

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION
IN THE FAR EAST

THE CHINESE SOVIETS

EYES ON JAPAN

OVER THE DIVIDE

USSR
FOREIGN POLICY

By Victor A. Yakhontoff

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To the Memory of

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT (1882-1945).

Great President of the United States of America, who understood the importance of friendship with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and thereby made possible the co-operation with it that brought victory over the Fascists.

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PREFACE

WHATEVER we understand by the term foreign policy, we have to agree that it never develops in a vacuum; it cannot be anything but a reflection of the conditions existing in the world as a whole. Since 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution, the history of the world has been seriously affected by its repercussions. Such has been, of course, the case with all revolutions. Such was the effect on the rest of the world of the American Revolution, such was the effect of the French Revolution of 1789.

The new regime in Russia was met with hostility just as were the new regimes created by other revolutions. The rest of the world did not take kindly to the advent of innovations ushering radical changes in the existing order. The result was harmful for both the adherents of the old and the pioneers of the new. In our time the harm was probably even more disastrous, more profound, than in the past.

It is not advisable to speculate on "ifs," but one is justified in believing that if there were a better understanding between the "old" and the "new" both would be spared much suffering and trouble. If, instead of mistrust, suspicion and animosity toward the New Russia there had been understanding and mutual respect, could there have been the tragedy of Pearl Harbor, and the very war, started by Japan, continued by Mussolini's Italy and developed to its climax by Hitler? In other words, if by that time there had existed a united front of peace-loving nations, including, of course, the mighty U.S.S.R., is it likely that Japan would have dared to attack Pearl Harbor? Is it likely that Hitler would have dared to start his last mad act, the war for domination over the world? Were they not encouraged by the disunity of the others?

Fortunately for all decent human beings Hitler's formidable military machine (built not without some outside approval and even help) was finally routed, even after all the mistakes of the past including the long avoidance of co-ordinated effort, and after considerable reverses and heavy losses resulting from disunity, quarrels, disagreements and lack of co-operation

among the various partners in later years. But is it not logical to suppose that the forces of evil, called Fascism, would have been destroyed earlier and at a much lower cost if the unity had been achieved earlier?

If the agreements reached at Moscow and Teheran in 1943, and at Yalta in 1945, had been consummated, say, before 1939, and the United Nations had been organized not in January 1942, but before the outbreak of the war, the world certainly could have been spared the horrible experiences of the recent bloody years. Faced with a Great Britain that still had not suffered from the disaster of Dunkirk and reverses in Africa; France, that still had not been betrayed by her Bonnets, Lavals and Petains; China, that still was united, capable of fighting and willing to fight; the mighty U.S.S.R. and the great trans-Atlantic republic, the U.S.A., united and determined to resist any and all international gangsters, the Axis Powers would not have dared to plunge the world into that war.

If the foregoing is correct, and in the opinion of the present writer it is irrefutably correct, it must be clear how important it would have been to know better than most of us did know the U.S.S.R., the country that proved to be such an important factor in the defeat of the Fascists, such a reliable friend in time of need, in time of mortal danger to millions and millions of good people here, there and everywhere.

During the war in Europe peoples all over the globe have learned much about the U.S.S.R., but have they learned enough? This is a question one is justified in asking when confronted with the strange, if not even sinister, renewal of the attacks on the U.S.S.R. immediately after the war in Europe was ended; in other words, immediately after the need for the help of that friend, in the opinion of some individuals, was no longer required. And, one may add, immediately after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who did so much to remedy the harm produced by the mistakes of the past, and who had begun to cement the friendship between these two great neighbors. This shift might be the result of some remaining misunderstandings; it might be something else. But one thing seems to be quite obvious: we must not allow a recurrence of the mistakes of the past, for the price we have paid for them has been frightfully high.

The price paid by the world for these mistakes was: millions of fresh graves all over the earth; millions of men crippled, disabled or mentally unbalanced; millions of people pauperized by the destruction wrought by the war, and millions of others whose multiform sufferings and misery cannot be justified by any distortion of the facts.

We have to know facts and stop playing with fancies, especially when human lives and happiness are directly involved. We need to know the facts because otherwise how can we form sound judgments, how can we create any sensible and workable policies of action?

The foreign relations of the U.S.S.R. with the rest of the world were for a long time anything but normal. Was it the fault of the regime of Russia? Was it not rather a reflection of the attitude of the others toward that regime? To a certain extent the unfortunate experiences of the past might be explained by the lack of proper information, by exaggerated fears resulting primarily from the lack of adequate understanding, although they sometimes, no one can deny, were the result of a stubborn refusal to look at the facts as they were.

This book is an attempt to offer the general public, i.e. all those who suffered, one way or another, from World War II (which was the outcome of long years of disunity among the peace-loving nations), a recapitulation of the foreign relations of the U.S.S.R. from its inception up to the present day. It does not pretend to be more than it is; namely, a review of what was known to many, but should be known by many more. It is based on the course given by the present writer at the New School for Social Research of New York in 1945, and is built primarily around documents available in the United States. It quotes from treaties and agreements, speeches of such personages as Lenin, Stalin, Litvinov, Molotov and Troyanovsky on the one hand, and Roosevelt, Churchill, David Lloyd George, etc., on the other, and from such authoritative reports as those found in *Mission to Moscow*, the book written by the former American Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph E. Davies.

One hardly needs to justify this attempt (inadequate as it may be), for the need for more light on the subject is obvious. To what extent the topic is timely and important one may judge from the two following quotations:

“If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships,” wrote the late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in a speech he prepared for Jefferson Day shortly before his untimely death.

“Once before in our lifetime we fell into disunity and became ineffective in world affairs by reason of it,” said Secretary of State Cordell Hull, in his speech on the United States’ Foreign Policy on April 9, 1944. “Should this happen again,” he added, “it will be a tragedy to you and your children and to the world for generations.”

May, 1945.

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USSR

FOREIGN POLICY

CHAPTER I

Struggle for Peace and Survival of the New Regime

October Revolution. Decree on Peace. Appeals to the Allies and Publication of the Secret Treaties. The Brest-Litovsk Tragedy. Hopes for World Revolution. The Mised Czechoslovaks Help Counter-Revolution.

October Revolution. Russia of the Tsars entered World War I, in 1914, shockingly unprepared either militarily or economically. The army was poorly armed and inadequately equipped. Russian industry was in its infancy and unable to supply all the needs of a modern war. The poorly developed transportation system soon proved incapable of satisfying the tremendous requirements of a large-scale war. In spite of the heroism of the troops, their brilliant victories in the opening months of the conflict were soon turned into reverses. Defeat followed defeat. Economic disruption was growing and becoming acute. The railroads were jammed and unable to cope with the situation on the fronts. By 1917 the extent and acuteness of the disorganization of the food, raw material and fuel supply reached a climax. The supply of foodstuffs to Petrograd, the capital, and Moscow, the heart of the country, had almost ceased. One factory after another was forced to close for lack of raw materials and fuel. This in turn served to aggravate unemployment. The country was clearly facing a mortal crisis.

People from every walk of life were arriving at the conclusion that the only way out of the intolerable situation was in a radical change, and first of all in the overthrow of the autocracy, discredited by the corruption and impotence of its entourage, and disgraced by the scandalous role played in the affairs of the State by the infamous monk, Rasputin. The attempt to solve the crisis by a palace coup failed. But the people themselves, with the participation of the armed forces, solved it. The monarch abdicated on advice of a deputation from the State Duma

(Parliament). On March 2 (15)¹ a Provisional Government was formed, mostly by the members of the Duma, with Prince Lvov as its first Prime Minister. But alongside this new Government of the liberal bourgeoisie there came into being the Soviet (Council) of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers' Deputies.² This dualism of power resulted, naturally, in a serious clash, for each of the two groups wanted undisputed authority for itself. The most resolute and militant among the labor leaders were the members of the Bolshevik (majority) faction of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party.

On April 3 (16), the leader of the Bolsheviks, Nicholai Lenin, returned to Russia from Switzerland, where he had been forced to live in exile during the days of the Tsars. Before long he found himself hunted by the Provisional Government, then already under Kerensky's leadership, and went into hiding in Finland.

On October 7 (20), Lenin secretly returned to Petrograd. Three days later the historic meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party took place at which it was decided to launch an armed uprising within the next few days. The resolution of the Committee, drawn up by Lenin, stated:

"The Central Committee recognizes that the international position of the Russian Revolution . . . as well as its military position . . . taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence toward our Party . . . places the armed uprising on the order of the day.

"Considering therefore that an armed uprising is inevitable, and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all Party organizations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions . . . from this point of view."³

On these instructions a Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet was set up. On October 16 (29), a Party Center was elected, headed by Joseph Stalin. On October 21

¹ The first date is according to the old Julian calendar, then used in Russia, and the second, the Georgian, i.e., the one used by the Western countries.

² The Soviet was organized in Petrograd on February 27 (March 12) and in Moscow the next day.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), VI, 203, as quoted from *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 205.

(November 3) the Bolsheviks sent commissars of the Revolutionary Military Committee to all revolutionary units in the army, as well as in factories and mills. Precise instructions were also issued to several warships.

At a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, "Trotzky in a fit of boasting blabbed to the enemy the date on which the Bolsheviks had planned to begin the armed uprising. In order not to allow the Kerensky government to frustrate the uprising, the Central Committee of the Party decided to start and carry it through before the appointed time, and set its date for the day before the opening of the Second Congress of Soviets."⁴

On the night of October 24 (November 6), Lenin arrived at Smolny Institute and assumed personal direction of the uprising.

On October 25 (November 7), Red Guards and revolutionary troops occupied the railway stations, Post Office, Telegraph Office, all the Ministries and the State Bank. A Manifesto issued by the Bolsheviks the same day announced that the short-lived Provisional Government had been deposed and that the State's power had passed into the hands of the Soviets.

The armed uprising in Petrograd was successful.

Decree on Peace. That night (November 7)⁵ the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened in the Smolny, and the Bolshevik Party secured an overwhelming majority. The Congress announced that all power had passed to the Soviets, and declared that it was taking power into its own hands.

One of the first questions on the agenda was peace. Accordingly, on November 8, the Congress unanimously adopted the Decree on Peace. It declared that the Soviet State abolished secret diplomacy, and was determined to carry on all negotiations absolutely openly, in full view of all the peoples. An appeal was sent to all the belligerents asking them immediately to start open negotiations for "an equitable, democratic peace, without annexations and without indemnities and with a proviso for self-determination for all nations."⁶

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵ From now on all the dates will be according to the Georgian, that is, our calendar only, for after the October Revolution, Russia also adopted it.

⁶ For the complete text see Kluchnikoff and Sabanin, *International Politics in Modern Times: Treaties, Notes and Declarations* (In Russian) II, 88.

From that moment on peace became (and never ceased to be) the cardinal point of the foreign policy of the Soviet regime. Even before they had come to power the Bolsheviki had declared in a Manifesto, issued on March 27, 1917, that they were ready to make peace.

Another principle of the new regime, closely related to the question of peace, was that of the fraternity of peoples. Internationalist in their politics, the Bolsheviki never ignored national peculiarities and national problems within and without the country. "Against all international hatreds, animosity and rivalries we wish to raise, as high as possible, our banner of supreme friendship, neighborliness and co-operation among the nations," declared their leaders.⁷

Accordingly the "Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia," published on November 15, 1917, proclaimed the equality and sovereign rights of all the nations of Russia along with the right of self-determination, including secession and formation of independent states.⁸

Appeals to the Allies and Publication of Secret Treaties. On November 21, 1917, Trotzky, the first Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the new regime, addressed a note to all the foreign envoys at Petrograd, asking them to consider as formal the proposal of an immediate armistice on all fronts, to be followed by the opening of peace negotiations, but it remained without reply. A second note was addressed to the neutral states, asking them to mediate and hasten the conclusion of peace.

On November 23, Lenin, now the head of the government, issued an order to start negotiations for an armistice. At the same time the Soviet press began publishing secret diplomatic documents found in the Russian Foreign Office, in order to expose to the peoples of the world what was behind the war.⁹

The Russians were not only exhausted by their hard fighting against the superior and better-equipped armies of the Kaiser; they were actually unable to continue the war because of the

⁷ Alexander Troyanovsky, *The Soviet Union and World Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), pp. 3 and 7.

⁸ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

⁹ The Bolsheviki had demanded publication of the secret treaties for a long time. It was one of the slogans at the big demonstration held in April, 1917, at Petrograd, in protest against Milyukoff's note about Constantinople.

status of their national economy (the general breakdown of their industries and agriculture, and the chaotic condition of transportation) and the confusion inherent in revolutionary upheaval. They needed peace badly. However, they did not want peace for themselves alone, but for all.

This was admitted by the British Ambassador to Russia, Sir George Buchanan, who wrote:

“It will be the fault of the Allied governments if Russia has after all to make a separate peace . . . For us to hold our pound of flesh and to insist on Russia fulfilling her obligations, under the 1914 agreement, is to play Germany’s game. Every day we keep Russia in the War against her will does but embitter her people against us.”¹⁰

This opinion was upheld much later by an objective student of Soviet foreign policy, Professor Malbone W. Graham:¹¹

“Unquestionably the offer of peace to the warring Powers was a major internal and external necessity consciously realized by Lenin; that it became a one-sided struggle with a foe infinitely superior and cunning, alike in strategy and diplomacy, can hardly be laid at the door of the Soviets.”

On November 27, the Germans and their allies accepted the Russian bid. It was agreed upon to meet at Brest-Litovsk and start negotiations.

On November 30, Trotzky repeated his appeal to the Allies. But again they did not deign to reply.

The Brest-Litovsk Tragedy. Soon after the opening meeting, the delegates agreed upon a recess. On December 12, the negotiations were resumed. The Russians were uncompromising in their demand that no German troops should be moved to the Western front. The civilians among the German delegates agreed, but their military colleagues balked, and the latter finally had their own way.¹²

On the fifteenth, the Armistice was signed between the

¹⁰ Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memoirs* (London: Cassell & Co., 1923), p. 225.

¹¹ Malbone W. Graham, *The Peace Policy of the Soviet Union* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 128.

¹² See Chapter II.

R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republics) on the one hand and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey on the other.

In the meantime, some parts of the Russian Empire started withdrawing from it, taking advantage not only of the weakness of a country in the throes of revolution, but also of the new regime's declaration that any nation incorporated in the Empire might withdraw if it so desired.¹³

Clearly the international situation was becoming more and more difficult for the young republic, and the internal situation was rapidly deteriorating. All this made peace absolutely imperative.

Therefore, on December 19, Trotzky made another appeal, this time directly to the peoples of the Allied nations, to join Russian efforts to stop the war. Announcing that an Armistice had been signed between Russia and the German Alliance, and that all military operations had been suspended, he warned the people that "because the existing capitalist governments obviously were unable to conclude a really democratic peace, their only hope lay in revolutionary struggle."¹⁴

But all the efforts of the Russians failed to impress the outside world. The press of the Western nations fumed at the "red usurpers" and predicted their disappearance if not in six weeks then, surely, in six months.

It was under such circumstances, on December 22, that the first session of the Peace Conference was held. The chief Russian delegate, Joffe, outlined the principles upon which his country expected to see the peace established: no annexations, no indemnities, and the right of self-determination for all.¹⁵

On the thirtieth, Narcomindel, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, informed the Allied governments that negotiations at Brest-Litovsk had been suspended for ten days in

¹³ Finland was the first to do so; she declared her independence on December 6, 1917. Lithuania was the next on the eleventh; the Ukraine on the seventeenth. In February, 1918, Estonia followed the others' example. On February 9, 1918, the Ukraine concluded separate peace with Germany and her allies.

¹⁴ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, Document #83, pp. 100-102. A few days earlier a Proclamation, signed by Lenin and Stalin, was addressed to the Moslems of Russia and the East, in which the Soviet Government declared null and void all secret agreements of the old regime, which were designed to acquire Constantinople for Russia and to partition Persia and Turkey.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Document #84, pp. 102-104.

order to give the Allies a last opportunity to define their attitude toward the R.S.F.S.R. and to "state openly before the world clearly, definitely and correctly in the name of what purposes must the people of Europe bleed during the fourth year of war?"¹⁶

Again there was no reply! But on January 8, 1918, the last day of recess of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, President Woodrow Wilson presented in his message to Congress the famous Fourteen Points on which, he believed, the peace should be built. These Fourteen Points reflected in a most amazing degree the Russian revolutionary slogans.¹⁷ The Sixth Point considered the liberation of all the Russian territories then occupied by the Central Powers, admitted the undeniable right of Russia to decide for herself what form of government she wanted and welcomed the Soviet into the family of nations.¹⁸

It was not exactly a reply, but, at least, there was some hope. Still the Russians thought that the Allies would support them; still they wanted to remain loyal. It was around that time that Maxim Litvinov, then the unrecognized envoy of the Soviet in London, declared in an interview with the *London Daily Chronicle* that:¹⁹

"It is grossly malicious to represent the Bolsheviki as pro-German or anti-Allies. They are none of those things. . . . They would regard it as their highest triumph if they could carry the torch of revolution to Berlin. . . . A separate peace would be looked upon by the Bolsheviki as a disaster, and, as a collapse of all their efforts."

But fate was against them!

On January 18, 1918, the Constituent Assembly convened at Petrograd. Although it was short-lived (for the Bolsheviki dis-

¹⁶ Frederick Schuman, *American Policy Toward Russia Since 1917* (New York: International Publishers, 1928), p. 70.

¹⁷ According to Louis Fischer in *The Soviets in World Affairs* (New York, Cape & Smith, 1930, 2 vols.), President Wilson acted on the advice of Edgar Sisson, then in charge of information on Russia.

¹⁸ It was on that occasion also that Wilson declared that "the Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They cannot entertain proposals of conquest and domination, while the Germans express the spirit and intention of those who insist upon conquest and subjugation." *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918*, Supplement I, pp. 12-14.

¹⁹ Reprinted by the *New York Times* on January 6, 1918.

solved it), the Assembly had time to pass a resolution accepting responsibility for the continuation of peace negotiations, in accordance with the will of the people. The Assembly also expressed its regret that these negotiations had had to be started without first securing the consent of the Allied Powers, thereby giving to the negotiations the form of a separate venture.²⁰

On February 10, Trotzky, then the chief of the Soviet delegation, considering that any further discussions were futile, declared that Russia had decided to get out of the war, but he refused to sign the treaty on terms dictated by the Central Powers.²¹

A few days later, the Germans began an offensive and rapidly advanced over Russian territory. The Russians were not expected to resist because they had declared they were out of the war, and had actually started demobilization of their scattered troops. Their armed forces, long since exhausted and demoralized, were not considered in shape for real fighting. Nevertheless, the revolutionary spirit of the people made some resistance feasible. On February 23, 1918, at Pskov and Narva, the Germans suffered reverses from the young Red troops.²²

Under the circumstances the Government had to act without delay. It issued an appeal to the population in which, after explaining the peace negotiations in detail, it asked the peoples of Russia to do their best to build resistance to the perfidious invader, who began his attack without warning, contrary to the terms of armistice signed on December 15.

