measures will have to be taken to improve the conditions of the masses of the people at least to some extent. The future will show whether the new government can cope with these tasks. At all events, it is clear that Belgium, like the other countries which have been liberated from the yoke of German aggression, urgently needs a government which derives its strength from the broad masses of the people and enjoys their confidence.
Problems of Post-War Civil Aviation

COL. M. TOLCHENOV

As the final defeat of Hitler Germany draws near the problems of the post-war arrangement of the world more and more attract the attention of wide sections of the public as well as of the governments of the democratic countries. The problem of the international organization of civil aviation after the war occupies a special place. This is quite natural. The lines on which air transport develops will exercise no little influence on international relations and on the stability of world order in the post-war period.

In the years preceding the present war all the big countries devoted serious attention to the development of the aircraft industry, to the building up of a powerful air fleet and an extensive network of land structures, as well as to the training of large flying and technical staffs. The course of military operations during the present war has proved that potential air power is closely connected with the state of air transport. It transpired that all the countries which had possessed an extensive aviation base were able to build up strong air forces in a short space of time. The war gave a powerful impetus to the development of armaments, and to aviation in particular. The importance of the latter in the armaments of the belligerent countries grew to such an extent that it brought about important changes in the methods and means of conducting operations. The growth in the power of aircraft, including transport planes, has changed all former conceptions of water and of terrestrial space and the degree to which they could be protected against an enemy. The development of aviation, and of air transport in particular, enabled the Germans to capture Crete and to create the immediate danger of an invasion of the British Isles. On the other hand, in the course of the present war, the industrial centres of Germany situated in the interior of the country and, until comparatively recently, protected from enemy attack by considerable distances, came under the systematic blows of the Allied air forces.

The aircraft industry of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, which has grown to gigantic dimensions, and their technical achievements in aircraft construction and in the utilization of aircraft facilities, open up new and wide prospects for aviation. It is obvious that in the post-war period the vast aviation bases of the United Nations, and their enormous technical experience in handling aircraft will be utilized primarily to serve the needs of civil air transport. The utilization of aircraft for home goods and passenger traffic, as well as for international communications, will assume unprecedented dimensions. The role of aviation as a means of transport and communication between countries and continents will undoubtedly grow immensely, and its relative importance in the world transport system will increase.

The wide prospects that have opened for air transport in the post-war period, the close connection that exists between the level of its development and that of the military might of a given country, and the possibility of utilizing civil aircraft directly for war purposes all emphasize the special importance of international co-operation in this sphere. As is well known, no uniform international convention on questions of civil aviation exists as yet. In 1928 the United States and several other countries on the American continent signed the Havana Convention, the operation of which was limited to the western hemisphere. In 1919 thirty-three countries ratified the Paris Convention, but this failed to regulate international air transport to any appreciable extent, in so far as countries like the Soviet Union, the United States and China were not parties to it.

Naturally, problems of civil aviation can be solved only by the joint efforts of the powers which are now bearing the burden of the war against Hitler Germany and are interested in the establishment of a firmly secured peace. Over a long period of time bilateral negotiations were conducted between different countries with the object of mutually exchanging information concerning the degree to which the respective countries engaged in air transport, and also with the object of concluding corresponding agreements. Such negotiations were conducted, in particular, between Great Britain and the
United States. Negotiations were also carried on with the object of uniting the efforts of all the members of the British Empire in the sphere of civil aviation. All these preliminary measures prepared the ground for the convocation of an international conference on problems of post-war civil aviation. Such a conference, convened on the initiative of the United States, was opened in Chicago on November 1, 1944. At this conference fifty-two countries were represented. This might have given grounds for hoping that it would produce important positive results; but owing to the invitation to the conference of Switzerland, Portugal and Spain, with whom the Soviet Union has no diplomatic relations and who for many years have been pursuing a pro-fascist policy inimical to our country, the Soviet Union took no part in the proceedings of the Chicago conference. This limited its proceedings to such an extent that it predetermined the limited character of the agreements drawn up.

At the very outset of the conference serious differences of opinion were revealed regarding the organization of post-war civil aviation. After the heads of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Canadian delegations had expressed their points of view, the heads of delegations of the smaller countries made statements in support of one or other of the leading countries. The main disagreement was that between the English and the American points of view regarding the proposal to set up an international body to handle problems of civil aviation. According to the reports in the foreign press the British delegation, taking into account the United States' superiority in aviation facilities, proposed that a strong international body be set up with powers to distribute air routes, quotas of air communications, and so forth. In opposition to this, the United States delegation expressed itself in favour of setting up a body with limited powers to handle only technical problems.

Adolph Berle, Assistant Secretary of State and head of the United States delegation, already in his opening speech expressed strong opposition to all anticipated attempts of other delegations to establish rigid control over the economic side of civil transport.

"Some brave spirits have proposed," he said, "that an international body should receive similar powers in the economic and commercial fields. One must respect the boldness of this conception and the brilliance and sincerity with which it is urged. But—and to the United States Government this constitutes the cardinal difficulty—there has not yet been proposed seriously, let alone generally accepted, a set of rules and legal principles whereby these powers should be guided."

The disagreement on this question actually reflected the difference in the respective positions occupied by the United States and Great Britain on the question of aviation. Possessing a vast aircraft industry and an enormous fleet of transport aeroplanes, the United States is interested in having the freest competition in the sphere of civil aviation, unregulated by any international body. Great Britain, whose aircraft industry and air transport fleet are considerably smaller than those of the United States, leans towards the establishment of international control of air transport with the object of protecting herself from United States competition. It must be observed that the delegations of the countries which belong to the British Empire came to the conference without any concerted plan. The Canadian delegation proposed a plan that differed from that of the United Kingdom. The New Zealand delegate called upon the conference to endorse the proposal to establish international ownership of air lines, which were to be controlled by an international organization. The Australian delegation supported this proposal, which went much further than that of the United Kingdom.

