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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF THE SOVIET UNION, 1935-1939

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF THE SOVIET UNION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II

A profound and comprehensive analysis of the international situation on the eve of World War II was given by I. V. Stalin in his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress on the work of the Central Committee. In this report he stated that the period between the seventeenth and eighteenth party congresses was a period of great tensions for the capitalist countries. Beginning in the latter half of 1937 a new economic crisis had developed in the capitalist countries. Its uniqueness consisted in the fact that the crisis occurred, not after a period of economic boom as had been the case earlier, but after a long period of stagnation, a depression of a special kind. Another special characteristic of the crisis was that it began at a time when imperialist Japan was waging war against China, disorganizing the Chinese market, and when Germany and Italy had already put their economies on a wartime footing. The economies of the other imperialist powers were also put on a wartime footing. These factors limited the possibilities for a peaceful emergence from the crisis on the part of the capitalist countries, and made for an extreme aggravation of the conflicts among them because of markets, colonies, and spheres of influence.

This period saw an increase in the disproportions in the development of capitalism. A new power ratio among the chief capitalist nations on the world market had come into being. Following World War I the US had moved far ahead and taken first place

in industrial production in the capitalist world. There was a corresponding decrease in the role of Britain and France in industrial production. Germany, which had been weakened in World War I, had been able (with the help of American and British loans) to rebuild its economy rapidly. In 1938 it moved into second place (after the US) in industrial production in the capitalist countries and first place (except for coal production) among the states of west Europe. Japan had also grown considerably stronger. Between 1929 and 1938 its industrial production as a whole increased 170% and heavy industry production increased 2.6 times.

The distribution of markets and spheres of influence did not correspond to the new power ratio. On the eve of World War II the chief imperialist powers, Britain, France, the US, Japan, and Italy, possessed colonies with territories of 50.5 million sq km and a population of 601.9 million persons. At that time the colonies and semicolonies were providing 64% of the copper mined in the capitalist world, more than 96% of the tin, 54% of the lead, 95% of the nickel, 82% of the gold, 70% of the silver, 97% of the rubber, 67% of the wool, and 99% of the jute.

But the imperialist powers were by no means equally provided with colonial territories and their resources. Britain possessed territories amounting to almost 1/4 of the surface of the earth (34.7 million sq mi) inhabited by about 1/4 of the world's population (525 million people). The British colonies accounted for 93% of the world production of jute, 41% of the tin, 47% of the wool, 58% of the rubber, and 28% of the copper.

Britain's colonial possessions were the object of predatory strivings on the part of her imperialist competitors, primarily on

the part of the German monopolies, which by 1929 had already regained almost completely their former positions on the world markets, with the exception of the colonies which had been lost. In central and southeast Europe, German exports increased from 19.4% in 1933 to 40.2% in 1936. Germany occupied first place in the foreign trade of the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Belgium, and Portugal. In 1935 Germany occupied second place after the US in exports to Latin America and was ahead of the US in exports to Brazil. German goods accounted for 15.9% of Chinese imports. In 1937-1938 Germany exported as many metal products to India as did Britain. In 1937 German deliveries accounted for 37.9% of all European imports of coal. By 1938 Germany accounted for 1/2 of the foreign trade of Turkey. In 1937-1938 Germany accounted for 27% of the imports of Iran and in 1938-1939 41.5%. Germany occupied second place in the imports of Egypt. Germany was the chief competitor, not only of Britain, but of the US. She squeezed the US out of southeast Europe and was its strongest competitor in Latin America.

But the German monopolies were not satisfied with what they had achieved. They demanded colonies. The German banker Schacht, who was the spokesman for their interests, said: "Germany must have colonies. If possible we will obtain them by means of negotiation. If this does not prove successful we will obtain them by means of force." The shifts in the positions of the imperialist powers in China testify to the increase in competition. Between 1932 and 1937 the US share in Chinese imports dropped from 25% to 16.9%. On the other hand Japan's share increased from 14% to 23.7%, and Germany's increased from 6.8% to 12%.

The lack of proportion in the development of the capitalist countries, which was intensified after World War I, compelled the capitalist countries to redistribute markets and spheres of influence forcibly. In their pursuit of maximum profits and in the struggle against competitors and for monopoly rule, the imperialists did not confine themselves to seizing underdeveloped agrarian regions and countries. As V. I. Lenin pointed out: "It is precisely the striving to annex, not only agrarian regions, but also industrial regions themselves, which is typical of imperialism" (Lenin, V. I., Soch. [Collected Works], Vol XXII, page 255).

This view of Lenin's was confirmed in the period which we are considering. The German monopolists put forth a plan for the establishment of world domination which provided not only for the return of those territories which they had lost earlier but for the seizing of all Europe, Africa, the Near and Far East, and the American continent.

Not only did the adventurist plans of the Japanese militarists provide for the seizing of the colonial and dependent countries of Asia, they were also directed against the USSR and other industrially developed countries.

Imperialist Italy, dissatisfied with the results of World War I, not only wanted to expand and strengthen her positions in the basin of the Mediterranean and in Africa, she was also preparing to seize territory in southeast Europe.

The increased strength of the US and its striving for greater expansion constituted an important factor in international relations following World War I.

International relations became more complex from one year to the next. There was a struggle among the US, Britain, and Germany for domination in Latin America, among the US, Britain, and Japan for domination in the basin of the Pacific Ocean and in China, and among the US, Britain, Germany, France, and Italy for predominance in the Near and Far East and in Africa.

This struggle was determined by the entire development of the capitalist system of world economy, showing that the development of world capitalism did not take place in the form "of a systematic and even forward movement, but by way of crises and military catastrophes" (Stalin, I. V., Rech'na predvybornom sobranii izbirateley Stalinskogo izbiratel'nogo okruga g. Moskvy [Speech at the Pre-Election Meeting of the Voters of the Stalin Electoral District of Moscow], 1946, Gospolitizdat, page 6).

During the period under consideration the new economic power ratio which had been formed came more and more rapidly into conflict with the distribution of colonies, markets, and spheres of influence which had been formed as a result of World War I. There was a sharpening of the conflict between the possibilities of capitalist production and the limitations of the markets. In this framework of limited markets, capitalism was being squeezed tighter and tighter. The entire system of international relations in the capitalist world which had been established following World War I was radically undermined. The further intensification of the disproportions in the development of the capitalist countries lead to a serious disturbance of the balance within the world system of capitalism. The ripening crisis in the capitalist system of world economy inevitably led to a crisis in international

relations. The problem of a new, forcible redivision of markets, spheres of influence, and colonies was put directly on the agenda. World War II was imminent.

For the Soviet Union the years 1935-1939 were marked by a further expansion of heavy industry and, on its basis, of all branches of industry and socialist agriculture, an upswing in the material and cultural well-being of the laboring masses, a growth in the political and military strength of the country, and a systematic struggle by the people and the government for the preservation of peace throughout the world.

Socialist industry grew tremendously and began to base itself on the well-developed technology and great expansion of heavy industry and machine building. In agriculture the world's largest mechanized system of kolkhozes and sovkhoses was established in lieu of the former ocean of small private peasant farms with their primitive equipment and low yields. The machine-tractor stations, provided with the newest equipment, were the strong points for the state administration of the kolkhozes and the industrial base for kolkhoz production. The powerful union of the working class and the peasantry in the Soviet Union was strengthened even more in the heroic struggle for the building of socialism.

Radical changes also occurred in the nation's trade turnover. Soviet trade was extensively developed.

Socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production was confirmed as the inviolable basis of Soviet society. The exploiter classes were liquidated. The exploitation of man by man was eliminated. These things meant that socialism had triumphed in the USSR.

The victory of socialism liberated the workers from their centuries-old needs and led them along the path of a comfortable existence. A cultural revolution took place in the USSR. In a short period of time illiteracy was eliminated and compulsory elementary and secondary education was established. There was a considerable increase in the number of institutions of higher education, schools, theaters, motion picture houses, libraries, and scientific research institutions. A Soviet intelligentsia was created out of the workers and peasants.

There was a radical change in the character of the peoples of the USSR. They developed a feeling of mutual friendship and brotherly cooperation in a single Soviet socialist state. The liquidation of the exploiter classes and the correct solution of the national minority problem created the inviolable moral political unity of the Soviet people. Soviet patriotism, the strength of which consists in the deep devotion of the peoples to their socialist fatherland, grew even stronger.

Soviet patriotism is directly associated with proletarian internationalism. It combines love for the fatherland and its socialist social and governmental structure with respect for the workers of other nations.

The historic victories of the Soviet people, which were achieved under the wise leadership of the Communist Party, were legislatively consolidated in the great monument of our era, the new Constitution of the USSR, which was ratified on 5 December 1936 by the Extraordinary Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets.

The building of socialism in the USSR represents the greatest revolution in the history of mankind and a world historic victory for the working class, peasantry, and intelligentsia of the USSR. The victory of socialism in the Soviet Union was not only a victory for the Soviet people but a general victory for the workers throughout the world. As I. V. Stalin pointed out, the new Soviet Constitution meant that those things which millions of decent persons in the capitalist countries had been dreaming of and are still dreaming of had already been carried out in the USSR. It told the peoples of the whole world that that which had been accomplished in the USSR was fully within the capabilities of workers in other countries as well (Stalin, I. V., Voprosy leninizma /Problems of Leninism/, 1952, page 572).

The ratification of the Constitution of the USSR was of great international significance. The Soviet Constitution was and is a strong moral support for all fighters in the great democratic camp.

The building of socialism in the USSR was the result of carrying out the precepts of the great Lenin, a result of the great organizing and guiding activity of the Communist Party and of its wise leaders, and a result of the heroic labor and creative activity of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia.

The victory of socialism was won in a bitter struggle against class enemies. Under the leadership of the Central Committee the Communist Party unmasked and destroyed in good time the Trotskyite-Bucharinite gang of spies and murderers who were working for foreign capitalist intelligence services and carrying on subversive activity against the Soviet state.

In directing the building of socialism the Communist Party and the Soviet Government consistently and resolutely carried out a policy of peace and struggled for collective resistance to the fascist aggressors.

In contrast to this the imperialists of the US, Britain, and France tried in every possible way to distract the attention of their competitors, the fascist powers, from their markets, colonies, and spheres of influence, and to direct them against the USSR.

To this end they tried to reach an agreement with the governments of the fascist states at the expense of the USSR and other countries bordering the Soviet Union. The reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France saw in the fascist states a crushing force for the struggle against the land of victorious socialism and the forces of democracy throughout the whole world.

Despite the will of the popular masses, the reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France rejected the proposals of the Soviet Government for a collective struggle against the fascist aggressors. They hypocritically stated that they were carrying out a policy of "nonintervention" or "pacification" of the aggressors.

The pernicious intent behind the policy of "nonintervention" was exposed at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party. In the report on the work of the Central Committee it was pointed out that the policy of nonintervention meant going along with aggression, the unleashing of a war, and its transformation into a world war (Stalin, I., Voprosy leninizma, pages 609-610). The scheme of the authors and executors of the policy of "nonintervention," the monopolists of the US, Britain, and France, was to

embroil fascist Germany and militarist Japan in a war with the USSR, China, and other countries, to weaken the warring nations, and then, having gathered strength and waited until the right moment, to enter the conflict in order to dictate their own conditions and thus expand and consolidate their positions. The bourgeois newspapers and politicians openly discussed plans of this kind. For example, the semiofficial French newspaper Le Temps said: "We will let the Germans get tied up in the Russian steppes, and we will become involved only toward the end of the second or third year of the war when the might of Berlin and the might of Moscow will have been weakened to an equal degree." Speaking of the state of mind predominant among the ruling circles of several capitalist countries, S. Wells, former Undersecretary of State of the US, wrote that in those years "the representatives of the biggest financial and commercial groups in the Western nations, including the US, were firmly convinced that war between the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany would be favorable to their own interests. They affirmed that Russia would certainly suffer defeat, which would entail the destruction of communism, and that Germany, weakened as a result of this conflict, could not for many years constitute a real threat to the rest of the world."

Incontrovertible facts from the history of international relations on the eve of World War II confirm the description of the policy of the US, Britain, and France given at the Eighteenth Party Congress, and at the same time show the consistent policy of the Soviet Union, aimed at the preservation of peace.

THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN WAR AND THE POSITION
OF THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES; THE USSR'S STRUGGLE
IN THE DEFENSE OF ETHIOPIA

As is well known, Ethiopia (Abyssinia) had long been coveted by the imperialists. The latter were attracted by the natural resources of that country, by the market and cheap labor, and by the important strategic position of Ethiopia, which is located along the route from Asia to Europe. Its possession offered the imperialists several advantages of control over very important lines of communication.

The Italian imperialists too were endeavoring to seize Ethiopia. The competition between Germany and Italy in southeast Europe and the strengthening of the position of the German monopolists in this area made Italy anxious to seize Ethiopia as rapidly as possible, and the Italian fascists stepped up preparations for this seizure in the years 1934-1935.

The policy of "nonintervention" being followed by the ruling circles of the US, Britain, and France created favorable conditions for Italian aggression against Ethiopia. In December 1934 the Italian military leaders organized several incidents on the border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. But when on 3 January Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations to take up the question of Italy's aggressive moves the British and French delegates to the League of Nations "advised" that the matter not be pursued. In early 1935 the fascist forces once again carried out raids on the border of Ethiopia. Then on 17 March the Ethiopian Government once again raised the question of Italy's aggressive acts at the League of Nations. But Britain and France again prevented

consideration of Ethiopia's protest. A commission of the League of Nations was not formed until May 1935. After an on-the-spot "investigation" the commission reported that it had been unable to determine who was responsible for the "incident." It was not until September 1935 that the League of Nations organized a commission for further study of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and worked up a draft resolution thereon.

Having failed to secure support from the League of Nations, Ethiopia asked the US 3 July 1935 to help prevent the conflict from being provoked by fascist Italy. In this connection it was pointed out that Ethiopia was a party to the Kellog-Briand Pact, which had officially condemned and prohibited wars and armed conflicts and required the solution of disputes by peaceful means.

The US Government rejected this request from Ethiopia. On 24 August 1935, in an attempt to conceal aid to the aggressor behind the screen of "nonintervention," the ruling circles of the US put a "neutrality" act through Congress. This act forbade the exporting of weapons, ammunition, and war materiel to belligerent countries. It prohibited the carrying of these materials in American ships. In essence the act served to notify the aggressors that their victims would not receive any help from the US. The monopolist circles of the US knew that the "neutrality" act would not interfere with profitable shipments of weapons and strategic materials to the fascist nations. The US imperialists were interested not in preventing war but in bringing it about. In September 1935 the Journal of Commerce openly wrote that the outbreak of war "would have a stimulating effect on the economic position of the US and would increase exports of various kinds of raw materials and industrial products."

Despite the fact that the Italian plans posed a threat to the possessions and communication lines of Britain, the latter government took a conciliatory position and announced its readiness to reach an agreement with Italy at the expense of Ethiopia. One of the reasons for Britain's reluctance to oppose the aggressive designs of Italy was that the British ruling circles were fearful of attacks by the Italian submarine and surface fleets and air force against British bases and communication lines in the Mediterranean. Britain's position was also affected by her desire to avoid a rapprochement between Italy and fascist Germany.

France's position with respect to the Italian plans was expressed in the agreement between Laval and Mussolini in January 1935. In the course of the preliminaries to this agreement Mussolini informed Laval of fascist Italy's intentions to seize Ethiopia. Laval averred that the French Government would not oppose the execution of Mussolini's plans. Helping to strengthen the position of the Italian aggressor in Africa, the French Government headed by Laval agreed to a "rectification" of the borders between French and Italian possessions in Africa. France handed over to Italy 22 km of coastline opposite the Strait of Bab el Mandeb. Pursuant to the agreement, Italy obtained Dumeyr Island and 20% of the shares of the Jibuti-Addis Ababa Railroad. This worked damage to the communication lines and strategic positions of France and Britain. The Laval government justified its policy on the grounds of wanting to avoid a rapprochement between Italy and Germany. But primarily it was trying to direct the aspirations of the Italian imperialists, which were threatening the positions of the French monopolists in Tunisia, toward East Africa, weakening the British positions in this area.

On 3 October 1935, encouraged by the international reactionaries, fascist Italy began war on Ethiopia. At the time of the attack Italy had assembled near its borders an army of 500,000-600,000 men, 400 aircraft, 400 tanks, and 800 field pieces.

Owing to its feudal and tribal decentralization, Ethiopia did not have a unified army. Its armed forces consisted of the guards of the Negus and military units subordinated to individual feudal landowners. The Ethiopian forces were equipped for the most part with cold steel. They had no gas masks or defenses against chemical warfare. Many of the soldiers did not have footwear. Nonetheless the troops of fascist Italy encountered stubborn resistance from the Ethiopians, who were struggling heroically for their independence.

Because of the inequality between the forces of Italy and Ethiopia the attitude of the great powers toward this war was of special importance.

The position of the ruling circles in France and Britain is clearly illustrated by the Anglo-French agreement (the Hoare-Laval Pact) concluded on 9 December 1935. This agreement provided that Ethiopia should be dismembered, that it should be divided among the great powers into spheres of influence, and that Italy should get 1/2 of Ethiopia.

However the fascist leaders rejected this proposal since they were counting on seizing the entire country and combining the Italian possessions in Africa into a single territory.

The Hoare-Laval Pact provoked a violent rage on the part of the popular masses of Ethiopia. They rightly categorized this

agreement as a stab in the back. The pact also provoked disturbance and protests on the part of the democratic elements in all countries of the world and in particular in Britain and France. As a result the British Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoare was obliged to retire. And in January 1936, under the pressure of dissatisfaction on the part of the people, the Laval cabinet in France fell.