Lenin advocated acceptance of the peace treaty on the German terms; others opposed it. On February 23, after five days of heated debate, Lenin won. The Government sent word to the invaders that it was suing for peace.

On March 3, the remaining Soviet representatives at Brest-Litovsk declared that the R.S.F.S.R. accepted the terms without further discussion. But at the same time, they made it clear that

²⁰ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, Document #89, p. 110.

²¹ Lenin and Stalin were for signing the peace treaty, and Trotzky later was accused of violating the direct instructions of the Bolshevik Party. See *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 216. Trotzky subsequently admitted the error of his attitude. At a meeting of the Central Executive Committee on October 3, 1918, he said: "We were not right." Then he admitted that Lenin was right. (Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, I, 68.)

²² This is why February 23 is considered the official birthday of the Red Army.

it was a peace imposed by force of arms on a nation exhausted, practically disarmed and unable to resist. The treaty was signed the same day.²³

The new terms were even more severe than those originally rejected by Trotzky. It was a hard blow to Russia. It was a ghastly example of the cynicism and greed of German militarism. Fortunately for Russia, it was also recognized as such by the Allied Powers, who branded it a "political crime against the Russian people committed under the name of the German people."²⁴

After the signing of the treaty the Russians still cherished the hope that the Allies might intervene on their behalf. Until March 14, when the Congress of Soviets finally voted to ratify the cruel treaty, there was more than a fighting chance that Russia would stay in the war on the Allied side, at least so thought David Francis, the American Ambassador, and Colonel Raymond Robins, representing the American Red Cross in Russia.²⁵ The British representative, Bruce Lockhart, stated:

"Trotzky and Lenin promised to do their best if the Allies would extend practical military assistance to the exhausted and impoverished Russian Armies which were utterly incapable of resuming a serious offensive without substantial support and encouragement."²⁶

Even as late as March 5, two days after the treaty was signed, the Soviet Government was willing to defeat its ratification, if the Allies would promise aid against Germany, and guarantee not to interfere with Russian internal policy.

"Lenin promised to use his influence to reject the Brest-Litovsk terms, if the United States would extend any hope of real help. Unfortunately, in Francis' final cable of appeal to the State Department, on March 9, to take advantage of the offers he included a restatement of his conviction that Lenin and Trotzky were German agents. The meeting of the Congress was postponed from the 12, to the 14, at the

²³ Turkey added her signature four days later.

²⁴ Declaration by the Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Entente Powers, issued in London on March 14, 1918.

²⁵ Colonel Raymond Robins tried to explain the real situation in Russia and counseled generous and sympathetic co-operation.

²⁶ Arthur Upham Pope, *Maxim Litvinov* (New York: L. B. Fischer, 1943), pp. 153-154.

request of Colonel Robins in order to give time for Washington's answer. Lenin waited until the last moment, but Washington sent only vague generalities, expressing good-will and saying nothing about the matter on hand."²⁷

"Intolerably severe are the terms of peace" wrote Lenin, "nevertheless history will claim its own . . . let us set to work to organize, to organize and organize."²⁸

History, obviously, has fully proven the correctness of Lenin's line. The new Russia gained a respite, and began organizing, even though the circumstances of the years that followed were extremely unfavorable for the young republic of Soviets. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty was repudiated.²⁹ New Russia survived and the indignity of that treaty was avenged at Stalingrad in 1942-3, and at Berlin, occupied by the victorious Red Army in 1945.

The signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty ended the first stage of revolutionary development. This stage was filled with painful disappointments, unbelievable hardships, and unavoidable blunders. This stage, from November 1917 to February 1918, was called by Lenin the period of the "Red Guard attack on capital," and as such it was anything but tender toward the remnants of capitalism in Russia and the capitalist states surrounding it.

Hopes for World Revolution. "Many factors in the Russian situation conspired to mislead the Allied statesmen. The Revolution itself was not only thoroughly alarming, but also exceedingly difficult, at the time, to gauge. Its apparent suddenness, magnitude and violence, the grandiose ambitions of the revolting masses and the messianic fervor for a world revolution astonished even a close and skilled observer like Gorky" . . . wrote a friendly American student of that period.³⁰

²⁷ Frederick Schuman, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-80.

²⁸ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 219.

²⁹ By September, 1918, Moscow declared the Brest-Litovsk Treaty annulled as far as Turkey was concerned, for her violation of the pledge not to attack Russia. (Chicherin's note to Turkey, published in Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, p. 175-6.) By the terms of the Armistice signed at the Compiègne Forest in November, 1918, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was finally considered null and void.

³⁰ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

Reports coming from the diplomatic and other representatives of foreign countries in Russia were vague, more often than not erroneous, and grossly misleading. Relying on their old friends and acquaintances (members of those classes which lost their position and role in Russia) the officials of foreign countries, naturally, were not in the best position to understand. Because of prejudice or misinformation they were hardly reliable sources for correct interpretation. As for the spokesmen of the actual government in Soviet Russia, most of the officials refused to listen to them. The very fact that the new ruling group proclaimed the World Revolution as their goal served to aggravate the situation. Fear and suspicion made understanding practically impossible.

In this stage of the Soviet regime, with revolutionary ardor still high and its leaders hoping to see the expansion of their ideas for the World Revolution, the foreign policy of Soviet Russia was directed along the line of building security for the new socialist state through the sovietization of others. Wrote the late Professor Samuel Harper, who was known as a friend of Russia before and after the Revolution:

“With their accession to power the Bolsheviks accepted the principle of a war of defense of their new proletarian state, and engaged in conflict formal as well as informal, with both the Central Powers and the Allies and America. At the same time, while the Bolshevik leaders were trying to establish their regime throughout the territory of the Russian Empire they were working for revolution also in other countries. The propaganda for the material support to revolutionary movements during the first period of the Revolution represented both the program of World Revolution of Bolshevism and the technique of defense against foreign attack and intervention.”³¹

Another noted student of Soviet Russia's foreign policies, Professor Malbone W. Graham, appraised that period in the following words:

“The diplomacy of revolution is seldom a clear-cut affair . . . Previous to the October Revolution the general problem of future foreign policy appears to have been given scant consideration, except

³¹ Samuel Harper, *The Government of the Soviet Union* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1938), p. 176.

in so far as peace was proposed as an essential part of the trilogy 'Peace-Land-Bread.' But the details of that peace were exceedingly nebulous. That they were postulated on the impending collapse of capitalism and the imminence of the world revolution none can deny. That they proposed, in a general way, to break what was conceived to be the vicious circle of imperialistic war, by putting an end to the international conflict, is clear."³²

When discussing the foreign policy of Soviet Russia during the early days of its existence, one has to remember that it was to a great extent imposed externally, since it consisted in Soviet adjustments to world conditions. It is true that the technique was non-orthodox, that manners were not in accord with the established etiquette of diplomatic protocol. But is it not true that revolutions, everywhere, begin with the breaking of old and the trying of new approaches? Is it not also true that the attitude of other nations would have had much to do with canalizing the policy of a young republic *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world?

Those who came to power in Russia after the October Revolution certainly had to consider the attitudes of their own people before the niceties of diplomatic intercourse. The Russians had to appeal to other people over the heads of their own governments, for the Russian aim was revolution. They believed in the inevitability of a drastic change everywhere in the capitalist world. They acted accordingly. "The first Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet regime, Trotzky, in power has been as red as he was while staying in Switzerland, where he preached revolution," wrote Lincoln Steffens, who is remembered for saying after a visit to Moscow: "I have seen the future—it works."³³

George Chicherin, who followed Trotzky, although a diplomat of the old school, was probably even more unorthodox in his correspondence with foreigners than was the first Commissar. "Unrealistic and inflexible, ready for conflict," said some foreign observers; "queer and a genius," added others. Chicherin, a scion of an aristocratic family, who became an active and ardently sincere partisan of the Revolution, remained in the re-

³² Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

³³ Lincoln Steffens, in his introduction to Leon Trotzky's book *The Bolsheviki and World Peace* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1918), p. 9.

sponsible post of Commissar for Foreign Affairs for more than twelve years (up to 1930), the most trying years of the Soviet Union's formative period. Part of this time Chicherin was not well enough to work, and then Litvinov acted in his place, which means that for some acts of that period he rather than Chicherin was responsible. Apparently Litvinov was much more careful in his correspondence than were either Trotzky or Chicherin, but his language, too, sometimes sounded shocking to foreign diplomats.

No wonder that foreigners sometimes found it difficult to deal with these unorthodox diplomats of Moscow. No wonder that correspondence (limited as it was in the early days of the Soviet regime) was sometimes not quite in accord with the established etiquette.

When the Congress of Soviets was ready to vote on the treaty signed at Brest-Litovsk, a message from President Wilson was received. It was a welcome message, but in no way gave encouragement for rejection of the harsh treaty.

The American President wrote:

“May I not take advantage of the meeting of the Congress of the Soviets to express the sincere sympathy which the people of the United States feel for the Russian people at this moment when the German power has been thrust in to interrupt and turn back the whole struggle for freedom and substitute the wishes of Germany for the purpose of the people of Russia? Although the Government of the United States, unfortunately, is now not in a position to render the direct and effective aid it would wish to render, I beg to assure the people of Russia through the Congress that it will avail itself of every opportunity to secure to Russia once more complete sovereignty and independence in her own affairs, and full restoration to her great role in the life of Europe and the modern world.”

The Congress of Soviets replied by expressing its gratitude for the message of sympathy, and added its hope that “the happy time is not distant when the working people of all the bourgeois countries will overthrow the yoke of capitalists and establish a socialist society capable of guaranteeing an enduring and just peace.”⁸⁴ It was hardly a reply that diplomatic protocol

⁸⁴ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.

would approve, but it was a sign of the times, and in this particular case was the expression of disappointment created by the refusal of the outsiders to stand by their ally of yesterday.

The conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk at a time when the war in the West was still in full swing created profound alarm among the Western Powers. There was a fear that this peace might improve Germany's position in the war and correspondingly worsen the position of the Allied Armies. Actually, it served to start the disintegration of the German forces. This, in its turn, engendered the fear that the formation of a socialist state might serve as an infectious example for the workers and the soldiers of other countries. Consequently, the Entente governments decided to intervene in Russia by armed force with the object of overthrowing the Soviets and establishing a bourgeois regime. Some believed it possible even to restore a fighting front in Russia.

From the very first days of the October Revolution the new regime had been engaged in a fierce struggle with various counter-revolutionary groups at home. Thus, simultaneously, two forces took shape that were prepared to embark upon the overthrow of Soviet power, namely, the foreign interventionists and anti-Soviet elements at home.

By April 5, 1918, the Soviet Government announced a Japanese landing at Vladivostok, as the beginning of a "long prepared assault by the Imperialists" and appealed to the peoples of the R.S.F.S.R. to get ready for resistance.

At the other end of the country, Rumania created a problem by declaring that the population of Bessarabia voted for a union with that country. Chicherin sent a protest, declaring that it was a flagrant violation of a recent official promise to return that Russian province to its lawful sovereigns. The pretense that the people voted for a change of its status was ridiculous, in the opinion of Chicherin, for the voting was limited to a small group of landlords, who certainly could not represent the will of the people. Still, Bessarabia remained under the control of Rumania for another quarter of a century, until it was reoccupied by Soviet troops in World War II.

In September, 1918, a large force of Turks occupied Baku. Two months later they were succeeded by the British.

The Misled Czechoslovaks Help Counter-Revolution. A new and much more serious problem arose when some forty thousand Czechs mutinied. Former prisoners of war in Russia, the Czechs were at first allowed by the Provisional Government to form their own units to fight the Central Powers,³⁵ and later were permitted by the Soviet Government to leave Russia and report to the Allied fighting front in Europe, even taking with them the arms given to them by the Russians. Presumably on their way to Europe via Siberia and the United States, the Czechs turned their guns against the country which had treated them so well. They were instigated in this by the foreign residents of Russia whose activities in co-operation with various Russian counter-revolutionary groups have been so vividly described by His Britannic Majesty's one-time chargé-d'affaires, Bruce Lockhart, in his revealing book *British Agent*.³⁶

By the end of May, 1918, the Czech troops were in occupation of several cities: Cheliabinsk, Penza, Syzran and Kazan. At Kazan they seized six-hundred-million rubles'³⁷ worth of bullion belonging to the Russian State gold reserve, which had been transferred thither from Petrograd when the Germans menaced the capital. This was a blow of far-reaching consequences, for most of this gold never returned to the Russian State Bank, which, whatever its new name, still rightfully belonged to the Russian people. As a result, the latter were deprived of a not-insignificant portion of their liquid assets at a time when they needed them most.

By the end of June the Czechs were in control of practically the entire railway from the Volga River to Vladivostok; and in the east they were not alone, for some Japanese had already landed there, and more were expected. Other expeditionary forces followed.

Soon after the Czechs and Japanese other foreign troops came and started armed intervention without any declaration of war, although this was real war against Russia.

³⁵ The Czechs, then still subjects of Austria-Hungary, willingly deserted the ranks of the Austrian Army and came over to the Russian side. Their leaders arranged with the Provisional Government of Russia for the formation of military units out of those prisoners of war as the nucleus of a force to fight their oppressors and regain independence.

³⁶ Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933).

³⁷ Equivalent of some three-hundred-million American dollars.

Informed of a mutiny among the Czechs at Cheliabinsk, the Soviet Government ordered their disarmament. On June 4, it received a strongly worded protest from the Allied governments. To this Chicherin replied with a long note explaining the circumstances and expressed his surprise at the stand of the foreign Powers. For the Allies had declared that unless the Russians rescinded their order to disarm the Czechs they, the Allies, would consider the order "an unfriendly act" against them, since the Czechs were on their way to the European front as an ally. Chicherin in his note submitted that Russia, as a neutral country (after the Brest-Litovsk pact was signed) could not allow the presence on her territory of any foreign armed forces. But, what was more important, the order to disarm the Czechoslovaks was prompted by their actions. Only an open armed mutiny of those troops directed against the Soviets had forced the Government to order their disarmament.³⁸ Everywhere the Czech uprisings were followed by arrests and even executions of Soviet officials and the formation of counter-revolutionary local regimes. Everywhere the Czechoslovaks were acting in conjunction with the White Guards. In some places French officers were actively involved in these events.

"The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," said Chicherin's note, "expressed its conviction that after all that was said above, the representatives of the Four Powers of the Entente would not consider the disarmament of the Czechoslovak troops, described by the foreigners themselves as their ally and under their, Allied, protection, as an unfriendly act, but just the contrary, would consider as imperative and proper the measures taken by the Soviet Government against the mutineers." At the same time the People's Commissariat expressed the hope that the Four Powers would, without delay, condemn the behavior of the Czechoslovak troops, because their counter-revolutionary insurrection was a plain and open intervention in the internal affairs of Russia.³⁹

Instead of paying any heed to that protest, the British shortly

³⁸ There was an agreement between the Czech representatives in Moscow, Dr. Maxa and Chermak, to the effect that the Czechs should surrender their arms. But when those two officials wired to the corps to fulfill the terms of that agreement, no heed was paid to their remonstrances. (Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. III.)

³⁹ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-148.

thereafter landed more troops at Murmansk. Another note of Chicherin's put this on record.

The only hope remained on the other side of the Atlantic. On July 4, 1918, President Wilson, speaking at Mount Vernon, reiterated his previously announced principles on which he expected to see the peace built. The terms, he said, should be such as would settle all the outstanding problems on a basis freely accepted by the peoples themselves, and should not be based on considerations of the material interests or profits of any one nation. The relations between the nations should be regulated by principles of honor and respect for common law so that no plot or conspiracies would be tolerated, no injustice would remain unpunished, but mutual confidence would be established.⁴⁰

A few days later Chicherin was forced by events to send another note of protest. More British troops had landed and were advancing over Russian territory. The Council of People's Commissars also issued an appeal addressed to the peoples of Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States asking them to stop the armed intervention of foreigners in the internal affairs of Russia.⁴¹ At that time America still had not joined the others in the war against the Russian Revolution, and Moscow made it clear that this attitude was highly appreciated. In a letter to De Witt Clinton Pool, American Consul at Moscow, Chicherin stressed this fact and asked Pool if he would find out what the other Powers wanted.

Unfortunately, soon after that, America also became involved in the armed intervention, and Chicherin addressed a note to Wilson which was severely criticized by some observers.

"As the World War drew to its close in the West," wrote Professor M. W. Graham, "and the Fourteen Points became the lodestar of the diplomacy of the Western Powers, the Soviet Government endeavored, in a long memorandum to President Wilson, to give a revolutionary interpretation to his program as the basis for armistice and peace. Penned by Radek and Chicherin in a period of pique and exasperation, and giving much evidence of the headiness of the new wine of militant war communism—i.e., reflecting fully in foreign affairs the tempo

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-156.

of the internal *Zeitgeist* of the regime—the note brought into tragic juxtaposition the contrasts between the diplomacy of the Soviet Republic, encompassed at the moment by a ring of enemies, and the diplomacy of the Western Powers, avid for aggrandizement.”⁴²

In general accepting the principles advanced by the President, Chicherin's note declared Russia's readiness to conclude an armistice, provided that as a preliminary the German troops should be withdrawn from the occupied territories, as suggested by Wilson. So far so good; but then Chicherin proceeded with a criticism of Wilson's ideas about the proposed League of Nations, and again he became a revolutionary propagandist rather than an orthodox diplomat. “The union of nations has got not only to settle the present war, it has got to render further wars impossible,” but this involved, in his opinion, “the expropriation of the capitalists of the world.” On the hypothesis of a social peace, based on the nationalization of industry in all lands and an exchange of products between nations according to their capacity to produce, Chicherin believed it would not be a difficult matter to diminish military forces to the limits necessary for internal safety.