Although the proposal of the New Zealand delegate was rejected immediately after the statement made by the United States delegate, the conference failed to achieve any palpable results, as the divergence between the United States and British points of view prevented the conference from arriving at a common decision. The United States press at the time expressed the hope that a compromise solution would be found in the long run. Some newspapers, perturbed by the deadlock which the conference had reached, urged that the United States delegation should change its position to give the other countries guarantees against the establishment of United States domination on the international air lines. Observing that Americans were willing to support measures that would lead to international cooperation, the Chicago Sun called upon the United States delegation to abstain from a policy which has the object of ensuring for the United States aviation companies "the lion's share of future global air traffic."
Grafton, the commentator of the *New York Post*, criticizing the policy of the United States delegation at the Chicago conference, wrote:

"We have a hungry desire to begin activities in the field of aviation and this impulse pushes us regardless of other considerations. It made us welcome Spain in Chicago, offend the Soviet Union, and quarrel with our Allies. It makes us fear lest some international agency will cripple air trade by assigning quotas."

In commenting on the proceedings of the conference a section of the United States newspapers, reflecting the views of influential circles, emphatically protested against even partial yielding to the British proposals. Analogous statements were made by certain representatives of interested business circles in the United States. According to an Associated Press report from New York, Rickenbacker, the president of the large Eastern Air Lines Corporation, stated:

"Britain wants America to have only an equal chance with her. I violently disagree. I cannot see how our air transport can be regulated that way when 75 per cent of the world's travel comes from America."

After a month's examination of different formulas for removing Anglo-American disagreements on the main issue, viz., the principles on which the economic regulation of international air lines was to be conducted, both sides made concessions. Nevertheless, the British and American points of view still diverged considerably. When it was found that agreement could not be reached even on the basis of the new proposals, the United States delegation withdrew its concessions and reverted to its original proposal in favour of unlimited competition in the air. The British delegation also withdrew the concessions it had made.

At the very beginning of the Chicago conference it was agreed that the different delegations could conclude temporary bilateral agreements establishing air lines in their respective countries for definite periods. It was anticipated that a fairly large number of agreements of this kind would be concluded, to be embodied subsequently in a permanent agreement that would regulate the whole system of world air lines. During the whole period the conference was in session, over five weeks, the signing of only one such agreement was announced, namely, that between the United States and Spain, negotiations for which had commenced as far back as the spring of 1943. Later, the United States signed similar agreements only with Sweden, Denmark (signed on behalf of the latter by the Danish Ambassador in Washington), and Iceland.

On December 7, 1944, the Chicago conference on civil aviation came to a close. The conference drew up several documents, mainly concerning technical and organizational problems of air transport, but even these were not signed by many of the delegations. Thus, the agreement on problems of air transport was signed only by the United States, China and the majority of the Latin American countries. It is characteristic that of the European countries only Sweden followed suit; most of the others confined themselves to stating that they would sign the agreement later.

Another agreement, providing right of transit to commercial aircraft of the countries adhering to it, was signed by a slightly larger number of delegations. If the other countries fail to adhere to this agreement it will mean that there will be no free transit across a large part of Europe, the Near East, India and other parts of Asia, and Australia. As regards the main problems of civil aviation, they were practically removed in the end from the agenda of the conference. This must obviously be ascribed to the circumstance that the creation in the field of aviation of an international organ invested with plenary powers in political and economic matters is hardly feasible. Evidently the establishment in the realm of airborne traffic of an international organization with technical and consultative functions would be a much more tangible proposition.

Commenting on the failure of the Chicago conference, the international press gave as one of the main reasons for this the absence of the Soviet Union, which covers a vast territory and possesses a powerful aircraft industry and a numerous air fleet. On January 19 the Associated Press reported from London that during the first three days of the Red Army's offensive the Soviet air force made 30,000 aircraft sorties. According to the United Press the figure was 35,000. Many United States newspapers published these figures as an index of the Soviet Union's air power. Commenting on this, Wilson, the aviation expert of the *New York
Herald-Tribune, stated that “such accomplishment is possible only for a great air force. . . . It indicates a tremendous and comprehensive air power.” He went on to say:

“Russia will be able to accomplish with civil aviation what she is accomplishing with military aviation. Before the war Russia flew one-third more route mileage than the United States. When after the war Russia develops her domestic system throughout Siberia toward Alaska, the United States will have more for meditation than air distance between Moscow and New York. The Soviet Union possesses everything necessary for the world’s supreme air power. American smugness is unjustifiable.”

The results of the Chicago conference have changed very little in the situation regarding civil aviation, since all the urgent questions connected with this important problem have remained unsettled. The fact that the representatives of the different countries had the opportunity to exchange opinions and bring out the extreme complexity of the problems connected with the organization of civil aviation in the post-war period is, of course, of some importance. The question of flying over alien territory is one of the most difficult to decide. True, for countries comprising small areas this form of international co-operation is perhaps the only possible one since the operation of short air lines would in practice prove unprofitable for them. But for countries stretching across vast expanses of territory the most expedient solution of this problem would seem to be the incorporation of their national air lines in the general network of international lines, provided each such country employs its own transport facilities for traffic across its own territory. Such a system of international air lines would give it the necessary completeness and at the same time would make it possible to avoid unnecessary friction between the different countries. All this, of course, does not preclude the possibility of concluding bilateral agreements between individual countries based on the principle of mutuality.

The difficulties standing in the way of achieving agreement on the questions of civil aviation in the post-war period are great, but they must not be regarded as insurmountable. Given complete mutual understanding of the interests of the big as well as small countries, and given a sincere desire on the part of the democratic peoples for cooperation and general security, the problems of world air transport can and must be solved in the interests of a stable, just and durable peace among the nations.
CORRESPONDENCE

Whom Does Stanczyk Represent at the World Trade Union Conference?