As was noted above, the US under the pretext of "nonintervention" in the Italo-Ethiopian affair refused to let Ethiopia buy in the US any arms for carrying on the just war against the fascist aggressors. However the American monopolists continued deliveries of war materiel to Italy. Whereas in 1934 average monthly exports of weapons, war materiel, and other products from the US to Italy did not exceed 25,000 dollars, by October 1935 (after the Italian attack on Ethiopia) they had increased to 368,000 dollars and by November to 584,000 dollars. During the first 9 months of 1935 exports of aircraft, engines, and other spare parts from the US to Italy increased 11.3 times relative to 1928. US exports of petroleum to Italy increased from 175,000 t in 1934 to 472,000 t in 1935. During the same period exports of petroleum directly to Italian possessions in Africa increased 149 times (Slobodyanyuk, I., Amerikanskiye imperialisty -- posobniki fashistskoy interventsii v Ispanii (1936-1939) [The American Imperialists, Accomplices of the Fascist Interventionists in Spain (1936-1939)], 1954 edition, pages 15, 48).

It was precisely this policy of supporting the fascist aggressors, carried out by the ruling circles in the imperialist nations, which made it possible for Italy to conquer Ethiopia.

But, despite the defeat of Ethiopia's armed forces in the war, the Ethiopian people did not fall on their knees before the usurpers. (Officially the war ended on 5 May 1936, when Ethiopia was declared to be a colony of Italy.) Instead they carried on a heroic partisan war against them for their freedom and independence.

The victory of fascist Italy was relative and unstable. Italy was obliged to keep about 250,000 troops in Ethiopia. In 1937 the Italians lost about 6,000 men in the fighting with the partisans. Other figures also show how much of a strain this fighting was. Whereas in the course of the war from October 1935 to May 1936 Italian aircraft flew 2,091 bombing and reconnaissance missions, during the period of occupation from May 1936 to March 1937 the number of missions increased to 3,406.

Of the great powers only the Soviet Union raised its voice in defense of the Ethiopian people, against the fascist aggression and the policy of encouraging it. Vis-a-vis the Italo-Ethiopian war it took a position opposed to imperialism and to the policy of seizing colonies. Before Italy's attack on Ethiopia the Soviet Union had declared by way of warning that in the region of Ethiopia a situation was building up which threatened not only the Ethiopian people but the whole cause of general peace. The Soviet Union proposed to the League of Nations, of which it was a member, "to spare no effort or means to prevent armed conflict between 2 members of the League" (Pravda, 6 September 1935). Basing its position on the principle of the equality and independence of all countries, the Soviet Government stated that it could not support any acts of the League of Nations or of individual capitalist countries aimed at violating the independence and equality of

Ethiopia. The Soviet Union took advantage of its membership in the League of Nations to encourage the condemnation of the aggression against the Ethiopian people and the organization of collective resistance to the Italian aggressors. At a plenum of the Council of the League of Nations on 10 April 1935 the Soviet delegate stated that "the USSR considers it a duty to reaffirm its readiness to carry out together with other members of the League of Nations all of the obligations which the covenant imposes upon all members without exception" (Pravda, 11 October 1935). The Soviet delegate emphasized that concerted action was the surest means of eliminating the conflict which had arisen on the soil of fascist Italy's aspirations for colonial expansion and which was threatening the territorial integrity and national independence of Ethiopia. Warning of the danger which the fascist aggression presented for all mankind, the Soviet delegate pointed out that concerted action would also constitute a deterrent to other aggressors. The Soviet delegation to the League of Nations exposed the false "arguments" of the Italian rulers as to the allegedly "civilizing" role of Italy vis-a-vis Ethiopia, the "struggle" against slavery, and "preserving" the security of Italy. Along with its pitiless exposure of the aggressors and their accomplices, the Soviet Government refused to recognize the seizure of Ethiopia by Italy.

At the demand of the Soviet Union, and under pressure from the popular masses of the entire world, the League of Nations was compelled to pass a resolution calling for economic sanctions against Italy on the basis of Article 3 of the Covenant. Those states which were members of the League of Nations agreed not to trade with Italy and not to deliver weapons and war materiel to

her. If carried out realistically the economic sanctions could have played a decisive role since Italy depended upon imports of petroleum and petroleum products, iron ore, copper, tin, nickel, rubber, cotton, and many other kinds of raw material.

However the ruling circles of Britain and France saw in the application of the sanctions only a means of deceiving public opinion in their own countries and of exercising a certain pressure on Italy, since she had reached an agreement with them at the expense of Ethiopia. The sanctions were not applied in the case of several commodities, including petroleum and petroleum products. Actually the governments of the capitalist countries did not implement the rulings of the League of Nations with regard to sanctions against Italy. The closing of the Suez Canal to Italian shipping could have served as a great hindrance to the fascist aggressors but Britain did not want to do this. The US was among those nations, not members of the League of Nations, which were invited to participate in the sanctions. But the US rejected the invitation. Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, and certain other nations also did not participate in the sanctions.

Only the Soviet Union consistently carried out sanctions against the Italian aggressor.

The basic policy of the Soviet Union, which was aimed at defending the Ethiopian people and against the fascist aggression, was supported by the masses of workers in all countries, inspired by the communist parties. Organizing a movement of the popular masses in defense of Ethiopia and against the fascist aggressors, the Communist Party of the US demanded that the government discontinue shipments of weapons and war materiel to Italy, prohibit the

financing of the aggressors by American banks, and permit the sale to Ethiopia of weapons to carry on a just war.

The Communist International did a great deal of work by way of mobilizing the masses for the struggle against fascist aggression and in defense of the Ethiopian people. In its appeal of 7 October 1935 the IKKI [Ispolnitel'nyy Komitet Kommunisticheskogo internatsionala -- Executive Committee of the Communist International] laid down a broad program for this struggle, called for the organization of meetings, congresses, and demonstrations, and appealed to transport workers and port workers to prevent the departure of ships and trains carrying Italian military units and war materiel to be used in the war against Ethiopia.

THE OCCUPATION OF THE RHINELAND DEMILITARIZED ZONE
BY GERMAN FASCIST TROOPS, AND GERMANY'S DENUNCIATION
OF THE VERSAILLES TREATY AND THE LOCARNO AGREEMENTS

With respect to the Italo-Ethiopian War fascist Germany had officially announced its "neutrality" but actually it was helping the Italian aggressors to strangle the Ethiopian people. In addition to the solidarity with Italy as a fascist state, Germany was proceeding on the assumption that Italy, having directed her efforts toward Africa, would yield up her position in southeast Europe. As a matter of fact this was precisely what happened subsequently.

Taking advantage of the international situation due to the Italo-Ethiopian War and the refusal of the Western powers to oppose the aggression, fascist Germany sent its troops into the Rhineland demilitarized zone which had been established pursuant to the Versailles Treaty and strengthened by the Locarno agreements.

In undertaking this new violation of international commitments the Hitlerites were not wholly convinced that the occupation of the Rhineland demilitarized zone would not meet with opposition on the part of France and other states signatory to the Locarno agreements. Hitler's government was ready in the event of the slightest resistance to refrain from the remilitarization of the Rhineland zone. The commanding officers of the units which entered the Rhineland had been provided with packets and instructed to open them if French troops made their appearance. The packets contained instructions as to the necessity of retreating in the event of real resistance on the part of France. In a conversation with the Austrian Chancellor von Schuschnigg in 1938 Hitler acknowledged that if France had offered resistance in March 1936 Germany would have been compelled to retreat.

But the fear of the French leaders turned out to have been groundless. The French Government took no steps to ensure the security of the country and the German troops which invaded the Rhineland zone on 7 March 1936 consolidated their positions there.

In order to conceal its capitulatory policy and deceive the people the French Government sent to the League of Nations a protest against the acts of fascist Germany and appealed to the US and Britain to condemn these acts.

The US Government rejected France's appeal. The British Government also took a position which in fact amounted to encouragement of the German fascists. This position was supported by the right wing Laborites. The Laborite Member of Parliament Bellendger, sympathizing with fascist Germany, stated apropos of the German troops' occupation of the Rhineland that Germany had thus thrown off the fetters of Versailles.

Having taken up on 17-19 March the French protest, the League of Nations confined itself to a verbal reproach to Germany, pointing out that its acts did not contribute to the security of Europe. The German fascist ringleaders could not interpret this position of the League of Nations as anything but an encouragement of their aggressive acts. A similar position was taken at the London conference of delegates from nations signatory to the Locarno agreements (excepting Italy), held in March 1936, which tacitly recognized the remilitarization of the Rhineland zone. At this meeting Britain once again guaranteed the security of France and Belgium.

The liquidation of the Rhineland demilitarized zone meant the abrogation of the most important articles of the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno agreements (in January 1937 Germany announced that it was removing its signature from the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno agreements) and dealt a blow to the international prestige of France and Britain, exposing to the whole world the capitulatory policy of the ruling circles of France and the unrealistic nature of the British guarantees.

The occupation of the Rhineland strengthened fascist Germany's position in the event of a war against France and Belgium. It also meant the strengthening of the German rear areas for aggression in east Europe, that is, it increased the threat of war and dealt a blow to European security.

Among all the powers only the Soviet Union took a position of principle with regard to the events which had developed. On 17 March 1936, when the French protest was under consideration at the League of Nations, the Soviet delegation exposed the aggressive trend of the foreign policy of fascist Germany. It pointed out

that the USSR was not signatory to the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno agreements but that the Soviet Government was opposing the violation of international agreements by the aggressors. The Soviet Government not only protested against the aggressive acts of fascist Germany but it declared its readiness to assist France in the event of an attack on her on the part of any European power.

On 19 March 1936 in an interview with Chastenet, the chief editor of the French newspaper Le Temps, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, V. M. Molotov, stated that the uneasiness of the French people because of the aggressive acts of fascist Germany was quite understandable to the Soviet people and their government. He further stated: "All of the assistance required by France in connection with a possible attack on her by a European state, insofar as it is derived from the Franco-Soviet Pact, which contains no limitations in this respect, will be rendered on the part of the Soviet Union" (Pravda, 24 March 1936).

Pointing to the growing danger of war for France and Belgium, V. M. Molotov emphasized that the remilitarization of the Rhineland had undoubtedly increased the threat for countries east of Germany as well, particularly for the Soviet Union (Ibid.).

In order to ward off this danger the Soviet Government proposed measures to ensure collective security and collective resistance to the fascist aggressors.

THE CONFERENCE AT MONTREUX, THE SUCCESS
OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE MATTER
OF STRENGTHENING SECURITY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

Owing to the increased tensions in international relations as a whole, particularly in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, the problem of revising the regulations governing the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles established by the Lausanne Conference of 1923 acquired real urgency.

On the initiative of Turkey, supported by the Soviet Union, a special international conference was called at the Swiss town of Montreux for purposes of revising the Lausanne Convention on the Straits. Those participating in the work of the conference included the USSR, Britain, Australia, France, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Japan.

As at the Lausanne Conference of 1923 Britain strove at Montreux to have the Black Sea declared an open international sea. It demanded that the conditions for the passage of naval vessels through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles be the same for nations bounded by the Black Sea and other nations. In peacetime, the British draft convention stated, naval vessels and auxiliary vessels, with the exception of submarines, should be granted free passage through the Straits. In time of war, if Turkey remained neutral, naval vessels should have the right of free transit and navigation under the conditions named above. In time of a war in which Turkey was a belligerent, the conditions for transit and navigation for naval vessels would be established "entirely at the discretion of the Turkish Government." The international commission on the straits was to continue to carry out its functions.

These demands of Britain constituted an infringement of the sovereignty and security of the nations bordered by the Black Sea, being an attempt to establish the domination of the imperialists in the region of the straits.

In the course of the conference the Turkish ruling circles, counter to the national interests of their own country, rejected the draft convention they themselves had proposed, and made substantial concessions to the British imperialists, actually supporting many of their demands. By indirect methods the Turkish delegation tried to block the passage of naval vessels of the Soviet Union through the straits.

The Soviet Union's line at the Montreux Conference was aimed at ensuring the security of all Black Sea nations and at the preservation and strengthening of peace in the regions of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The problem of the Black Sea Straits was of tremendous importance to the USSR. It involved the security of the USSR's boundaries on the Black Sea, ensuring conditions for trade relations with the outside world, and communications among the Soviet fleets in the Black Sea, the Baltic, the North Sea, and Far Eastern waters. Emphasizing the vital importance of the problem of the Black Sea Straits to the USSR, M. M. Litvinov, chief of the Soviet delegation, stated at the conference: "If, according to the metaphorical expression of Mr. Titulescu (Rumanian delegate -- I. I.), the Straits constitute the heart of Turkey and the lungs of Rumania, for the Soviet Union they constitute a vital nerve connecting the different parts of its body" (Pravda, 23 June 1936).

The Soviet Union proceeded on the assumption that the straits could not be compared with any other international waterways or straits, since they led only into the Black Sea, a closed sea which could not be used for transit into other countries. The Soviet delegation emphasized that the security of Turkey and all Black Sea nations "would be best guaranteed by completely barring access to the straits on the part of naval vessels of nations not bordered by the Black Sea" (Pravda, 24 June 1936). But in the interests of cooperation and of achieving an acceptable compromise solution the Soviet delegation stated that it would not insist on completely closing the straits to the naval vessels of nations not bordered by the Black Sea but would demand limited access for such vessels, regarding both quantity and tonnage.

At the Montreux Conference the Soviet delegation also insisted on free passage through the straits for the naval vessels of Black Sea nations. These were the minimal demands flowing from the essential security interests of the USSR and all Black Sea states.

The position taken by the Soviet Union obstructed the maneuvers of the imperialist powers and Britain was obliged to withdraw her demands, which were unacceptable to the Black Sea nations, and also to make concessions. The work of the Montreux Conference was concluded with the signing on 20 July 1936 of a new convention governing the Black Sea Straits, consisting of 29 articles, 4 appendices, and a protocol.

The enacting section of the convention emphasized that the new conditions for the straits were established with the aim of protecting the security of Turkey and the other Black Sea nations.

Article 2 stipulated that "in time of peace merchant vessels will be granted the right of completely free passage and navigation through the straits, both in the daytime and at night, regardless of their flag or cargo" (Sbornik deystvuyushikh dogovorov, soglashe-
sheniy, konfentsiy, zaklyuchennykh s inostrannymi gosudarstvami

[A Compilation of Currently Effective Pacts, Agreements, and Con-
ventions Concluded with Foreign States], No 9, 1938, Izd. NKID

[Publishing House of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs]).

Pursuant to Article 4, this rule held good in time of war also, provided Turkey remained neutral. Passage through the straits in peacetime on the part of the naval vessels of nations not bordered by the Black Sea was limited in terms of quantity and tonnage. Passage was allowed to surface and auxiliary vessels with an over-all tonnage not in excess of 15,000 t (Article 4). In peacetime passage for the naval vessels of nations not bordering on the Black Sea was allowed, provided that the over-all tonnage of ves- sels passing through at the same time did not exceed 30,000 t, with the possibility of increasing this figure to 45,000 t in the event that the fleet of one of the 4 Black Sea nations should be increased. By the terms of the convention naval vessels of nations not bordered by the Black Sea which had passed through the straits into the Black Sea could not remain there more than 21 days (Article 19). Consequently the convention made provision for access into the Black Sea on the part of the naval vessels of non-Black Sea nations in exceptional cases.

In this respect the convention signed at Montreux differed radically from the Lausanne Convention, pursuant to which the straits had been stripped of military defenses and declared open to any naval vessels of any flag, day or night, without any

permission from or notification of the Turkish authorities. In contrast to this the conditions of the convention signed at Montreux imposed upon the non-Black Sea power definite limitations with regard to the passage of naval vessels into the Black Sea.

The convention also established certain advantages for the Black Sea nations, who were permitted to send naval vessels, including battleships and submarines, through the straits (articles 11 and 12).

It was decided that the regulations for the straits would remain in force in time of war as well. Turkey agreed that if she remained neutral she would prevent the passage of the naval vessels of belligerents through the straits (Article 19). If Turkey were a belligerent she would act at her own discretion in the region of the straits. An analogous situation was to obtain in the event that Turkey was threatened by war (articles 20 and 21).

The convention adopted at Montreux meant the dissolution of the international commission which had been established by the Lausanne Convention of 1923 to regulate conditions for the Black Sea Straits. The authority of this commission was transferred to Turkey. The latter was authorized to remilitarize the region of the straits.

The convention regulating the Black Sea Straits was to remain in force for 20 years. It was stipulated that if the convention was not denounced within the 2 years immediately preceding the expiration of this period it would remain in force for another 20 years.

The decisions of the Montreux Conference had a positive significance. The experience of the conference showed that even under the complex conditions of an aggravation of the international situation it was possible to solve controversial problems if the principle of cooperation and mutual consideration of the interests of the contracting parties were observed. Nonetheless the convention regulating the Black Sea Straits contains serious shortcomings due to the position of Britain and other capitalist countries participating in the work of the conference and in particular to the position of the Turkish delegation. One shortcoming of the convention was the fact that in violation of the rights of the Black Sea nations it did not establish the principle of closing the straits to the naval vessels of non-Black Sea nations. Another defect of the convention was the granting to the Turkish Government of the right actually to interpret and apply its articles at the latter's own discretion without outside controls.

However compared to the Lausanne Convention it represented a step ahead. To a certain extent it took into account the security interests of the Soviet Union and the other Black Sea nations, which fact bore witness to the success of Soviet foreign policy.

THE GERMAN-ITALIAN FASCIST INTERVENTION IN SPAIN
AND THE POSITION OF THE CAPITALIST POWERS,
THE SOVIET UNION'S STRUGGLE IN DEFENSE OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE

Toward the end of 1935, on the initiative of the Communist Party, a movement for the establishment of a united popular front against fascism and fascist aggression was launched in Spain. In February 1936, on the occasion of the elections to the Cortes (Parliament), the parties which had joined the popular front won a

victory (the united front included the Communist Party of Spain, the Radical Republican Party, the Republican Union, the Socialist Party, the Catalonian Radical Party, the General Confederation of Labor, and the socialist and communist parties of Catalonia). Following the elections in Spain there was formed a united front government which announced a pacific foreign policy and began to carry out democratic transformations within the country.