In the opinion of Professor Graham this note of Chicherin's was too blunt and tactless. The note was sent “at a moment when President Wilson was engaged in a violent quarrel with his war-time associates over peace and armistice terms” and possibly was considered justification for Wilson's decision to rely on the Tsarist and Provisional Government's diplomats. “It failed to procure for the Soviet Republic a seat at the Peace Conference of Paris. It failed to mitigate the rigors of the intervention to which the R.S.F.S.R. was then being subjected.”⁴³

The World Revolution failed to materialize. Practically all the efforts of the Soviet Government to enlist support from the outside world failed. The humiliation of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty was the hard penalty imposed, for a while, by the enemy. The refusal of recognition and co-operation, the exclusion from the peace table at Versailles, and armed intervention in the life of Soviet Russia, were the reactions of her former Allies.

⁴² Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

“The failure of World Revolution to develop in Western Europe in the post-war years was faced realistically by the majority of the leaders of Bolshevism. The assistance to the nationalist movement of ‘oppressed nationalism,’ which was part of their program of revolution, also did not succeed in bringing Sovietism to the countries of the East, although it contributed to the national revival in Turkey, Persia and China, for example. This assistance was viewed both by those to whom it was extended and also by others, as a new, Soviet form of aggressive imperialism,” wrote Professor Samuel Harper.⁴⁴

How wrong they were who tried to explain new phenomena by old clichés became clear in the later years of the existence of the first socialist state.

To sum up the events of this stage in the life of the R.S.F.S.R. we see that its struggle for peace did not bring satisfactory results at once. Practically all the appeals to the Entente Powers to negotiate peace remained unanswered. The request for military aid to enable Russia to remain in the war on the Allied side failed to bring any results. Soviet diplomats were ignored, often mistreated and even arrested.

The young Soviet State was attacked from all sides and had to fight. But the survival of the new regime was secured in spite of the outside world’s disapproval and all efforts from the inside and outside alike to halt its development. The Soviet form of government had come to stay.

⁴⁴ Samuel Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

CHAPTER II

Resistance to Armed Intervention

Civil War and Various Interventions. Early Steps toward Conciliation. Versailles and the Prinkipo Fiasco. Peace Treaties with the Border States. First Treaty of Friendship.

Civil War and Various Interventions. "The conditions of the struggle against the Soviet Power dictated a union of two anti-Soviet forces, foreign and domestic."¹ And, as we have seen, this union was effected in the first half of 1918. But, so long as the war in the West continued, it was not possible to launch a large-scale intervention in the affairs of the Soviets.

First to start the fight with the new regime were those Russians who disapproved of revolution in general and of the Bolsheviks in particular. In the South the "Voluntary Army" was formed, mostly by officers of the Tsarist Army, under Generals Kornilov (who had headed an abortive coup before the advent of the Bolsheviks), Alexeieff (the Tsar's Chief of Staff during the war), and Denikin (who was also involved in the Kornilov plot). Another group, on the territory of the Don Cossacks, was formed under Generals Krasnov and Mamontov.

Then came the mutiny of the Czechoslovaks in the Middle Volga region and Siberia. Under Czech protection a number of anti-Soviet "governments" came into existence, and new military organizations, Cossack and others, were hurriedly formed to fight the Soviets. In Samara, on the Volga River, several members of the Constituent Assembly, which had been dissolved by the Bolsheviks, gathered to set up a provisional authority. At Omsk yet another group was functioning under the name of the Siberian Government, only to be quickly replaced by a Directory composed of five members of the Social-Revolutionary Party, which in its turn was quite unceremoniously removed by still another Siberian Government, headed by the "Supreme Ruler," Admiral Kolchak. In Southern Russia,

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 226.

likewise, a number of anti-Soviet "governments" were active. In the Ukraine the Germans were plundering the countryside and trying to control the Ukrainian population. But the latter met this not only with non-co-operation, but also with sporadic revolts against the invaders. In July, 1918, the German Commander, Field Marshal von Eichorn, was assassinated.

On November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed by the belligerents in France. The World War, officially, was over, but not for the Russians, nor, one is justified in saying, for the whole world either. It was only halted, partly because both sides were exhausted, partly because a revolutionary situation seemed to be menacing the existing order. In Germany the revolutionary movement was growing. Important political strikes had broken out in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich as early as January, 1918. The first Soviets were formed there in the early days of November. The Russian Revolution was acquiring a certain amount of support beyond its own borders. Gradually its repercussions spread not only to Germany and Austria, but to other countries as well. In that sense the Russian Revolution was instrumental in speeding up the defeat of the Central Powers by the Allies.² Furthermore, not only the vanquished, but some of the victors, too, experienced in the post-war period serious reverberations from the events in Russia. Worried by the possible repercussions at home, various governments started shaping their activities in Russia according to their fears.

The Japanese, who had not been actively involved in the World War, were in a better position to move quickly than the other Allies, and consequently they landed on Russian territory before the others. In July and August, 1918, British contingents followed with landings at Murmansk where another Russian "government" had been formed. Soon afterwards British troops were also in Turkestan and others were near the Baku oil fields. With the end of the war in Europe this intervention in

² After the Brest-Litovsk Peace was concluded between revolutionary Russia and the Central Powers it was considered likely that the latter might transfer their forces from the East to fight in the West. But actually Germany and her Allies continued to keep more than forty divisions on the Russian front even after Brest-Litovsk. Even at the most critical moment, on the eve of their collapse in France, the Germans did not shift their troops from the East because "Ludendorff and Hoffmann agreed that they would be of no real service in an attack." (Louis Fischer, *op cit.*, p. 76.)

Russian affairs developed into a large-scale, undeclared war with foreign troops of various countries coming in from all sides.

Contrary to his wishes President Wilson finally was forced by the Allies to join them in this intervention. Accordingly, American troops landed in Archangel on August 3, and in Vladivostok on August 16, 1918.

When the Czechoslovaks were trying to overthrow the Soviet regime, the Allies supported them, and under the pretext of helping them to get out of Siberia and hasten their return to Europe to fight alongside them, sent their own troops to Russia. With the war halted, there was no longer any need of helping the Czechs. The other excuse offered by the interventionists was that they had to prevent the German and Austrian prisoners of war, kept in Russia, from forming a fighting front against the Allies. This excuse, too, no longer held good. There never had been any menace of the prisoners forming a front,³ nor was there any such plan, as has been made clear by General William S. Graves, Commander of the American forces sent to Siberia.⁴

In his remarkable book *The American Siberian Adventure* General Graves exposed the misinformation and distortion of facts which were presented as official reports to the State Department by its Consuls and other representatives then stationed in Russia. In other words, there was no justification for keeping the foreign forces on Russian soil.⁵

Nevertheless the Czechoslovak troops, as well as those of other Powers, continued fighting the undeclared war, and continued to interfere in the internal affairs of Russia in a most shocking manner, until the resistance of the Russian people forced most of them to return ingloriously home.

Surrounded by foreign troops and Russian White Guards,

³ "As for the 'armed' German and Austrian prisoners of war, there were none," wrote Bruce Lockhart, in his *British Agent*, p. 251.

⁴ "The Czechs were never in danger from the aggressive acts of the Soviets . . . the Czechs were the aggressors," wrote General Graves in *The American Siberian Adventure*, pp. 51-52.

⁵ The first moves of the Allies were considered defensible as efforts to keep supplies out of German hands. In Vladivostok, Murmansk and Archangel there were considerable stores of goods shipped to Russia by the Allies, waiting in these ports for transportation to the fronts.

the Soviet part of the country was cut off from its principal sources of food, raw materials and fuel. Conditions became very hard for the people, who only recently had been jubilant at their success in emancipating themselves from the yoke of Tsarism and had hopefully expected to start the reconstruction of their country in peace and tranquility. There was a shortage of meat and even of bread. Most of the population was starving. The factories were at a standstill, or almost at a standstill, owing to the shortage or even lack of raw materials and fuel. But the people did not lose heart. A desperate struggle, forced upon them, was waged by the nation to overcome these great difficulties, but it finally emerged victorious out of this dark period.

The country proclaimed itself an armed camp and placed its economic and political life on a war footing. The Soviet Government announced that "the Socialist fatherland is in danger," and called upon the people to rise in its defense "against foreign invaders and the bourgeois and landlord White Guards." Lenin issued the slogan "all for the front," and hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants volunteered for service in the Red Army and left for the front. Shortly afterwards compulsory military service was decreed and hundreds of thousands of new recruits entered the Red Army raising its strength to over a million men.⁶

In spite of the fact that the country was in a difficult position, and the Red Army was not yet a really strong armed force, the measures of defense adopted by the Soviets soon yielded results. General Krasnov was forced back from the Volga (at Tsaritzin, the Stalingrad of today), and driven beyond the River Don. General Denikin's operations were localized within a small area in the Northern Caucasus. General Kornilov was killed in action. The Czechoslovaks and the Whites were ousted from Kazan, Simbirsk and Samara and driven to the Urals. A revolt in Yaroslavl, on the Upper Volga (July 6, 1918), organized by Lockhart, chief of the British Mission in Moscow, was suppressed, and the "British Agent" himself arrested. Other smaller uprisings were put down.

Gradually hardening in battle, the Red Army was maturing. The Bolsheviks knew that these minor successes were not de-

⁶ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 228.

cisive. They realized that more serious battles were still to come. Therefore they immediately began preparing for a protracted war. The entire country was placed at the service of the front. The Red Army was considerably enlarged; compulsory labor service was introduced. The stage of "War Communism" was inaugurated. This was a hard period for the population and merciless for the enemies of the new regime.

✓ By the end of 1918 most of the foreign diplomats had left the Soviet-controlled part of Russia. With the Armistice signed the Powers were free to turn their attention to revolutionary Russia, and, incidentally, to the revolutionary movements in other countries as well. Soon a Soviet Republic was formed in Hungary, then one in Bavaria, later on another in Saxony. These events were considered by Lenin and his followers to justify the formation of a new international revolutionary body to take the place of the discredited Second International. The Third International, known as the "Comintern,"⁷ came into being.

This new International served to strengthen Soviet Russia's revolutionary influence everywhere, but for that very reason it added serious difficulties to the task of consolidating her official position among the other governments.

In March, 1919, the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party adopted a new program, in which certain important points concerning foreign policy were made. Accepting the definition of "Imperialism" as the advanced stage of capitalism, the program stated that there already existed two systems facing one another: the socialist one—that of Soviet Russia—and the capitalist one—that of the bourgeois countries. In other words, such a juxtaposition served to underline the inevitability of a struggle between the two.

With Germany and Austria vanquished, the Entente states decided to hurl large military forces against the Soviet country. After Germany's defeat and the evacuation of her troops from the Ukraine and Transcaucasia, her place was taken by the British and French, who dispatched their fleets to the Black Sea and landed troops in Odessa and Transcaucasia.⁸

⁷ Comintern is an abbreviation of Communist International.

⁸ Louis Fischer (*op. cit.*, II, 836) reproduced a rather interesting secret document, which was supplied to him "from a British source." It seems to be an Anglo-French Convention of December 23, 1917, for the division of South Russia into

Soon after this the Allied Supreme Council proclaimed a blockade of Russia. All lines of communication with the outside world were cut. The Soviet country was now surrounded on practically all sides.

For some time the Eastern Siberian front was considered by the interventionists to be the most promising, and thus became the main one. In the early spring of 1919 Admiral Kolchak's army, assisted by the Powers, almost reached the Volga. Perm was taken in March; Ufa fell. In a note dated May 26, the Allied Supreme Council promised further assistance to Kolchak, provided he would "guarantee a democratic regime and give other pledges." Kolchak answered by agreeing, and so the aid continued to come, but not for very long.

The assistance rendered by the Powers to the various counter-revolutionary Russian groups was multiform and generous. Arms, munitions, clothes, food, medicine, loans poured in from all directions. As for foreign troops, they were not very numerous, for only the Japanese concentrated over seventy thousand of their soldiers in Siberia. This was partly because the Powers hesitated to send large numbers of troops already tired from their experiences in the real war (and who in some cases showed an unwillingness to fight against the Revolution), but chiefly because their governments believed that Russia was disorganized by the Revolution and had no troops with which to resist. They were certain that the Reds had no military leaders, for the majority of the former officers had joined the various counter-revolutionary groups. They had faith in their protégés, Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich. They were sure that Russia's new regime would be unable to arm the soldiers and supply them with the necessities of war. There were no factories to speak of in Soviet hands, and the blockade had been established. But the calculations of the interventionists proved to be "zones of influence," and assigned to France the north of the Black Sea, and to Great Britain the south-east of that Sea. Of course, this division was not strictly a matter of military necessity alone. The French had large business interests in Ukrainian mining, as did the British in Baku oil and Chiaturi manganese. Undoubtedly these considerations dictated the above demarcation of "zones of influence"

There can be no doubt whatsoever that Japan at the other end of Russia was also seeking a "zone of influence." Some Japanese officials were frank enough to declare that the Far-Eastern possessions of Russia, meaning all the lands to the East of Lake Baikal, should belong to the Mikado.

wrong, and their efforts futile. Their troops had to return home with nothing to brag about.

Already in April the best troops of the Revolution had checked Kolchak's advancing army, and had even forced it to start a retreat. In its pursuit, the Reds crossed the Urals and entered Siberia, where they found considerable support from the local partisans fighting in Kolchak's rear.

To divert the attention of these Red troops advancing over Siberia, another invasion was started from Estonia in the direction of Petrograd, under General Yudenich, who had various foreign mercenaries in his army. Yudenich was also frustrated by the Reds. Then the task of coping with Kolchak became still easier, and by the end of the same year he was completely routed.

When Kolchak's chances became doubtful the interventionists decided to try from the South and turned their hopes and main support to General Denikin, who at that time was fighting in the Kuban region, in the Northern Caucasus. Considerable supplies of ammunition and equipment from the Western Powers enabled Denikin to start a campaign northward by the summer of 1919. This advance developed successfully until by the middle of October his troops had seized the whole of the Ukraine (which was made easier by the local anti-Soviet revolts), captured Orel and were nearing Tula. In other words, they were not far from Moscow. But the Revolution won. Before the end of October the Whites were smashed by the concentrated efforts of the Reds, and forced to retreat. By the beginning of 1920, with the help of the local population, the whole of the Ukraine and the North Caucasus had been cleared of the Whites.

During these decisive battles in the South, the interventionists again hurled Yudenich's forces against Petrograd. He succeeded in advancing almost to the very gates of that city but was checked, defeated, and again flung beyond the Russian border back into Estonia (which was then and for long years afterwards used as a base for plots against Russia).

"When the imperialists saw that the White Guards had been smashed, that intervention had failed, and that the Soviet Government was consolidating its position all over the country, while in

Western Europe the indignation of the workers against military intervention in the Soviet Republic was rising, they began to change their attitude towards the Soviet state.”⁹

Disappointed in the results of their venture, the foreigners were gradually withdrawing their* forces from Russia. The French started the evacuation soon after their sailors on the Black Sea, led by André Marty, refused to fire on the Russians. English troops were driven out of the Murmansk and Archangel regions in August, and before the end of 1919 had withdrawn from practically all other parts of Soviet Russia. In January, 1920, under the pressure of public opinion, England, France and Italy decided to lift the blockade.¹⁰

Besides, when the League of Nations came into existence, after the signing of the Versailles Treaty, it became rather embarrassing to continue armed intervention in Russia. Such use of force did not serve to prove any degree of sincerity on the part of the nations who were talking about the brotherhood of man and respect for the rights of other nations. It was better to stop such a flagrant violation of existing international law and withdraw from an undeclared and unlawful war. By the spring of 1920 all foreign troops had been evacuated from European Russia. In April the American Expeditionary Force left Siberia. Only the Japanese remained in the Far East, and they remained for almost two more years. Japan was the first to come and the last to leave.

This did not mean, of course, that the young Soviet republic was left alone and in peace. The Powers still refused to reconcile themselves to the idea that Soviet power had proved strong and had come out victorious. Gradually the French idea of a *cordon sanitaire* was accepted and the Powers began relying on various smaller states bordering Russia, offering them “independence” and multiform assistance in return for anti-Soviet activity from

⁹ *History of the Communist Party of Soviet Union*, p. 239.

¹⁰ General Jan Smuts of South Africa asked in July, 1919, that Russia be left alone and the blockade lifted, and predicted, in a cautious statement that should have won conservative confidence: “It may well be that the only ultimate hope of Russia is a sober, purified system; and that may be far better than the Tsarism to which our present policy seems inevitably tending” (Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.)

them.¹¹ There was still the danger of an attack by Poland, which materialized later in 1920. A new counter-revolutionary leader, Baron Wrangel, continued fighting in the Crimea for almost another year. But by early 1920 the general situation seemed somewhat better for the population; a respite of sorts had been achieved for improving the economic position of the country.

Early Steps toward Conciliation. While their country was fighting on various fronts and resisting internal and foreign enemies, the diplomats of Soviet Russia were trying their best to find a common ground with the Powers in order to check the intervention, and to re-establish normal or at least tolerable relations with them. After the failure of its numerous appeals for peace and after its realization that hope for revolts in the West had been exaggerated, if it had been at all justified, the Moscow Government began a campaign for first *de facto* and then *de jure* recognition by the Powers.

Chicherin's "rather-too-strongly-revolutionary" note which had been sent to Wilson in October 1918, was followed by a number of others, much more mild, which definitely sought conciliation with the Powers. The Soviet Government was eager to reach a friendly settlement of all questions at issue.

Maxim Litvinov, who became Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs after he was released by the British (who not only refused to recognize him as an envoy of the Soviets, but even imprisoned him for a while), wrote a note to the American President in which he declared that "most of the principles proclaimed by Wilson, as a basis for settlement, were included in the more extensive aspirations of the Russian people's government," and emphasized "the idea of self-determination, opposition to militarism and imperialism, and to secret diplomacy." At the same time, said Litvinov, "the Soviet authorities wished the foreign Powers to know that Moscow was prepared to make concessions." But it should be remembered that it was

¹¹ British Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson's diary commented on this in the following words: "It is amazing to see the Frock mind. (Sir Henry called the civilians "frocks." V Y) In St. James Palace is sitting the League of Nations, their principal business being the limitation of armaments. In Downing Street is sitting the Allied Conference . . . who are feverishly arming Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Rumania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Persia, etc. . . ." (Quoted by Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 217.)

difficult for the Soviets to reconcile actualities, such as intervention, the blockade, the denial to Russia of her own sources of food and raw materials, with the high-sounding principles of the Fourteen Points.

In his message to the President, Litvinov said:

“The Russian workers and peasants fail to understand how foreign countries which never dreamed of interfering with Russian affairs when Tzarist barbarism and militarism ruled supreme, and even supported that regime, can feel justified in interfering in Russia now. . . .