DEMOCRATS of all countries are following the proceedings of the World Trade Union Conference with the greatest interest. The workers justly hope that their representatives at the trade union conference in London will lay the firm foundations for co-operation between the trade unions of the democratic countries and that the conference will help to unite the efforts of the organized workers of these countries for the final defeat of Hitler Germany and for the protection of the interests of the working class after the war. Judging by the course the proceedings of the conference are taking it will undoubtedly make a big contribution to the successful accomplishment of these tasks. Many of the speakers stated with every justification that probably never before in the history of the trade union movement have delegates enjoyed such unanimous support of the broad mass of the working people as is enjoyed by the trade union representatives gathered at the World Conference.

All the more strange is it, therefore, that one of the delegates at this conference is the Polish reactionary émigré Stanczyk. On more than one occasion this gentleman has been a member of the Polish "government" in exile, and now he is alleged to be a "delegate of the Polish trade unions in London."

As we know, the Standing Orders Committee set up at the conference recommended that the trade unions of liberated Poland be invited to the conference, but this recommendation was not adopted owing to the opposition of the British delegation, which argued that too little was known about the "Lublin trade unions."

Meanwhile the Red Army has cleared the German invaders out of almost the whole of Poland, and in the liberated areas of the long-suffering Polish Republic the working masses are enthusiastically and rapidly re-habilitating their trade union organizations. The resurrected Polish unions are taking an active part in the restoration of the ruined industries and transport services. They are co-operating in carrying out the agrarian reform and in the efforts to improve the material conditions of the working people. They are effectively collaborating in the creation of a new, democratic Polish state. Unfortunately, all this was not convincing enough for the British delegation, and, as a result, the working class of liberated Poland, which has contributed many a glorious page to the history of the labour movement, finds itself excluded from the conference.

But how does Stanczyk come to be among the delegates? Whom does he represent? At one of the sessions of the conference the Standing Orders Committee read a letter from the Polish Trade Union Council denouncing that Stanczyk does not represent the Polish unions and has no right to speak in their name. Kolodziej, secretary of the Polish Seamen's Union in London, also declared that Stanczyk was certainly not a representative of the Polish unions.

It is thus clear that there is no room at the World Trade Union Conference for the impostor Stanczyk, who represents no one but himself. Stanczyk's participation in the conference is a palpable violation of the principles of democracy that serve as the necessary basis of the trade union movement. What has this bankrupt reactionary in common with the working masses of Poland? He is one of those reactionary émigrats whom the Polish people clearly do not want to permit to return to his country, for these reactionary politicians have inflicted great harm upon Poland. One can readily imagine what sentiments were roused among the working masses of liberated Poland by the fact that an impostor without the slightest authorization spoke on their behalf at the conference to which their genuine representatives had not been invited.

The case of Stanczyk is very instructive. It indicates that strong tendencies still exist among certain sections of the trade union movement which are likely to hinder the achievement of real unity among the working people of all the democratic countries.

N. GAISENOK,
Chairman, Central Committee,
Shipbuilding Workers' Union
INTERNATIONAL LIFE

NOTES

THE WORLD OF FANTASY

Science has not yet adequately revealed the technique of the modern art of creating myths, and no doubt, research workers will some time in the future have to burrow in dusty archives to get to the root of the legend that appeared in the columns of a certain section of the foreign press at the end of January and the beginning of February this year. As far as we contemporaries can judge, the first swallow appeared on January 24 in the form of a United Press report from Ankara—what better source of information about Soviet policy can be found?—to the effect that the Soviet Government had decided to form a provisional German government consisting of prisoner-of-war generals headed by Paulus.

It needed no magnifying glass to see that this Ankara swallow was a good, fat, American canard. Nevertheless, this venomous rumour grew like a snowball. Hefty newspaper aunts and uncles behaved like innocent little children and pretended that they believed the story. Several days after the United Press report appeared, Callender, the Paris correspondent of the New York Times, nodding significantly in the direction of "diplomatic circles" of whose existence he alone was aware, averred that the Soviet Union is "holding von Paulus in reserve," Axelsson, his Stockholm colleague, went even further in exploiting this scoop. Throwing off all shame, he, in the columns of the same paper, waxed eloquent about a "future Soviet-German alliance" which, he alleged, the members of the German Officers' League regarded as the only possible way in which Germany can prepare for another war.

The discussion of this theme, the figment of a distorted imagination, spread to the columns of other newspapers. In the New York Post Dorothy Thompson made the astonishing discovery that the Russians already have the embryo of a government for Germany. Echoing her, Brown, the commentator of the Washington Post, circulated a legend about the activities of the Free Germany Committee and asserted that its existence was the source of fatal disagreement among the Allies. A similarly morbid interest in this Committee is displayed by Ward, the Washington correspondent of the Baltimore Sun, who, giving free rein to his imagination, transformed the Committee into a German government whose mission was to restore a militarily and economically strong Germany, subservient to the Soviet Union. Similarly crazy arguments were advanced by the Scripps-Howard commentator Simms in the notorious Army and Navy Journal. The well-known pro-fascist New York World-Telegram bluntly stated in a leading article that the Soviet Union was saving German militarism with the aid of the Free Germany Committee.

Lovers of exotics of this kind have been found on this side of the Atlantic too. The London Observer of February 4 published an article signed by "A Student of Europe," who, with a serious mien talked about the prospects of a "government of Paulus established in Königsberg, Breslau or Berlin." Lord Vansittart proved himself a no less zealous "student of Europe" in the Sunday Dispatch, in which he hastened to express his "displeasure" with this very same mythical "German government."

And so, by the joint efforts of journalists of a definite sort, a whole edifice of lies was erected, literally out of nothing. It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union, which has suffered from German aggression more than other countries, and has made the largest contribution to the cause of defeating Hitler, has been consistently striving for a solution of the German problem that will make a repetition of German aggression impossible. This, however, has not prevented the creation and circulation of this stupid myth. In this there is a touching unity among people who appear to adhere to different positions, such as Dorothy Thompson, who is a zealous advocate of a "soft peace with Germany," i.e., of the preservation of the sources of strength of the German aggressor, and Lord Vansittart, who is reputed to stand for strong measures against the Germans. The participants in this collective creation of myths find common ground in their prejudices against the Soviet Union, and this is the source that fosters the constant readiness of the Axelssons,
Thompsons, Browns and other "students" of Europe to invent and circulate all sorts of legends about Soviet policy, and the readiness of many editors to publish these legends without any qualms of conscience.