The Spanish reactionaries, supported by the fascists of Germany and Italy, decided to oppose the victorious Popular Front and its government and to oppose the democratic social changes and the pacific foreign policy.

The fascist revolt against the legal government of the Popular Front, prepared and organized with the aid and instigation of the German and Italian fascists, began on 18 July 1936 in Spanish Morocco and on the Canary Islands. Military units stationed in Spain itself participated in the revolt.

In almost all of the cities of Spain (especially in Madrid and Barcelona) the rebels met with resistance from the popular masses and were defeated almost immediately.

As early as August 1936, having witnessed the fiasco of the criminal plans of the rebels, the fascist governments of Germany and Italy began open intervention in the Spanish war. Thus the German-Italian fascist intervention began developing in the summer of 1936. By the end of December 1936 there were more than 20,000 German soldiers and officers in Spain and more than 35,000 Italian troops. By March 1937 the forces of the interventionists numbered more than 100,000.

In carrying out their intervention against republican Spain, the ruling cliques of fascist Germany and Italy were pursuing long range aims. They had taken into account the strategic importance of Spain, which is situated along the sea lanes between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean and connecting Europe to North Africa and Asia. The imperialists of all countries, including the German imperialists, were interested in Spain as a base for expansion into Africa. Taking into account the connections between Spain and the countries of Latin America, the imperialists assumed that the possession of Spain would provide certain advantages for expanding in those countries. And Spain itself was an important market for the imperialist monopolies. It possessed reserves of tin, zinc, mercury, copper, manganese, and other strategic raw materials.

In launching their intervention in Spain, fascist Germany and Italy were directly threatening the positions of the other imperialist powers, above all, those of France and Britain. At the same time, their plans included the goal of destroying the forces of democracy in Spain and subsequently in other countries. The fascist aggressors figured that once they had consolidated their position in Spain they could strengthen their rear areas for war in east Europe against the USSR. Finally, the German-Italian fascists considered Spain to be a kind of "experimental farm" for testing their armed forces.

The heroic Spanish people, inspired by the Communist Party, had to carry on a bitter struggle not only against the internal fascist gangs but also against the foreign fascist interventionists. The struggle of the Spanish people against the rebels was transformed

into a revolutionary war of national liberation against foreign invaders, against internal and international reactionaries.

A German-Italian aggressive bloc was built up in the course of the wars against Ethiopia and Spain. On 24 October 1936 a protocol between the fascist rulers of Germany and Italy was signed, forming the so-called "Rome-Berlin Axis." Germany recognized the seizure of Ethiopia by fascist Italy. An agreement was reached regarding the coordination of the policies of these nations in European politics. Italy made concessions to Germany with regard to economic positions in southeast Europe. The fascist ring-leaders of Germany and Italy recognized Franco, the leader of the rebels, as the ruler of Spain.

What was the position of the great capitalist powers vis-a-vis the Franco revolt and the German-Italian fascist intervention?

The governments of the US, Britain, and France announced a policy of "nonintervention" with regard to the Spanish question. They praised this policy as an attempt to localize the war in Spain.

Despite the fact that the German-Italian intervention against Spain threatened the interests of Britain and France in the basins of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, the reactionary circles of these countries, like the ruling circles of the US, actually helped the rebels and interventionists. They assumed that a victory on the part of republican Spain would encourage an upswing in the revolutionary democratic movement in France and other European countries, which would weaken the position of the bourgeoisie. The imperialists were also afraid (or so they alleged) that republican Spain would not solve the problem of the Spanish colonies in a

democratic manner, and that this would serve as a rallying point for all the peoples of the colonial countries. On the basis of these class interests, they saw in the person of the fascist interventionists a weapon and a smashing force in the struggle against democracy. They hated the democratic regime which had been established in Spain and the democratic measures which had been taken.

The League of Nations, where British and French delegates played the chief role and on which the US exercised a cloakroom influence, did not take the necessary steps against the fascist aggression and in defense of the Spanish Republic.

On the initiative of France and Britain there was reached an agreement on nonintervention in Spanish affairs, signed by 28 nations. A nonintervention committee with headquarters in London was established on the basis of this agreement. In the course of its 2 1/2 years of existence this committee took no effective steps whatsoever for implementing real nonintervention in the internal affairs of Spain but in fact became an organ for instigation and hidden assistance to the aggressors in strangling the Spanish people.

Despite the fact that since 1935 there had existed in the US a law prohibiting exports of weapons and war materiel to belligerent countries, in the first 6 months following the beginning of the intervention in Spain the US monopolies delivered to fascist Germany weapons and war materiel costing 400,000 dollars. In January 1937 the US Congress voted an amendment to the 1935 "neutrality" act prohibiting shipments of weapons and war materiel to countries where a civil war was in progress. In this case Spain was meant.

In accordance with the amendment to the "neutrality" act the American monopolies absolutely refused to deliver weapons and materiel to republican Spain, even at very high prices. At the same time they stepped up deliveries (especially through Portugal) to the Franco rebels and the German and Italian interventionists. By February 1937 the US had in effect recognized Franco as the ruler of Spain. This was evidenced by the fact that it opened a consulate in Malaga, which had been seized by the rebels.

The US authorities denied passports to persons desiring to fight in international volunteer units against the fascist rebels and interventionists, under threat of a loss of citizenship, 3 years' imprisonment, and a fine of 3,000 dollars. Surveillance was established over the collection of funds from the population to aid the Spanish republicans. It was proposed to all persons desirous of making such contributions that they register with the FBI. When the democratic organizations and progressive public figures had collected about one million dollars for the Spanish republicans, the American authorities proposed that this sum be divided equally among the rebels and the republicans, a proposal which caused consternation among the democratic elements.

The reactionaries of the US, Britain, France, and other capitalist countries spread vicious slander about republican Spain. They depicted the struggle of the Spanish people as the handiwork of the Soviet Government and the Comintern, and the democratic reforms of the united front government as the "sovietization" of Spain, etc.

Of all the great powers only the Soviet Union correctly evaluated the struggle of the Spanish people for their liberty

and independence and against fascism and fascist aggression. The Soviet people and their government looked upon the heroic struggle of the Spanish people not as their private affair but as the affair of all progressive mankind. This attitude of the Soviet Union toward the struggle of the Spanish people was clearly expressed by I. V. Stalin in a telegram dated 16 October 1936 addressed to the secretary of the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party, Jose Diaz.

Guided by the principles of peace and security, the Soviet Government did not consider that aid to the legal government of the Spanish Republic against the rebels and interventionists constituted intervention in the internal affairs of that country or that it was counter to the Covenant of the League of Nations. On the contrary the Soviet Government felt that the prohibition of the sale of weapons to that government was an arbitrary and unjust measure which violated the principles of international law.

However, by virtue of the exceptional circumstances, with a view to the most rapid cessation of the war and bloodletting in Spain, and for the sake of preserving peace in Europe, the Soviet Union considered it feasible to sign the international agreement on nonintervention. The Soviet Government signed the agreement on nonintervention in Spanish affairs on the basis of "the natural assumption that the commitments imposed by the agreement would be observed by all of the nations signatory thereto" (Mirovoye khoz-yaystvo i mirovaya politika [World Economy and World Politics], No 1, 1937, page 174).

The Soviet Union demanded that the Committee on Nonintervention systematically implement the agreement on nonintervention and

achieve the cessation of intervention and other kinds of aid to the rebels. In reply to an invitation to sign the agreement on nonintervention on 6 August 1936 the Soviet Government pointed to the necessity for immediate cessation of the aid being rendered by certain states to the rebels against the legal Spanish Government. In October 1936 the Soviet Government resolutely declared that it opposed transforming the agreement on nonintervention into a screen to cover up aid to the rebels on the part of the signatories to the agreement.

Considering that Portugal was an important base for supplying the rebels and that the armed forces of the interventionists were being sent into Spain through the former country, the Soviet Government demanded the immediate establishment of controls over the Portuguese ports. At the same time the Soviet Government proposed the establishment of controls over the Spanish ports and the important border points. In December 1936 the Soviet Government declared its readiness to cooperate in an attempt to put an end to the war in Spain by means of mediation and to enter into talks with the governments of other countries to this end. In the interests of stopping the bloodletting in Spain the Soviet Government signed an agreement prohibiting the sending of volunteers to Spain. It announced its readiness to attempt, together with other countries, the recall of all foreign volunteers and regular troops from Spain and for purposes of achieving this to encourage the signing of an armistice. Considering that it was impossible to regard the legal Spanish Government and the rebels as equal parties, the Soviet Government justly insisted that "the rebels, who were the first to use armed force against the legal government of the Spanish Republic, should be the first to desist from military

actions . . . and the first to begin the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country" (Izvestiya, 29 May 1937).

The Soviet Government systematically exposed the intervention in Spanish affairs on the part of the fascist powers and the activity of the Committee on Nonintervention, which was actually encouraging the interventionists and the rebels. In view of this policy of the committee, the Soviet Union stated that it would not be responsible for its activity and "could not consider itself bound by the agreement on nonintervention to any greater extent than any of the other signatories to this agreement" (Izvestiya, 24 October 1936). Pointing out that a favorable position for the rebels and the interventionists had been created as a result of the violation of the agreement on nonintervention, the Soviet Government demanded that "the right to purchase weapons outside of Spain and the possibility thereof, which rights and possibilities are enjoyed by . . . all governments in the world . . . be restored to the Spanish Government" (Ibid.).

The Soviet Union utilized all possible diplomatic means and methods to struggle for collective resistance to the fascist aggressors and in defense of the just cause of the Spanish people within the framework of the international agreement and the Committee on Nonintervention. When however the Committee on Nonintervention had definitively been transformed into an organ for assisting the interventionists and the rebels the Soviet Government recalled its delegates.

The Soviet Union took advantage of its presence at the League of Nations to expose the German-Italian fascist interventionists and to defend the interests of the Spanish people. In

December 1936 at an extraordinary session of the Council of the League of Nations the Soviet delegation proposed taking a position which would make it possible to utilize all potentialities for the most rapid cessation of the aggression and for preventing the catastrophe which was threatening the peoples of the world. In 1937 at the May session of the Council of the League of Nations the Soviet delegation issued an appeal for maximum aid to the Spanish people not only in the interests of Spain but in the interests of international security and the preservation of peace in the world. The chief of the Soviet delegation warned that the League of Nations would be doomed to physical and moral death if it remained aloof from the events in Spain. The Soviet Union called upon the governments of all countries to offer collective resistance to the fascist aggressors, to rally the forces of democracy in all countries for the struggle against fascism and fascist aggression.

The Soviet Union rendered not only moral and diplomatic support but material and military support as well to republican Spain. The sons of the Soviet people were among those who fought heroically in the international volunteer units. The Soviet Union rendered aid in the form of foodstuffs to the Spanish people. Children of Spanish patriots who had fallen on the field of battle were given shelter in the land of socialism.

Not only the Soviet people but the peoples of the whole world supported the Spanish people in their heroic struggle for freedom, independence, and democracy. The communist parties inspired the struggle of the laboring masses in defense of the Spanish people. The Communist International did a huge amount of work in

organizing on an international scale the struggle of the workers in defense of the Spanish people and against the fascist aggressors. Its efforts were aimed at achieving the unity of the working class and the laboring masses.

In contrast to this the right wing socialists followed a policy of dividing the working class, slandered the Spanish Republic and the Soviet Union, and frustrated measures for rendering aid to the Spanish republicans. Special responsibility for this was borne by L. Blum, the leader of the French right wing socialists, who headed the French Government during this period. The acts of this government amounted to a stab in the back of the Spanish people.

Against the will of their people, the governments of Britain and France increased step by step their aid to the Franco forces. They tried persistently to reach an agreement with the fascist aggressors at the expense of the Spanish and other peoples.

The refusal of the governments of Britain and France to invite representatives of republican Spain to the Nyon Conference (September 1937) constituted an inimical act vis-a-vis the latter. This conference had been called because the fascist interventionists had begun, on a large scale, to carry out piratical raids on ships in the Mediterranean. In August 1937 the Soviet steamers Timiryazev and Blagoyev, which were carrying food cargoes to republican Spain, were sunk. The Nyon Conference passed a resolution on the necessity of destroying the submarines which were engaged in maritime piracy. But, despite the protests of the Soviet delegation, the British and French delegates refused to grant to

the shipping of republican Spain protection against attacks from the submarines of the fascist states.

In November 1937 the governments of Britain and France, in an attempt to attract the rebels to their side, accorded de facto recognition to the Franco government and in February 1939 they accorded it de jure recognition. The French Government turned over to the Franco government the fleet and gold reserves of republican Spain, which had been entrusted to France for safekeeping. Spanish republican exiles were turned over for prosecution. Pursuant to an agreement with Britain, the traitors who had gained control of the positions of authority in the navy of republican Spain took the Spanish fleet to Bizerte. This move provoked the wrath of the broad popular masses throughout the world.

On 28 March 1939 with the active help of the reactionary circles in Britain, France, and the US the fascist rebels and the German-Italian interventionists captured Madrid. No later than 1 April 1939 the US Government accorded de jure recognition to the Franco government and established diplomatic relations with it.

Thus the fascist regime in Spain was established not only by the bayonets of the German-Italian interventionists but by the efforts of certain circles in the US, Britain, and France. In aiding the rebels and the German-Italian interventionists, the reactionary circles in the US, Britain, and France wanted above all to untie the hands of the rulers of Germany and Italy in the west so that they could be in a better position to act in the east against the USSR.

As a result of the aggressive acts of the fascist powers a hotbed for war was created in the Mediterranean basin along the most important routes from Europe to Asia. This was a policy fraught with danger for the monopolists of Britain and France, since it helped to strengthen the positions of their competitors.

This aid to the fascist rebels and the German-Italian interventionists was a stab in the back of the forces of democracy not only in Spain and Europe but throughout the world. The events in Ethiopia, the Rhineland, and Spain were the preparatory stages in the unleashing of war, a prelude to World War II.

In spite of the defeat of republican Spain, the heroic struggle of the Spanish people was not in vain. It bred and forged uncompromising enemies of fascism, flaming patriots of their fatherland. It was an inspiring example for the oppressed peoples of other countries and it strengthened the sentiments of proletarian internationalism. Generations of Spanish democrats and other freedom loving peoples will always be inspired by the heroism of the fighters for a just cause. The heroic struggle of the Spanish people in the years 1936-1939 constitutes an important guarantee that the Spanish people will gain freedom and independence.

**A NEW STAGE IN THE JAPANESE AGGRESSION IN CHINA,
THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE
IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST THE JAPANESE IMPERIALIST INVADERS,
THE USSR'S STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE FAR EAST**

In the years 1936-1939 international relations in the Far East were characterized by a further aggravation of the conflicts between the imperialist powers, Japan, the US, Britain, France, etc.

This was due to an aggravation of the problem of markets, colonies, and spheres of influence. China was one of the main arenas of the intrainperialist struggle.

Despite the fact that Japan represented a growing competitor of the US, Britain, and France in the Far East and in the Pacific area, the ruling circles of these countries aided Japanese militarism in every way, seeing in it a crushing force in the struggle against the USSR and the revolutionary movement in the countries of the Far East, especially against the democratic forces in China. They followed a policy aimed at collusion with the Japanese imperialists at the expense of the USSR, China, and other countries. The reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France used every method to direct the Japanese aggression against the Soviet Union.

The Kuomintang Government which held the power in China, that motley assembly of reactionary forces and agents of the foreign imperialists, followed a policy of collusion with the Japanese invaders. The chief aim of this clique was a struggle against the democratic forces of China, headed by the Chinese Communist Party.

The fact that Italy had gone unpunished for its aggression in Ethiopia and the encouragement of the German-Italian fascist intervention in Spain created favorable conditions for the expansion of the intervention of the Japanese militarists in China.

In 1935-1936, pursuing a policy of unleashing war, the Japanese militarists carried out surprise attacks on the Mongolian People's Republic. In January 1935 several border provocations took place. The government of the MNR (Mongol'skaya Narodnaya

Respublika -- Mongolian People's Republic⁷ proposed to use peaceful means in dealing with all controversial matters. But the talks which had been begun in June were broken off by the Japanese in November. In February 1936 Japanese troops with tanks, artillery, and air support invaded the MNR. Thus by early 1936 a tense and alarming situation had been created on the border between Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic. The direct threat of an attack by the Japanese imperialists on the MNR had arisen.

In this connection in an interview with Roy Howard, an American newspaperman, on 1 March 1936 I. V. Stalin stated that if Japan tried to seize the Mongolian People's Republic the Soviet Union would come to the aid of the Mongolian people as it had in 1921. (Stalin, I. V., Beseda s predsedatelem amerikanskogo gazetnogo ob'yedineniya Skripps-Govard N'yuspeypers g-nom Roy Govardom 1 marta 1936 goda [Interview with Roy Howard, President of the American Newspaper Chain, "Scripps-Howard Newspapers," on 1 March 1936⁷, 1936, Partizdat, page 5])

On 12 March 1936 a mutual assistance pact was signed between the USSR and the MNR, which formalized the agreement between them which had existed since 1934 and which provided for mutual support by all means in the matter of warding off and preventing the threat of a military attack and the rendering of mutual aid and support in the event of an attack by any third party on the USSR or the MNR.

In signing this protocol the governments of the USSR and the MNR were guided by a desire to support the cause of peace in the Far East and to promote the further strengthening of the friendly relations existing between them. By the terms of Article 1 of the protocol the parties agreed, in the event of the threat

of an attack on their territories by a third state, immediately to consider jointly the situation which had arisen and to take all steps which might be necessary to ensure the security of their territories. Pursuant to Article 2 the governments of both states agreed, in the event of a military attack on one of them, to render to each other all possible aid, including military aid.

