

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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The USSR and Germany

THE news of the Soviet-German negotiations for a non-aggression pact comes as we go to press. We must therefore reserve discussion of its full significance until our next issue. These, however, seem to us the most important things to emphasize in this moment of great international tension: The dramatic thing about the Soviet decision to begin negotiations for a pact with Nazi Germany lies in its timing. But in principle, the Soviet Union has always stood for peaceful, businesslike relations with all countries. At the Eighteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party last March, Joseph Stalin stressed what all friends and observers of the Soviet Union know: that the Russian people "stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries." To this end, the Soviet Union has concluded many non-aggression pacts, and in fact, repeatedly offered one to both Germany and Japan, having had the pact with Italy since 1933. The same goes for trade relations. Indeed, the seven-year credit terms and unusual interest rates in the newly concluded trade treaty represent concessions from Hitler as much as they reaffirm the strength and trustworthiness of Soviet power.

In its timing, in the fact that the negotiations come at this time rather than any other, lies a great deal of significance. For this is a moment when the pro-fascists in Great Britain and France are seeking some new and tortuous path to a second Munich. On the one hand, they were sabotaging the peace front with Moscow, placing obstacles in the way of an immediate signature to the Anglo-French Soviet treaty. On the other hand, through the Oslo powers, pressure upon Hungary, Poland, and even through soundings in Washington, they endeavored to find a formula that would conciliate Hitler without bringing into force their own pledges to Poland.

This is the classic policy of the French and British reactionaries. This was the essence of Munich last September. It represents not only the sacrifice of the smaller nations in Europe, but of the national interests of England and France themselves. It envisions the Soviets "pulling British chestnuts out of the fire," while on the other hand it wishes to propel the

axis toward the east, that is, the Soviet Union. By opening negotiations for a non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union has now called Chamberlain's hand.

It should be understood that a non-aggression pact has nothing in common with a treaty of mutual assistance such as the Soviet Union contracted with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935. If a pact such as the Soviet Union has with the Baltic states is signed, Germany and Russia will agree merely not to attack each other. Nor is there anything in the principle of non-aggression treaties which would prevent other nations from uniting with the Soviet Union in the case of an attack by Hitler upon their borders or territories. In short, nothing in the negotiations prevents England and France from signing a peace front with the Soviet Union and thus assuring Polish independence against Hitler.

What, then, is the position of Poland? What it was before, that is, in the shadow of imminent danger unless a cry goes up from the British and French peoples compelling their governments to come to terms with Moscow. Polish resistance is thereby strengthened if the Soviet move brings nearer, as it was intended to do, a firm alliance against aggression upon Poland.

In other words, by a single move the Soviet Union has revealed all the forces that are imperiling Poland's freedom. First of all Germany, of course—but the Munichois of England and France as well, so long as they refuse to implement their pledge to Poland by joining hands with the Soviet Union in a peace front.

But the Soviet move is bound to have other and equally significant effects. For one thing, all the contradictions within the axis are magnified. Mussolini may well inquire where the latest involvement of his partner gets him. Japan, angling for a Western ally in its own provocations against the Soviet Union, must save face in a big way: for Germany must now go on record not to attack the Soviet Union. Thereby even Japan's signature to the anti-Comintern alliance becomes a formality. China, as the press reports, takes encouragement from Japan's predicament.

Sober citizens in the United States, discounting the headlines and the synthetic alarm of pro-Munich editorialists, will appreciate that this exposure of Chamberlain and Bonnet makes it more difficult for these same forces to bring the United States into the tow of their policies. For one thing, negotiations looking toward a Munich for the Far East at the expense of the United States receive a setback. For another, it becomes more difficult for Halifax, Chamberlain, Bonnet, and their friends to expect the United States to help them prepare the stage for a second Munich.

People who want to know what is happening abroad must always remember that just because the events of last September aroused such resentment in every decent person, a second Munich under the same setting and with the same actors is, for the fascists,

a difficult thing to achieve. From the axis point of view, the problem is to get Danzig and prepare the breakup of Poland first of all, without fighting, and second, without straining to the point of uselessness the position of Hitler's friends in the French and British governments. These friends can still do the trick for Hitler but only under unusual circumstances and with unusual exertions. The Soviet Union's move will make these exertions even more difficult, for Chamberlain and Bonnet will have an awakened and aroused public opinion at home demanding the signature of that pact pronto.