THE SAD CASE OF MR. HAMBRO

Hambro, the ex-Speaker of the Norwegian Storting, has suffered a bereavement. His friend Nejman, ex-Ambassador of the reactionary Polish government in Norway, died. Hambro gave vent to his feelings in Norsk Tidende, the official organ of the Norwegian Government in London.

On February 3 he published an article in that newspaper entitled "A Friend of Norway," in which he informed his readers that Nejman's death had plunged him into profound grief. Reminiscing, Hambro states that "Nejman was unhappy... owing to the general trend of international politics. The rift among the Poles, the formation of the Government in London, undermined his vital strength. He looked with profound anxiety at the different manifestations of the new and cruel imperialism that is emerging to take the place of German imperialism."

We can regard it as natural that the diplomat of the Beck school should grieve over the "general development of the international situation." This development is leading to the rout of German fascism and its hangers-on and to the liberation of the peoples of Europe from the fascist yoke and pro-fascist regimes. It is natural also that he was greatly distressed by the liberation of the Polish people and the formation of a National Government which has firmly taken the path of building up a democratic Poland.

But here it is not a matter of the deceased Mr. Nejman, but of the living Mr. Hambro. This gentleman, as we see, takes the liberty to repeat in an extremely transparent form slander against the Soviet Union, and indulges in the political jargon in vogue among hidebound reactionaries and such mortal enemies of the Soviet Union as the abettors of Hitler in the now completely defunct Polish émigré "government."

Especially worthy of attention is the fact that Hambro's outrageous sally was made in the columns of the official organ of the Norwegian Government. It glaringly shows that among those who at every opportunity express their desire and readiness to co-operate with the Soviet Union, there are not a few who, in fact, adhere to an anti-democratic position, which is incompatible with the policy of co-operation with the Soviet Union.

THE WISH IS FATHER TO THE THOUGHT

Deciding to make a hurried survey of Europe and Asia Mr. de Courcy, the commentator of the London Review of World Affairs, made an imaginary tour of France, Greece, Poland, Rumania, Iran, and even Germany, feverishly jotting down his impressions as he ran. As a result, we have a long review prominently published in two issues of this worthy journal.

The author's thoughts are not distinguished for their variety, which, indeed, he did not strive for. Starting his tour with France, he regretfully noted the great part that was being played in the towns and villages liberated from the Germans by the "Left wing of the resistance movement," and, what was most distressful, by the Communists. It appears that south of Paris there are "Communist municipalities," and that this is the case with "most big cities on the Loire." It goes without saying that de Courcy took this as a sign of the growth of sympathy towards the Soviet Union, and what could cause the Review of World Affairs deeper chagrin than that? But here a brilliant idea flashed like lightning through the author's mind. What if the French Communists are depicted as—opponents of the Soviet Union? That would be splendid, for, as he puts it, this would serve "to complicate European politics and create unexpected difficulties for those who in their efforts to conciliate the Left have sought the friendship of Russia."

Charmed by this brilliant idea, the author's imagination took the bit between its teeth, as it were, and ran away with him. He at once discerned "signs of strain" in the relations between the French Communists and the Soviet Union. The popularity of the Soviet Union, he thinks, is waning, and the French Communists are "beginning to find it easier to preach revolution than pro-Russianism."

Then events develop on paper with whirlwind speed, calling to mind the jottings of Gogol's Poprishchin: Next door to France is Spain; in Spain there is a king—pardon me, I meant anarchists; among the anarchists the influence of Trotskyism is felt; hence, concludes the author, "it is quite possible that the French Communists may order a general insurrection in direct opposition to the desires of the Kremlin."

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This description of the situation in France has, of course, no relation whatever to reality, but it is in complete harmony with the author’s political conceptions, because from it he draws the following conclusion:

“If as a result of the present widespread chaos the Fourth International should grow and capture Leftist support, its reaction upon Russia’s internal and external affairs would be... very great indeed.”

So the summit of the hopes of the gentlemen of the Review of World Affairs is the formation of an international anti-Soviet organization! They seek for likely adherents of such an organization in Poland, Greece and in Rumania. And in this quest they turned their benevolent attention to that old and disreputable firm, the notorious “Fourth International.” What matters it to them that this firm serves as a screen for the activities of the scoundrelly Trotskyites, the paid agents of the Gestapo? Evidently de Courcy and those who share his opinions assume that it will not be difficult for the Trotskyite provocateurs to change masters. If Hitler found his Driot, why should not others find similar renegades to carry out special commissions?...

The second part of de Courcy’s journey, “In the East,” is filled with no less wonderful discoveries than the first. He expresses opinions on the merits of King Peter of Yugo-slavia, of the Hungarian generals and of the Hapsburg dynasty and even pays gratuitous compliments to the wife of Sir Walter Citrine, who visited Greece, by saying that she “would make a very good Labour Prime Minister’s wife.” De Courcy scatters no few pearls of wisdom of this kind, but he does not forget the main problem that disturbs him.

Discovering that at present “Russia is fighting at the end of long and difficult communications” he is nevertheless obliged to draw the, to him, regrettable conclusion that “a final German collapse on the East front during the next few weeks” is possible. Hitler is incapable of averting or postponing this collapse by armed force, and the Review of World Affairs therefore suggests to the Germans that they should drag out the war by “a terrific political effort” and rest their hopes on the “Fourth International.”