The Soviet-Mongolian agreement had a sobering effect on the Japanese militarists. They henceforth preferred to refrain from attacking the Mongolian People's Republic, knowing that the Soviet Union would immediately come to the latter's aid.

In the course of its preparations for wide scale aggression the Japanese Government moved steadily closer to fascist Germany. On 25 November 1936 the so-called "Anti-Comintern Pact" was signed between fascist Germany and militarist Japan. This was an aggressive, predatory pact aimed not only against the USSR but against the US, Britain, France, and other countries, against the forces of democracy throughout the world. Its aggressive aims were covered by a screen of anticommunism. Italy became a party to this pact in 1937.

Following the signing of this pact Japan stepped up its preparations for new acts of aggression against China. By means of seizing China the Japanese imperialists wanted to create convenient strategic positions against the Soviet Union and also against the colonial power which were their competitors in the Far East and in the Pacific area. They figured that the seizure of China, with its inexhaustible material resources, would strengthen their position in the struggle against the US, Britain, and France. On the basis of these long range calculations, Japan

decided to begin a war against China as soon as possible, in order to ward off the formation of a united front of the Chinese people, on the organization of which the Communist Party was working intensively.

The Japanese aggressors hoped that they would succeed in waging a "blitzkrieg" against China and would defeat it without great difficulty. They assumed that they would not meet with any serious resistance from the disorganized forces of China.

Considering itself adequately prepared to carry out its aggressive adventurist plans, militarist Japan suddenly invaded north and central China. The military actions began on 7 July 1937, when Japanese troops attacked Chinese military units in the vicinity of Peiping.

In the course of July the Japanese troops captured Peiping, Tientsin, Kalgan, and several other cities. In August battles were fought in the region of Shanghai, ending with its capture in November 1937. In December Japanese troops captured Nanking. Such was the beginning of the new stage of Japanese aggression in China.

The war waged by militarist Japan against China was an unjust, predatory war. Its aim was the establishment of a monopoly rule of the Japanese imperialists in China, the enslavement of the Chinese people, and the conversion of the territory of China into a staging area for further aggression. Its aim also included the destruction of the democratic forces in China.

But even in the early stages of the war oversights on the part of the Japanese imperialists became apparent. On the

initiative of the Communist Party a united national front against the Japanese invaders began to be formed in China. In September 1937 an agreement was reached between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang, compelled by powerful pressure from the popular masses to make such an agreement. After the agreement on a united front had been reached, the Soviet regions of China were reorganized into separate democratic regions (Shensi, Hansu, Nansi). The armed forces headed by the Chinese Communist Party were reorganized into the independent Eighth and Fourth armies.

Owing to the attack by the Japanese aggressors, the Chinese people rose up to struggle in defense of their freedom and independence. This was a just, holy war. The struggle of the Chinese people against the Japanese imperialist invaders was an important contribution to the general cause of the struggle of the antifascist forces of the entire world.

The popular democratic forces, inspired and led by the Chinese Communist Party, constituted a genuine fortress in the struggle against the Japanese invaders. Struggling for the strengthening of the united national front and the rallying of all national forces capable of resisting the aggressors, the Chinese Communist Party proposed measures which were calculated to ensure favorable international conditions for the victory of the Chinese people. It posed the problem of strengthening the ties between the national front of China and the peace loving forces of other countries, and strengthening the unity between the Chinese and Soviet peoples. It emphasized the task of taking advantage of the conflicts in the camp of imperialism to the interests of the Chinese people's struggle for liberation (Mao Tse-Tung, Izbrannye

proizvedeniya [Selected Works], Vol I, 1952 edition, page 450).

The creation of a united national front in China was of historic significance. It meant the mobilization of the patriotic forces in the struggle against the enemy and constituted a decisive factor in the inevitable collapse of the Japanese imperialists' plans.

Mao Tse-Tung, the leader of the Communist Party and of all democratic forces in China, said that in the antiimperialist war the Chinese patriots "need help from foreign peoples and, above all, help from the peoples of the Soviet Union. And they will of course help us, since we have vital interests in common with them" (Mao Tse-Tung, Izbrannye proizvedeniya, Vol I, page 290). He was not mistaken. In their struggle against the foreign oppressors the Chinese people were united with the Soviet people and the laboring masses of all countries of the world, who supported them.

The ruling circles of the US, Britain, and the other capitalist countries took a completely different attitude toward the Japanese aggression. The British monopolists were disturbed by the success of their Japanese competitors in China. But they were even more fearful of the revolutionary democratic movement in China. They were afraid that it might have an influence on the popular masses of India and the other countries dependent upon Britain. Therefore the British ruling circles tried in every possible way to reach agreement with Japan by means of collusion with her at the expense of the Chinese people and against the USSR.

Even before military action had begun the British imperialists had made attempts to reach agreement with their Japanese competitors at the expense of China and against the USSR. In particular these attempts were made in the course of the Japanese-British talks of May 1937. These talks showed that Britain was actually willing to accept Japan's dominant position in northeast China. The British ruling circles figured that from these positions the Japanese aggressors would probably move in the direction of the Soviet Union. However it was very important to the British that they conserve their capital and positions in the central and southern regions of China.

Therefore the Japanese politicians let it be understood that they would not infringe upon British interests in this area. But even after the Japanese forces had invaded central China the British ruling circles continued to seek ways of reaching agreement with the Japanese aggressors, with a view to redirecting the latter's expansion toward the north.

This policy was characteristic of the ruling circles of the US to an even greater extent. In the hope that they could come to an agreement with Japan at the expense of China and direct the former's aggression toward the USSR, the US monopolists supplied Japan with scrap metal, fuel, and other war materiel. From January through June 1937 (that is, the 6 months before the beginning of the war) US exports to Japan increased by 80% relative to the same period in the preceding year. Weapons and strategic materials accounted for 60% of US exports to Japan. With the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War American exports continued. In 1937 they increased by 33.5%, and in 1938 by 34.3%. There was a similar increase in 1939. The American monopolies helped Japan to modernize

their shipbuilding technology, to organize the production of synthetic fuels, and to create an aluminum industry.

In addition to technical and economic aid to the Japanese aggressors, the US attempted to reach a political agreement with them. In February 1939 Grew, the US Ambassador to Tokyo, emphasized that "from the economic, financial, and commercial viewpoint, the US can be a better friend to Japan than any other country in the world, if Japan will play ball with it (that is, with the US)" (Voprosy istorii [Problems of History], No 4, 1953, page 79).

The US also exported weapons and war materiel to the Kuomintang people. In the course of 1938 it granted Chang Kai-shek credits amounting to 297 million dollars (Cf. Iyu Da-nyan', Istoriya amerikanskoy agressii v Kitaye [A History of American Aggression in China], 1951 edition, page 119). In granting credits to the Kuomintang people and rendering them other kinds of assistance, the American imperialists were preparing the conditions for the enslavement of China and were obtaining broad privileges for themselves by way of extortion.

The attitude of the capitalist powers toward the Japanese aggression was clearly shown at the League of Nations, to which on 12 September 1937 China appealed with a protest against the aggressive acts of Japan. The League of Nations failed to take the required steps in the defense of China, which was a member of this organization, and did not move toward organizing resistance to the Japanese imperialist aggressors. It confined itself to expressing the hope in October 1937 that those states which were members of the League of Nations would not take steps which might weaken China and make its position more difficult.

Actually avoiding any consideration of the problem of Japanese imperialist aggression in China, the League of Nations passed the problem on for consideration by the international conference which was to be called pursuant to Article 7 of the 9 Power Pact in connection with the "situation which had arisen in the Far East."

This conference was held in November 1937 at Brussels. Delegates from the US, Britain, France, China, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and Holland participated in the work of the conference. (Delegates from the British dominions, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, also participated.) Of those nations which had participated in the Washington Conference, Japan did not send delegates to the Brussels Conference. Of the states which had not participated in the Washington Conference, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Bolivia, and Mexico sent delegates to the Brussels Conference.

The Soviet Union was invited to the Brussels Conference. In answer to the note from the Belgian Government, which had been charged with issuing the invitation, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs wrote that "although the USSR was not a participant in the Washington Treaty, considering that the conference at Brussels is being called pursuant to a resolution of the League of Nations Assembly . . . the Soviet Government, having an interest in affairs in the Far East, affirms its readiness to participate in the conference in question" (Izvestiya, 30 October 1937). In agreeing to participate in the conference the Soviet Union posed for itself the task of promoting the cause of peace and defending those peoples who had become victims of aggression.

At the Brussels Conference the delegates from the US, Britain, and France followed a line aimed at agreement with the Japanese imperialists at the expense of the Chinese people. They reproached Japan, not for aggression against China but for infringing in China upon the privileges of the monopolists of their own countries. And they demanded that the latter's positions be restored in that country. The delegates from the US, Britain, and France did not make any proposals aimed at stopping the Japanese aggression in China. Moreover they tried to take advantage of the situation which had arisen in order to bring Japan into collision with the USSR and thereby distract the former from those areas in which they were interested and to weaken the Soviet Union. To this end they hinted that the Soviet Union alone should assume the burden of the struggle against the Japanese aggressors in China. This was a crafty attempt to push the USSR into war with Japan and under conditions of the latter's international isolation to have somebody else pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

This attempt on the part of the US, British, and French delegates met with firm opposition from the Soviet delegation. The documents of the Brussels Conference testify to the fact that the USSR was ready to participate in any action against the Japanese aggression if that action was undertaken collectively with the efforts of all of the interested powers.

The Soviet delegation stated that the Sino-Japanese conflict should be regulated on the basis of the independence of the Chinese people and a respect for their sovereignty. However this goal, as the Soviet statement put it, "can be attained only if the unified and effective efforts of the powers interested in preserving peace

in the Far East are directed toward it. Any concrete initiative in this direction will be supported by the Soviet Union" (Izvestiya, 15 November 1937).

In view of the fact that in order to carry on the war Japan was importing a large quantity of strategic materials (up to 70% of the iron required, 90% of the petroleum, etc) the Soviet delegation insisted that economic sanctions be invoked against Japan on the basis of articles 16 and 17 of the League of Nations Covenant. M. M. Litvinov, the chief of the Soviet delegation, emphasized that "the unification of the peace loving countries is especially important at this time, when the aggressive countries are becoming increasingly united and closely knit, creating a threat for an increasingly large number of nations." The Soviet delegation demanded "not only the restoration of peace in the Far East, but the restoration of a just peace, a peace which will not unleash but contain aggression, both in the future and in other parts of the world" (Izvestiya, 4 November 1937). The Soviet delegation exposed the machinations of the imperialists and their plans to reach an agreement with Japan at the expense of China and decisively and resolutely defended the interests of the Chinese people.

The proposals of the Soviet Union were not accepted by the Brussels Conference. It confined itself to a meaningless declaration expressing the desire that hostilities cease and that peaceful procedures be employed. The declaration stated that the conference "reaffirms the principle of the 9 Power Pact" and considered it essential to settle the conflict in accordance therewith.

Despite the refusal of the US, British, and French imperialists to take collective measures to stop the Japanese aggression

in the Far East, the Soviet Union continued to render real assistance to the Chinese people. On 21 August 1937 the Soviet Union concluded with China a nonaggression pact which substantially helped the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese invaders. In Article 1 of the pact both parties declared that they condemned recourse to war as a means of settling international disputes and pledged not to attack each other either individually or jointly with one or several powers. Article 2 stated that if one of the contracting parties were attacked by one or several other powers, the other contracting party agreed not to render any aid, either direct or indirect, to the other power or powers. At the same time the parties agreed to refrain from any acts or agreements which might be utilized by attacking power or powers to the disadvantage of the party being attacked.

The Sino-Soviet Pact, being an "instrument of peace and collective security," was intended to serve the cause of preserving the general peace and strengthening the friendly relations between the peoples of the USSR and China (Pravda, 20 August 1937).

The Soviet Government issued several declarations protesting the bombing of peaceful Chinese cities by Japanese aircraft and the brutality of the Japanese occupying forces toward the Chinese population. In these declarations the Soviet Government exposed before the entire world the brutal visage of the Japanese imperialist invaders. The protest against the bombing of Canton stated that the attacks of the Japanese aircraft on the peaceful and defenseless population "had provoked a feeling of great alarm in the public opinion of all of the civilized countries in the world, including the Soviet Union" (Pravda, 21 June 1938).

In 1938 the Soviet Union made a loan of 100 million dollars to China and in 1939 a loan of 150 million dollars. In June 1939 the Soviet Union and China concluded a trade agreement on the basis of the principle of equality and mutual benefit. This support from the Soviet Union eased the burden of the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese invaders.

The Soviet Union took advantage of its membership in the League of Nations to defend the interests of the Chinese people, demanding the organization of collective resistance to the invaders. On 30 September 1938 at a session of the Council of the League of Nations M. M. Litvinov, the chief of the Soviet delegation, stated that the Soviet Government was ready "to take part in collective measures which would enable the League of Nations to fulfill its commitments vis-a-vis China" (Pravda, 2 October 1938).

The sympathy of the Soviet people was entirely on the side of the Chinese people, who were carrying on a heroic struggle for their freedom and independence against the Japanese imperialist invaders. Therefore the Soviet people earned even greater love and respect not only from the Chinese people but from the peoples of other countries in the world.

While continuing their aggression against China, the Japanese militarists made an attempt, with the support of the US, British, and French imperialists, to attack the Soviet Union. In the event that this attack was successful, Germany (according to the imperialists' designs) would come to the aid of Japan. On 29 July 1938 in contravention of the Khonchun (Sino-Russian) Treaty of 1886, according to which the villages of Zaozernaya and Bezymyannaya, located

near Lake Khasan, belonged to Russia, Japanese troops invaded this region within the boundaries of the USSR. The Japanese aggressors attributed great importance to these villages in connection with the occupation of the entire Soviet Far East.

But their schemes were completely frustrated. The courageous troops of the Soviet Union dealt a crushing defensive blow to the Japanese invaders. In early August of 1938 the Japanese troops in the Lake Khasan region were defeated. On 11 August the Soviet Union and Japan concluded an agreement on the cessation of hostilities in the Lake Khasan region. Thanks to the vigilance of the Soviet Government and the decisive resistance offered by the Soviet troops, the Japanese plan for seizing the Soviet Far East was frustrated. Also frustrated at the same time was the scheme for organizing a large scale war against the USSR from the east and west.

The defeat of the Japanese aggressors at Lake Khasan was of inspirational importance to the Chinese patriots, who under the leadership of the Communist Party were successfully resisting the interventionists. Although on individual sectors of the front the Japanese troops were attacking (in October 1938 they captured Canton and Hankow), it had already become clear that the Japanese invaders, despite their plans for a "blitzkrieg," had become involved in a long drawn out war in which the ratio of power was changing to their disadvantage.

The successes of the people's liberation movement in China had frightened not only the Japanese invaders and the US, British, and French monopolists, but also the clique of Chang Kai-shek, who was carrying on secret talks with the Japanese occupation authorities

with a view to organizing joint action against the Communist Party and those forces which were following it.

In February 1939 Japanese troops landed on the island of Hainan, thus creating a threat to the French possessions in Indo-China and to the British base of Hongkong. In May they occupied Spratly Island. The Japanese authorities blockaded the British and French concessions. They demanded that the administration of the foreign settlement in Shanghai be turned over to them. These acts aggravated the tensions among Japan, the US, Britain, and France.

Despite this, the last-named countries continued their policy of conciliation vis-a-vis Japan. In the summer of 1939 the reactionary circles in these countries, with the approval of the Chang Kai-shek clique, made preparations for a Pacific conference aimed at reaching an agreement with the aggressor at the expense of China and other countries.

The successes of the people's liberation movement, the exposure of the imperialists' plans by the Communist Party of China, and the aggravation of the tensions among the imperialists prevented the calling of this conference.

But the reactionary circles continued their policy of conciliation vis-a-vis the aggression in the Far East. On the part of the ruling circles of Britain this policy was given official expression in an Anglo-Japanese agreement (the Arita-Craig Pact) concluded in July 1939. By the terms of this agreement Britain recognized the "special" interests of Japan and the necessity for special measures on its part to "bring order" to China. Britain

stated that she would not oppose Japan in the implementation of these measures. In exchange for these very real concessions Britain received Japan's assurances that the latter would not violate the interests of the British monopolies in China.

The strengthening of the positions of the Japanese imperialists in the Far East led to an aggravation of the tensions between Japan and America. This was manifested in the US Government's denunciation of the trade treaty with Japan. In this the US was trying to frighten the Japanese imperialists and compel them to be more conciliatory. However the US policy was based as before on a desire to support the Japanese aggression, directing it against the USSR. Moreover the American monopolies did not want to lose their profits from shipments of strategic materials to Japan. Therefore the US Government explained that the decision to abrogate the trade treaty would not take effect until after the expiration of 6 months. In the meantime US exports to Japan continued to increase very rapidly. In 1939 the American monopolies sold to Japan 10 times more iron and steel scrap than during the preceding year. Shipments of various kinds of machinery and equipment increased with special rapidity. The amount of money spent by Japan to purchase these items increased from 800,000 dollars in 1938 to 24.5 million dollars in 1939. Immediately following the abrogation of the trade treaty the US monopolists sold to Japan 3 million dollars' worth of new machine tools for aircraft plants. Strategic materials accounted for more than 70% of the Japanese imports (Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya na Dal'nem Vostoke (1870-1945 gg.) [International Relations in the Far East, 1870-1945], 1951 edition, pages 472-473, 478). Not confining itself to exports of war materiel, the US rendered financial aid to

Japan. The US monopolists figured that in helping Japan they would succeed in directing Japan against the USSR. Their strategic calculations were to involve Japan and the Soviet Union in a war and thereby weaken them. They intended to take advantage of the weakening of the USSR, Japan, and China to expand and consolidate their own positions.