“The dictatorship of toilers and producers is not an aim in itself, but the means of building up a new social system under which useful work and equal rights would be provided for all citizens. . . . One may believe this or not, but it surely gives no justification for sending foreign troops to fight against it, or for arming and supporting classes interested in the restoration of the old system of exploitation of man by man. . . .”¹²

On January 10, 1919, Chicherin sent a formal note to the American State Department asking them to name the time and place for a peace conference. Litvinov, then in London, met the American attaché, W. H. Buckler, and pledged his government to an armistice at any time on the Archangel front without prejudice to Russians who had co-operated with the Allies. On January 21, President Wilson put these terms before the Peace Conference, already in session in Versailles. Out of this, after a certain amount of bickering and adjustment, grew a plan to have representatives of all Russian factions meet for negotiation of their differences on the island of Prinkipo, in the Sea of Marmara.

Versailles and the Prinkipo Fiasco. The Paris Peace Conference was opened on January 18, 1919. Russia was not invited to send her representatives. To have the Bolsheviks among them was considered out of the question by the conferees. But to legalize the deliberations of the Conference on matters pertaining to Russia, a scheme was worked out. The representatives of the Soviet Government, as well as representatives of various

¹² Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, I, 158.

Russian groups, who had formed regional governments under the protection of foreign bayonets, and who pretended that they were official spokesmen for the former Russian Empire, were invited to meet at Prinkipo, in Turkey. The invitation of the Powers was sent to Russia on January 22.¹³

The Moscow authorities replied on February 4, by accepting and declaring their willingness to make certain concessions, provided the further development of Soviet Russia should not be jeopardized. Moscow was prepared to repay privately held debts, to guarantee the payment of interest on loans by the delivery of a certain amount of raw materials, to grant concessions in mines and other resources, and even, if need be, to consider certain territorial concessions.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Ukrainian Soviet Government also accepted the invitation. But the various Russian groups outside of the Soviet-controlled part of Russia flatly refused to sit at the same conference table with the Bolsheviks, and therefore the entire Prinkipo venture turned into a fiasco.¹⁴

With this plan frustrated, another attempt to find out the Soviet proposals for peace was made through the special mission to Moscow of Mr. William Christian Bullitt, then an assistant in the U.S. State Department. The idea, apparently, originated with Lloyd George, and was approved by Colonel House, the right-hand man of President Wilson. Bullitt's instructions were to negotiate a preliminary agreement with the Russians so that Great Britain and the United States could persuade France to join them in an invitation to a parley reasonably sure of some results.¹⁵ A Convention based on the principles suggested by the Allies was drafted by Litvinov, and duly approved by the Soviet Government.¹⁶

When Mr. Bullitt and Lincoln Steffens, who was with him on

¹³ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-220. Louis Fischer asserted (*op. cit.*, p. 167) that the invitation was not delivered because of sabotage in Paris, and that Moscow learned about the plan from a radio broadcast picked up by Moscow.

¹⁴ According to Louis Fischer (*op. cit.*, p. 170), W. C. Bullitt testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that the French Foreign Office advised the Ukrainian Government and various anti-Soviet groups to refuse to meet with the Bolsheviks

¹⁵ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹⁶ Representatives of England and the U.S.A. agreed on several fundamental principles: cessation of hostilities, economic relations with Russia, withdrawal of Allied Armies, debt settlement. (Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 171.)

that trip, returned to Paris, they found it difficult to get any action on the results obtained. If Lloyd George, who had planned the visit, received Bullitt and seemed to be still interested,¹⁷ though reluctant to act under the pressure of anti-Soviet elements, President Wilson did not even find time to see either Bullitt or Steffens, and the entire affair evaporated without any effect on the Russian position.

The main points of the draft were attested to by Professor Malbone W. Graham as containing all the essentials of a workable peace:¹⁸

“Their distinctiveness lies in (a) the emergence of the reciprocal pledge ‘not to attempt to upset by force the existing *de-facto* governments’—the lineal antecedent of all the Soviet anti-aggression pacts; (b) the appearance, also in reciprocal form, of the anti-propaganda clauses; (c) the clarification of the conception of aggressive acts, and (d) the initiation of practical steps toward disarmament.”

Because the Bullitt-Litvinov proposals failed to achieve the results sought, in the opinion of some observers, a division in counsel as to the tactics of Narcomindel (People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) ensued. Litvinov having failed to obtain a collective peace, Chicherin appears to have been sceptical of the possibilities of obtaining a distributive one, and hence appears to have followed the course of appealing over the heads of their respective governments to the citizenry of the Allied countries.¹⁹

One more attempt was made by President Wilson in March, 1919, to solve the Russian problem but it also miscarried. The plan was to send food to the starving population of Eastern Europe, including Soviet-occupied territories. The project was discussed by Herbert Hoover and Fritjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian explorer and a friend of Russia. The “Big Four” of the Peace Conference approved the plan.

¹⁷ Lincoln Steffens, *Autobiography* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1931), p. 799.

¹⁸ Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

In 1939, again, Mr. Litvinov was to experience disappointment in his endeavor to establish collective peace in co-operation with the Western Powers, and therefore to resign his post of Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Immediately the news became public, a storm of opposition arose. The "Russian Political Conference," a White organization, entered a protest to the Council of Four, signed by Prince Lvov, the first Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Sazonov, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Maklakov, the Russian Ambassador at Paris, and Nicholas Chaikovsky, the head of the Archangel "government." In their protest these Russians said: "The proposition to feed our enemies comes when the moment of victory is near for us." The reactionary press likewise protested; so did the French Foreign Office, in spite of the fact that Clemenceau, the Premier, signed the letter sent by the Big Four to Nansen approving the scheme.²⁰

Whatever was behind this plan, the people of Russia did not benefit from it. Nor was the problem solved by a humanitarian approach, for, instead of food, guns and munitions were sent to Kolchak and Denikin. But the anti-Soviet plotters miscalculated: their investment was destined to bring disappointment, and not the dividends which they had expected to collect.

Peace Treaties with the Border States. The first countries to enter into diplomatic and economic relations with the Soviets were Russia's immediate neighbors, and former parts of the Empire. In February, 1920, the Treaty of Tartu was signed with Estonia; a treaty was signed in May with Georgia, in July with Lithuania, in August with Latvia and in October, in Dorpat, with Finland. All of them served as *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Government and defined frontiers between these former parts of Russia and the Soviet State.²¹

These peace treaties were followed the next year, 1921, by a series of agreements with the Soviet's Asiatic neighbors: Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia and Outer Mongolia.

Immediately after the October Revolution Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took advantage of the new situation in the

²⁰ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-177. See also Chicherin's note to Nansen with thanks for his offer to arrange aid, in Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, document #172, pp. 242-244.

²¹ Treaty of Tartu with Estonia, signed February 2, 1920, see *Treaties Series of League of Nations*, XI, 30. Treaty with Lithuania, signed July 12, 1920, *ibid.*, III, 106. Treaty with Latvia, signed August 11, 1920, *ibid.*, II, 196. Treaty with Finland, signed October 14, 1920, *ibid.*, III, 6.

former Russian Empire to proclaim their independence. Among the first acts of the Soviet regime, as we have seen, was the issuance of the decree on nationalities, by which this right to secede from Russia was granted.²²

The Soviet regimes that had been established in these border states had been short-lived. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty turned over the Baltic provinces to Germany. In February, 1918, the Germans arrived and stayed until the end of 1919, that is, even after the Versailles Treaty was signed.²³ The German troops were invited to Finland by the Finnish bourgeoisie who were anxious to curb the revolution. Not only did the Finnish Government invite the German soldiers but also, out of gratitude for helping them to suppress their own people, General Mannerheim and the Old Finn Party induced the Diet to offer the "Finnish Crown" to a German prince.²⁴

With the defeat of the Central Powers, the status of the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, was changed again; they proclaimed themselves democratic republics, but some German troops remained "to protect the Baltic States from the Bolsheviks."

At the Paris Peace Conference the independence of Finland and the three Baltic states was contested by the representatives of "old" Russia. Although not admitted to the Conference officially, for their status was hardly official, even in the eyes of the conferees, these Russians had formed a Political Conference to prepare and present to the Peace Conference memoranda in which they gave their views on various problems pertaining to Russia. They vigorously objected to the independence of the above-mentioned parts of the Russian Empire, because they refused to recognize the authority of the Soviets, and therefore considered its decrees illegal. Besides, they asserted, and with sound argumentation, that the independence of these provinces, even if granted, could only be fictitious, because they were too

²² Finland declared her independence on December 4, 1917; Estonia on December 8, 1918; Latvia and Lithuania on December 22, 1918, and Byelorussia in February, 1919

²³ At Versailles, Germany was granted the right to keep her troops in the Baltic States to check the Russians.

²⁴ Whether or not an offer was made, no prince received the crown.

small and weak to maintain their independence, hence they would become pawns in the hands of larger and stronger Powers.²⁵

In the case of Finland they had in mind Germany, and said so. By now it is clear that their warning was justified. To allow a strong Power to control Finland and to use it for military purposes would constitute a serious menace to Petrograd, making insecure the open (unprotected) flank of the country.

"If Russia, as any other country, must defend herself from aggression, she cannot remain indifferent to the prospect of seeing Finland used by the enemies of Russia as a base of operations directed against her. In such a case the defense of Russia from the North would be illusory.

"Every military expert would admit, most categorically, that no naval defense is possible for Russia without her control over the Gulf of Finland. The loss by the Russian Navy of the right of using the waters adjacent to the Finnish coast would make it impossible to have any navy in the Baltic Sea and that would mean impossibility to resist an attack on Petrograd from the sea."²⁶

This Memorandum ended by warning the Conference that to ignore legality and to settle this, or any other question concerning Russia's interests without listening to Russia's side, too, would mean an invitation to trouble in the future.

The Baltic States gained little or nothing at the Paris Conference. This was partly because the United States did not wish to see the disintegration of the territories of the old Russian Empire. Except for Finland, which was admitted in 1920, the Baltic States did not enter the League of Nations until late 1921.

It is a well-known fact that the United States withheld full *de jure* recognition of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia until July, 1922, and then granted it reluctantly and with the belief that it was provisional:

²⁵ Finland wanted independence after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, because, she argued, her allegiance was to the Tsar, not to Russia. But the Provisional Government refused to accept such an interpretation, asserting that the future form of government of Russia had yet to be decided by the Constituent Assembly, and disagreed with the legalistically incorrect interpretation of the Constitution by Finland.

²⁶ Conference Politique Russe, *Quelques Considérations sur le Problème Finlandais*. Paris, L. Fournier, 1919, p. 10.

"With an orderly, well-established government in Russia, the Baltic provinces will in time again become a part of what, probably, will be a federated Russia," asserted Evan Young, U.S. Commissioner at Riga, in 1920.²⁷

In connection with this it may be interesting to quote a few lines from a speech by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby, who said on August 10, 1920:

"The United States feels that friendship and honor require that Russia's interests must be generously protected, and as far as possible, all decisions of vital importance to it, especially those concerning its sovereignty over the territory of the former Russian Empire, be held in abeyance. By this feeling of friendship and honorable obligation to the great nation whose brave and heroic self-sacrifice contributed so much to the successful termination of the war, the Government of the United States was guided . . . in its persistent refusal to recognize the Baltic States as independent of Russia. . . . No final decision should or can be made without the consent of Russia. . . . The territorial integrity and true boundaries of Russia shall be respected. These boundaries should properly include the whole of the former Russian Empire with the exception of Finland proper and ethnic Poland."²⁸

It was quite natural, under the circumstances described above, that the newly created states wanted to legalize their status to some extent and therefore were willing to conclude agreements with the Soviet Government. Estonia expressed that willingness as early as October, 1918. Latvia and Lithuania also began exchanging diplomatic correspondence with Moscow about the same time. On the other hand, by signing such treaties, they granted recognition to the new regime of Russia. In addition to establishing peace,²⁹ the treaties defined the

²⁷ Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1943), p. 142.

²⁸ Quoted from Frederick Schuman's introduction to the pamphlet *The Baltic Soviet Republics*, based on the book *The Baltic Riddle* by Gregory Meiksins, and published by the Council on American-Soviet Friendship. New York, 1944. But, apparently, Mr. Colby meant Russia without the Soviets, for it was he who two years earlier said: "The existing regime in Russia . . . is the negation of every principle upon which it is possible to base harmonious and trustful relations." (Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 143.)

²⁹ With all but Lithuania, for the latter had not been at war with Russia.

frontiers and gave some important pledges. Russia was anxious to receive guarantees of non-aggression and non-interference. After the painful experience of the years of armed intervention, the Soviet state was naturally seeking an end to such interference and wanted to secure peace. If this legal bulwark of treaty obligations was not a genuine and firm guarantee against the renewal of attacks by outsiders (for nobody ever made any attempt to justify his actions by law or treaty stipulations) at least it was the beginning of the security system that the Soviet state wanted to build. As such, these first treaties can be considered as a kind of achievement after Russia's long struggle for peace, and the recognition of its right to be master in its own house.

Generally speaking, Russia "showed a much more sympathetic attitude toward the new Baltic States than did the Allies," admitted an American observer.³⁰ As we have seen, she recognized their existence promptly and made peace with them. In the treaties with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russia reiterated what was said in the Soviet Decree on Nationalities about the right of all peoples freely to decide their own destinies, and even to separate themselves completely from the State of which they formed a part.

Naturally, the young Soviet Republic was anxious to make her borders secure, and therefore sought to prevent the newly constituted Baltic States from becoming centers of anti-Soviet intrigues. But this was not achieved by a "more sympathetic attitude" nor by the recognition of the independence of those border republics, for their independence was merely an illusion under the pressure of other stronger Powers.

For a period of years Estonia, Latvia and, to a lesser extent, Lithuania, continued to serve as listening-posts, and as possible approaches for new attacks, for many foreigners. Conscious of the danger this presented to the future of their relations with the Soviet State, the governments of the Baltic Republics made various efforts to strengthen their own positions through the creation of a close association of the three countries in the form of a union or federation. But none of these projects materialized. Gradually, as the strength of the Soviet State grew, the idea of co-operation with the Russians was revived. And even

³⁰ He prefers that his name be omitted.

the desirability of re-entering the Russian federation was discussed (in certain private circles of those countries) by those who realized that it would be to their advantage to be included within the Russian economic unit.²¹

In commenting on this period of the Soviet struggle for security, which he defined as "security through negotiation," Professor Malbone W. Graham wrote:

"With the abandonment by Estonia of the policy of folly into which she had been dragooned by the Allied States, the signing of a formal armistice and the inauguration of negotiations for final peace with Russia, the first phase of Soviet policy came to a definite close. Whatever might be her theories as to spreading the revolution, here Russia was face to face with the fact of a proud and stubborn peasant democracy which she could not conquer or sovietize, yet which did not want to pursue further hostilities. Under the circumstances the decision to be reached was basic, for if peace could be made with a democracy not subscribing to either communism or sovietism, a precedent would be established and the fundamental pattern of the decisions reached in the initial case must inevitably be applied to the next comer in eventual negotiations for peace. It is important to note, therefore, that the Treaty of Tartu of February 2, 1920, marked a distinct turning point in Soviet policy and traced the broad lines of the settlements to be reached with any bourgeois States willing to make peace with their communist neighbor. . . .

"By differentially pledging various nations previously in open or passive hostility to the Soviet regime to a predetermined line of conduct which would prevent military aggression, Soviet Russia succeeded in breaking the iron circle of her foes and in progressively isolating the powers or groups engaged in definite hostilities with her. . . .

"A broad analysis of all the foregoing agreements reveals the fact that the Soviet government began to elaborate its security policy by building, on the stipulations of conventional neutrality, the broad outlines of the non-aggression system. . . . there was constructed for Russia and her immediate neighbors a legal bulwark of treaty stipulations yielding at least the minimum basis of safety from unanticipated attacks of a military or political nature directed against their territorial integrity or the security of their institutions. . . .

"It is obvious that only upon the hypothesis of the continuance of peace were the treaty safeguards actually valid, for if the border

²¹ From published material by an American observer. See footnote 30.

States were to be engulfed in some new war, it would be extremely difficult for them to prevent their territories from being made a base of operations—in all probability against Russia. Nevertheless, Russia was content for the moment to liquidate the recent wars and provide a minimum of political and military safeguards without specifically pledging the border States unconditionally to a policy of peace. It can be seen in retrospect that there was an unescapable element of weakness in the situation, which required remedying when a more permanent alignment of political forces in and surrounding Russia was in prospect. Plainly, a carefully developed system must eventually be brought into being if genuine security was to exist on Russia's borders."³²

Early in 1920 foreigners became interested in the resumption of trade relations with the Soviet State. But not their governments. Maxim Litvinov, in Copenhagen for negotiation of the exchange of prisoners of war, informed outsiders that his country was prepared to negotiate, for it also wanted trade resumed. A few days after this declaration by Litvinov, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, admitted in a public speech that intervention was a failure and intimated that it was time to do business with Russia.

A few days later Litvinov made the following statement:

"We have triumphed over Yudenich, Denikin and Kolchak, because they had the people against them. We do not wish either to avenge or to attack any one. We are leaving all the little republics which have arisen round us absolute freedom to adopt whatever regime they like. We respect the right of every country to dispose freely of its own affairs. But on the other hand we claim similar treatment. We must be left in peace to work out among ourselves our social experiment; if that experiment succeeds, other peoples will follow it. If it fails, we shall be obliged to try another method. In any case, none must interfere with us. That is all we ask. . . . We are convinced pacifists. We have had to fight because war was forced on us, but we are anxious to lay down arms. We desire a renewal of normal commercial relations with other countries. Europe has need of Russian raw materials, and we have need of manufactured goods in return. We are ready to recognize the debt, former loans

³² *International Conciliation Series*, New York, #252, September, 1929, pp. 347-352.

with interest. We also solemnly declare that we will repulse any secret German advances seeking alliance against the Entente. We do not wish to hear talk of any military combination whatever.”³³

First Treaty of Friendship. A short time after the treaties with the Baltic States and Georgia were signed, an understanding was reached with three of Russia’s Asiatic neighbors, namely, Afghanistan, Turkey and Persia.³⁴

The Treaty of Friendship between Persia and the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, signed on February 26, 1921, at Moscow, stated:

“Article I: In order to confirm its declarations regarding Russian policy towards the Persian Nation, which formed the subject of correspondence on January 14, 1918, and June 26, 1919, the R.S.F.S.R. formally affirms once again that it definitely renounces the tyrannical policy carried by the Colonizing Government of Russia which has been overthrown by the will of the workers and peasants of Russia.

“Inspired by this principle, and desiring that the Persian people should be happy and independent and should be able to dispose freely of its patrimony, the Russian Republic declares the whole body of treaties and conventions concluded by Persia with the Tsarist Government, which crushed the rights of the Persian people, to be null and void.