Naturally the Review of World Affairs cannot claim a monopoly in attempts to rally the anti-Soviet forces “on an international scale. Nevertheless, it can patent its inven-

Mr. Daniell’s Verbal Tricks

The other day Mr. Daniell, the London correspondent of the New York Times, took it into his head to perform in the sphere of politics the brilliant experiment made by the Catholic monk Gorenflot who, as is well known, overcome by the desire to eat meat on a fast day, christened a porker fish. Mr. Daniell was overcome by a longing to come out in defence of Filov, Bozhilov, Bagryanov and the other ex-rulers of Bulgaria who were sentenced by the people’s court of that country. The trouble was, however, that all the world knew that this was a gang of war criminals and fascists, Hitler’s Bulgarian mercenaries. The public trials in Sofia, lengthy reports of which were widely published, disclosed the crimes this gang committed in every detail: their subservience to Hitler; dragging Bulgaria into the war on the side of Germany against the freedom-loving nations; the mass extermination of Bulgarian patriots; the torment and torture of thousands and thousands of people guilty only of being loyal to their country and to their people. Under the weight of the incontrovertible evidence against them, the accused themselves did not at the trial deny the crimes they had committed against the Bulgarian people, their treachery and other infamous deeds.

These facts were well known to Mr. Daniell, but he is not the sort of man to be daunted by such trifles. In a message he sent to the New York Times, published on February 3, he wrote that the execution of the Nazi criminals in Sofia

“was merely an attempt to strengthen the present Bulgarian Government by eliminating the political opposition.”

Thus we see that Mr. Daniell excelled in ingenuity the simple-hearted monk. By christening the porker fish, Gorenflot merely wanted to cover up his sin, without wishing to pose as a champion of virtue. Mr. Daniell, however, after performing the simple rite of verbally transforming the Bulgarian servants of Hitler into a “political opposition,” poses as a champion of—democracy and law, which,
he claims, were violated by the Bulgarian people’s court.

“While the English are debating legal methods of punishing the war criminals the Bulgarian Government summarily liquidates political opposition,” he wrote.

The New York Times’ correspondent is broadly hinting at the “legal methods” of Sir Cecil Hurst, the ex-Chairman of the United Nations War Crimes Commission in London. The latter, as is well known, was concerned most of all about enabling the Hitler war criminals to go unpunished. True; Sir Cecil Hurst never thought of christening the fascist gangsters a political opposition. In this respect the palm undoubtedly goes to Mr. Daniell, whose fame has now eclipsed that of the monk Gorenflot.

LET US HAVE COMPLETE CLARITY

As far back as 1943 the Three Allied Powers announced that the fascist war criminals would not succeed in escaping from justice and that they would be caught even if they fled to the ends of the earth. This was brought to the notice of the governments of neutral—really or ostensibly—countries, who were warned that granting asylum to the Hitler fiends will be regarded as an unfriendly act against the Allied Powers.

One would have thought that this was perfectly clear. How did the neutral and quasi-neutral governments react to this warning? The facts are as follows.

The Government of Eire officially stated that it was unable to furnish assurances which would prevent Eire from exercising its right to afford asylum to the Hitler chiefs “if national interest, honour, charity and justice demanded.”

Portugal’s reply, as officially conveyed to press representatives in Washington, cannot be regarded as quite satisfactory.

The Spanish Ambassador in Washington blandly told the representatives of the press that

“nobody has ever contemplated providing a hiding place in Spain for enemies of the Allied countries.”

One would think that during the past five years and more of war the Franco government had done nothing except guard the interests of the Allies against their fascist enemies!

In order to stir up the mud a little more Franco’s Ambassador began to theorize, so to speak, about the question. He added that Spain would insist on a definition of the term “war criminal” before the necessity arises of applying it.

In other words, the fascist hidalgos are not averse to having this question drag on still longer in order to give their German masters an opportunity of hiding their time on the shores of the Guadalquivir.

Switzerland, which always boasts of her “ancient democratic traditions,” prefers to adopt the Spanish method and avoid giving a straight answer. She limited herself to a repetition of the statement she made last September to the effect that she was

“fully alive to the problems which would arise should the Axis leaders find asylum in Switzerland.”

The main point remains unclear, however. Do the Swiss authorities intend to shelter war criminals, or heed the voice of reason? Yes or no?

The Argentine Government, through its Embassy in Washington, informed press representatives that

“it did not suppose that Argentina would become a refuge for Axis leaders after the war.”

At the same time Argentina stated that she would exercise her own discretion. What Argentina’s “own discretion” means has been proved by numerous facts of recent days. These are the transfer to Argentine banks of the capital the Hitlerites have grabbed; the timely settlement of fugitive Hitlerites under the sultry sky of Buenos Aires; the traffic in forged passports, and other frolics of this kind.

But time flies. Things are obviously reaching a climax. The neutral countries must make their attitude towards the fascist war criminals absolutely clear in order to avoid undesirable complications.

NO MITIGATION!

The French newspaper Libération quotes a fact that is not devoid of interest. During the five months that have elapsed since the Germans were driven from France the investigation authorities have prepared over a thousand dossiers of persons accused of economic collaboration with the enemy. Nevertheless, writes the above-mentioned newspaper, only two of the accused have been put on trial. The industrialists try to justify themselves by pleading that they were obliged to deliver to the Germans only twenty-five per cent of their output and that
consequently, in fulfilling German contracts, they tried to "infuse life into the economy of France."

How the corrupt profiteers of the type of the "two hundred families" jointly with their Hitlerite friends "revived" the economy of France is shown by the severe economic dislocation from which France has not recovered to this day. The Germans, of course, took not twenty-five but the entire hundred per cent of output, and the French traffickers in their country willingly served them, in conformity with their motto: non olet—"money does not smell."

In trying to whitewash themselves before the investigation authorities, the traitor-collaborationists put forward one other plea, viz., "We carried out government orders."

Thus, the French reactionary industrial and financial magnates, who must now answer for their treason, want to screen themselves from justice behind the political corpses of Pétain and Laval.

These gentlemen, however, display no originality in pleading that they were carrying out orders from above. This plea is always advanced by Hitler gangsters when they are caught and are brought to book for their crimes. As if a crime committed by somebody's order or command ceases to be a crime! As if it were not known that the German fascist gangsters and their contemptible associates very willingly carried out these orders, fully aware of their criminal character.