In 1939 Soviet-Japanese relations again became strained. Taking advantage of the general tension in the international situation, the Japanese militarists decided to attack the Mongolian People's Republic, planning, in the event of success, to invade the territory of the USSR, cut the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and seize the Siberian and Far Eastern territories of the USSR. On 11 May 1939 Japanese troops attacked the Mongolian People's Republic in the region of the Khalkhin-Gol River. This created a serious threat to the independence of the MNR. True to its promises of mutual aid, the Soviet Union came to the defense of the Mongolian People's Republic. In the military operations which were carried out between May and August 1939, the glorious Soviet and Mongolian troops completely defeated the Japanese usurpers who had invaded the MNR, thereby frustrating the criminal plans of the Japanese militarists.

In rendering brotherly aid to the Mongolian people, the Soviet Union demonstrated to the whole world that it was faithful to the obligations it undertook in treaties and agreements, showing the meaning of mutual aid pacts signed by the Soviet Government. This was a model of disinterested defense by a great power of a small nation which was the victim of aggression. The Soviet Union showed how aggressors who have gone too far should be bridled.

The defeat of the Japanese aggressors in the region of the Khalkhin-Gol River eased the burden for the Chinese people in their struggle for the freedom and independence of their fatherland against the Japanese imperialists.

THE USSR'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST POLICY
OF APPEASING THE FASCIST AGGRESSORS
AND FOR THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY OF EUROPE,
SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR MEASURES TO DEFEND AUSTRIA

The policy of encouraging the German imperialists and involving them with the Soviet Union, which was being carried out by the reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France, was presented as a policy of "pacifying" the aggressor and was covered up with hypocritical declarations referring to the "peace" and "security" of nations.

Encouraged by the international reactionaries, fascist Germany strove to make radical changes to its own advantage in the situation which had arisen after World War I and to establish world hegemony. Militarization and the race for armaments grew apace in Germany. Between 1934 and 1938 German expenditures for military purposes increased more than 8-fold.

By continuing to invest capital in the military economy of Germany, the US, British, and French monopolists were nourishing the fascist aggressor. France exported 55,200 t of pig iron to Germany in 1937, and 170,900 t in 1938.

Germany imported 161,700 t of scrap iron from the US in 1937, and 469,800 t in 1938 (Matveyev, V. A., Proval myunkhenskoy politiki (1939-1939 gg.) / The Collapse of the Munich Policy,

1938-1939⁷, 1955, Gospolitizdat, page 130). The countries of the British Empire exported 1,097,600 t of scrap iron and iron ore to Germany in 1937 and 1,720,000 t in 1938. During the first 10 months of 1938 alone, American firms exported to Germany weapons amounting to 400,000 dollars. In 1938 and 1939 the US shipped 2,500 first class airplane motors to Germany. The cooperation between the German and US monopolies continued right up until World War II and even after it had begun. The US, British, and French imperialists urged their fascist competitors toward the east against the USSR.

The American reactionaries were especially zealous in attempting to reach agreement with fascist Germany. On 23 November 1937 a secret meeting was held in San Francisco between representatives of fascist Germany and the American monopolies. Representing Germany in the talks was the Consul General in Boston, Tipelskirch, and the Consul General in San Francisco, Killinger. The American representatives included Senator Vandenberg, Lamont DuPont, and Alfred Sloane. In his speech at the meeting the German representative pointed out that Germany and the US should cooperate in gaining possession of the gigantic markets of Russia and China. In their turn the representatives of the US stated that American business men welcomed a meeting of this kind and they tried to conceal the criminal purposes of the talks with a screen of opposing the "sovietization" of the countries of the Far East.

The policy of the reactionary circles of Britain was also characterized by a striving to reach agreement with fascist Germany. Lord Halifax, one of the leading members of the British Cabinet and close associate of Chamberlain, in a talk with Hitler which took

place on 19 November 1937 stated that Britain was ready to reach agreement with Germany. In the name of the British Government Halifax proposed a plan for creating an anti-Soviet bloc to consist of Germany, Italy, Britain, and France. In the opinion of Halifax, the British rulers were deeply aware that the "Fuehrer had achieved a great deal, not only in Germany itself, but as a result of destroying communism in his own country he had blocked the latter's route into west Europe and therefore Germany should rightfully be considered the bastion of the west against Bolshevism" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny /Documents and Materials Referring to the Eve of World War II/, Vol I, 1948, Gospolitizdat, page 16).

When Hitler said that cooperation between Germany and Britain was possible provided that the Versailles Treaty was completely abrogated and several territorial problems were settled, Halifax hastened to assure him that Britain was ready to settle all territorial problems by means of "intelligent evolution." Halifax informed Hitler that the British Government had agreed to the annexation of Austria, Danzig, and the western regions of Czechoslovakia by Germany.

However Britain did not want to return to Germany those colonies which it had taken as a result of World War I. Britain let it be understood that this problem might be solved with the participation of the other colonial powers, that is, at the expense of France, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal (Voprosy istorii, No 7, 1954, pages 91-92).

The Halifax talks were continued by the British Ambassador in Berlin, H. Henderson. In a conversation with Hitler on

3 March 1938 he emphasized that "this is not a commercial transaction, but an attempt to establish a basis for a genuine and sincere friendship with Germany" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol I, page 55).

The French reactionaries were also endeavoring to reach an agreement with fascist Germany. In November 1937 the French Prime Minister Chautemps and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Bonnet held talks in Paris with von Papen, the representative of fascist Germany. The latter informed Hitler that the French Government "would not oppose . . . the spreading of German influence in Austria and Czechoslovakia."

The monopolists of the US, Britain, and France needed this "friendship" and cooperation with fascist Germany in order to combat the Soviet Union and the forces of democracy throughout the world. But when colonies, markets, and spheres of influence were involved, their interests and aims ran counter to each other.

In order to remove the danger to their colonies, markets, and spheres of influence, the US, British, and French monopolists declared their readiness to buy off Germany at the expense of those countries located close to the USSR. They considered that turning these countries over to Germany would constitute payment for the latter's attacking the land of socialism.

One of the first victims of fascist aggression and the policy of encouraging it was Austria, which occupied an important strategic position in Europe and was of considerable economic significance. For Germany, as for the other imperialist powers, Austria was an important launching point for expansion into southeastern Europe and aggression against the USSR.

As is generally known, Germany had tried as early as 1934 to seize Austria but this attempt met with failure. During the years that followed Germany prepared for the Anschluss and waited for a convenient occasion. On 11 March 1938, convinced that it would not meet with resistance, fascist Germany sent its troops into Austria.

The occupation of Austria was a direct violation of the Versailles St. Germain treaties. The governments of Britain and France, which were signatories to these treaties, bore the prime responsibility for preserving the independence of Austria. However they not only failed to come to her defense but they directly supported the fascist aggression. As late as 27 February 1938 the British Minister of Finance Simon stated in the House of Commons that the British Government had never guaranteed the independence of Austria. Immediately thereafter the British Prime Minister condemned the very notion of collective action in defense of Austria. "We should not," Chamberlain said, "delude small nations and promise them that the League of Nations will defend them against aggression." On 2 April 1938 the British Government officially recognized the annexation of Austria by fascist Germany. A similar position was taken by the French Government, despite the fact that the occupation of Austria by Germany clearly weakened the positions of Britain and France in the countries of southeast Europe.

The reactionary circles of the United States of America also supported German fascism in the Austrian question, covering up its position with false declarations of "neutrality" and "nonintervention." On the eve of the occupation of Austria, on 17 February 1938, The New York Times wrote that "there is nothing the

government can effectively do" in defense of Austria. On the day the German troops invaded Austria (11 March 1938) US Secretary of State Cordell Hull stated to representatives of the press that "the events which have taken place do not affect the US," and that "the US Government . . . by no means insists that the German Government follow a moderate policy." After a talk with Hull the German Ambassador, in a communication to his government, wrote that the Secretary of State "fully understands our actions vis-a-vis Austria" (Voprosy istorii, No 6, 1954, page 50). On 12 March at a press conference Hull assured the journalists that the occupation of Austria did not contravene the Kellog Pact.

In April 1938, despite protests against going along with the fascist aggressors and demands that steps be taken to defend the Austrian people, the US Government officially recognized the seizure of Austria by fascist Germany and reorganized its embassy in Vienna into a consulate functioning within the framework of the fascist Reich.

Following the intentions of the Anglo-French leaders the League of Nations tacitly sanctioned the fascist aggression.

Approval of the annexation of Austria was a part of the overall strategic policy of the US, British, and French reactionaries, who were endeavoring to direct the fascist aggression to the east against the USSR. They figured that after the annexation of Austria a strengthened fascist Germany would occupy launching positions for further expansion in a southeastern direction.

Of all the great powers only the Soviet Union took a position of principle on the Austrian question. It raised its warning

voice and issued a sharp protest against the acts of fascist Germany, classifying them as aggression and a threat to peace. The Soviet Union appealed for the organization of collective defense of the independence of countries threatened by aggression. It proposed the immediate taking of effective steps for the collective bridling of the aggressor and preserving the security of the peoples of Europe. The declaration of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs on 17 March 1938 stated that the Soviet Government was "ready to take part in collective action which might be decided upon jointly with it, and which would have the aim of preventing the further development of aggression and eliminating the increasing danger of a new world war. It is ready to proceed immediately to the consideration, jointly with other powers in the League of Nations or outside it, of those practical measures dictated by the circumstances" (Izvestiya, 18 March 1938).

If the proposals of the Soviet Government had been accepted and collective pressure had been brought to bear on Germany, Austria could have kept her independence. However the reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France knew that the approval of the collective measures would have dealt a crushing blow to the Hitler regime and they feared their results. They saved not Austria but the German fascist regime from defeat.

The occupation of Austria increased Germany's war potential. Owing to the seizure of Austria, the territory of Germany was increased by 17%, its population by 10%, its acreage under cultivation by 10%, and its industrial capacity by 4-5%. The Austrian economy began to serve the German war machine. The fact that Austria had been occupied with impunity encouraged the German imperialists to further acts of aggression.

The encouragement of German aggression by the ruling circles of the US, Britain, and France whetted the predatory appetites of the Polish rulers, who had been following an undemocratic policy and had established close contact with Germany as early as 1934. On 17 March 1938 the Polish Government presented an ultimatum to Lithuania, demanding the opening of the frontier and cancelling that article of the Lithuanian Constitution which stated that the capital of Lithuania was the city of Vilna, which had been occupied by Poland. The Polish militarists brandished weapons. The reactionary newspapers belligerently urged the army to march on Kaunas, etc. A tense situation arose on the Polish-Lithuanian border.

The Soviet Government resolutely and sternly warned the Polish rulers of the dangerous consequences which their provocative acts would have for Poland. The active diplomatic intervention of the USSR relieved the tension. This example constitutes one more testimonial to the USSR's consistent struggle for peace, for checking aggressors.

THE GERMAN FASCISTS' PREPARATIONS FOR THE DISMEMBERMENT
OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE USSR'S STRUGGLE
FOR THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE
OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE IN EUROPE

Following the occupation of Austria by fascist Germany, the position of the Czechoslovakian Republic became much worse. On the west, the northwest, and the south it was threatened by the German fascists, and on the east it was threatened by Poland, whose rulers were following a hostile policy vis-a-vis the Czechoslovakian people.

At the time of the occupation of Austria the German fascist ringleaders came out with false declarations to the effect that Germany had no territorial designs on other countries. At the same time fascist Germany was preparing to seize Czechoslovakia. On 29 March 1938 on orders from his government von Ribbentrop held a meeting in Berlin which was attended by Henlein and other fascist leaders active in Czechoslovakia. Their prime purpose was to create a furor about the "oppression" of Germans in Czechoslovakia. It was decided that the Henleinites would present demands for the autonomy of regions having German populations. If the Czechoslovak Government met these demands they would put forth other conditions.

Following their Berlin briefing the Henleinites demanded that the government of Czechoslovakia grant autonomy to these regions. At the same time they organized gang raids on the clubs and other buildings of democratic organizations. The Henleinites intended to frighten the democratic forces by means of these outrages and seize the power on the spot.

At the same time fascist Germany was assembling troops on the Czechoslovak borders. Thus the fascist aggressors artificially created a crisis in the matter of the western regions of Czechoslovakia which has gone down in history under the name of the "May Crisis." This crisis posed with new urgency the problem of the security not only of Czechoslovakia but of the other countries of Europe.

The threat to the independence and territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia provoked a patriotic movement among the laboring masses. Under pressure from them the Czechoslovakian Government was compelled to take certain steps against the fascist aggression.

Partial mobilization was declared in Czechoslovakia and was carried out under circumstances of a great patriotic upsurge. A state of emergency was declared in those regions bordering upon Germany.

The upsurge of patriotism among the popular masses of Czechoslovakia caused dissatisfaction among the ruling circles of Britain and France. They were afraid that fascist Germany in attacking Czechoslovakia would meet with armed resistance which would lead to a rallying of the democratic forces and would frustrate plans for an agreement with the Hitler government against the USSR. In an attempt to prevent this and create conditions for capitulation on the part of the ruling circles of Czechoslovakia, along with creating the appearance that they were defending the peace in Europe, the ruling circles of Britain and France undertook several diplomatic maneuvers. On 28-29 April 1938 a meeting was held in London among governmental representatives of Britain and France and a declaration was issued to the effect that aid would be rendered to Czechoslovakia if it were threatened by aggression. But the declaration went no further. In a private talk with friends the British Prime Minister Chamberlain stated that he did not believe in the effectiveness of the declaration he had signed and that if Germany wanted to destroy Czechoslovakia he did not see "how they could be prevented from doing it" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol I, page 125).

As Dirksen, the German Ambassador in London, reported, the British Government had set itself the task of reaching agreement with Germany, manifesting in the "Sudetenland Question" a maximum understanding of German interests and "approaching an understanding of the most essential points of the basic demands put forth by

Germany with regard to preventing the Soviet Union from deciding the fate of Europe" (Ibid., page 155).

In early August 1938 Lord Runciman came to Prague with a large group of experts from the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An attempt was made to depict Runciman's trip as a private undertaking. Actually Runciman had been sent to Czechoslovakia as a plenipotentiary of the British Government. It is very significant that his first step was to get in touch with the Henleinites. In the course of his talks with Henlein Runciman advised him not to confine himself to demands for the autonomy of the western regions of Czechoslovakia but to pose the problem of their separation from Czechoslovakia. In this respect Runciman was even ahead of von Ribbentrop who on 29 March 1938 had issued instructions that the first thing to do was to obtain the Czechoslovak Government's agreement to the autonomy of these regions and then to pose the problem of their separation. In his talks with representatives of the Czechoslovak Government Runciman insisted that the mutual assistance pact between Czechoslovakia and the USSR be immediately abrogated.

The policy of the reactionary circles of Britain and France in the Czechoslovak question was supported by the imperialists of the US. In France a great deal of activity was carried on by US Ambassador Bullitt who encouraged acts aimed at directing the aggression of the German fascists to the east. "It would correspond fully to the desires of the democratic nations," Bullitt said, "if the German Reich and Russia should come into conflict in the east." In Britain US Ambassador Kennedy was acting in this direction. In a talk with Dirksen, the German Ambassador in London, he declared that "in economic questions Germany must have a free hand in the

east and also in the southeast." From this talk and from other observations the German Ambassador drew the conclusion that the US Government was supporting the British Government in the Czechoslovakian question.

Wilson, the US Ambassador to Germany, came to Prague at the same time as Runciman. On 6 August 1938 Wilson met with Benes. He insistently "advised" the Czech rulers to reach agreement with Germany, ostensibly demonstrating that the German fascist ring-leaders had only "peaceful intentions" with regard to Czechoslovakia.

During the days that followed the proponents of encouragement of the German aggressor went even further. On 23 August Kordt, the Counsellor of the German Embassy in London, informed the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in a talk with him one of the most influential of Chamberlain's advisors, Horace Wilson, had stated that Britain was ready to satisfy Germany's demands.

Even at this stage in the Czechoslovakian crisis the actions of the British ruling circles were encouraged in every way by the reactionary circles of the US. On 1 September 1938 the German Charge d'Affaires in the US, Tomsen, informed Berlin that in America "there was understanding of the demands of the Sudeten Germans."

The policy of the French Government was similar. On 2 September 1938 Minister of Foreign Affairs Bonnet told Wilczek, the German Ambassador to Paris: "France takes an understanding attitude toward Germany's problems and aspirations."

The Czechoslovak Government made concessions. It did not take into account the mood of the broad laboring masses, who, headed by the communists, demanded resistance to the aggression and contact with the USSR. The government acted in accordance with the interests of the Czech reactionaries, who, fearing the militancy of the laboring masses, preferred to capitulate to fascist Germany. On 13 September 1938 the Czechoslovak Government met the demands of the Henleinites and agreed to grant autonomy to the western and northwestern regions of Czechoslovakia.

On 14 September Chamberlain sent Hitler an invitation to come to London to hold talks on the Czechoslovak question. In reply Hitler proposed that Chamberlain come to see him in Germany. On 15 September they met at Hitler's residence at Berchtesgaden. Hitler presented to Chamberlain a demand that the western and northwestern regions of Czechoslovakia be separated from Czechoslovakia and annexed to Germany. Chamberlain did not object to this seizure. But it was extremely important to him to conceal the position of the British Government and depict the betrayal of Czechoslovakia as a "concern" for peace. Therefore Chamberlain stated that he had to consult with the British and French ministers.

On 18 September the Anglo-French meeting began in London. Behind the back of the Czechoslovakian people the participants in the meeting proposed that several regions of Czechoslovakia be immediately turned over to fascist Germany. On the basis of the same decision, it was proposed that Czechoslovakia should abrogate its mutual assistance pact with the USSR.