The Soviet move cannot be seen as something in itself. It is all the more nonsensical to speak of reconciliation between fascism and Communism. These moves must be seen in the context of a great effort which the Soviet Union and all the democratic peoples of Europe are making in alliance with each other to smash those fifth column groups who would capitulate to fascism.

The issue may come to a head very shortly. The thing to watch for is a situation in which the Vatican, or the Oslo powers, or perhaps some other capitulator, may be persuaded to call some sort of conference, or pave the way for a conference, which Hitler would at first ridicule and then, having been assured of concessions, come into at the end and emerge as the victor. We must beware the war of nerves, the press campaign, the alarum of embassies closing down, of harbors being barricaded, air raids in the offing. The issue is not "war or appeasement" at all. By tying up Germany so that Hitler is compelled to declare he will not attack the Soviet Union, the issue has been placed before the responsible governments of the great powers. If they step up and sign that pact with Russia, and stand by their pledges to Poland, and cease their twisting and squirming toward a new Munich, peace can be saved without saving Hitler.

Dies Comes Back

FRITZ KUHN enjoyed himself last week. Summoned before the Dies committee to testify in its alleged investigation of Nazi activities, Kuhn was keen enough to see the opportunity to plug the Bund philosophy. Wisely destroying his correspondence with his bosses overseas, just in case any of the committee members overstepped the bounds of propriety, Kuhn was ready to fill any space the press might offer. The press offered plenty, and Kuhn filled it. For two days the papers gave wide publicity to his statements that the Bund was not really a Nazi outfit, in the sense that it was linked with Germany, but a sturdy defender of the true Americanism. Kuhn and Dies used the old double entendre against Attorney General Murphy, when Kuhn implied that the former governor of Michigan had given his blessing to the Bund in a speech at a Detroit meeting. It later developed that the meeting was just some sort of German-American rally, not Nazi, and that Murphy had had no kind words for the Bund.

Several months of surcease have not improved the Dies committee. It persists in using evidence of any sort chiefly as a weapon with which to attack the New Deal. Dies himself continues as a sort of vicious clown who, whether or not he is serious about investigating fascism, is too near it in his own beliefs to be party to any effective study. The committee's failure to get any of the really significant material on the Nazis is the result either of its members' sympathy toward the fascists or of their bumbling stupidity, and probably both. One reporter, William Allan, writing in the New York *Sunday Worker* for August 20, turned up more information on Nazi work in Detroit than Dies has produced on the whole country in a year and a half.

Japan and Britain

THE Far Eastern chess match entered its semi-finals last week with a proposal from Great Britain that negotiations with Tokyo be resumed with the cooperation of "interested third parties." That means the United States. On the face of it, such a suggestion will hardly meet with American favor. The position of the United States was made clear over a month ago by the abrogation of the 1911 trade treaty. If Congress had heeded the desire of the great proportion of the American people, America's attitude would have been even more sharply defined by the imposition of an embargo upon all trade with the aggressor.

On the other hand, there are circumstances under which Anglo-American cooperation would be valuable. Together with France, these are the powers most directly affected by Japan's insolent, persistent aggression against China. The crucial question is: on what basis shall America cooperate with Britain? If it shall be in defense of the provisions of the Nine Power Treaty and the territorial integrity of China, very well. But if the British are trying to involve the United States in the sort of thing which has characterized British diplomacy since Munich, nothing would be more dangerous.

This distinction is doubly important in view of the immediate record in Britain's suspended negotiations with Japan. Straightaway, Sir Robert Craigie recognized the "new order of things" in the Far East. Last week, the British agreed to yield the four Chinese prisoners to Japan. Happily, Norman Bentwich, British lawyer, and Sara Margery Fry, a noted social worker, have secured permission to file a writ of *habeas corpus* which will prevent handing the prisoners over for at least a while.

The Japanese blockade at Tientsin was to be lifted upon the release of the prisoners. Naturally, the Japanese would have double-crossed the British had not the flood at Tientsin virtually lifted the blockade anyway. More than that, the Japanese attacks upon the British continue; Hongkong is now menaced and the international concession at Shanghai endangered. What the Japanese are after, as NEW

MASSIS indicated in its issue of August 15, is the fifty million ounces of silver now in British care at Tientsin. Of course, they want further concessions, if not cooperation, from England in the invasion of China.