“Article 8: Federal Russia finally renounces the economic policy pursued in the east by the Tsarist Government, which consisted in lending money to the Persian Government, not with a view to the economic development of the country, but rather for purposes of political subjugation.

“Federal Russia accordingly renounces its rights in respect to the loans granted by the Tsarist Government. It regards the debts due to it as void and will not require their repayment. Russia likewise renounces its claims to the resources of Persia which were specified as security for the loans in question.”

Aside from these magnanimous clauses there was Article 4, which was of considerable importance, too:

³³ Arthur Upham Pope, *op cit*, pp. 162-163.

³⁴ In September, 1920, a Congress of the Peoples of the East was held at Baku. Almost two thousand delegates representing thirty-seven nationalities were present.

"Article 4: In consideration of the fact that each nation has the right to determine freely its political destiny, each of the two Contracting Parties formally expresses its desire to abstain from any intervention in the internal affairs of the other."³⁵

Another article (5th) prohibited the formation or presence within their respective territories of "any organizations or groups . . . whose object is to engage in acts of hostility." This treaty established the reciprocal pledge not to enter into hostile combinations and not to allow any third party to use the territories of Russia and Persia for any hostile acts against them.

During the intervention in Russia's affairs, when some of the British forces were in Baku and elsewhere in the Caucasian territory, other British troops had been stationed in Persia. This had aroused considerable resentment among the Persians especially because Great Britain also had made an attempt to impose on Persia a treaty which would have meant a fatal impairment of Persian sovereignty, with virtual British control.

"The Soviets, on the contrary, offered the Persians terms of such unprecedented generosity that it made the British policy seem by comparison predatory and hostile," wrote Arthur Upham Pope, a recognized authority on Iran (formerly Persia). "The Russian triumph was complete, and it resounded throughout the bazaars of the Near and Middle East."³⁶

If we add to the aforesaid, that during 1920 Soviet Russia also concluded treaties of alliance in September with Khiva (Khorzemia), in December with Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Ukraine,³⁷ and next year, 1921, with White Russia (in January), Bukhara (in March), Georgia (a second treaty, in May) and Outer Mongolia (in November), we see that by the end of 1921 most of the border states were (to a certain extent) reunited with the center. The basis was laid for the reintegration of the temporarily detached parts and their final merger

³⁵ *International Conciliation Series, op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

³⁶ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

³⁷ After renouncing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty Moscow had informed (in December, 1918) the Ukraine and Georgia that their independence was no longer recognized by the Soviet Russian Government.

into the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, consummated at the close of 1922.³⁸

At the same time the relations with the outside world became somewhat more tolerable. Most of the interventionists had withdrawn their troops, and by the signing of her first series of treaties the new regime of Russia had gained official recognition from the other Powers, and so made a step in the direction of its re-entry into the family of nations.

This process proved to be very painful and slow. Still, the young republic not only survived and gradually emerged out of all the trials as a mighty state, but as the state destined to perform most valuable services to the rest of the world in the moment of its adversity, the second World War. During this war the real worth of the Soviet Union became known to millions of people all over the world, who admired the heroism of the people of the U.S.S.R. and applauded their military exploits.

³⁸ By the end of 1920 Azerbaijan was liberated from the bourgeois-nationalists, and Armenia from the Dashnaks.

CHAPTER III

Struggle for Disarmament and Consolidation

The Polish War and Riga Treaty. Trade Agreement with England. Washington Conference. Famine in Soviet Russia. Genoa Conference and Rapallo Treaty. Moscow Conference on Limitation of Armaments.

The Polish War and Riga Treaty. Although practically all foreign troops and naval forces had been withdrawn from European Russia, and although a number of peace treaties had been signed with the border states, the Soviets were still faced with the problem of war with internal and external enemies. The Soviet Republic was still far from being received into the family of nations, far from being restored to the status of an equal partner in international affairs.

In the Far East the Japanese remained in occupation of considerable Russian territory, in spite of the creation of a buffer state, the Far-Eastern Republic (on April 6, 1920), to allay Tokyo's fears of Communist infection. In the Crimea there were the troops of General Baron Wrangel, supported by French money and by war supplies from England and France. And soon there was another war with Poland, instigated by foreigners, particularly France.¹

The Old Tiger, Clemenceau, never showed any particular enthusiasm for armed intervention, at least so far as participation with French soldiers was concerned. His idea was the famous *cordon sanitaire*. He preferred to rely on the states bordering Russia, which should constitute the desired *cordon*. These states actually became not only pawns in the interna-

¹ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-260 France definitely did try to align Hungary with Poland against Russia in 1920, and planned to pay for the service with arbitrarily transferred towns and populations. She hoped Rumania could be rewarded in some other quarter. . . . Rumania suspected and held aloof. Hungary hesitated till it became too late. Mutual hostility paralyzed the potential power of both against the great Red enemy. Czechoslovakia, moreover, protested against the deal because it threatened to strengthen her enemy, Hungary, and involved the transportation of Hungarian troops through her territory.

tional game in Russia, but also the bulwark of anti-Soviet policies on the European continent. Of these states Poland was the best fitted and most willing to attack Soviet Russia. There was, aside from the question of the "Red Menace," the ambition of Pilsudski and his followers to restore the 1772 frontiers and thereby to create a Great Poland, from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

The reconstitution of independent Poland discussed at the Paris Peace Conference meant, naturally, the defining of her borders. This problem proved to be a thorny one. According to the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, Poland was promised the restoration of her independence in the territories indisputably inhabited by Poles. The line marking these confines, named the Curzon Line (for the Chairman of the Commission charged with this task, Great Britain's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Marquis Curzon), was approved as the logical one and accepted by all the conferees but the Poles.

Marshal Pilsudski and his lieutenants, fired with ambition for new power and visions of Poland's grandeur, disagreed with the decision of the others. "They were as anxious to violate the principle of nationality as had been the despoilers of Poland at the time of her partitions in the XVIIIth Century."²

The Poles demanded the restoration of the frontiers of 1772, although "even then the Poles had formed scarcely half of the population of this region. In 1918, they had, certainly, no stronger ethnic claim to the territory. These demands were put forward not only on the basis of history, but in the name of military necessity. Poland had no natural frontiers, and she was open to invasion either by Russia or Germany.. Animated by false strategic considerations and learning nothing from history, the Polish leaders in 1919 believed they could strengthen the defenses of their territory by extending the boundaries until they achieved a 'natural' physical unity more capable of resisting outside attack."³

Conscious of the wide-spread animosity toward the new regime in Russia, and taking advantage of his neighbor's comparative weakness at a time of revolution and general exhaustion, Pilsudski decided to risk a war against the Soviet state in

² See footnote 30, Chapter II.

³ See footnote 30, Chapter II.

order to acquire by force what was refused to Poland by the Peace Conference at Paris. He expected, not without reason, to get necessary help from outside. Actually he received that help in many and various ways: arms and officers, headed by General Weygand, from France; food from Herbert Hoover; "moral" support from various quarters, including certain Russian emigrés. The war waged in the South by Baron Wrangel was quite a help, too.

Stubbornly refusing to discuss the differences or settle any claims by amicable agreement, as was again and again suggested by the Russians and advocated by some of the more sober Poles, Pilsudski openly prepared for the attack.⁴

In April, 1920, without declaring war, the Polish legions began their march. They penetrated into the Byelorussian and Ukrainian territory, where they had found a collaborator in Ataman Petlura, who had previously been an enemy of the Poles. Petlura, apparently, had had a change of heart under the influence of France, with whose representatives he had co-operated at the time when French troops were in Odessa.

The short breathing space for Russia therefore came to an end.⁵

By May 6, 1920, the Poles had occupied Minsk and Kiev. But their success was short-lived, even though Baron Wrangel also was on the march and threatened the Donetz Basin. The Red Army recaptured Kiev and Minsk and not only drove the invaders out of Russian lands, but also in their turn advanced far into Polish territory.

While the Russians were advancing, the French pressed Great Britain to join in more active assistance to the Poles. Lloyd George hesitated. (But when the Red troops were closing in on Warsaw, the Welshman decided to act.) His hesitation was

⁴ The Poles did not give the Soviet proposals serious consideration, wrote Polish Foreign Minister Count Skrzyński in *Poland and Peace* (London, 1923), p. 40.

Peace on the basis of the Soviet's terms, which were by no means unreasonable, was obviously not desired by the Poles, wrote H. H. Fischer, in his *The Famine in Soviet Russia* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 32.

See also Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op cit.*, document #165, pp. 229-230; document #2, III, 4-5; document #5, III, 9-11.

⁵ By a joint note to the Powers, Chucherin, for Soviet Russia, and Rakovsky, for the Ukraine, complained of the Polish attack. (Kluchnikoff and Sabanin, *op. cit.*, III, 25-26.)

prompted by the growing indignation of Western labor. The slogan "Hands Off Russia!" became almost a universal demand.

"Campaigns to prevent the forwarding of war materials to Poland developed in all transit countries. Working men in Czechoslovakia stopped and searched trains moving in the direction of the Polish frontier and refused to pass them when munitions were discovered. Danzig, the most important port of Polish traffic, witnessed stirring scenes. Longshoremen and sailors went on strike. . . . Opposition to Allied intervention against Russia grew strongest in England. Here it took the form of sharp struggle with the established Government."⁶

The successful Soviet advance in pursuit of the retreating Poles made some Moscow leaders believe that the Polish masses would rise and overthrow their Government. The militancy of the proletariat in Germany, England, and other parts of Europe seemed encouraging. The renewal of hope for revolutionary developments undoubtedly inspired the Russians. A Provisional Revolutionary Cabinet, composed of three Poles, was ready to enter Warsaw if and when the capital of Poland fell.

At the same time all this naturally served to increase the anxiety of the bourgeois governments of Europe and spurred them to action on behalf of Poland. Help was rushed to the Poles not only by France, but also by Great Britain. In order to evade search and detention by the workers in the West, some of these war supplies were sent through Balkan countries.

The rapid advance of the Russians, whose rear had not been adequately organized, necessitated the requisitioning of products from the Polish population, especially the peasants. This antagonized the countryside, and helped anti-Soviet propaganda, which was claiming that the Russians were enemies of Poland. Polish peasants joined the townsfolk who were spurred to action by the fear that Warsaw, their capital, might fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks.⁷

⁶ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

⁷ On June 17, the Governments of Soviet Russia and the Ukraine appealed to the Polish workers and peasants to stop fighting their brothers and join them to overthrow their landlords and bosses. (See Kluchnikoff & Sabann, *op. cit.*, document # 19, III, 28-29.)

By this time Pilsudski had already received plenty of foreign arms, munitions, food, and military leaders.

“The American Government gave moral comfort to the Poles in addition to financial and material succour. This took form of a much-quoted note from Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby to the Italian Ambassador at Washington in which Colby gave a warning to Russia ‘not to take herself wholly out of the pale of the friendly interests of other nations by the pillage and oppression of the Poles.’

“The French Government, which backed Poland, thanked Mr. Colby for his note. . . . Whereupon it was announced that the American State Department approved the aims of Baron Wrangel . . . and rejoiced in the ‘common objective of the French and American Governments.’”⁸

All this enabled Pilsudski to make a stand before the very gate of his capital, Warsaw. This was proclaimed the “miracle of Warsaw” by the partisans of the Polish Marshal. Actually it was the result of bad mistakes committed by Trotzky, who had hindered the occupation of the city of Lwow by Budenny’s cavalry, and the young general Tukhachevsky, who had rashly overextended a flanking movement, thereby leaving a dangerously wide gap in the Russian lines.⁹ The Polish command turned the tables on the Russians, taking advantage of the situation by a swift and ferocious counterattack. Poland was not only saved from disaster, but was even able to force the Russians to retreat.

Within a few days the advance of the Poles was checked, and the Red troops began preparing for a new attack. But neither side was in shape to prolong the war; both preferred to stop fighting. On October 12, 1920, the preliminary agreement on peace was signed at Riga by Polish, Ukrainian and Russian delegates. The final treaty followed in March, 1921. By the treaty Poland acquired Galicia and a part of Byelorussia, territories far beyond the Curzon Line, territories definitely inhabited in large part by non-Poles.¹⁰ This treaty pledged reciprocal

⁸ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp 306-308

⁹ Vladimir Melikov, of the Soviet War College, in his book *Marne, Vistula, Smurna* (Moscow, 1928), condemned Tukhachevsky for not halting his advance in order to straighten his lines and reorganize his rear.

¹⁰ For the text see *League of Nations Treaties Series*, VI, 52. This treaty was not recognized by the Powers until 1923.

minority guarantees. But, as became known to everybody interested in finding out the facts, Poland violated this pledge. In 1934 the Polish Government even denounced all guarantees for minorities.¹¹

Soviet Russia signed this "minor Brest-Litovsk" treaty because she wanted peace above all, and was not in a position to continue war without seriously endangering her plans for starting reconstruction of national economy. She still had to cope with the anti-Bolshevik forces of Wrangel in the South (they were completely liquidated before the end of the year), with the Japanese in the Orient, and with the growing menace of famine all over the country.

Lenin remarked on that occasion: "Our situation made it by no means necessary to conclude peace at any price. We could have carried on through the winter. But I believe that from a political point of view it was wiser to make concessions to the enemy. The temporary sacrifices of a bad peace seemed to me cheaper than the prolongation of war."¹²

Trade Agreement with Great Britain. When the policy of armed intervention failed, the businessmen of many countries began to urge relations of peace and commerce with Soviet Russia. The Western governments were not ready to think of political recognition of the new regime, but some of their leaders were willing to permit commercial intercourse.

"When soldiers began to mutiny, businessmen to think of trade, and ministers to doubt the likelihood of White success, labor sentiment was able to mobilize a strong body of public opinion which hastened the day when the policy of intervention was scrapped."¹³

Litvinov realized the possibility of achieving his goal (recognition of the Soviet Government) through first arranging for commercial exchange; accordingly, he worked toward that end. On March 21, 1921, in his capacity as Chief of Soviet Legations abroad, he dispatched to President Harding and to the Congress of the United States the following note:

¹¹ Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹² Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

"From the first day of her existence, Soviet Russia had nourished the hope of the possibility of a speedy establishment of friendly relations with the great republic of North America and had firmly expected that intimate and solid ties would be created between the two republics to the greater advantage of both. . . ." ¹⁴

The attitude of the Bolsheviks toward the United States (according to Louis Fischer) has always been exceptionally friendly. From the beginning, Moscow believed that America's anti-Soviet sentiment was less deep-seated than that of the other Powers; further, it believed that the Far-Eastern situation might induce a more cordial relationship in Washington toward the Soviets. Special treatment was therefore accorded American business interests. The large American concerns, which had property in the country, were not confiscated until 1920, whereas other foreign firms suffered much earlier nationalization. ¹⁵

Meantime, the Russian leaders maintained that the United States was best equipped to undertake the gigantic task of exploiting the riches of the Soviet Republic. In a memorandum sent to Colonel Raymond Robins in May, 1918, Lenin, presenting a plan for American-Soviet relations, suggested American co-operation in the construction of electric-power stations, in digging canals, exploiting mines and developing railroads. ¹⁶ The policy of "Don't antagonize Americans" was advocated for a long time by many Bolsheviks.

In 1920 an American multimillionaire, Washington B. Vanderlip, went to Moscow and bargained for oil, coal, fishing and forest concessions in the Soviet Far East. The following year, in May, 1921, a preliminary concession was granted by the Far-Eastern Republic (with the approval of Moscow) to another American, the oil magnate, Harry F. Sinclair. Together with the right to exploit oil fields in the northern half of Sakhalin Island, the Russians were willing to allow the Americans to build two harbors there. According to Louis Fischer, the Bolsheviks expected that Vanderlip and Sinclair alike would use their influence in Washington for the speedy establishment of normal relations with Moscow. Actually the concessions were

¹⁴ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

¹⁵ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 300

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

never used (for there was a time limit which had expired).¹⁷

By his note to President Harding, Litvinov wanted again to see if there were a chance for the establishment of those eagerly desired normal relations with the United States. But there was no reply to his message.

Not long thereafter (on March 28, 1921) the American Consul at Reval handed to Litvinov a copy of the following statement made by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes:

“The Government of the United States views with deep sympathy and grave concern the plight of the people of Russia, and desires to aid with every appropriate means in promoting proper opportunities through which commerce can be established upon a sound basis. It is manifest to this Government that in existing circumstances there is no assurance of development of trade, as the supplies which Russia might now be able to obtain would be wholly inadequate to meet the needs, and no lasting good can result as long as the present causes of progressive impoverishment continue to operate. If fundamental changes are contemplated, involving due regard for the protection of persons and property and the establishment of conditions essential to the maintenance of commerce, this Government will be glad to have convincing evidence of the consummation of such changes, and until this evidence is supplied this Government is unable to perceive that there is any proper basis for considering trade relations.”¹⁸

To this Litvinov's comment was:

“I am afraid the masses of Russia will interpret and resent the statement of Mr. Hughes as an attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of Russia and to dictate from the outside a scheme for the Russian social system, and that they will justly say that the conquests of the revolution for which they have fought for more than three years and for which they underwent enormous privations, are not for sale. . . . I feel sure that trade relations soon will be renewed, but the acceptance of the proposal of a Russian mission to the United States would accelerate it by dispelling the misunderstandings and misconceptions which prompted Mr. Hughes's statement.”¹⁹

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

¹⁸ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

¹⁹ From January, 1919, to January, 1921, Soviet Russia had its envoy in the United States in the person of L. K. Martens, but the latter never was officially

During the same month (March 1921), after a long period of negotiations, a trade agreement was signed by the Soviets with Great Britain. This was a serious crack in the united front of anti-Soviet elements. Soon after this the blockade on Soviet gold, imposed under pressure by France, also became ineffective. Sweden had already accepted (in 1920) a considerable deposit of Russia's gold, as advance payment for a rolling-stock order placed by Moscow. Others changed their attitude, too. Trade became possible on a somewhat larger scale.²⁰

At about the time of the signing the preliminary trade agreement with Great Britain Moscow introduced a new economic policy at home, the so-called NEP.