The peoples who have borne the savage tyranny of the Hitler invaders and the bottomless knavery of their accomplices know that the fascist fiends and their abettors must bear stern punishment to the full, without any mitigation.

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Four Weeks in France*

L. SOLOVYEV,
Secretary, All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions

In the middle of December we left Moscow for France, which had recently been liberated after four years of German occupation.

Our aeroplane landed in the large aerodrome in Bourget, sixteen kilometres from Paris. This aerodrome is under the control of the American military authorities.

The representatives of the Confédération Générale du Travail had come out several times to meet us, but they were not there when we arrived. The reason for this was the misleading information they had received from the air authorities. A motor bus was to leave for the city in about forty minutes and we were asked to wait in the American Red Cross buffet in the aerodrome. The buffet was a sort of clubroom. The American men and women in the service, when off duty, have a good time here, listen to music, and play bridge. The place was filled with tobacco smoke and was very noisy.

We then left for the city. The working class quarters adjacent to the aerodrome bore traces of air bombardment. The Bourget aerodrome was an important German air base and often served as a target for Allied aircraft. The latter proved extremely efficient, as most of the aerodrome buildings were wrecked.

Near the city our motor bus was stopped by a patrol and our papers were examined. One of our fellow travellers told us that recently German agents had been dropped in the region of Paris. The Hitlerites are still sending their men into the liberated districts of France to organize sabotage.

We are in Paris! Were it not for the blackout and the Parisians with their careworn faces, shabby clothes and the clatter of their wooden-soled boots on the littered pavements, one would have thought that there had been no war in Paris. The Germans intended to
The winter is exceptionally cold in France this year. Snow fell even in the South, and in Paris the thermometer sometimes dropped to twelve and even fifteen degrees below zero, Centigrade. This winter the French are suffering acutely in their dwellings, as they are not adapted for such cold weather, and particularly now when it is impossible to obtain coal or firewood. Owing to the shortage of electricity scarcely any trolley buses are running. There are few automobiles in the streets as there is no fuel, and besides, the Germans shipped two-thirds of the automobiles out of the country. True, the Metro is running, but it is terribly overcrowded. The Paris Metro is a wretched affair: long narrow corridors and low ceilings. Numerous advertisements are posted up in the cars as well as on the station walls, and these give it more than ever the appearance of a commercial undertaking in which the convenience of passengers is by no means the first consideration.

The Parisians move across the town on foot or on bicycles. Many cyclists carry on their hind wheels sacks of potatoes and vegetables—obtained by barter in the neighbouring villages—or other bulky objects. Many cyclists are seen laboriously hauling trailers over the melting snow with one and even two passengers. Once we saw an American soldier sitting in one of these trailers cuddling a girl with whom he was merily chatting. We did not expect to see such an exotic sight in Paris!

On the day after our arrival we met the leaders of the C.G.T. We arranged to visit eleven of the largest industrial cities of France, including Marseilles, Bordeaux, Lens, Lille and others. The next few days were taken up with meetings with leading trade unionists, members of the Provisional French Government, and civic leaders. The representatives of the National Railwaymen's Federation told us much that was interesting. The dislocation of transport is a severe scourge in France. The Germans took out of the country a considerable part of the rolling stock; 2,300 structures of various kinds and 3,000 kilometres of railway track were wrecked. Many bridges were blown up. During the occupation the railwaymen were extremely active in the struggle against the Germans. In some of the railway workshops the occupational authorities organized the production and capital repair of locomotives. The railwaymen, however, inserted explosives into the cylinders and put these engines out of action. At the present time the railwaymen and their trade union organizations are exerting all their efforts to improve the situation on the railways, as their dislocation is hindering the restoration of the country's economy.

In Paris we visited an exhibition on the insurrection in the capital and its liberation. Numerous photographs, documents and weapons illustrate how the population, and also the police which came over to the side of the people, drove the Germans out or took them prisoner and prevented them from wrecking important structures.

On one of our free days we visited Versailles. The Curator of the Museum told us that on his insistence preparations for the evacuation of the treasures of Versailles were completed in 1938. On the outbreak of the war they were shipped to the provinces, where they were preserved.

On the third day of our stay in Paris the C.G.T. called a meeting in the Grand Opéra at which the representatives of the Government and of all parties were present. The interior was decorated with portraits of Comrade Stalin and General de Gaulle, and with the national flags of France, the Soviet Union and the other Allied countries. The appearance of the members of the Soviet delegation was greeted with enthusiastic cries of "Vive l'Union Soivietique!" "Vive l'Armée Rouge!" "Vive le maréchal Staline!" The orchestra played the national anthem of the Soviet Union, the Marseillaise and the national anthems of Great Britain and the United States. After the meeting a concert was given, one of the items of which was an act from Boris Godunov.

Like other Paris theatres, the opera house was not heated, and the people sat in their overcoats.

We visited a number of industrial plants and offices in Paris, such as the Renault automobile works, the gas works, the electric power station, the motor bus depot and the Central Telegraph Office. Everywhere impromptu meetings were held which passed off with great enthusiasm. At one of these meetings a group of workers came on to the platform carrying the red banner of the Moscow gas works. It appeared that when a French workers' delegation visited the Soviet
Union in 1935 our trade union organizations presented it with banners. One of these was the banner of the Moscow gas works, and this the workers of Paris had preserved at great risk to their lives all through the German occupation.

The Renault works have been confiscated and nationalized as their owner had collaborated with the Germans. Control is exercised by a committee consisting of engineers, technicians and workers. The first committees of this kind arose in Lyons to control the factories that were producing war materials. This was approved by the C.G.T., and now such committees exist in many plants in France.

Before the war the Renault works turned out 400 automobiles a month, as we were told by local trade union officials. At the present time the staff of 17,000 is for the most part idle, as are many of the machines. This is due primarily to the fact that after Paris was liberated Renault, the ex-owner, engaged in sabotage, waiting to see how things would turn out.