Instead of facing up firmly to Japan, the British government now projects the possibility that the Nine Power Treaty will be entirely disavowed. Over the weekend, the Foreign Office reiterated its stand that "Britain does not regard treaties as eternal, and is prepared to consider any constructive proposals the Japanese government may make regarding the modification of existing treaties."

It is this "let's kiss and make up" attitude which constitutes the best reason why the United States should go into any Far Eastern conference with a policy that flows from its historic position and its national interest.

Democracy Wanted

TWO of Bill Green's internationals are now in open revolt against the high-handed actions of the AFL Executive Council. The International Typographical Union has been suspended from the parent body because the printers have refused to pay special assess-



HONG KONG

Richter

"Hy, Pal."

Mischa Richter

ments to fight the CIO. A referendum among ITU's 79,000 members showed a tremendous majority in favor of any assessments designed to organize the unorganized, but not one cent for Bill Green's vanity. The boys in the composing room, led by the late Charles Howard, were one of the first AFL unions to assist CIO organization, and later to fight for labor unity, but the autocratic AFL executive has finally broken their patience. The actors' muddle, which is no muddle at all but a gangster raid by one AFL international on another, is the second crisis deliberately prolonged by Green's council. AAAA, the actor's international, in cleaning the slate of oldline leadership in its constituent union, the American Federation of Actors, chartered a new union, The American Guild of Variety Artists, in the same jurisdiction, a prerogative which is clearly the constitutional right of the 4-A. Whereupon the gangster-dominated stagehands' international, IATSE, illegally grabbed the AFA charter as an entering wedge in capturing the actor unions. Forced to act by the indignant uproar of the actors, Green set up an "arbitration committee" which offered the curious compromise of rescinding the IATSE grab, but sending AFA back into the 4-A with its old leadership and outmoded methods. The actors are not going back. They notified Bill Green as much. They may withdraw from the AFL if the executive does not recognize their autonomy.

Dairy Farmers on Strike

NEW YORK'S inspiring milk strike is the dairy farmers' answer to the unprecedented misery caused by the trust's control of the industry and accentuated by this summer's drought.

The strikers want a decent price for their milk—\$2.35 per hundredweight, no matter what the trust uses the milk for. They are striking to abolish the classification racket under which farmers and consumers join in subsidizing the trust's butter and cheese business through an artificially high price on fluid milk. Although the Dairy Farmers Union claims only fifteen thousand out of the sixty thousand farmers in the milkshed, the strike is over 50 percent effective and growing stronger every day. Members of the Dairy-men's League, the Sheffield Producers, and other trust-dominated cooperatives are out on the picketline, rebuking the strikebreaking attempts of their official leadership. So widespread is strike support that GOP judges are suspending sentences on arrested pickets.

The misery of the farmers has caused the growth of the strike, but the support of labor, consumers, and the progressives has been a decisive factor contributing to its chances of ultimate success. By providing funds, organizers, and public support, both CIO and AFL unions have made an important contribution not only to the strike but to farmer-labor unity. In rejecting a strikebreaking proposal to extend the milkshed west into Wisconsin, Mayor LaGuardia pointed a lesson which

unfortunately Governor Lehman has yet to learn—the need for progressive support to legitimate aspirations of the farmers.

Consumers, remembering the years of suffering of the farmers, are willing to put up with a little inconvenience to help the farmers get what is coming to them. The Dairy Farmers Union, on its part, has emphasized that a successful strike will not mean higher consumer prices by offering to supply the city itself with all the milk it can distribute, to retail at 10 cents a quart. Even before the strike was called, the union had worked out methods of guaranteeing milk to hospitals, health stations, clinics, etc.

Manifestations of support for the strike, whether by individuals or organizations, can prove of key importance in demonstrating to the farmers that the city folk support them. It is also important that progressive sentiment should be mobilized in support of the farmers' demands at the hearings on a new Milk Marketing Order, to be held at the end of this week, and that Secretary of Agriculture Wallace in Washington and Commissioner Holton Noyes in Albany should know that the city people support the farmers' struggle for a fair price.