“War Communism had been an attempt to take the fortress of capitalist elements in town and countryside by assault, by a frontal attack. In this offensive the Party had gone too far ahead, and ran the risk of being cut off from its base. Now Lenin proposed to retire a little, to retreat for a while to the base, to change from an assault of the fortress to the slow method of siege, so as to gather strength and resume the offensive.”²¹

The change was prompted partly by growing discontent inside the country. The peasants were not satisfied and grumbled, for they considered that the townsfolk were living at their expense. Counterrevolutionaries, inside and outside, were stirring up the tired population. The Kronstadt mutiny was one of the most serious signals, indicating that the enemies of the Soviets were quite active and had succeeded in taking advantage of the difficult times. The mutiny was suppressed by the Red troops. The Soviet Government, confronted with unrest, realized the necessity of revising its approach to many questions affecting the economic life of the people. It decided to meet the new situation by adopting a new economic policy. The Tenth Congress of the Communist Party approved Lenin's idea, in spite

recognized by Washington and was never able to establish officially approved commercial relations with the trans-Atlantic republic.

²⁰ For the text of this “preliminary agreement” see *League of Nations Treaties Series*, VI, 128. For the same agreement, as applied to Canada, see XIII, 38.

²¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 257.

of the opposition voiced by some of the Bolshevik leaders. War Communism was ended. A new period of revolutionary development was inaugurated.

The system of requisitioning the peasants' grain was replaced by a tax in kind and later in stabilized currency. Rationing was abolished in the cities and wages were reintroduced. A new currency, backed by gold, was issued. Private trade was permitted and soon began to show signs of revival. All this was not meant as a complete giving way to capitalism. Gradually, with the improvement of economic conditions, the government again extended its control over industry and trade and drew them together under unified management. Lenin's idea was to offer a short respite. One step back, later to make a jump forward. After just one year of the NEP in practice Lenin declared that "the retreat had come to an end," and he put forward the slogan "Prepare for an offensive on private capital," and predicted that "New Russia will become Socialist Russia."²²

But even at the time of the NEP the foreign trade of the Soviet country continued to be controlled by the state. No private enterprise was allowed to have any commercial relations with the outside world. State monopoly of foreign trade never was abolished, although it was seriously threatened by the Opposition's stand. It served as a mighty factor in developing foreign relations in general.

The years that followed demonstrated that the New Economic Policy had brought salutary results in the restoration of the economic life of the Soviet State. From the short period of NEP the country emerged into a new period, the period of industrialization.

By the end of 1921 Moscow had already negotiated commercial agreements with Sweden, Germany, England, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Austria. Although without formal treaties, trade was also carried on with Turkey, Persia and China.

Washington Conference. On November 12, 1921, representatives of nine nations with territorial possessions on the rim of

²² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 257-261.

the Pacific, met at Washington, by invitation of the United States, to discuss limitation of armaments, especially of navies. The Conference also hoped to adjust the Far-Eastern situation. President Harding, in his address of welcome to the delegates, declared that the invitation to the Conference was not from the United States alone; "it is, rather, the spoken word of a war-wearied world, struggling for restoration, hungering and thirsting for better relationships, of humanity crying for relief and craving of lasting peace."²³

But Russia, a country with old and considerable interests in Asia, was not invited to participate in this conference. Even the Far-Eastern Republic, shortly before created as a buffer between Japan and the Soviet State, was not officially on the list of delegates. A group of its representatives was allowed to come to Washington and present its point of view, but it was not allowed to enter the Conference (the same status was also afforded to the Ambassador of the defunct Provisional Russian Government, who still was "recognized" by the American Government).

Chicherin sent a protest, and this was the end of Russia's part in the Conference.²⁴

Aside from the agreement on limitation of naval armaments, accompanied by a promise not to fortify any further insular possessions in the Pacific, the Conference produced two treaties of importance to Russia: the Four-Power Treaty signed on December 13, 1921,²⁵ and the Nine-Power Treaty, signed on February 6, 1922.

Instrumental in summoning the Conference was the United States' (and others') concern over: 1) the growing arrogance of Japan in her dealings with China, which for a long time had been deprived by disintegration and civil war of her power to resist; 2) the unwelcome extension by Japanese militarists of the limits agreed upon by the Allies during their intervention in Russia's Far-Eastern possessions; 3) the apprehension of the United States regarding American economic interests in the

²³ George H. Blackeslee, *The Recent Foreign Policy of the United States* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1925).

²⁴ Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op cit.*, document #74, vol. III.

²⁵ Agreement to respect one another's insular possessions in the Pacific.

Orient which were being menaced by the continental Asiatic activities of the Empire of the Rising Sun.

The Nine-Power Treaty, relating to the future of China, was of great importance to Russia. It promised to respect China's independence, territorial and administrative integrity and to give her a free hand in her internal efforts to put her house in order. This pledge of non-interference in the affairs of the Soviet Republic's next-door neighbor was, naturally, welcome news.

Among various minor agreements reached at the Washington Conference were two of direct concern to Russia. One was on the inviolability of her rights in the Chinese Eastern Railway. The other was the promise of the Japanese to withdraw their troops from Russian soil in 1922. This actually was carried out by the Japanese, though with some prompting from the Red Army. By the end of 1922 the Japanese soldiers and sailors were evacuated, except for a limited number of them who remained on the Russian half of the Island of Sakhalin. They were withdrawn only in 1925 after an agreement signed at Peking by Tokyo and Moscow.

Famine in Soviet Russia. Three years of World War had cut down the acreage of grain. The Revolution, Civil War and foreign intervention that followed further deprived the population of its most important sources of food. The situation was also aggravated by the blockade imposed by the foreign Powers and finally the scarcity of food all over the country became quite acute. A drought in the Lower Volga (not uncommon in that area) brought the scarcity to the point of serious famine.

As we have seen, earlier attempts to help the Russian people with food imported from abroad had been opposed by the enemies of the Soviet regime (foreigners and Russian emigrés). But in 1921 the situation became grave, epidemics menaced the rest of Europe, and relief became imperative.

From January, 1919, on, the American Relief Administration had been feeding the Polish population on a large scale. This was "giving the new state the strength to conquer those disintegrating and subversive forces which threatened to check in anarchy or revolution, the forward course of national inde-

pendence," in the words of the historian of the American Relief Administration, Professor H. H. Fischer.²⁶

During the summer of 1920 the Americans tried again to make a relief agreement with the Soviet authorities. The occasion arose in the midst of the Polish-Russian War, when A.R.A. feeding stations in Eastern Poland were swept away by the contending armies. The negotiations failed to enable A.R.A. to start work with the Russians, for the Soviet authorities suspected the motives of Herbert Hoover, head of the A.R.A. They knew that his representative, Captain Gregory,²⁷ had been instrumental in overthrowing the Soviet regime in Hungary by manipulations of food relief.²⁸

What the attitude of Mr. Hoover was in regard to Bolshevism, one can learn from Professor H. H. Fischer's writings. "He fought it with all his strength. Every pound of flour, every tin of milk, every ounce of fat that he drove through the blockade into Germany or distributed in the newly formed states was a vastly more effective weapon against Bolshevism than the machine guns and tanks delivered to the counter-revolutionary armies of Russian Whites."²⁹

In a comment on this approach to the problem of relieving those who were starving in Russia, the liberal weekly *The Nation* in an editorial entitled "Mr. Hoover Feeds Russia," said: "We cannot understand the conception of charity which selects children to feed according to the politics or even actions of their parents."³⁰

Finally, on August 20, 1921, an agreement was signed by Mr. Walter Lyman Brown, Director for Europe of the A.R.A., and Maxim Litvinov for Soviet Russia. In September, American relief began arriving in Russia and helped to save millions of people from death by starvation.

When the A.R.A., by July, 1923, ended its great humanitarian work, the Soviet Government presented the Americans with a scroll on which the following Resolution of the Council of Commissars was inscribed:

²⁶ H. H. Fischer, *The Famine in Soviet Russia* (New York, Macmillan, 1927), p. 28.

²⁷ Louis Fischer, *op cit.*, p. 316.

²⁸ Arthur Upham Pope, *op cit.*, pp. 173-174.

²⁹ H. H. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁰ Quoted by Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

"In the trying hour of great and overwhelming disaster, the people of the United States represented by the A.R.A. responded to the needs of the population, already exhausted by intervention and blockade, in the famine-stricken parts of Russia and the Federated Republics.

"Unselfishly, the A.R.A. came to the aid of the people and organized on a broad scale the supply and distribution of food products and other articles of prime necessity.

"Due to the enormous and entirely disinterested efforts of the A.R.A. millions of people of all ages were saved from the horrible catastrophe which threatened them.

"Now when the famine is over and the colossal work of the A.R.A. comes to a close, the Soviet of People's Commissars, in the name of the millions of people saved and in the name of all the working people of Soviet Russia and the Federated Republics counts it its duty to express before the whole world its deepest thanks to this organization, to its leader, Herbert Hoover, to its representative in Russia, Colonel Haskel, and to all its workers, and to declare that the people inhabiting the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will never forget the help given them by the American people through the A.R.A., seeing in it a pledge of the future friendship of the two nations." ³¹

Genoa Conference and the Rapallo Treaty. Slowly, but irresistibly, events were working in the direction of conciliation and establishment of more normal relations between the New Russia and the rest of the world.

On January 6, 1922, representatives of Great Britain and France, meeting at Cannes, in southern France, decided that, in principle, diplomatic relations should be renewed with Soviet Russia. But these two great Powers, together with Italy and Belgium, had an understanding that action in relation to the Soviets would be taken only as a group, not separately.³²

One of the greatest barriers to the re-establishment of commercial and diplomatic relations with the outside world was the repudiation of foreign debts by the Soviet Government in 1918.

³¹ A facsimile of that scroll and the English translation of its Russian text are found in the H. H. Fischer's book *The Famine in Soviet Russia*, pp. 398-399.

³² A Cannes resolution declared that "nations can claim no right to dictate to each other the principles on which they are to regulate their system of ownership, internal economy and government. It is for every nation to choose for itself the system which it prefers in this respect." (*British White Paper*, London, 1922.)

As a matter of fact, long before the Revolution of 1917 and the advent to power of the Soviets, namely, on July 10, 1906, the occasion of the Tsar's illegal dissolution of the State Duma, some two hundred delegates of the Duma had made it known to the world by a Manifesto signed at Viborg that "if the Government contracts loans to secure funds, such loans contracted without the approval of the people's representatives will be invalid. The Russian people will never acknowledge them and will not pay them."³³

On the other hand, at Prinkipo and on several other occasions as well, the Soviet Government expressed its readiness to pay foreign debts on certain conditions. The main condition Moscow had in mind was that credit facilities should be extended to the Soviet Government to enable it to pay instalments on debts and to undertake economic reconstruction.

To find out what could be arranged to satisfy the creditors of the former Russian Empire and the seekers of concessions within her territories, a conference was convoked on the initiative of Lloyd George, with the obvious approval of Aristide Briand at Genoa. It was opened on April 10, 1922. The United States declined the invitation. The Russian delegates were authorized by Lenin to offer far-reaching concessions, including settlement of foreign debts. But the others were not in a mood to be lenient at all. They expected that even more might be squeezed out of the people impoverished by wars, revolution, intervention, blockade and famine. They had overestimated the implications of the NEP. They still had doubts about the ability of the Soviet regime to survive. There was no agreement between the conferees, especially the British and French, but there was a common enmity toward the Bolsheviks that kept them more or less united.

When the Russian, as well as the German, delegates at Genoa became convinced by the conduct of the negotiations that they had little to gain from the Conference for the countries they represented, they came together to find out if there might not be a way for collaboration. The way toward a successful agreement was paved by some preliminary conversations at Berlin, during which Baron von Maltzan, chief of the Russian division of the German Foreign Office, stubbornly advocated a Russian

³³ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

orientation of policy for Germany. This was accelerated by the stand of the other Powers.

Meeting at Rapallo, near Genoa, on April 16, the Russians and the Germans speedily reached an agreement, and the same day signed a document that became known as the Treaty of Rapallo.³⁴

It was a real bombshell for the other conferees. It started co-operation between the two outcast nations who were ostracized by the others. It deprived the outsiders of their strongest weapon against the Soviet State—isolation.

For a long time the Western Powers had feared the possibility of Russia and Germany coming together to create a menace to them and to the peace. Germany, likewise, had been afraid that an agreement between Russia and the Entente Powers would be consummated, for that would have been disastrous to her. Now the situation became somewhat clearer.

The Treaty of Rapallo was a gain for Soviet Russia; she established her position on the international stage; she was no longer alone.³⁵ It was a gain for Germany, too. It strengthened Germany's position *vis-à-vis* the other Powers. As for the plans of their enemies, they had gone awry.

The conferees of Genoa had no choice but to accept this *fait accompli* and start packing their trunks.

On November 6, of the same year, a supplementary agreement between Berlin and Moscow was signed further regulating the diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries.³⁶

Still another international conference for the purpose of forcing the demands of the Western Powers on Soviet Russia was convoked at The Hague in June of the same year, 1922, but its results were practically nil, for Russia had her counterclaims, and the creditors did not want to recognize them as valid. Those were claims for the damages incurred by the illegal armed intervention. But behind the scenes at The Hague, just as at Genoa, other forces were working. Rivals in the growing oil empires

³⁴ For the text of the Treaty of Rapallo see the *League of Nations Treaties Series*, XIX, 248, or Kluchnikoff & Sabanin, *op. cit.*, III, 176-7.

³⁵ Wickham Steed, the Editor of the *London Times*, said on this occasion: "The Russians are the arbiters of the Conference." This was an exaggeration, but it was also a prophecy.

³⁶ *League of Nations Treaties Series*, XVI, 388.

(American and British oil interests) did not want their competitors to win. Deterding's Royal Dutch Shell Corporation and the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey had diametrically opposed interests in Russia. The grandiose plans of Deterding had clashed with the schemes of Standard Oil, which in 1920 bought from Nobel his share in Russian oil fields, and Standard did not like the prospect of Royal Dutch getting large concessions by agreeing to Russian terms offered first at Genoa and again at The Hague. Both conferences ended in an impasse.

Even if they were economic failures, as nobody could deny, in the opinion of some observers these two conferences might be considered as having distinct political significance. "At Genoa," writes Professor Malbone W. Graham,³⁷ "for the first time the Soviet plenipotentiaries drew the necessary inferences of a re-entry into the judicial bonds of international intercourse: active participation in international unions, technical commissions, etc. with an implicit pledge to consider membership in the League of Nations at a later date."

One may question the immediate correctness of this opinion, for after Genoa and The Hague, Chicherin, still the head of the Soviet Foreign Office, did not change his attitude of scepticism and suspicion toward the chancelleries of the rest of the world. He did not agree with his more sanguine comrades that Europe must see that helping the rehabilitation of Soviet Russia was in Europe's own interest, and therefore reconciliation was probable. The inevitability of the co-existence of the two economic systems was admitted by the other Powers, that was true, but still the road to collaboration based on mutual trust and supported by real good will was blocked.

Actually, after the failure of Genoa and The Hague, the Bolsheviks had to realize that they were thrown back on their own resources. They would have to shoulder the entire burden of reconstruction of the national economy themselves. For this gigantic task they needed peace above all, and they doubled their efforts toward securing this peace.

The Moscow Conference on Limitation of Armaments. At the opening of the Genoa Conference Chicherin had declared that

³⁷ Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

"Russia desires to contribute to the consolidation of peace, and therefore intends to propose the general reduction of armaments and to support every proposition which tends to lighten the burden of militarism." Before going to Genoa, the Russians had signed at Riga a Protocol with Estonia, Latvia and Poland, by which the signatories not only declared that they sincerely desired peace, and recommended the settlement of disputes by pacific means, but also agreed to give full support to the principle of the reduction of armaments.

Chicherin's suggestion, which had been vigorously opposed by the French delegate Barthou and had been unsupported by the others, had not even been discussed at the plenary session.

But the question of peace continued to be of the greatest importance to the Soviet State. According to Mr. Litvinov, from the time the Decree on Peace had been issued by the new regime, immediately after its advent to power, up to 1921, Soviet Russia made no less than twenty peace proposals to various Powers. Impoverished by war, revolution, intervention, all accompanied by the destruction of industries and then by famine, the young republic was naturally anxious to obtain security and to reduce the heavy burden of armaments. Therefore, soon after the Genoa fiasco Russia, in an effort to achieve some practical results through negotiations, invited her immediate neighbors to a conference on limitation of armaments.

The Conference was convoked at Moscow and started its deliberations on December 2, 1922. The border states, after the invitation to confer, had met several times and had determined upon their policy at the conference, so they came as a united group.

The Chairman of the Soviet delegation to the Conference, Maxim Litvinov, in his speech at the opening session explained the Russian proposal "to establish a definite plan for the reciprocal reduction of military effectives, a plan based on the reduction of its army by two hundred thousand men on the condition that there be a reciprocal reduction of the armies of the states on the western boundary of Soviet Russia." The Russian draft of a convention was discussed and approved.

Then representatives of the border states offered their drafts. Poland, from the very beginning, demonstrated its unwillingness to achieve any results. Her delegate, Prince Janus Radzi-

will, advocated action under the auspices of the League of Nations. Article IV of the draft presented by him on December 4, said: "If during the period in which the present convention is in force a treaty of mutual defensive guarantee or of general reduction of armaments should come to be concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations by the signatory States members of the League, the present convention will remain in force in so far as it shall not be in contravention of the provisions of the said treaty of guarantee or general disarmament."³⁸ The Prince, naturally, knew that Russia neither was a member of the august body at Geneva, nor approved of it.

That was rather a bad start. The Baltic Republics presented their drafts and amendments, too. They were willing to agree. Moscow believed that an agreement on disarmament with the latter states was possible, but suspected that they would not demonstrate enough independence from Poland, and would therefore follow her lead. On a number of occasions Poland's small neighbors had followed in her steps.

The Polish stand reflected the French thesis of "security first." All the guests actually were more interested in political guarantees (they wanted to be certain that their newly acquired independence would not be imperiled). On the other hand Soviet Russia, after her painful experience with armed intervention, was primarily interested in disarmament and a guarantee against repetition of the attacks on her borders. Gradually the united front of the border states became evident: they all wanted security first, and would not discuss disarmament seriously without previously clearing up the political atmosphere.

The Conference lasted only ten days, and was dissolved without practical results. Poland and the Baltic States insisted that the decision on disarmament should be postponed for several months, and should be placed in the hands of military experts. The Russians regarded this simply as a ruse to evade the real issue. Without any agreement on the main issue, that is, disarmament, the convention also remained unsigned; and the entire venture ended in a fiasco.

Still, in the opinion of Professor Malbone W. Graham, it was not completely without useful results:

³⁸ *International Conciliation Series, op. cit.*, pp. 395-396.