In communicating this "decision" to Prague the British and French ministers hypocritically interpreted it as the only means

of strengthening the position of Czechoslovakia. They stated that "the support of the peace and security . . . of Czechoslovakia cannot be effectively ensured if these regions are not immediately transferred to the German Reich" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol I, page 203).

The news of these ultimatum demands of Britain and France, which threatened the security of Czechoslovakia and meant the beginning of its dismemberment, provoked a storm of protest among the workers. Under pressure from the laboring masses the Czechoslovak Government did not dare accept immediately the demands of the Anglo-French imperialists. It queried the governments of the USSR, Britain, and France as to the positions they would take in the event of German aggression.

In connection with the query of the Czechoslovak Government, the Soviet Government issued the following instructions to its representative in Prague.

"(1) In reply to the question of Benes as to whether the USSR, pursuant to the pact, will immediately and effectively help Czechoslovakia if France keeps its word to Czechoslovakia and also renders aid, you may give an affirmative answer in the name of the Government of the Soviet Union.

"(2) Similarly, an affirmative answer may be given to the other question put by Benes: whether the USSR will help Czechoslovakia, as a member of the League of Nations, on the basis of articles 16 and 17, if, in the event of an attack by Germany, Benes appeals to the Council of the League of Nations for the application of the above articles" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol I, page 240).

The Soviet Government proposed to Britain and France the immediate publication of a declaration of the 3 powers as collective aid to Czechoslovakia in the event of German aggression. The Soviet Government also proposed the conclusion of a tripartite military convention among the general staffs of these countries in order to render immediate aid to Czechoslovakia in case of aggression.

On 21 September 1938, at a session of the League of Nations, the representative of the Soviet Government stated that the USSR would meet its commitments as per the pact and would help Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Government called upon all countries (large and small) to render to Czechoslovakia collective support and aid against aggression.

The Soviet Union also declared its readiness to help Czechoslovakia if France failed to meet its commitments as an ally of Czechoslovakia. At a meeting in Prague in December 1949 Klement Gottwald made the following statement in this connection: "In the critical year of 1938 I was invited to be a guest of Stalin. . . . At that time Stalin stated to me unequivocally that the Soviet Union was ready to render military aid to Czechoslovakia even if France did not do so. . . . Naturally Stalin emphasized the Soviet Union will help Czechoslovakia only under one condition, that Czechoslovakia defend herself and request Soviet aid" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol I, page 240).

In September 1938 the rulers of feudal Poland increased their provocations against Czechoslovakia, threatening her security. In this connection on 23 September the Soviet Government warned that in the event of Polish attack on Czechoslovakia the nonaggression

pact between Poland and the USSR would immediately be abrogated.

Thus at all stages of the Czechoslovak tragedy the Soviet Union came to the defense of the independence and national rights of Czechoslovakia for collective resistance to the fascist aggressors. Toward the end of September the Soviet Government again proposed the immediate calling of an international conference with the aim of "seeking out practical measures to oppose aggression and save the peace through collective efforts" (Za prochnyy mir, za narodnuyu demokratiyu! [For a Stable Peace, for a Popular Democracy], 21 December 1949).

The governments of the imperialist nations followed a diametrically opposed policy. On 21 September 1938 the British and French ambassadors in Prague stated to the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs that if, owing to the stubbornness of Czechoslovakia, a conflict should arise between that country and Germany, Britain and France would not help Czechoslovakia. The British and French ambassadors warned President Benes that if Czechoslovakia accepted help from the Soviet Union fascist Germany's war would take on the character of a "crusade" against the Bolsheviks, and that Britain and France would find it difficult to refrain from participating in it. Thus the representatives of Britain and France raised the threat of a joint campaign through Czechoslovakia against the Soviet Union under the leadership of fascist Germany.

On 22 September 1938 Chamberlain made a second flying visit to Hitler. In the course of his talk with the latter he recognized Germany's "rights" to the separation of the Sudetens and promised to compel Czechoslovakia to accept Hitler's demands.

Making a show of being much concerned with the fate of the country the Czechoslovak Government queried the US Government as to its position in the event of a conflict with Germany.

The American Government did not support Czechoslovakia. On 24 September the German representatives in the US wrote to Berlin that the ruling circles in the US "understand the German demands on Czechoslovakia. . . Here there is a clearly manifested antipathy toward Russia" (Popov, A. Ya., SShA -- organizator i aktivnyy uchastnik myunkhenskogo sgovora s fashistkimi agressorami [The US, Organizer of and Active Participant in the Munich Agreement with the Fascist Aggressors], 1952 edition, page 20). The American Government appealed to the governments of fascist Germany, Britain, and France to continue their talks on the fate of the western regions of Czechoslovakia. This amounted to direct support of the policy being followed by the governments of Britain and France, a policy of betraying Czechoslovakia.

On 28 September 1938 the German Government, encouraged by the British, French, and US reactionaries, presented to the Czechoslovak Government an ultimatum in the form of a memorandum. Fascist Germany demanded that the western regions of Czechoslovakia be turned over to her within a period of 10 days.

At this tense moment the US Government proposed that a conference be called to settle the problem of Czechoslovakia. To this end it sent special emissaries to Hitler and Mussolini. All these facts show that the diplomacy of the US took a very active part in the preparation of the Munich agreement. Cordell Hull, then US Secretary of State, could not conceal this situation.

Later he acknowledged that the policy followed by the US Government "had a considerable effect on the course of events."

Encouraged by the ruling circles of the US, the head of the British Government, Chamberlain, appealed to Hitler and Mussolini to arrange a personal meeting among the heads of 4 governments, those of Germany, Italy, France, and Britain.

Thus the agreement with the aggressor at the expense of the Czechoslovak people, aimed against the USSR, was prepared by the efforts of the ruling circles of Britain, France, and the US.

THE SOVIET UNION EXPOSES THE MUNICH AGREEMENT,
THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AGAINST THE FASCIST AGGRESSORS
AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES

The Munich Conference took place on 29 September 1938. The following were represented at the conference: Hitlerite Germany, Britain, France, and fascist Italy.

At Munich it was decided that the western regions of Czechoslovakia should be given to Germany. The first paragraph of the Munich agreement stated that these regions were to be turned over to Germany within 10 days, between 1 and 10 October. It was further stipulated that all of the property on the territory of these regions should be left there, and that the Czechoslovakian Government bore the responsibility for seeing that this was done. As a consequence of the immediate deadline for the transfer of these regions and the terrorism of the German fascist elements the Czech citizens could not even take their personal property with them when they evacuated the regions which were being separated.

The Munich agreement also specified that the demands of Poland and Hungary with regard to Czechoslovakian territory should be satisfied in the very near future.

The agreement reached at Munich was not confined to the transfer of the western regions of Czechoslovakia to the German fascists. On 30 September 1938 an Anglo-German declaration on a "lasting peace" was signed. By this means the British imperialists intended to protect their positions against their German competitor and direct his aggression toward the east, against the USSR. The British Government considered this act as a step toward a definitive agreement with German fascism. On 7 October 1938 British Minister of Foreign Affairs Halifax stated to Dirksen, the German Ambassador, that it would soon be possible to achieve "a further broadening of the bases of Anglo-German relations" laid down at Munich (Voprosy istorii, No 4, 1953, page 69). On 13 October Britain proposed to the German economic delegation in London a draft economic agreement among Britain, Germany, France, and Italy.

Somewhat later (on 6 December 1938) a similar declaration between France and Germany was signed. It stated that there were no territorial disputes between France and Germany, and that they would strive to develop peaceful and honorable relations and would maintain contact on all questions of interest to them. Commenting on the Franco-German declaration, the newspaper Aube said on 7 December: "Our border has been recognized and guaranteed so that the other borders of Europe might be violated."

In reaching agreement with fascist Germany the ruling circles of Britain and France were endeavoring to provide Germany

with a secure rear area for war against the USSR and were attempting to bribe the aggressor at the expense of the USSR and the other countries of east Europe. This situation was very openly set forth in January 1939 by a columnist of the newspaper Sunday Times who stated that the British Government was ready to maintain good relations with Germany under the following condition: "Germany must not try to challenge our (namely, the British -- I. I.) rule of the seas."

A similar policy was followed by the American imperialists. Subsequent to the Munich agreement the American monopolies concluded several agreements with German firms on increasing deliveries of strategic raw materials to Germany. Welles, the US Undersecretary of State, referred to the Munich agreement as the basis of a new order in international relations.

Although the Munich agreement formally deals only with the matter of transferring the western regions of Czechoslovakia to Germany, Munich was actually the scene of a far-reaching imperialist agreement with tremendous international and military consequences.

The transfer of the western regions of Czechoslovakia to fascist Germany meant that the strategic gateways in central and east Europe had been opened to fascist aggression. Czechoslovakia was weakened and crippled, and a crushing blow had been dealt to its security. Its territory and population were diminished by 1/3. It lost about 1/2 of its economic resources, specifically about 90% of its power resources, 25% of its heavy industry, and 50% of its light industry. Its network of railroads was cut by more than 50%.

On 30 September at a session presided over by Benes the Czechoslovak Government accepted the Munich agreement without resistance, that is, it capitulated. It did not urge the people to rise in defense of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. The Czech reactionaries threatened to open the borders to the German fascist troops if help was accepted from the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak Government did not protest fascist Germany's actions to the League of Nations. And yet with the help of the Soviet delegation consideration of the protest might have been transformed into an international judgment not only against the aggressors but against his Anglo-French and American accomplices as well.

On 5 October 1938 in an attempt to deceive the Czechoslovak people and avoid personal responsibility for the betrayal Benes resigned the presidency of Czechoslovakia. The reorganized Czechoslovakian Government included out-and-out agents of the German and Italian fascists who promised to liquidate the democratic organizations in Czechoslovakia. In December 1938 the government published a decree dissolving the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and depriving its deputies of all mandates in Parliament and other electoral organs. The democratic forces in the country were subjected to harsh political repressions.

Thus thanks to its narrow class interests, the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie sacrificed the interests of the country. Along with their patrons, the monopolists of the US, Britain, and France, they carried out a large scale plot against the people, against the republic, and against all democratic forces.

The ruling circles of Britain, France, and the US tried to deceive public opinion, asserting that the Munich agreement would save the world from the threat of war. But they did not succeed in this attempt.

The workers of all countries, and above all, those of Czechoslovakia, came out against the traitorous "Munich" policy. The Czechoslovakian crisis was accompanied by a stubborn struggle on the part of the Czech patriots for the country's integrity and independence. On 4 and 5 July 1938 in answer to an appeal from the Communist Party huge demonstrations were held. On 11 July a meeting was held in Prague which was attended by 50,000 persons. On 31 July a huge demonstration was held in Prague. The patriotic movement continued through August and September. On 21 September a general strike was begun in Prague. On that same day a demonstration in which 250,000 persons participated was held in front of the Parliament building. The news of the decision taken at the Munich parley provoked violent indignation on the part of the laboring masses of Czechoslovakia. Czech soldiers left their posts in the western regions with tears in their eyes. On 3 October 1938 at the Prague Club in the presence of several hundred persons Czech veterans demonstrated their feelings by throwing into wastebaskets the French and British medals they had received.

A wave of protest against the Munich betrayal swept through France. The Politburo of the French Communist Party published a communique exposing the line of the French and British governments, which had assisted in the dismembering of Czechoslovakia. The Politburo called upon the people to step up the struggle against fascism and the threat of war. On 2 October 1938 the French Communist Party published a message to the Czechoslovak people, who

had become the victims of aggression. "The workers of France," the message said, "are protesting against the decisions dictated at Munich. These monstrous decisions are immolating Czechoslovakia." This message was signed by Romain Rolland, Marcel Cachin, Maurice Thorez, Jacques Duclos, and other leading figures in France. On 7 October on the initiative of the French Communist Party a meeting was held in Paris at which Maurice Thorez spoke. He said: "The day of 29 September will go down in history as the day of the great betrayal. . . Those persons who betrayed Czechoslovakia dealt, by the same token, a blow to the security of France. . . Chamberlain wants to make use of Hitler as the new gendarme of capitalist Europe, against republic Spain, against the international workers' movement, and against the USSR."

On 2 October 1938 20,000 workers demonstrated in New York as a sign of protest against the Munich agreement. Mass demonstrations and meetings were held in other US cities as well.

On 30 September 1938 27 London sections of the National Committee of the Unemployed sent protests to the British Government against its "Munich" policy. The Fifteenth Congress of the British Communist Party, which was held during the period of the Czechoslovak crisis, exposed the provocative policy of the British Government and demanded contact with the USSR in the struggle against the aggressor.

The wave of alarm spread through the broad masses of workers in almost every country in the world. But the protests of the laboring masses were weakened by the acts of the right wing socialist leaders. The Munich collusion was made easier because the working class, owing to the schismatic policy of the leaders of

the Second International, could not rally their forces and frustrate this criminal plot of the imperialists.

Throughout the world the communists exposed not only the imperialists governmental leaders but their "socialist" accomplices as well.

The British, American, and French imperialists were convinced that it would be difficult to present their provocative policy as a policy of "pacifying" the aggressor. Therefore they undertook direct provocation. Rumors were circulated to the effect that the Soviet Government had approved the Munich agreement. These false rumors were exposed in special statements from TASS published on 2 and 4 October 1938. They specified that the USSR had no connection with the Munich parley and its decisions.

The "Munich" policy of the British, US, and French imperialists constituted political collusion with the fascist aggressors and was aimed at isolating the Soviet Union in the international arena and surrounding it with a bloc headed by fascist Germany.

In his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress on the work of the Central Committee, I. V. Stalin said: "It may be assumed that the Germans were given parts of Czechoslovakia in reward for promising to start a war against the Soviet Union" (Stalin, I. V., Voprosy leninizma, page 611). The report stated that after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia the imperialists of the US, Britain, and France began a press campaign of loud lies as to the "weakness" of the Soviet Army and "disorders" in the Soviet Union, urging the German aggressors on toward the east and promising them an easy reward. The reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France hoped that fascist Germany would seize the Ukraine in a short time

and establish there a "government" controlled by Germany. As the German Ambassador in London reported, the British reactionary circles were favorably disposed toward this idea.

It was the aim of the Munich policy that the fascist hangmen should be utilized by the Anglo-American-French reactionaries not only against the Soviet Union but against the democratic forces in other countries.

However the imperialists' plans met with failure. The Soviet Union had grown and increased in strength. It was following a consistent and firm policy of peace and international cooperation. The USSR pitilessly exposed the fascist aggressors, their Anglo-American-French patrons, and their accomplices, the so-called right wing socialists. The Soviet Union was struggling for collective resistance to the aggressors, for the unification of all peace loving peoples against the threat of fascism.

THE OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE GERMAN FASCISTS,
THE PROTEST OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE OCCUPATION
OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE UNMASKING OF GERMANY'S AGGRESSIVE POLICY

The "Munich" policy of the ruling circles of the US, Britain, and France encouraged the German fascists to undertake new adventures. Following the Munich agreement they began to make preparations for the occupation of Czechoslovakia and carried out several preparatory steps to facilitate the attainment of their piratic goals. First and foremost, they demanded that the subservient Czechoslovak Government reduce its army from 250,000 to 100,000 men. Democratically inclined soldiers and officers were discharged. At the demand of the German fascists the Czechoslovakian Government

withdrew its troops from Slovakia, which untied the hands of the fascist insurgents under Hlinka. At the same time the fascist press raised up a hue and cry about the "Czech danger," the "concentration" of Czech forces along the German frontier, etc. A so-called "independent" government of fascist agents was formed in Slovakia. On 13 March 1939 President Hacha, endeavoring to ingratiate himself with fascist Germany, ordered the release of fascist bandits from prison. German fascist troops ready to invade Czechoslovak territory at any moment were concentrated along the frontiers of Czechoslovakia.

On 14 March under these circumstances of blackmail and threats the German Government presented an ultimatum to the Czechoslovakian Government. Hacha and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kvalkovsky, were summoned to Berlin. Acting counter to the will of the Czechoslovak people and in violation of the Constitution of Czechoslovakia, they signed a treasonous document on the basis of which the fate of Czechoslovakia was put into the hands of fascist Germany. On 15 March 1939 Germany seized Czechoslovakia. Bohemia and Moravia were declared to be German protectorates while Slovakia was declared to be an "independent" state. Actually it was also occupied and deprived of all independence. At the same time that the German troops were invading Czechoslovakia, Hungarian troops began the occupation of the Transcarpathian Ukraine.

On 17 March 1939 the German Government by means of special notes informed the governments of other countries that it had included Czechoslovakia in Germany's "Lebensraum." The Hitler government brazenly described this aggressive act as Germany's striving toward "self-defense" and "calm" in the center of Europe.

The laboring masses of the entire world were alarmed by the treasonous, piratical acts of the German fascists and their Anglo-American-French accomplices. The Czechoslovakian patriots were fully resolved to defend their country. On 15 March 1939 Czechoslovak units in the city of Brno offered resistance to the fascist forces. The same thing occurred when the fascists occupied Fridek. In connection with the events in Czechoslovakia, the French communist deputies vigorously opposed the granting to the government of the special powers it required to put down the democratic opposition. In all countries the laboring masses, led by the communist parties, demanded that their governments establish contact with the Soviet Union in order to offer collective resistance to the aggressor. They saw the might of the Soviet Union as a firm fortress for the peace and security of nations.

The British Government had had advance knowledge of the impending occupation of Czechoslovakia by the German fascists. However it took no steps against the impending aggression. A circular of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to foreign governments stated: "It would be quite undesirable to make a protest which would not tend to strengthen the position in any way, or to make a statement which would only infuriate Hitler." On 15 March 1939 Chamberlain stated in Parliament that Britain bore no responsibility for what had happened and that she had no intention of altering her foreign policy. In his report to Berlin the German Ambassador to London, Dirksen, wrote that the ruling circles of Britain had welcomed the news of the occupation of Czechoslovakia. On 15 March 1939 the day the fascists invaded Czechoslovakia Anglo-German economic talks were being concluded in Dusseldorf. In the agreement which was reached it was noted

that both parties welcomed the strengthening of the friendly relations between them. A special Anglo-German committee was established to coordinate Anglo-German cooperation. Ten days later the British Government officially recognized the fascist occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. Czechoslovak gold reserves which had been held in British banks were turned over to the German fascists. These reserves were soon used to purchase strategic materials.