Tory Oratory

LABOR was invited, but it was pretty well understood that its place was in the kitchen. The people who backed the World Congress for Education and Democracy made it plain from the very beginning that this was a gathering in which the elect of business and those politicians of whom business approved would give a few days to these perplexing problems and see what could be done. The time had come, said Dean William Fletcher Russell, of Columbia University's Teachers College, when he announced the congress last December, for educators "to seek the advice of business men." Dean Russell, along with Nicholas Murray Butler and Winthrop Aldrich of Chase National Bank, organized the sessions that took place on Morningside Heights last week.

For the most part the congress was so much pap. Stanley Baldwin; Sir Ernest Bevin, the Matthew Woll of England; Felix McWhirter, General Moseley's friend; Winthrop Aldrich, and a score of other bankers, industrialists, and their politicians did most of the talking. It was a godsend to the New York Times, which ran page after page of the tory oratory, but otherwise it was little more than fullblown apologetic for appeasement and reaction. A few voices, like that of Edouard Herriot, who attacked Hitler without gloves, were drowned out by the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, the American Bankers Association. The really serious problems of the immediate future of both education and democracy got their only attention from the scattered delegates of the CIO and AFL, and the few progressive educators. A congress that would attain the stated objectives of this one would reverse the representation.

"Krivitsky's" Game

THE scheduled appearance of "General Krivitsky" before the Dies committee becomes an issue aside from the fumbling and partisan procedure that has been employed to date. For "Krivitsky" is something more than a garden variety malcontent and renegade. He is an agent of a group which, by its own admission, seeks ends identical with those of the fascists, whose ends in turn are the armed conquest of every democracy. At the Moscow trials the Trotskyites admitted this, and in his public statements in this country "Krivitsky" has made no particular effort to mask his own connections with Leon Trotsky. Sedov, Trotsky's son, openly campaigned in behalf of the group his father directed. "I saw Sedov almost daily," said "Krivitsky," and he expressed his gratitude for the "help and comfort" given him by Sedov.

If "Krivitsky's" connections with fascism's friends inside the Soviet Union are clear, his relations with the same group elsewhere are not less so. Trotskyism, like fascism, functions best with the aid of divisive and sabotaging fifth columns. Trotskyites here are as eager as Sedov was to give "help and comfort" to "Krivitsky." Two of the most prominent, for example, find themselves named by Harper & Bros., which will publish in book form the *Saturday Evening Post* articles of Isaac Don Levine and "Krivitsky." In the Harpers salesman's office information sheet, the publishers inform the staff: "As you know, NEW MASSES questioned authenticity of Krivitsky material in *Satevepost*. If questions come up you may want to know that Professors [John] Dewey and [Sidney] Hook of Columbia University have written us about importance of this material." Harpers might have gone on to mention the part these two played in the Mexico City whitewash trial that exonerated Trotsky of all charges of sabotage of the Soviet military and economic machines. Harpers certainly knew, for Harpers published the committee's official report, and John Dewey headed the committee.

Now, "Krivitsky's" political status is clear enough to any student of world politics. Regardless of what connections he cares to admit or disavow, his very approach is confirmation enough. But "Krivitsky" goes further. He tells of his cooperation with Sedov and the Trotskyites. And the men who front for Trotsky here back him to the hilt. He entered the country under a dust cloud of intrigue and faking, engineered by his friends abroad. His testimony before the Dies committee will be part of the same strategy. As an agent of Trotsky, and more dangerous because he is masked as a "revolutionary," he will be a spokesman of international fascism. His entry into this country, his dubious status here, and his ministrations give progressives good reason vehemently to protest his activities and urge the U. S. Labor Department to prosecute further its case against him as a subject for deportation.

Readers' Forum

Missing Longshoreman

TO NEW MASSES: My name is Alice Maffia. I am the fiancée of Peter Panto, longshoreman, who left his home on July 14 and never came back. He never did that before and I am sure he did not do it then of his own free will. Something horrible must have happened to him. That is why I write to you. I want you to help me find him. His father, who is old and ailing, and I appeal to you to use your influence with the mayor and police to help find our Pete.

Maybe you read about Pete in the papers. Walter Winchell—my heart goes dead when I think of it—says maybe he's at the bottom of the East River. Whoever it was took him away did it because he was a good man. He tried to help the longshoremen, to save them from the gangsters and racketeers on the waterfront, to break the kickback system, and to make the union [ILA] a better union for the men. The longshoremen liked Pete. The last time he called a meeting hundreds came. They wanted to go his way because they knew his way was right, and he was for them. That was why he was taken away.