"The net gains from the discussions at Moscow lay in the definition of the Russian attitude toward two basic problems in connection with security: (1) action in case of aggression, and (2) the application of sanctions of the League of Nations. In the draft proposal for a non-aggression treaty, Russia provided that in case of aggression by third States against signatories, the contracting parties were to give no assistance to the aggressor. In a subsequent article, dealing with aggression by one contracting party against another signatory, the remaining signatories were pledged to give no aid, directly or indirectly, to the aggressor. In no case was mutual assistance provided for or any alliance suggested, hence all that can be construed from the proposal is that Russia intended the various signatories, in the respective cases, to follow a policy of differential neutrality, more severe toward the aggressor than the defender, and particularly severe toward what must be, in the eyes of Moscow, a covenant-breaking state."³⁹

In the opinion of another observer, Louis Fischer, the Conference produced a better feeling between Russia and Lithuania, and more understanding between Russia and Estonia, Latvia and Finland. But Moscow's relations with Poland suffered. Relations with still another neighbor, Rumania (who was not invited to the Moscow Conference) continued to be bad. In 1921 Poland entered into an alliance with Rumania, who wanted to protect her spoil, Bessarabia, the annexation of which was recognized by the Powers in 1920. Soviet Russia never recognized it; she had protested strenuously to the annexation, as well as the "recognition" by the Powers.⁴⁰

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Formed. The years between 1921 and 1923 were extremely hard for the Soviet Republic of Russia. She suffered from famine which grew to unprecedented severity. She suffered from war with Poland and pressure by others, who expected to take advantage of Russia's plight to squeeze concessions out of her which would cripple her economically for years to come. She failed to secure recognition by the great Powers; she did not score in any of the conferences, to which by the end of that time she was being invited. But still she emerged out of this turbulent period with a considerable

³⁹ *International Conciliation Series, op. cit.*, pp. 356-7.

⁴⁰ See footnote 30, Chapter II.

gain. At the end of 1922, the parts of the former Russian Empire were reintegrated into one country, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In December, 1922, the First All-Union Congress of Soviets was held at which, on the proposal of Lenin and Stalin, a voluntary state union of the Soviet nations was formed—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). Originally, the U.S.S.R. comprised the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, (R.S.F.S.R.), the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (T.S.F.S.R.), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukr. S.S.R.) and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (B.S.S.R.). Somewhat later, three independent Union Soviet Republics—the Uzbek, Turkmen and Tadjik—were formed in Central Asia. All these and several other republics now constitute a union of Soviet States—U.S.S.R.—each of them reserving the right to secede freely from the Union.⁴¹

The formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics meant the consolidation of Soviet power. Consequently, the position of the Soviet State on the international arena also became more secure and its role in the affairs of the world became more important.

⁴¹*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 261.

CHAPTER IV

Pacts of Neutrality and Non-Aggression

Establishment of Commercial and Diplomatic Relations. Locarno Treaties. Treaty of Berlin. Strange Happenings. Principle of Peaceful Coexistence. Kellogg Pact and Litvinov Protocol.

Establishment of Commercial and Diplomatic Relations. The Soviet-British Trade Agreement of 1921 served as a signal for other Powers to consider trade relations with the U.S.S.R. When, in 1921, the New Economic Policy (NEP) had been inaugurated by Moscow, many foreigners supposed that it signaled the scrapping of Communism and the reintroduction of private capitalism in the Soviet State. Genoa and The Hague forced a revision of that erroneous impression. Nevertheless, the development of commercial relations with that country was still a possibility.

Along with commercial intercourse, diplomatic relations would inevitably have to be established, and they actually were established by one Power after another. The year 1924 witnessed the largest number of "recognitions" of the Soviet regime. The richest country, the United States, could afford to ignore the Soviet market longer than the others; eventually even the U.S.A. began developing trade there, and by 1933 joined the rest in a *de jure* recognition of the U.S.S.R.

The American Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, in March, 1923, made a statement admitting the apparent stability of the Soviet Government, but at the same time declared that relations of confidence would be impossible "as long as that Government persisted in propaganda and debt repudiation."¹ Commenting on this statement, Moscow pointed out that at Genoa and The Hague the Soviet offered to settle the debts and therefore, obviously, the debts were not the real issue.

About the same time Great Britain advanced a new reason for opposition to the Soviet regime. This time it was its anti-religion. Displeased with Russian activities in Asia (Persia and

¹Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

Afghanistan), and also disappointed with the results of the Trade Agreement, on May 2, 1923, Lord Curzon presented the Russians with a ten-day ultimatum. The diplomatic barrage that preceded that ultimatum dealt with neither the debt question nor Communist propaganda, but with anti-religious persecution. This new "tune" continued in vogue for a long time.

In March, 1923, Cardinal Ciepliak, Monsignor Butkevich and a number of Polish Roman-Catholic priests, were brought to trial in Moscow on the accusation of espionage and various treasonous activities during the Civil War, and especially the Soviet-Polish War of 1920. The Soviet Government insisted that this trial was in no wise anti-religious, but purely on the counter-revolutionary, i.e. political activities, of these priests. The conciliatory tone of the Soviet reply to the ultimatum served to close the incident.

Whatever the objections or excuses for non-recognition, the Soviet Union could not be ignored on many problems in the international field. Late in 1922 Moscow was invited to send delegates to a conference at Lausanne where the status of the Dardanelles was to be discussed. The Conference opened in November, 1922, and lasted until February of the next year. The Russians not only were present but played a prominent role, taking the stand that the Straits should be closed in case of war. The other Powers wanted them open in time of peace as well as in time of war. On this occasion Great Britain and Soviet Russia reversed their stand as compared with the past, when Tsarist Russia insisted on keeping the Straits open, while England traditionally opposed it. During World War I the Allies promised the Tsar's Government that Constantinople would belong to Russia, but now the situation was very different. The U.S.S.R. was weak and had no aggressive designs; naturally it was interested in preventing others from entering the Black Sea with naval forces and so endangering peace in that region. But the Soviet Government was not yet strong enough to secure what it wanted. Turkey, exhausted by war, also was not in a position to resist the demands of the Powers. Failing to agree, the Conference adjourned. But, in April, negotiations with Turkey were resumed by the Powers. Russia was not invited, and sent a protest. The Soviet envoy to Rome, Vorovsky, went to Lausanne, but before he was able to achieve

anything he was assassinated by a Russian emigré. The murderer was later acquitted by a Swiss court, whereupon the Soviets refused to send any of their delegates to international gatherings in Switzerland until 1927 when the Swiss Government finally apologized.

Although the Lausanne Conference failed to bring the results sought by the Russians, it served as an approach to more regular relations with other Powers. It also demonstrated that the Soviet State had at its disposal diplomats of the first caliber.

“Chicherin’s brilliance and deftness of argument and his lightning repartee in all Western tongues astonished the conference and the world that watched it with concern. Equalled only by Curzon among post-war statesmen in his command of the historical, ethnographical and geographical facts of the situation under discussion, Chicherin enjoyed the advantage of humour and of impersonal approach.”²

In 1923, when France, taking advantage of revolutionary developments in Germany, occupied the Ruhr district, the Russians vigorously denounced it. The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs even went so far as to call the occupation a crime. Chicherin considered it a menace to the political and economic life of all Europe and thus of great harm to the Soviet State, which required the establishment of economic relations with the rest of the world.

The revolutionary situation in Germany was not simply a severe test of the Soviet-German relations established at Rapallo; it was a situation full of dynamite. Poland and Czechoslovakia seemed to be ready to take advantage of it by annexing German lands. Moscow was suspicious of the stand taken by France. Was not France conniving at the establishment of a Communist regime in Germany in the expectation that economic collapse and territorial disintegration might follow?³

The Soviet Union actually saved the situation for Germany by keeping Germany’s eastern neighbor, Poland, from attempting any violation of German soil by the tacit threat of moving the Red Army. Moscow did not contemplate the sovietization of Germany, nor at that time expect this would happen by itself. But soon her policy *vis-à-vis* Germany changed. The Left and

² Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 401

³ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-452.

the Right elements in Germany felt the need for decisive measures, and Moscow then decided to take sides. Belief that the revolution would succeed there prompted this change. But the German revolution did not win, and, as a result, the relations between Moscow and Berlin became considerably cooler.

The year 1924 introduced a relatively pacific atmosphere into Europe, and that fact plus the improvement of Russia's economic position opened a new era of more normal relations between Soviet Russia and the rest of the world.

"It became unwise and detrimental to hold Russia outside the pale, and thus postpone pacification of Europe. The Western world began seriously to think of putting its house in order. The Russian market was expected to yield rich fruits. The previous policies of capitalist states *vis-a-vis* Soviet Russia had achieved nothing but harm. Intervention, blockade, commercial embargoes, financial boycotts, and insistence on debt payments and property restitution had brought the Powers nothing. . . . Perhaps the strongest impulse to the establishment of more normal diplomatic relations was the marked improvement in Russia's economic conditions."⁴

By that time it was plain that the Soviet Union had been able to win a prolonged breathing space, a period of peace. This insured the possibility of further stabilization of the Soviet regime, particularly in the economic life of the country.

"The international situation had undergone a change. Capitalism had withstood the first revolutionary onslaught of the masses after the imperialist war. The revolutionary movement in Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland and a number of other countries had been crushed. . . . There began a partial stabilization of capitalism. . . . Parallel with the stabilization of capitalism, proceeded the stabilization of the Soviet Union. But these two processes of stabilization were fundamentally different in character. Capitalist stabilization pre-saged a new crisis of capitalism. The stabilization of the Soviet Union meant a further growth of the economic and political might of the Socialist country. Despite the defeat of the revolution in the West, the position of the Soviet Union in the international arena continued to grow stronger, although, it is true, at a slower rate. . . ."⁵

⁴ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

⁵ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 270-271.

On February 4, 1924, Great Britain recognized *de jure* the Soviet Government and thereby broke the diplomatic blockade instituted by the great Powers. Three days later Italy followed England's example. On the fifteenth of the same month Norway followed suit and on the twenty-fifth—Austria. In succession other countries gave their recognition: in March, Greece, Sweden and Hedjas; on May 31, China; in June, Denmark; in August, Mexico and on October 28, France. The following year, on January 20, 1925, a Convention with Japan ended the long period of enmity in the Far East.

Russia's foreign trade in 1924 almost doubled in value that of the previous year, and reached the five hundred and forty-eight million rubles mark. In June of 1924 Chicherin declared: "Our Red Army, the chervonetz⁶ and grain exports were the chief factors in strengthening the political situation of the Soviet Union."

In January, 1924, Lenin died; it was a great loss for the Soviet country, but by then it had become stabilized to a considerable extent and was working smoothly enough to allow an uninterrupted continuation of the work started by the leader. Although Lenin had been directing the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R., it was shaped on principles well established by the Party of which he was the head, and therefore the same policy was followed even after his death. "Lenin's tactics consisted in exploiting the contradictions between capitalist governments," writes Louis Fischer.⁷

At the time of the Prinkipo invitation Lenin had outlined his policy of an appeal in the name of economic advantages, and advised that less favorable terms be offered after the original were not accepted. This became a guiding principle for the Narcomindel. For instance, the terms offered at The Hague Conference were recalled after a few months. Concessions suggested in the early part of the Revolution were subsequently withdrawn.⁸

One of the questions that the U.S.S.R. was faced with after the introduction of NEP was:⁹ Should and could it build a

⁶ Chervonetz—a gold monetary unit equal to ten rubles.

⁷ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

⁹ See Chapter III on the New Economic Policy, i.e., NEP.

socialist economy in one country? The Communist Party contended it could. The other question was: Could the Soviet people by their own efforts forestall the danger of new interventions in the U.S.S.R.? To this the Party answered:

“They could not, because in order to destroy the danger of capitalist intervention the capitalist encirclement would have to be destroyed; and the latter could be destroyed only as a result of victorious proletarian revolutions in at least several countries.”¹⁰

In other words, both sides, the socialist state and the capitalist states, wanted to find a *modus-vivendi*, to live and let others live.

The program of industrialization and modernization, upon which the Soviet Government had embarked, entailed a great need for foreign machinery and the assistance of foreign experts. Before 1924 it was widely believed in the United States (such was the attitude of Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, and many officials) that only the abjuration of Communism in Russia and compensation for the confiscated property could restore American confidence in that country. But even by then a sizable business intercourse had developed between the United States and the Soviets.

Now Litvinov declared “Soviet policy is: recognition must be unconditional; first the declaration of *de jure* recognition, then we may discuss debts, trade, concessions, etc.” But the United States continued to refuse any contact with the Soviet Government and was not in a mood to grant it the desired recognition. On the other hand even those who did recognize the Soviet regime did not become its friends.

Locarno Treaties. In December, 1924, Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Secretary, met the new French Premier, Herriot, and here is what the Paris *Matin* published about that meeting:

“We must, say the British, anticipate a situation when it will be necessary to break with the Soviets and exert pressure on them. Russia has become the Soviet Union, which means that she is militarily less powerful than Tsarist Russia, but she is more dangerous on ac-

¹⁰ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 274.

count of the contagion of her doctrines. . . . Lloyd George and MacDonald thought that the Soviet could be trusted. The new Minister (Chamberlain) does not think so. He does not propose to declare war, but he considers them as an enemy most to be feared in many parts of the world."¹¹

Considering the authority of the League of Nations inadequate, and seeking more security, for it was feared that another war was probable, some members of the League conceived the idea of adding the principle of compulsory arbitration, which was combined with that of security, in their draft of the so-called Geneva Protocol. But the Protocol was not accepted. A short time after this rejection of a universally acceptable agreement, the German Government advanced the idea of a multilateral security agreement, which would pledge no war only between Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. This plan met with the approval of others, and accordingly a Conference was convoked at Locarno in October, 1925 to discuss it.

The meeting resulted in five treaties: four of them provided for pacific settlement of disputes between Germany and her neighbors, France, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia; the fifth was the treaty signed by Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, guaranteeing inviolability of the frontiers between Germany, Belgium and France. (Not of Poland.)

This was the first international conference after Versailles in which defeated Germany was treated as an equal.

In spite of opposition at home, and the vigorous protests of the Soviet representatives, Berlin ratified these agreements on November 27, 1925. Three days later at London they were solemnly declared in force, and became the basis for European policies until it was no longer possible to pretend that they really meant a new "Spirit of Locarno," which came to take the place of the spirit of Versailles.

The Soviet Union realized that the Locarno agreement was conceived by her enemies, who sought, after Rapallo, to drag Germany away from Russia, to create a wedge between the two. But all the efforts of Chicherin to persuade Berlin not to ratify the Locarno documents failed, for Germany wanted to play on both sides.

¹¹ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp 578-579

Chicherin asserted that the agreement gave the British Government an opportunity to exert powerful pressure upon Germany, as a result of which Germany might be forced, against her will, to change her attitude toward the Soviet Government.

The Treaty of Berlin. At the time of voting for the ratification of the Locarno agreements the Reichstag instructed the Government to ask for the admission of Germany to the League of Nations. In its early session of 1926 the League failed to agree to grant this demand. This affront served to prompt the signing of an agreement between Germany and the U.S.S.R. On April 26, 1926, they signed, at Berlin, the Treaty of Neutrality, which to some extent compensated Moscow for Locarno.¹²

This treaty strengthened the Rapallo understanding and accordingly the harm of Locarno was somewhat remedied. By this pact, Germany and the Soviet Union expressed their determination "to remain in friendly touch with one another, to ensure mutual understanding on all questions of political or economic importance and to remain neutral in case the other is the victim of unprovoked attack . . . should a coalition be formed between third parties for the purpose of imposing upon one of the contracting parties an economic or financial boycott, the other contracting party undertakes not to adhere to such coalition."

After the Treaty of Locarno was signed, Chicherin was anxious to find out how the plans of Russia's enemies could be forestalled. One of the methods for achieving this was to build a barrier between them and his own country, a barrier erected upon definite understanding with Russia's neighbors. In arranging the Berlin Treaty, he, undoubtedly, had this in mind. Realizing how difficult it was under the circumstances of widespread hostility to achieve any degree of solidarity between capitalist and socialist systems, let alone whole-hearted cooperation, the Soviet State had to seek some measure of security through agreements promising at least neutrality and non-aggression. The Treaty of Berlin was exactly that kind of promise.

¹² *League of Nations Treaties Series*, LIII, pp. 392-393.

“The new formula of the Soviet Government in its security policy thus became the trilogy ‘Non-intervention, non-aggression, neutrality.’ As crystallized in the various securities it struck directly at the vitals of the Locarno system with its provisions of an interventionist, coercive, belligerent character . . . the security treaties, it can be seen . . . are distinct regional understandings for maintenance of peace; they comprise, in the aggregate, a series of organic relationships constituting the frame work of a state system within which the Soviet Union makes its terms with a stabilized capitalist world.”¹³

Even before the Treaty of Berlin was signed, Moscow began building this barrier by concluding an agreement with Turkey on December 17, 1925. This agreement known as the Treaty of Paris, guaranteed to the two neighbors non-aggression and neutrality, i.e., assurance of freedom from the menace of war on their common frontiers. For the U.S.S.R. this assurance was a check against the dangers implied by the Convention signed at Lausanne in 1923 establishing the freedom of passage through the Straits of Turkey.

With these two basic treaties concluded, Moscow began building a series of others. In August, 1926, Russia signed one with Afghanistan (Treaty of Pergham). On December 28 she signed one with Lithuania (Treaty of Moscow). Later on, in 1927, a similar neutrality accord was reached with Latvia (but it remained unsigned), and with Persia the “most elaborate and far-reaching of the early treaties negotiated by Soviet diplomats”¹⁴ was signed at Moscow on October 1, 1927.

The entire security system that was being built by the U.S.S.R. was based on the following principles: (a) a mutual pledge of neutrality in the event of military action involving third powers; (b) a pledge to abstain from attack upon one another, i.e., the principle of non-aggression; (c) a pledge of non-participation in alliances, agreements and combinations designed to embarrass one of the contracting parties politically, militarily or economically, and the non-participation in any hostile acts directed against the other party; and finally (d) a promise to arrange for a method of settling differences between the contracting parties, that is, a pledge of pacific settlement.

¹³ Malbone W. Graham, *International Conciliation Series, op cit*, pp 25-26.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Strange Happenings. While relations between the Soviet Union and Germany were improved by the Treaty of Berlin, those between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain had been deteriorating since 1925. The Tory Government, headed by Stanley Baldwin, who had come to power with the clearly established help of the so-called "Zinoviev letter" (a crude forgery), accused Moscow of continuing Communist propaganda and complained of the financial help which had been received by striking miners of England from Soviet trade unions. Step by step these frictions resulted in the breaking of relations in May, 1927.

As for Moscow authorities, they considered that London's policy after Locarno systematically tended toward antagonizing the other Powers against the U.S.S.R. with the aim of eventually encircling the Soviet State.