After we went through the shops a meeting was held which ten thousand workers attended. One of the speakers, referring to the hardships suffered by the population of Paris, recalled the privation suffered by the Soviet people, and by the inhabitants of Leningrad and Stalingrad in particular.

No few difficulties confront the French people. The transport system, the factories and agriculture have to be restored; the output of foodstuffs and consumers' goods must be increased. We visited some of the factories during the dinner hour and saw what the workers had to eat. The dinner consisted of a small portion of soup and a dish of vegetables. If meat and bread are taken the coupons for them are clipped out of the ration card. Nearly all foodstuffs are rationed. We were struck by the fact that women smokers do not get any cigarettes.

It must be said that in France women do not enjoy actual equality with men. They were enfranchised only a little while ago. The pay of women having the same skill and performing the same work as men is twenty per cent lower than that of men. French working women are keenly interested in the working conditions enjoyed by women in the Soviet Union. Whenever we told them that Soviet women are paid on the principle of equal pay for equal work there was invariably an outburst of applause and cries of approval.

The hardships with which the French people have to contend arise not only out of the economic dislocation. They are largely due to the lack of proper organization of food distribution. One of the speakers at the meeting in Marseilles said:

"The most acute problem is that of food supplies. The population is starving. The scanty rations we receive are not enough. There is meat, fats, cheese, potatoes and wine in France, but there is no plan, and no organization to engage in the distribution of these products."

The situation is aggravated by the existence of many hundreds of thousands of unemployed.

When we arrived in Lens a meeting was at once held in the miners' club where 3,500 persons assembled. The hall was packed and hundreds of people remained in the street. Before we got to the club we were met by a large crowd and heard cries of "Vive l'Union Soviétique!" "Vivent les syndicats soviétiques!" From the speeches delivered at the meeting we learned how the miners of Lens have fought the German invaders. Amidst the difficult underground conditions a National Committee of Action was formed. The mass strike organized in the Départements du Nord and Pas-de-Calais in 1941 evoked cruel reprisals on the part of the Hitlerites. Many workers were shot, many were thrown into prison or deported to Germany. But the miners continued stubbornly to wage the struggle against the occupational forces, organized sabotage and put machines out of action. Now the miners are exerting all their efforts to increase the output of coal.

The port of Marseilles, once the largest port in the Mediterranean, now presents a sad spectacle. Expecting the Allies to land in that region, the Hitlerites blew up all the port buildings, cranes and railway lines. Here and there the hulls of sunken ships jut out of the water. The residential part of the town has also suffered a great deal.

The speakers at the meeting in Marseilles told of the self-sacrificing efforts of the French workers and of their desire to help to achieve the speedy defeat of Germany. When a large pontoon was damaged, the employers said that it would take fifteen days to repair. When the workers heard that the vessel was urgently needed by the Allied
military authorities they repaired it in two days.

The same labour enthusiasm prevails among the workers in other towns. Engineers calculated that the repair of a bridge across the Seine would take over three months. The workers did the job in fifteen days.

The fascist elements and the saboteurs sent into the country by the Germans are still continuing their subversive activities. These assume most diverse forms, from provocative propaganda to direct sabotage.

For example, a certain arsenal was ordered to stop producing 155-mm. shells, although the raw materials and equipment needed for producing such shells were available, and to produce 120-mm. shells instead. It would have taken a long time to adapt the machines and alter the jigs for this, and this would have meant that no shells would have been produced just when they were needed so badly. It transpired that this order had been given by a prominent official who, as Humanité pointed out, has been appointed to this post by the Vichy government.

At the Stella automobile plant, the owner of which was arrested as a traitor, a Patriotic Committee consisting of representatives of the engineers, technicians and workers was set up with the permission of the governmental Commissar of the Republic. The Committee set to work, got the plant going, and considerably increased productivity of labour. But insuperable financial difficulties arose. The bank refused to recognize the Patriotic Committee and insisted that only the former owner had the right to draw on the bank account. The result was that the plant's finances were cut off.

In Marseilles we were informed that many of the shipyards were ready to start work and had been waiting for orders from the competent bodies for several months.

In the mines of the North there was a shortage of pit props, and for this the transport difficulties were blamed. The trade unions proposed that unemployed be brought in to repair the railway tracks and bridges, and that timber be brought from the neighbouring forests. It was three months before the administration adopted this proposal. Now the pits are better supplied with props.

Enemy agents resort to direct acts of sabotage and engage in subversive propaganda. In some plants mysterious fires break out. Notices are put up in the pits calling upon the miners to stop work until a sufficient quantity of fats is issued. The miners treat these provocative activities of the agents of the “Fifth Column” in the manner they deserve.

The population has an interesting method of nabbing pro-fascist agents. Now and again the newspapers publish the portrait of a certain traitor with the following caption: “Help us to find this traitor! Before the Allied landing he committed such and such crimes, betrayed such and such patriots, and he is the cause of the death of so and so.” This method often helps to catch traitors.

A curious incident occurred on the way to Saint-Étienne. One of our cars came to an abrupt stop—the motor required some minor repair. Happily this occurred near a small service station. On getting out of our cars we found ourselves surrounded by a crowd of mechanics and labourers headed by the elderly owner of the station. The men looked very fierce. Each of them held a heavy object in his hand, a wrench or a crowbar. Everything was cleared up, however, when we told them who we were and showed them our papers. It appeared that a group of German agents had been dropped in the vicinity from an aeroplane recently... Several minutes later our car was put right. The owner refused to take any money, so we invited him to take lunch with us in a neighbouring village.

For over four years the Hitlerites and their hangers-on had dinned the wildest tales about our country into the ears of the French people. They were told that there was no such thing as the family in the Soviet Union, that “the Bolsheviks ate their children,” and so forth.

The French people are displaying keen interest in the Soviet Union, but little information about our country can be obtained in France. The French know and are fond of the Russian classical writers Tolstoy, Dostojevsky and Chekhov, but they know little about our modern Soviet literature. True, there is a scarcity not only of the works of Soviet authors, for hardly any useful literature has been published for many years.