We were to be married this October. I am a poor girl. I don't know how to go about doing the things that will find Pete. I am hoping you can do something, write to the mayor or to the police asking for a thorough investigation into the disappearance of our Pete; tell them you know about Pete and that his girl is pleading for your help. I am hoping that you will appeal to your readers to do the same. Please, I beg you to do everything you can.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

ALICE MAFFIA.

Pity the Nobility

TO NEW MASSES: I think you are all too unsympathetic to Isaac Don Levine. It should be borne in mind that the Levine family, like all the other Russian noble families, lost their vast estates, their sables, and their jewels, when the revolution came; thus it is only human for Isaac Don to lament the passing of those good old czarist days when, as a lad, he romped through the rooms and the great halls of the palace at Tsarskoe Selo. Another nobleman—or, at any rate, one of an old Russian noble family—is Simeon Strunsky. Whether the Strunskys and the Romanovs were related I do not know, but it would seem so judging by the anti-Communist paragraphs that appear in Simeon's column in the *New York Times*—owned, by the way, by Sulzberger and a member of the Ochs family, themselves scions of two old German noble families. Curious how the remnants of Russian and German nobility have been reduced to newspaper work in New York.

New York City.

MORTON PHILLIPS.

In Progressive Canada

TO NEW MASSES: Re your railroad article in the July 18 issue: The London & Port Stanley R. R. (Ontario) is an old line of the N. Y. Central lines which was bought from the N. Y. Central and Pere Marquette R. R. and electrified about twenty years ago. It serves London (eighty thousand population), St. Thomas (twenty thousand population), and Port Stanley, a summer resort.

The distance from one end to the other is approximately twenty-five miles. It is a radial or inter-urban railway. It became the property of the city of London, Ont., about fifteen years ago and since it couldn't be handled profitably by the L&PS Railway Commission it was given over to the London Public Utilities Commission three years ago, which also handles Water and Hydro, and since has shown a profit every year. Every man on the road from conductors to train washers, etc., are members of one union, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees. It has been said this is the only road outside of the USSR where this is so. The road also operates (under PUC) several large concessions at the lakeside, including a dance hall which was the only one of its size in this part of the country to show a good operating profit last year; so far, this year's records show that both the L&PS and the dance hall will make an even better showing. It also operates coal docks, etc.

Of course this is all to the good. Both the taxpayers and users of the road benefit. Fare from London to Port Stanley has been reduced from 50 cents to 35 cents, with 25 cent fares after 6 p.m. This gives working people a chance to enjoy the cooling breezes of Lake Erie, etc. Public ownership does pay both financially and healthfully. London, Ontario. JOHN BARRATTA.

Add Sokolsky

TO NEW MASSES: I enjoyed your recent articles dealing with the press and certain of its luminaries. The article by Dale Kramer exposing further depths of George Sokolsky's treachery interested me as there is evidence available concerning his activities in the Soviet Union during the revolution.

In *This Is My Affair*, by Mona Kinel (a sister-in-law of Victor Young, the orchestra leader), the author relates that during the ten days that shook the world, she was employed as a secretary-stenographer by Sokolsky, who was at that time an editor of a British-owned newspaper in Russia. Sokolsky's anti-Soviet editorials and counter-revolutionary statements attracted the attention of the Soviet authorities, who sent a squad of sailors to tell Mr. Sokolsky to cease publishing his sheet. Mr. Sokolsky evaded this order by changing the name of the paper. He did this on six occasions, but the seventh time the sailors smashed the presses. Sokolsky got away by fleeing out the rear exit. It's too bad that the navy men did not post a guard at the back door.

There is very little evidence available that Sokolsky at any time was friendly to the working class. On the other hand, his whole career is a blueprint on the development of a super-rat whose services have always been for sale to the worst enemies of the masses.

Denver, Colo.

L. K.

Relief for Loyalists

TO NEW MASSES: Thousands of your readers have in the past three years contributed used clothing to the Spanish people through the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign. May I remind your readers that the need for clothing is now greater than ever? Many thousands in the French camps are still without shoes, underclothing, and other necessary articles. A card sent to the warehouse of the Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, at 14 Wooster St., N. Y. C., will bring our truck to your house.

HERMAN F. REISSIG,
Executive Secretary,
Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign.



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