The British ruling circles not only dealt a stab in the back to the Czechoslovakian people but they increasingly urged fascist Germany on toward the east, against the Soviet Union.

The May number of the Bulletin of the British Industrial Federation stated that the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia did not suffice to meet the needs and decrease the difficulties of fascist Germany but that she needed additional spheres of influence. The countries of east Europe were mentioned in this connection.

A similar policy was pursued by the French ruling circles. On 15 March 1939 Bonnet, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that he considered the occupation of Czechoslovakia a "normal" phenomenon.

A policy of encouraging fascist aggression was also followed by the American imperialists, who approved all of the acts of Britain and France in this direction. Raymond Heist, former First Secretary of the US Embassy in Berlin, while testifying as a witness at the Nuremberg trials, acknowledged that the US Embassy had been given advance warning by the German Government of the occupation of Czechoslovakia. It is evident from the memoirs of Benes

that in May 1939 in talks with him the US authorities approved the position of the Czechoslovakian Government in offering no resistance to fascist Germany, in September 1938 and in March 1939.

The League of Nations did not even take up the question of the fate of Czechoslovakia, which was a member. At the insistence of the representatives of the USSR this question was put on the agenda of the League but the British and French delegates used every means to postpone its consideration for an indefinite time, so that it was never considered.

The Soviet Government was the only government in the world which resolutely opposed the fascist robbery, in defense of the Czechoslovak people. In reply to the German note on the inclusion of Czechoslovakia in its "Lebensraum," the Soviet Government exposed the fascist aggressors. The Soviet note stated that the USSR could not take an attitude of indifference toward the events in Czechoslovakia. It completely disproved the false arguments of the Hitler government in justification of its acts. In the second and third notes it was pointed out that Hacha had no right whatsoever to sign the document on the annexation of Czechoslovakia to Germany to which the German Government had referred by way of argument. The Soviet note decisively emphasized that "the occupation of Czechia by German troops and the subsequent acts of the German Government cannot be considered as other than arbitrary, aggressive, and acts of violence."

"In view of the above," the note continued, "the Soviet Government cannot recognize the inclusion of Bohemia in the German Empire, nor, in any form, that of Slovakia, as legal and corresponding to the generally accepted norms of international law and justice or the principle of the self-determination of nations.

". . . In the opinion of the Soviet Government, the acts of the German Government not only do not eliminate any danger to the general peace but on the contrary have created and increased such a danger, have disturbed the political stability in central Europe, have increased the elements of the state of alarm already created in Europe, and have dealt a new blow to the feeling of security on the part of nations" (Izvestiya, 20 March 1939).

The Soviet Union's refusal to recognize fascist Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia and its description of that occupation as an act of aggression were of tremendous importance to the Czechoslovakian people. Describing the importance of the position taken by the Soviet Union, K. Gottwald wrote: "This vigorous move on the part of the Soviet Union in defense of the victims of fascist violence showed not only the peoples of Czechoslovakia but all those threatened by fascist aggression that the Soviet Union was their most reliable support" (Klement Gottwald, Desyat' let [Ten Years], 1949 edition, Prague, page 187).

Even during the period of the Munich parley, in the spring of 1939, Czechoslovakia could have resisted. It had about 40 well equipped and trained divisions and about 2.5 million reservists. The Czechoslovak people were ready to fight for their independence. If Czechoslovakia had not been betrayed by the reactionary circles of the US, Britain, France, and the Czechoslovakian quislings, the fascist aggression might have been stopped and the forces of democracy throughout the world would have been strengthened. But the American, British, and French imperialists, and along with them, all the international reactionaries, did not want this to happen. They tried in every way to provoke an attack by Germany on the USSR.

Fascist Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia had serious consequences of a military and political nature. Germany gained control of the industry of Czechoslovakia and was able to make use of its military equipment. The seizure of the Czechoslovakian defensive lines, which had been built on the model of the French defenses, gave the fascist commanders the key to the French defense installations. The occupation of Czechoslovakia created favorable conditions for the occupation of Poland by the German fascists. The seizure of Czechoslovakia, which the Germans considered as an important anti-Soviet staging area, increased the danger of war for the USSR.

Following the occupation of Czechoslovakia the Germans began to prepare for war in a completely open manner. "The most dramatic months of the prewar period now set in. By this time it had become plain that each day brought mankind closer to an unprecedented military catastrophe" (Fal'sifikatory istorii (Istori-cheskaya spravka) [Falsifiers of History, An Historical Reference Book], 1952, Gospolitizdat).

On 23 March 1939 fascist Germany presented an ultimatum to the Government of Lithuania, demanding that Memel be turned over to Germany within 48 hours. An agreement to that effect was concluded the same day. The profascist rulers of Lithuania had betrayed the interests of the Lithuanian people and made a deal with the German fascists. Following its occupation by the German fascists, Memel was transformed into one of the most important bases for attacking the USSR and the other countries of east Europe, including Lithuania itself.

On 23 March 1939, as a result of pressure and deals made with the Rumanian reactionary ruling circles, a German-Rumanian economic agreement was concluded which subordinated the Rumanian economy to fascist Germany. Rumania was converted into a German sphere of influence, a staging area for war against the Soviet Union.

Hungary was also included in the fascist bloc. On 23 March 1939, having occupied the Transcarpathian Ukraine with the permission of fascist Germany, Hungary joined the so-called "Anti-Comintern Pact."

By the spring of 1939 the reactionary circles of the US, Britain, and France had definitively betrayed the Spanish Republic. They assisted in the liquidation of the freedom and independence of the Spanish people primarily in order to free the hands of the fascist aggressors for action in the east against the Soviet Union.

The aggressors continued their work. On 7 April 1939 fascist Italy attacked Albania in a piratical manner. On 14 April 1939 the Italian king was handed the Albanian crown by fascist bandits. The country was occupied by fascist troops.

In April 1939 fascist Germany increased its pressure on feudal Poland, demanding the annexation of Danzig to Germany and permission to build a railroad and highway through the so-called Polish Corridor. Talks on this matter had been held on 5 and 6 January 1939. Actually Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, had agreed to meet Germany's demands but on the condition that compensation be made at the expense of other countries, primarily at the expense of the Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belorussia.

In the spring of 1939 relations between Poland and Germany became strained. The German fascist press began to wail about the "oppression" of Germans in Poland. A campaign for the persecution of Poles was started up in Germany. German troops were massed along the Polish borders.

What was the reaction to these events in Britain? On 31 March 1939 Chamberlain stated in Parliament that the British Government did not yet have any data on a real threat to Poland but if she were threatened Britain would help her. The newspaper Times wrote that Chamberlain's statement was intended merely to ensure independence for Poland in the talks and that the British Government would not object if Poland transferred Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany. The newspaper emphasized that Britain was not prepared to defend every home on the Polish borders.

On 3 April 1939 Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived in London for talks. The Polish rulers were just as insincere as the British. They regarded the talks with Britain merely as a means of "frightening" the rulers of Germany in order to be in a better position to deal with them. They hoped that the German fascists would take into account their readiness to support Germany in a war against the USSR.

On 6 April 1939 Chamberlain stated in Parliament that Britain and Poland had concluded an agreement on mutual assistance. On 12 April France confirmed its position as an ally of Poland. Thus Poland had obtained "guarantees" from the 2 great powers. But these "guarantees" were worth nothing. A cartoon published in Pravda, 14 April 1939, depicted these "guarantees" as follows. A soldier in Polish uniform is drowning. A gentleman wearing a top

hat comes toward him in a boat and from a great distance throws him a life belt to which a heavy rock is attached. The British and French declarations on helping Poland were very vague. Moreover their definitive formulation was deliberately delayed until the middle of August 1939. The British and French governments had no intention of actually fulfilling their guarantees. Secretly they knew that the occupation of Poland by the German fascists would eliminate obstacles in the way of the latter's attacking the USSR.

On 28 April 1939 in view of this the rulers of fascist Germany denounced the German-Polish nonaggression pact which had been concluded in January 1934. That same day they presented to the Polish Government a memorandum on the question of Danzig and the Polish Corridor. It was also announced that fascist Germany had abrogated the Anglo-German maritime agreement which had been concluded in 1935.

THE ANGLO-FRENCH-SOVIET TALKS
ON A TRIPARTITE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PACT,
THE USSR'S PROPOSALS FOR ORGANIZING THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY
OF THE NATIONS OF EUROPE

Following the occupation of Czechoslovakia and several other aggressive acts on the part of the German fascists, the ruling circles of Britain and France, with the support of the reactionary forces in the US, continued their policy of trying to involve fascist Germany with the Soviet Union. For purposes of deceiving the masses this policy was screened with declarations as to their readiness to cooperate with the Soviet Union and with certain diplomatic subterfuges intended to conceal their real aims. In particular the

talks which Britain and France held with the Soviet Union in 1939 were of this nature. The ruling circles of Britain and France depicted these talks as a serious attempt on their part to prevent the further development of fascist aggression. Actually however they were playing a double game aimed at collusion with fascist Germany in order to direct her against the Soviet Union.

By means of the talks with the Soviet Union on the question of mutual assistance, the ruling circles of Britain and France wanted to delude the popular masses of their own countries and create the impression that they were ready to combat aggression alongside the Soviet Union. In addition to this the monopolists of Britain and France tried to take advantage of the talks in order to strengthen their positions vis-a-vis their competitor, imperialist Germany. By means of frightening the German imperialists with the possibility of their concluding a mutual assistance pact with the USSR, the reactionary circles of Britain and France wanted to accelerate agreement with them against the USSR.

The Anglo-French-Soviet talks began in March 1939. A rumor began to be circulated abroad that the USSR had offered guarantees to Poland and Rumania. On 22 March in this connection TASS published a communication which disproved these rumors as not corresponding to reality. In the name of the Soviet Government it expressed the desire to call a conference of the 6 most interested powers (the USSR, Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, and Turkey) to consider joint action in the struggle against aggression.

In reply to the Soviet proposal for calling this conference the British Government confined itself to a proposal for the signing of a declaration by the governments of the USSR, Britain, France,

and Poland. But several days later it backed down from this proposal. (At that time Halifax informed the US Government through the ambassador in Washington that in the course of the Anglo-French-Soviet talks there would be no question of actually inviting the Soviet Union to cooperate with Britain and France.)

On 17 April 1939, consistently struggling for collective resistance against the aggressor, the Soviet Government proposed that an agreement be reached to the effect, first, that the Soviet Union, Britain, and France would promise to render one another immediate aid of all kinds, including military aid, in the event of aggression against one of these states, second, that the Soviet Union, Britain, and France should promise to render aid of all kinds, including military aid, to the states of east Europe located between the Baltic and the Black Sea and adjacent to the Soviet Union, in the event of aggression against those states, and third and last, that the Soviet Union, Britain, and France should promise to determine, in the very near future the amount and form of military aid to be rendered to each of these states (Fal'sifikatory istorii (Istoricheskaya spravka), page 43).

These proposals meant in the event of their acceptance the organization of a system of collective security and they provided for effective measures to resist the aggressor. It followed from the Soviet proposals that the 3 states (the USSR, Britain, and France) would help one another in the event of aggression and would assume responsibility for defending the security of the countries of east Europe. The acceptance of the Soviet proposals would have assumed great international significance.

In reply to these proposals the British Government advised the Soviet Government to assume a unilateral responsibility to defend all of the countries contiguous to it and to help Britain and France if they should be drawn into a war with the aggressors because of obligations to Poland and Rumania, remaining tacit on the matter of its own obligations in the event of an attack on the USSR.

It was clear that the ruling circles of Britain and France were trying to foist upon the USSR all the burden of combating fascist aggression, refraining from any commitments vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. This crafty scheme of the Anglo-French diplomats was exposed by the Soviet Government, which unmasked the unfair nature of the British conditions. Throughout the period of the talks the Soviet Government countered the diplomatic traps of the British and French governments with concrete and clear proposals aimed at defending the peace and ensuring collective security in Europe. In particular the Soviet Union, taking into account the possibility that the aggressors would make use of the Baltic littoral as a staging area for an attack against the Soviet Union, demanded guarantees for the Baltic countries as well, something which corresponded to the security interests of both the USSR and the Baltic and other freedom loving peoples.

On 27 May 1939 the Soviet Government stated to the British Ambassador, Seeds, and the French Charge d'Affaires, Pailleur, that the position taken by their governments did not testify to a serious interest in a pact with the Soviet Union. The Soviet representative pointed out that the governments of Britain and France were not so much interested in a pact as in talking about one,

whereas the Soviet Government was interested in organizing effective mutual assistance among the USSR, Britain, and France against fascist aggression.

But even after this Soviet declaration, the talks were artificially dragged out by the British and French governments.

In order to accelerate the course of the talks the Soviet Government invited Halifax, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Moscow. But the latter did not want to come.

The bourgeois newspapers of Britain and France made a good deal of noise about the "success" of the talks in Moscow but actually no progress has been made, through the fault of the ruling circles of Britain and France. Therefore, it became necessary to expose their policy publicly. On 29 June 1939 Pravda published an article by A. A. Zhdanov titled "The British and French Governments Do Not Want a Just Treaty with the USSR," which pointed out that the talks had run into an impasse because the ruling circles of Britain and France did not want a pact with equal commitments on their side and were using the talks for other purposes. The article stated that "no self-respecting nation would agree to such a pact unless it wanted to be a toy in the hands of persons fond of having others pull the chestnuts out of the fire. A fortiori the USSR, whose strength, might, and merits are known to the whole world, cannot agree to such a pact" (Pravda, 29 June 1939).

As was learned subsequently, the ruling circles of Britain were holding secret talks with representatives of fascist Germany at the same time as the Moscow talks. Robert C. Hudson, Parliamentary Secretary of the Trade Council, met with Wohltat, Hitler's

economic advisor. It is clear from the reports of Dirksen, the German Ambassador to London, that the secret Anglo-German talks were begun on the initiative of the British Government. The program for the talks was worked out by Prime Minister Chamberlain. Dirksen noted that the British Government, fearful of disturbing its own people, insisted on the greatest secrecy.

The talks between Hudson and Wohltat involved long range Anglo-German cooperation "with a view to discovering new world markets and exploiting existing ones" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol II, 1948, Gospolitizdat, page 70). The Soviet Union and China were named as such markets. On 24 July 1939 Dirksen informed his government that the chief aim of the British ruling circles was "the broadest possible Anglo-German agreement on all important questions" on a world scale (Ibid., page 75). The kind of foundations on which it was proposed to erect the Anglo-German agreement is clear from the documents. Germany was to guarantee the integrity and inviolability of the British Empire and its spheres of influence while Britain agreed to the conversion of east Europe into a sphere of influence for fascist Germany.

The British representatives declared that their government was ready to reject the guarantees to Poland and other countries of east Europe. On 3 August Wilson said that the Anglo-German agreement "would completely liberate the British Government from the guarantee commitments it had undertaken . . . vis-a-vis Poland" (Ibid., page 133). In a talk with Dirksen on 9 August 1939 Halifax also emphasized that "I and the British Government will do all we can to urge the Poles toward conciliation." From this it is clear

that the British ruling circles were ready to deliver Poland into the hands of the German fascists. Moreover the British bankers had promised credit to fascist Germany in the event that agreement was reached.

The right wing Laborite lackeys of British imperialism deceived the masses with false declarations to the effect that they were in favor of cooperation with the USSR in the struggle against the aggressor. Actually they were opposed to cooperation with the USSR and were advocates of reaching an agreement with fascist Germany. As is borne out by the talks between Roden Baxton, head of the Department of Information and Propaganda of the Executive Committee of the Labor Party, and the German Ambassador and his embassy staff members, the British right wing Laborites supported the proposals for British recognition of German interests in east and southeast Europe and its abrogation of the guarantees made to those countries which would be included in fascist Germany's sphere of interests.

The secret Anglo-German talks were carried on with the knowledge of the ruling circles of the US. The American imperialists approved the anti-Soviet direction of these talks. In addition to this in the summer of 1939 several representatives of the American monopolies held talks with Hitler and von Ribbentrop, promising that if fascist Germany became involved in a war in east Europe the US would remain neutral.

In the course of the Anglo-French-Soviet talks the Soviet Government tried to reach agreement with Britain and France on mutual assistance on a basis of equality. It proposed that in addition to a political pact they sign a military convention

establishing the amounts and kinds of aid and a timetable therefor. The Soviet Government considered that only an agreement of this kind would serve as an effective weapon in the struggle with the fascist aggressor.

For the military talks the Soviet Government designated an authoritative delegation headed by K. Ye. Voroshilov, which fact emphasized the very great importance which the Soviet Union attributed to these talks.

The governments of Britain and France acted in an entirely different manner. A retired admiral, Drax, who in fact represented neither the army nor the navy, was named head of the British military delegation. One General Dumanc, similarly obscure, was named head of the French delegation. The members of these delegations were selected from among third-rate persons.

The British military delegation received secret instructions. These instructions stated that the government did not want to take upon itself any detailed commitments which might "tie its hands" (Bol'shevik, No 8, 1948, page 47). Dirksen, the German Ambassador to London, wrote his ministry that "the military mission's task is more likely that of ascertaining the war-making capacity of the Soviet Army than that of concluding operational agreements" (Dokumenty i materialy kanuna vtoroy mirovoy voyny, Vol II, page 117). The British and French military delegations did not arrive in Moscow until 11 August 1939. Moreover they were not fully empowered to conclude a significant military agreement. The members of the mission were not provided with the necessary authority until after the Soviet delegation had pointed out the foregoing inadmissible fact.