Hatred for the Germans, whom the French call boches, is manifested in everything. The French people do not forget that over two million French prisoners of war and forcibly deported workers are still groaning in Hitler
servitude. Nor do they forget that Germany attacked France three times during the past seventy years. And this is best understood by the workers, who suffered much more than any other class in France. At a chemical plant in Toulouse a working woman, whose three sons were deported to Germany, asked us anxiously: "Will there be another war with the boches in ten or twenty years’ time? We French women want Germany to be deprived of the opportunity of arming and building up an army again."

Ordinary French people are devoting a great deal of thought to the problem of how to safeguard the country against another invasion by Germany. Everywhere we went the importance of friendship with the Soviet Union was understood. The conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Alliance was enthusiastically welcomed.

On the occasion of our departure from France the C. G. T. convened a meeting, on January 17, in Paris. Twenty-five thousand people attended this meeting. The workers knocked off work two hours earlier to get there in time, pledging themselves to make up for the time lost. Over the heads of the vast crowd red flags and streamers floated with inscriptions: "We want work!" "We want the speediest restoration of France!"

The satisfaction of these demands can be guaranteed by the unity of the French people and the vigorous purging of France of the fascist scum.
February 1

Red Army troops captured the town and fortress of Torun (Thorn) in Poland.

The provisional government of the Polish Republic moved from Lublin to Warsaw, the capital of Poland.

February 2

The people's court in Bulgaria passed sentence in the trial of the ex-regents and the King's advisers and ministers, and also of ex-members of the 25th National Assembly.

February 3

A conference between representatives of E.A.M. (the People's Liberation Front of Greece) and of the Greek Government opened near Athens.

Pierlot, Prime Minister of Belgium, handed the resignation of his government to the Prince Regent, Charles.

February 4

Troops of the Red Army captured the towns of Landsberg and Bartenstein in East Prussia.

February 5

American troops entered Manila, capital of the Philippines.

CHRONICLE OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

February 1945

February 6

The troops of the First Ukrainian Front forced the Oder southeast of Breslau (Breslavl) and captured the towns of Ohlau, Brieg, Tomaskirch, Grottkau, Löwen and Scharzgast on the western bank of the river.

The Finnish Diet released Tan­ner from his duties as Deputy.

The World Trade Union Conference opened in London. The following were elected chairmen of the conference: V. V. Kuznetsov, President of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions; George Isaacs, Chairman of the British Trade Union Congress; and Thomas, Vice Chairman of the C.I.O. At its evening session the conference began to discuss the question of aiding the Allied war effort. V. V. Kuznetsov, head of the Soviet delegation, and Arthur Deakin, a representative of the British Trade Union Congress, took the floor on this question.

February 7

Robinson, C.I.O. Vice Chairman, spoke at the World Trade Union Conference on the wartime production achievements of the U.S. workers.

February 8

An announcement was published that a Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers—the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain—was taking place in the Black Sea area.

February 9

Allied troops completed the liberation of Alsace.

Paraguay declared war on the Axis countries.

The Gerbrandi Government of the Netherlands resigned.

February 10

Red Army troops captured Elbing and Preussisch Eylau in East Prussia.

February 11

Troops of the First Ukrainian Front forced the Oder northwest of Breslau (Breslavl) and in the course of four days' offensive fighting advanced up to 60 kilometres and widened the breach to 160 kilometres. In the course of the offensive the troops on this front captured Liegnitz, Steinau, Luben, Haynau, Neumarkt, and Kant. In Pomerania, Red Army units captured Deutsch Krone and Märkisch Friedland.

A new Belgian Government, headed by van Acker, was formed.

A trade delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Majig, left Moscow.

Agreements were signed between the Soviet Union and Great Britain and between the Soviet Union and the United States of America relating to the affairs of war prisoners and civilians of these states released by Allied armed forces entering Germany.

February 12

The communiqué on the Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers—the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain—in the Crimea, and the statement of W. Churchill, F. D. Roosevelt and J. V. Stalin on the results of the Conference were published.

Red Army troops captured Belsko, a powerful strongpoint of the German defences on the approaches to Moravská Ostrava.

Red Army units captured Buntlaw in German Silesia.
Mr. E. R. Stettinius, Secretary of State of the U.S.A., arrived in
Moscow.

An agreement was signed between the Greek Government and
E.A.M.

Sidney Hillman, C.I.O. representative, opened the debate at the
World Trade Union Conference on the establishment of an interna-
tional federation of trade unions.

February 13

V. V. Kuznetsov, head of the Soviet delegation to the World
Trade Union Conference, spoke on the question of establishing an
international trade union federation.

After a siege of a month and
a half and stubborn fighting Soviet
troops completed the rout of the
enemy grouping encircled in Budape-
st and thereby obtained com-
plete possession of Hungary's cap-
it.

February 14

Red Army troops captured
Schneidemühl, Neustätel, Neusalz,
Freistadt, Sprottau, Goldberg,
Jauer and Striegau in Germany.

B. Bierut, President of the
Krajowa Rada Narodowa, and
E. Osóbka-Morawski, Prime Min-
ister and Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the Provisional Gov-
ernment of the Polish Republic,
arrived in Moscow.

Mr. E. R. Stettinius, Secretary
of State of the U.S.A., left Moscow
for the United States.

February 15

The troops of the First Ukrain-
ian Front captured Grünberg in
German Silesia and Sommerfeld
and Sorau in Brandenburg. In
western Poland the troops of the
Second Byelorussian Front took
Chojnice (Konitz) and Tuchola
(Tuchel).

A. E. Bogomolov, Ambassador
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the U.S.S.R. in France, and
M. Georges Bidault, Minister for
Foreign Affairs of the French
Republic, exchanged in Paris
ratifications of the Treaty of Alli-
ance and Mutual Assistance be-
tween the Union of Soviet Social-
ist Republics and the French
Republic.
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