In the course of the talks the Soviet Union declared its readiness in the event of a war with the aggressor to furnish 136 divisions, 5,000 medium and heavy artillery pieces, 10,000 tanks, 5,000 aircraft, etc (Fal'sifikatory istorii (Istoricheskaya spravka), page 48).

The British delegates cited ridiculous figures, 5 infantry divisions and one mechanized division. This was a mockery of the idea of collective resistance to the aggressor.

The Soviet delegates felt that since the USSR did not have any common boundaries with the fascist aggressor it could help France, Britain, and Poland only if its forces were sent through Polish territory since there were no other routes by which the Soviet armed forces could come into contact with the armed forces of the aggressor (Pravda, 27 August 1939).

Despite the absolute correctness of this view, the French and British delegates did not agree with it. Acting on instructions from the Anglo-American-French imperialists, the Polish Government stated that it did not need military help from the USSR and would not accept it.

The profascist rulers of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, prompted by their imperialist masters, also rejected the guarantees mentioned in the Soviet conditions. The government of Finland, acting under the dictates of the rulers of the great powers, made a similar statement. By their refusal of the guarantees which had been proposed, the governments of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland dealt a blow to the security of their countries, betraying the national interests of their peoples.

As is shown in the historical reference book, Fal'sifikatory istorii, the perfidious scheme of the Anglo-French ruling circles was to let the fascist ringleaders of Germany understand that they were not allies of the USSR, that the USSR was isolated, and that the fascist gangsters could attack the USSR with no risk of encountering resistance from Britain and France. Thus the essence of the Anglo-French policy lay not in unifying the forces of the peace loving nations for a joint struggle against aggression but in isolating the USSR and directing the fascist aggression against it.

The talks were frustrated by the British and French ruling circles, who were acting in contact with the imperialists of the US.

The laboring masses of Britain, France, Poland, and other countries manifested great uneasiness. They demanded that their governments reach an honorable agreement with the Soviet Union as the chief and most reliable fortress of peace and security. The struggle of the laboring masses for collective resistance to the aggressor and for joint action with the Soviet Union was inspired by the communist parties. A declaration of the Central Committee of the British Communist Party dated 20 March 1939 stated: "Collective security by means of the unification of Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the US is the most reliable means of putting an end to the barbarous deeds of fascism and saving the peace throughout the world." On 11 April a demonstration was held in London with the slogan: "We want a pact with Russia!" Of the British citizens interviewed by the Institute of Public Opinion, 87% said they were in favor of a mutual assistance pact

with the USSR. With slogans calling for a struggle for collective security, May Day demonstrations were held in many cities of France and the US. The International Conference in Defense of Peace, Democracy, and Human Dignity, which was held on 13 and 14 May in Paris and was attended by delegates from 28 countries, gave clear expression to the will of the popular masses. The conference emphasized that "the effective defense of peace requires immediate loyal and close cooperation among France, Britain, Poland, and the Soviet Union on a basis of equality." The Communist International did a great deal of work in mobilizing the masses in the struggle for peace and against fascist aggression. In its May Day appeal the IKKI stated that the workers needed a united front on a national and international scale.

At first the imperialist press tried to sooth the masses with false information about the "successful" course of the Anglo-French-Soviet talks. Then it tried to shift the responsibility for the failure of the talks to the USSR. The Reuters Agency slanderously affirmed that the Anglo-French-Soviet talks had been frustrated by the Soviet Government, which had concluded a pact with Germany. The falseness of this provocative statement was exposed in an interview with K. Ye. Voroshilov, the chief of the Soviet delegation, which was published on 27 August in Pravda. K. Ye. Voroshilov said: "The military talks with Britain and France were not broken off because the USSR had concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany. On the contrary the USSR concluded a nonaggression pact with Germany as a result, inter alia, of the fact that the military talks with France and Britain reached an impasse by virtue of insurmountable obstacles" (Pravda, 27 August 1939).

**THE SOVIET-GERMAN NONAGGRESSION PACT
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE USSR**

In view of the fact that the Anglo-French-Soviet talks had been frustrated by the British and French ruling circles, whose acts were encouraged by the US imperialists, the Soviet Government was compelled to accept Germany's proposal for the conclusion of a nonaggression pact. The pact was signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939. It was to cover a period of 10 years and provided for the following obligations for the parties: (1) to refrain from any violence, aggressive acts, or attacks on each other, either individually or jointly with other powers; (2) to preserve neutrality if one of the contracting parties were attacked by a third party; (3) not to participate in any groupings of powers which directly or indirectly might be directed against the other party; and (4) to settle all disputes between the contracting parties only by peaceful means.

The significance of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact for the USSR was described by I. V. Stalin in a radio speech of 3 July 1941. He emphasized that the Soviet Government could not refuse the pact with Germany, despite the fact that the latter was headed by such monsters and cannibals as Hitler and von Ribbentrop, since this was a nonaggression pact between 2 nations. I. V. Stalin noted further that by means of this pact the Soviet Union had added a year and a half to its period of peaceful development. This period was used for the further strengthening of the defense capacity of the Soviet land and for the further improvement of its strategic and international positions. I. V. Stalin also pointed out that the German fascist ringleaders, in

treacherously violating this pact, had exposed themselves as bloody aggressors.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government knew that sooner or later the German fascists would attack the USSR. This followed from the entire foreign policy situation of fascist Germany (Fal'sifikatory istorii (Istoricheskaya spravka), page 56). To have refused at that time to conclude a nonaggression pact with Germany would have been to play into the hands of the imperialists, who wanted to push the fascists against the USSR as quickly as possible. It is clear that if fascist Germany had attacked the USSR at that time the reactionary circles of Britain and France, encouraged by the US imperialists, would either have supported her or, at best, would have taken a position of "neutrality" favorable to the fascists. The Soviet Government knew of the hostile intentions of imperialist Japan, which was also preparing for aggression against the USSR. The conclusion of the nonaggression pact with Germany complicated agreement between the Japanese and German aggressors. This is borne out by the fact that the fall of the Hiranuma cabinet [sic] in Japan took place following the conclusion of the Soviet-German pact. That government had protested against the conclusion of the pact, stating that it contravened the "Anti-Comintern Pact." The conflicts in the camp of imperialism between the bloc of fascist states on the one hand and the Anglo-French-US bloc on the other were skillfully utilized by the wise foreign policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government in the interests of the security of our socialist fatherland and of all freedom loving peoples.

Fal'sifikatory istorii, the historical reference book of Sovinformbyuro, notes that just as in 1918, in view of the hostile

policy of the Western powers, Soviet Russia was obliged to conclude the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, so in 1939 the Soviet Union was compelled to conclude a pact with Germany in view of the hostile policy of those same Western imperialist powers. In this period of tension the Soviet Government was faced with a choice.

"Either to accept, for purposes of self-defense, Germany's proposal for the conclusion of a nonaggression pact, and thereby secure for the Soviet Union an extension of the peace for a certain period which could be utilized by the Soviet state for purposes of an optimum preparation of its forces for resisting a possible attack by the aggressor.

"Or to reject Germany's proposal for a nonaggression pact and thereby enable the warmongers in the camp of the Western powers to involve the Soviet Union immediately in an armed conflict with Germany under circumstances which were completely unfavorable for the Soviet Union and under conditions of its complete isolation" (Fal'sifikatory istorii (Istoricheskaya spravka), page 53).

Taking into account all the complexity of the situation, the far-seeing and wise Soviet Government decided to conclude a nonaggression pact with Germany. This served to ward off the danger of a united front between the fascist powers and the US, British, and French imperialists, something which the ruling circles of these countries were intensively striving for. The sharp conflicts in the camp of imperialism, the might of the Soviet Union, the firmness and wisdom of its foreign policy, which took advantage of these conflicts, and the sympathy of the laboring masses of the capitalist countries for the Soviet Union prevented collusion among the imperialists at the expense of the USSR.

The USSR not only frustrated the plans for creating an imperialist, anti-Soviet front, but by means of its firm and consistent policy in the prewar years was able to prepare conditions so that subsequently the US and Britain were faced with the necessity of joining an antifascist coalition. As is generally known, the result of this wise Soviet foreign policy was the isolation of the fascist powers in lieu of the intended isolation of the USSR. This far-seeing and wise act of the Soviet Government did a great deal to determine the outcome of World War II, which was favorable for the Soviet Union and for all freedom loving peoples.

The conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact did not mean a change in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. It was a continuation of the consistent policy of peace which the Communist Party and the Soviet Government had unswervingly followed during the preceding years. In signing the nonaggression pact the Soviet Government was calling upon the people to be vigilant and ready to resist any aggressor.

The aims of the foreign policy of the Soviet state during that period were clearly defined by the Eighteenth Party Congress. The congress issued the following directive to the Central Committee and the Soviet Government.

- (1) To continue, as before, the policy of peace and the strengthening of trade relations with all countries.
- (2) To observe caution and avoid letting our country be dragged into a war by warmongers accustomed to having others pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

(3) To strengthen the war-making capacity of the Soviet Army and Navy to a maximum.

(4) To strengthen international friendly relations with the workers of all countries interested in peace and friendship among nations (Stalin, I. V., Voprosy leninizma, page 614).

The congress clearly and definitely warned the imperialist warmongers that the big and dangerous political game they had undertaken would end in complete collapse for them.

THE PREPARATION OF THE GERMAN FASCISTS
FOR THE INVASION OF POLAND, THE FURTHER AGGRAVATION
AND SHARPENING OF THE CRISIS IN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM
OF WORLD ECONOMY

As has already been noted, on 28 April 1939 the Hitlerites denounced the German-Polish Nonaggression Pact and presented to Poland a memorandum on the question of Danzig and the Polish Corridor. On 5 May the Polish Government formally rejected the German memorandum but expressed its willingness to reach agreement on all controversial questions on "good neighbor" principles. In this spirit Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Beck made a speech in the Diet. At the same time his deputy, Artsishevskiy, secretly reported to von Moltke, the German Ambassador to Poland, that Beck was acting "under pressure from public opinion, but he is faithful to Hitler as before." Artsishevskiy reported that "Poland has already made far-reaching concessions to Germany and she is ready to go even further. However she cannot give Germany full economic and political control of Danzig. The Polish governmental officials cannot do this without losing the power over their country"

(Fomin, V. T., Imperialisticheskaya agressiya protiv Pol'shi v 1939 g. [Imperialist Aggression Against Poland in 1939], 1952, Gospolitizdat, page 109).

The broad popular masses of Poland became alarmed over the fate of their fatherland. Despite harsh repressions, the workers held meetings, assemblies, and demonstrations demanding resistance to the fascist aggressor and cooperation with the Soviet Union in the task of defending the peace. The laboring masses protested against the antinational, treasonous policy of the ruling classes of Poland.

Against the will of the people the Polish landowners and capitalists continued to talk of their territorial claims. They expressed the desire to act jointly with fascist Germany and emphasized their readiness to undertake a joint struggle against the USSR. The Polish landowners and bourgeoisie still believed that fascist Germany would not wage war against Poland, that the Hitlerites would welcome their services in a joint war against the land of socialism. On 16 and 17 August 1939, proceeding on this assumption, the Polish Government held talks with German representatives on the economic relations between Germany and Poland. They expressed their readiness to place their country's economy at the service of fascist Germany. This was 14 days before the German attack on Poland. Even as late as 27 August, still hoping for an agreement with fascist Germany and trying to lull the vigilance of the Polish people and thereby prevent the development of a patriotic movement, Beck affirmed that "up to the present time Hitler has not yet decided to begin a war . . . and in no case will anything decisive take place in the near future."

But the German fascist ringleaders had long before decided the question of whether to attack Poland. The plan for the military operations had been worked out in April and May of 1939. It had been decided to attack Poland at the first opportunity. On 22 August the last instructions were issued to the army. Hitler, the ringleader of the fascist gang, pointed out that the aim of the impending war was the destruction of Poland. He told his rapacious hordes to annihilate without pity all men, women, and children of Polish nationality.

What position did the ruling circles of Britain, France, and the US take at this moment which was so critical for Poland?

The British Government tried to organize a unique Munich agreement at the expense of Poland. In the latter half of August British Prime Minister Chamberlain proposed the calling of a conference to settle the question of transferring Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany. In return for his support of the separation of Danzig and the Polish Corridor he wanted to obtain a guarantee that afterward the German fascists would not turn to the west but would move toward the east, against the USSR. The British note stated that in the event of the realization of these proposals "the way would be clear to a broad agreement between Germany and Britain."

In its turn the French Government in an official communication of 24 August insisted that if the German fascists seized Danzig the Polish Government should refrain from armed resistance.

The ruling circles of the US were aware of fascist Germany's military preparations against Poland. As early as 20 July 1939

Bullitt informed his government of a possible attack by Germany on Poland in August 1939. In particular the US Embassy possessed data on Hitler's instructions of 22 and 23 August. The position of the American imperialists during the period of the German-Polish crisis was also determined by the desire to urge the German fascists toward the east, against the USSR. In July 1939 Castle, the former US Assistant Secretary of State, stated: "It would be absurd for the US to fight against the seizure of Danzig by Germany. It would also be absurd if the US fought against Germany's obtaining access to the natural wealth of the Ukraine." On 24 August, trying this time to reach agreement with fascist Germany at the expense of Poland, the US Government sent to Hitler, Mussolini, and the Polish President Moscicki a proposal for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. The US reactionaries considered the separation of the Polish territories as a reward to the German fascists for their moving against the USSR.

But fascist Germany had chosen war as the means of carrying out her long range imperialist plans. It turned out that there was no real basis for agreement among Germany, Britain, the US, and France at the expense of Poland. Imperialist Germany was demanding world rule. Therefore partial concessions no longer satisfied her. The German fascist ringleaders regarded the war against Poland as only one stage in their struggle for world rule. In reply to a question from one of the Italian fascist rulers as to whether Germany wanted Danzig or the Polish Corridor, von Ribbentrop said: "She wants war." Fascist Germany had decided to change in her favor, by force of arms, the situation which had arisen following World War I. At the end of August, being ready to attack Poland, the German fascists demanded by way of ultimatum the annexation of

Danzig, the Polish Corridor, Upper Silesia, and other regions. The German Government acted in such a provocative manner as to refuse to consider the "rest of Poland" as an independent state. It knew that these demands could not be accepted even by such traitors to the national interests of their country as those who were then the rulers of Poland. On 31 August 1939, under the leadership of the fascist Ferster, a revolution was carried out in Danzig. On 1 September 1939, urged on by the threat of an economic crisis, fascist Germany attacked Poland. This event is usually taken as the beginning of World War II, although its most important events occurred later.

CONCLUSION

As early as 1916 in his book, Imperializm, kak vysshaya stadiya kapitalizma [Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism], V. I. Lenin had wisely foreseen that as capitalism developed the struggle for markets would assume an increasingly sharp and controversial character. "The higher the development of capitalism," V. I. Lenin wrote, "the more sharply the shortage of raw materials is felt and the sharper the competition and the race for sources of raw materials throughout the world, the more desperate will become the struggle for the acquisition of colonies" (Lenin, V. I., Soch., Vol XXII, page 247).

On the basis of the further aggravation of the imperialist conflicts in 1935-1939, 2 groupings of capitalist powers were formed, the German-Japanese-Italian group, and the Anglo-French-American group. This development of blocs of imperialist powers showed that a new world war was in the making. "Peaceful alliances," V. I. Lenin said, "prepare wars and in their turn grow out of wars,

determining one another, giving birth to a change in the forms of peaceful and nonpeaceful struggle from one and the same soil of the imperialist relations and interrelations of the world-wide economy and world-wide policy." In the period we have been considering each of the above groups was preparing to divide up the world by means of force, to strengthen its own positions at the expense of competitors, and to attain world domination.

However the nature of imperialist blocs is such that the conflicts among their members by no means disappear. Internal conflicts existed in both the Anglo-French-American group and the German-Japanese-Italian group. The members of these groups entertained ideas of surviving not only at the expense of their enemies but also at the expense of their partners, by no means rejecting the idea of snatching something from one another.

But above all the imperialists wanted to straighten out their affairs at the expense of the USSR. However they did not even succeed in agreeing among themselves on joint action against the USSR. V. I. Stalin pointed out that the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and the desire to ruin their competitors turned out to be stronger, on the practical level, than the differences between the 2 systems (Stalin, I., Ekonomicheskiye problemy sotsializma v SSSR /Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR/, 1952, Gospolitizdat, page 35). As a result World War II began with a clash between 2 capitalist countries. Fascist Germany, which had arisen with the aid of the US monopolies and had been armed by them, first directed its forces against the Anglo-French-American bloc.

I. V. Stalin pointed out that World War I arose as the inevitable result of the development of world economic and political forces on the basis of modern monopoly capital. It was a result of the second crisis in the capitalist system of world economy (Cf. Stalin, I. V., Rech'na predvybornom sobranii izbirateley Stalinskogo izbiratel'nogo okruga g. Moskvy, pages 6-7).

The fascist aggression was possible because of the tremendous aid rendered by the United States of America in the creation of Germany's military and economic base, and as a result of the rejection of collective security on the part of the British and French ruling circles. This cleared the road for German imperialist aggression and helped fascist Germany to unleash World War II.

During this period, as in the preceding years, the Soviet Union carried on a consistent struggle against imperialist aggression, for the preservation and strengthening of peace. It insistently posed the problem of collective resistance to the fascist aggressors and by means of its pitiless exposure of the Anglo-American-French accomplices of the fascist aggressors the Soviet Union earned even greater love on the part of the workers of all countries as a mighty fortress of peace and the security of nations. The laboring masses of all countries were inspired by the successes of the land of victorious socialism and rightly considered that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union would protect both their own interests and the interests of peace and friendship among nations.