"The *coup d'état* of Pilsudski of May, 1926; Sir Austen Chamberlain's understanding with Mussolini in September, 1926, and the Fascist coup in Lithuania the same December, were each accepted as fresh evidence of the designs of the Powers."¹⁵

Late in February, 1927, the British Foreign Office sent a new note to the Soviet Government complaining about propaganda and violations of the Trade Agreement of 1921. The note also warned Russia that continuance of its policy might lead to severance of relations. To this Moscow replied with a demand that England present concrete cases to support her accusations and in turn warned the British that their Government would be held responsible for any cessation of Anglo-Soviet relations.

Around that time some strange things began to happen. On April 9, 1927, the Soviet Embassy at Peking was raided by the police with the consent of the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. In Warsaw, on June 6, 1927, the Soviet Minister, Voikov, was assassinated by a Russian emigré, and (similar to the case at Lausanne in 1923, when another Soviet envoy, Vorovsky, was assassinated) the culprit was dealt with by the Polish authorities with leniency.

After her war with Soviet Russia in 1920, and her illegal seizure of Vilna, Poland endeavored to build a bloc of Baltic states with a spearhead aimed at Moscow. Owing to the stand

¹⁵ See footnote 30, Chapter II.

taken by Finland, this bloc never materialized. After 1925 Poland had even suspended, for a while, her efforts in that direction. It looked as though the relations with the U.S.S.R. were improving. In 1926 a group of Polish parliamentarians even visited the Soviet Union with the expectation of further improving relations and developing trade. But in May of that year Pilsudski's *coup d'état* took place and again Soviet-Polish relations began to deteriorate. The assassination of the Soviet Minister at Warsaw, Voikov, naturally strained them further.

This led to a discussion at Geneva of Germany's attitude in the event of a Soviet-Polish war. Sir Austen Chamberlain inquired whether Berlin would permit the transfer of troops to Poland through Germany. This query remained unanswered, but the crisis was adjusted without any armed conflict.

In May, 1927, the famous raid on the Soviet Trade Delegation's headquarters and its trade organization, Arcos, Ltd., of London, took place. "The Arcos raid was pathetic—a tragic-comic melodrama," wrote Ramsay MacDonald in the *Daily Express* of May 25, 1927. The search was barren of any serious results. Nothing really incriminating the Soviet authorities was found. Lloyd George ridiculed this raid in a bitingly sarcastic speech in Parliament.

One week later diplomatic and commercial relations were broken. Moscow protested the raid as a flagrant violation of the diplomatic immunity accorded, in the Treaty of 1921, to the official trade agents. But the only answer to its protest was the rupture of relations.

The case of Great Britain was not an exception, though she was probably the leader in this large-scale anti-Soviet crusade.

Relations with France also were worsening. Attempts to settle the question of debts were unavailing. In September, 1927, after one of the numerous changes in the government, French authorities asserted that the Soviet Ambassador, Rakovsky, had signed a Manifesto of the Third International, calling upon the workers to revolt against capitalist governments. Moscow disavowed this act. Then Rakovský was accused of publishing "false" news about the debt negotiations, and the French Government demanded his recall. Rakovsky was recalled, and as a result, relations were not broken.

Undoubtedly all these "strange happenings" were directly

related to events in China. The revolutionary situation there was of obvious concern to the Westerners. The Soviet Union was accused of promoting it. Dr. Sun Yat-sen had invited Russian advisers to China in 1923, and their work worried the Powers. Michael Borodin, the political adviser, became a guiding spirit and was considered an extremist, though a study of his activities shows he was not. The military advisers from the U.S.S.R. undoubtedly played an important role in making the Northern expedition of the Nationalist South a success.

But at that juncture the Chinese leaders were not alarmed at all. In his public speech at the Pan-Asiatic Congress at Tokyo, in November, 1924, Dr. Sun Yat-sen said:

“Russia believes in benevolence and righteousness, not in force and Utilitarianism. She is an exponent of justice, and does not believe in the principle that a minority should oppress a majority. Naturally, Russia comes to link hands with the Asiatics and breaks her family ties with the West. The Europeans, fearing that the Russians may succeed in carrying out these new principles, heap condemnations upon her as a rebel against the civilized world.”¹⁶

Borodin's draft of a program for the Kuomintang Party, which was adopted at its First Congress in January, 1924, showed quite clearly that he did not advocate socialism for China, and certainly not a Communist regime. Stalin and his followers at that time protested against any attempts to sovietize China (opposing Trotzky and his group). In the opinion of Stalin and the majority of the Party, China was ready only for a nationalist-democratic and anti-imperialist revolution. But even that was enough to worry the Westerners and cause them to intensify their intrigues against the U.S.S.R. Therefore the raids in Peking and elsewhere. Therefore the intensified attacks on the Soviet regime.

After the break of relations with Great Britain the international position of the U.S.S.R. was seriously worsened. Trade became insecure and exceedingly expensive, for credit, if available at all, carried high interest charges, and prices set on goods sold to Russia were exorbitant. Neither international law nor the usual practices were guaranteed to the Soviets.

¹⁶ Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

If raids of their diplomatically immune premises, such as those at Peking and London, were possible, there was no limit to what the hostile outsiders could do to damage the Soviet State. Also, there was even no secure way for her representatives to exchange information or to receive instructions, for there were no secrets that could not be intercepted with the tolerance, if not encouragement, of foreign officials. How could any one talk of normal relations, when even the lives of the Soviet diplomats abroad were endangered? How could one pretend that law must be honored, decency in intercourse among nations be practiced?

It was only natural in such circumstances that Moscow for a while preferred to remain aloof from international entanglements. Therefore the Soviet Government continued to refuse to consider entrance into the League of Nations, although prompted on numerous occasions to do so by various European statesmen.

Principle of Peaceful Co-Existence. As early as December, 1925, the League of Nations invited the Soviet Government to participate in the Preparatory Disarmament Conference called for February, 1926, at Geneva. Moscow expressed its interest, but declined to send delegates to Geneva because the Swiss authorities had recently acquitted the murderer of Vorovsky. In April, 1927, Switzerland made acceptable amends, and thereby made it possible for Moscow to revise its stand. Soon after that, Russia sent her delegation to attend the International Economic Conference held at Geneva in the spring of 1927.

The breaking of relations with London, together with the unpleasant events described above in other countries seriously affected Soviet standing in the world. But not for long. The Soviet Union's economic strength was growing, in spite of all the outside pressure. The outsiders were not in a position to hinder the normal economic life of the world just for the sake of gaining some short-lived political triumphs over a new system that was struggling for its right to exist.

The Soviet State, embarking on a very ambitious plan of industrialization, constituted such a tremendous opportunity for commercial enterprise that, whatever the efforts of the anti-Soviet plotters abroad, the relations with that country could

not remain unadjusted for a very long time. They had to be normalized, and that was clear not to the Russians alone.

Germany was the most interested neighbor, and her stand proved to be beneficial to the rest. After Versailles and in particular after the Rapallo Pact (with the exception of a short period, when the "Spirit of Locarno" prevailed) Berlin had to rely on the U.S.S.R. almost exclusively. This policy paid handsome dividends to the Germans, and it prompted other countries to start business relations with the U.S.S.R. But through the state monopoly of foreign trade Moscow was able to encourage or discourage trade with various countries. Moscow actually used this weapon as a reprisal for political and other harmful acts of foreign states, and often with rather good results for the Soviets.

Even the richest country in the world, the U.S.A., was not exempt, although she, naturally, could balk for a longer period than the less economically strong states.

In his message to Congress on December 6, 1923, President Coolidge declared:

"Whenever there appears any disposition to compensate our citizens who were despoiled, and to recognize that debt contracted with our government, not by the Tsar, but by the newly formed republic of Russia (meaning the Provisional Government, not the Bolsheviks, of course. V.Y.), whenever the active spirit of enmity to our institutions is abated . . . our country ought to be the first to go to the economic and moral rescue of Russia. We have every desire to help and no desire to injure. We hope the time is near at hand when we can act."

The Soviet Government "did not expect moral rescue at the hands of Mr. Coolidge," commented Louis Fischer, "but it interpreted his statement as a bid for relations," and Chicherin addressed a note to the President, expressing the readiness of the Soviet Government to discuss all problems mentioned in his message. These negotiations, elucidated the Commissar, should be based on mutual non-intervention in internal affairs. But Secretary Hughes replied with a "bluntly discourteous note" (to use the words of the late Senator Norris), declining any negotiations as long as propaganda persisted.

Nevertheless, business relations were developing even with-

out any blessings from the officials of the State Department. The most hostile elements (among which were the American Federation of Labor, the American Legion, the hierarchy of the Roman-Catholic Church and some business and banking concerns) were unable to prevent what was dictated by the realistic approach of those who were dealing with the economic life of the country.

While Russian-American trade in 1913, the last year before World War I, amounted to only forty-eight million dollars, and seven years after the October Revolution, in 1923-24, again was about the same (fifty-five), in 1924-25 it was already over one hundred and eighteen and in 1927-28 over one hundred and eleven million dollars, with almost 90 per cent of this representing American exports to the U.S.S.R.

American businessmen became rivals of the Germans. Such large concerns as Standard Oil had been in business with Russia since 1924, Soviet oil having been used for Near-Eastern markets. General Electric granted large credits to Moscow in 1928. Henry Ford had a large contract, too. Harriman had a concession in Chiaturi, the famous manganese fields. Colonel Hugh Cooper was engaged by Moscow as a consulting engineer on the dam then being built on the Dnieper River. Numerous other American experts in various technical fields were working for the Soviet Union.

While some British interests, like those of Sir Henry Deterding of the Royal Dutch and Shell Oil, and Urquart (who lost his concessions in Russia and wanted them back) were among the most active anti-Soviet intriguers, other British interests wanted business with Russia, whatever her regime. British co-operative societies, for instance, advanced millions of pounds sterling to Siberian butter and dairying co-operatives. British imports of Caucasian oil increased. But Soviet purchases in Great Britain sharply declined after the break in relations. While in 1925-26 they amounted to well over twenty million pounds, in 1927-28 they were less than six million.

By that time Soviet credit was already established. The business world learned that Moscow was scrupulous in carrying out its contracts and prompt in paying its obligations. The Germans, probably, were the first to realize the advantages of being friendly with the U.S.S.R. That is why at that juncture they

were not eager to become partners in the schemes against the Soviets of those who were responsible for the Versailles "Diktat."

For a time German bankers (who never developed any enthusiasm for the Soviet system) had created difficulties. This was partly because of their dependence upon the City of London, partly because, considering themselves monopolists in Russian trade, they wanted to charge the Bolsheviks exorbitant interest (13½ per cent). When the Russians in their search for credit turned in other directions (the Harriman project, etc.), the Germans hastened to arrange for better terms. While in 1926-27 Soviet-German trade amounted to three hundred and twenty-five million marks, in 1927-28 it was over four hundred and thirty million, with exports from Germany making up 60 per cent of the total.

Under pressure from London, Pilsudski's Poland was also considering a break with the Soviet Union, but again business considerations prevented it. Pilsudski and his "colonels' clique," together with some devoted friends of the British Tories, were politically and economically powerful enough to protract an abnormal situation, but eventually had to give up before economic necessity. A treaty regulating Soviet-Polish relations was finally agreed upon, although the signing of this understanding was suspended by the assassination of Voikov, the Soviet envoy at Warsaw.

Similarly a treaty of non-aggression and neutrality initialed, as we have seen, by the Latvian and Soviet representatives in March, 1927, remained unsigned, for the British break with Moscow took place. Geneva, at that time, was frowning on the successes of the U.S.S.R., and the Latvian Government, in the meantime, had changed.

When the Soviet delegates arrived at Geneva to attend the Economic Conference, in the spring of 1927, they urged a cessation of all forms of political and economic boycott against the U.S.S.R. and the establishment of relations based upon the recognition of the inevitable co-existence of the socialist and capitalist systems. This principle was duly accepted by the Conference. The Russian formula was:

"Considering the great importance of the full participation of the U.S.S.R. in world trade, the Conference recommends that all the

states develop their relations with the U.S.S.R. on the basis of a peaceful co-existence of two different economic systems.”¹⁷

After a discussion another formula was submitted by the American delegate, and accepted by the rest. It read:

“The Conference, recognizing the importance of renewal of world trade, refraining absolutely from infringing upon political questions, regards the participation of members of all the countries present, irrespective of differences in their economic systems, as a happy augury for a pacific commercial co-operation of all nations.”¹⁸

When we remember that this discussion took place while the strange happenings described above were in full swing, the formulas themselves were hardly more than an expression of good intentions. Still, the mere admission that co-existence of the two systems was the order of the day was a step forward.

At that time, if there was any peaceful co-existence with Russia, it was on her eastern frontiers. European developments did not affect the friendly relations established by Moscow with Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia and Mongolia. In November, 1927, they all sent their delegates to the celebration at Moscow of the tenth anniversary of the Soviet regime. This was a demonstration aimed against the Westerners.

Near the end of 1927 a Soviet expert on Near-Eastern affairs wrote:

“The British policy of hostile coalitions, of boycotting and isolating the U.S.S.R., beats from the Mediterranean to the frontiers of India against an uninterrupted wall of treaties of neutrality and non-participation in boycotts and hostile coalitions. Born of an imperialist war, the imperialist League of Nations entrains in its destiny the decline of imperialism. In sowing intrigues and war it reaps the fruits of its own ruin. Born of the October Revolution, the new system of international relations finds more and more partisans and reinforces its international authority. The new Soviet-Eastern peace, appreciated and sustained by the laboring masses of the entire world, easily and simply unmask and reverses all the hypo-

¹⁷ *League of Nations Report and Proceedings of the World Economic Conference*, I, 56, quoted from Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

critical projects of the imperialist League of Nations, which are destined to deceive the small and weak nations. . . ." ¹⁹

The exception among her Oriental neighbors at this time was China, with whose new anti-Soviet regime of Chiang Kai-shek, formed in 1927, Moscow had no relations for a number of years. This, however, did not reflect the feelings of the Chinese or Soviet peoples. Officially, Japan was on speaking terms with the U.S.S.R., without ever demonstrating any approval of Russia's new regime. As for the people of the country of the Rising Sun, it was not possible for them to express their feelings.

The Kellogg Pact and Litvinov Protocol. As we have seen, the amends offered by the Swiss Government in April, 1927, made it possible for the Russians to attend various international gatherings at Geneva.

In November, 1927, the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference met at Geneva, and the Russian delegates were present.

The chief Soviet delegate, Maxim Litvinov, submitted on that occasion his country's plan for general and complete disarmament. After a few speeches the discussion of this plan was postponed till the next session of the Commission.

At the next session of the same Commission, held in March, 1928, Litvinov elaborated on the detailed draft of a convention for disarmament. But the project was rejected by the Commission, which asserted that this plan was incompatible with the Covenant and was impractical at the moment.

The Soviet delegation presented, therefore, on March 23, 1928, a new project, namely, for partial disarmament, as the first step in anticipation of more drastic measures in the future. But even this modest project was not accepted. Even its discussion was put off till the next session, without fixing its date.

In the meantime the Kellogg-Briand Pact, outlawing war as an instrument of national policy, was signed at Paris on August 27, 1928. It also became known under another name, as the "Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War."

On December 10, 1928, Litvinov made a report to the

¹⁹ Iransky, in *Izvestia* of December 3, 1927, quoted by Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet, in which he asserted that the entire international situation was pointing toward a new world war. The Soviet Union's policy continued to be peace, and, in his opinion, the only guarantee of this would be in general disarmament. The Soviet delegation did all in its power to persuade the others at Geneva, but without any results. Instead of disarming, the Powers were busy creating military understandings and combining their forces for no other aim but war.

"Along with our offer of disarmament the suggestion of Mr. Kellogg about an international agreement renouncing war as an instrument of national policy was under discussion. Our Government criticized that pact as inadequate . . . our plans left no loopholes for any evasions . . . nevertheless, considering the fact that even under this pact the signatory states were undertaking certain moral obligations, the Soviet Union joined the others in signing it, and even was among the first to ratify the same."²⁰

In a note accompanying its formal adherence to the Kellogg Pact, the Soviet Government made certain remarks concerning the accomplishment of the purpose of the Pact:

"Without disarmament, or at least, without limitation of the steady development of armaments, the Pact will remain a dead letter without any reality . . . prohibition should include not only war in the technical sense of the word, but any unfriendly international operations, as, for example, intervention, blockade, or occupation of territories."²¹

Moscow realized that reservations made by certain states, like Great Britain, France and Japan, tending to restrict the application of the Kellogg Pact (excluding various parts of their Empires), were robbing it of any genuine meaning.²² But the Soviets also were suspicious of the delaying tactics of several

²⁰ Maxim M. Litvinov, *Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.* (in Russian; Moscow, 1935), pp. 3-23.

²¹ Eugene A. Korovin, "The U.S.S.R. and Disarmament," *International Conciliation Series*, September 1933, #292, p. 307.

²² Moscow was not consulted while the Kellogg-Briand Pact was in the process of formulation. There was even some hesitation among the Powers as to inviting Soviet Russia to adhere. Berlin insisted on inviting the U.S.S.R.

countries in postponing the ratification. While the Pact was being debated, some of them did not show any enthusiasm for it, and signed it only hesitatingly. That is why Russia decided to make an effort to hasten the validation of the document, and invited her neighbors to a conference at Moscow for the purpose of implementing the general agreement with some specific understandings.

The Soviet Premier, Rykov, in his address before the Supreme Soviet in May, 1929, said:

“We follow a policy which reflects the interests of workers and of the entire world, for those who suffer from war are not, obviously, the munition makers, but the workers and peasants, who form the armies. That always gave us a firm basis of principle for our determined policy of peace.”²³

Rich in territory and natural resources, the Soviet Union, busily engaged in construction and the development of those resources, was obviously not interested in any policy of conquest. From a friendly intercourse with other nations she expected to benefit, and was doing her best to prevent war, and to enjoy peaceful growth. All the unpleasant experiences of 1927 failed to provoke her into a war. Moscow worked for peace from the very inception of the new regime, but was well aware that it was an extremely difficult goal to achieve.

Before going to Geneva Litvinov made it plain that he did not trust the readiness or ability of imperialist states to achieve this end. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government did not shun any international attempts to lessen the burden of armaments and tried to do as much as possible to postpone, if it could not prevent, another armed clash.

“The Soviet Government pursues, firmly and unwaveringly, its policy of peace and of peaceful relations notwithstanding all the provocative moves of our enemies,” said Stalin.

In order to make the Kellogg Pact operative at once, at least in relation to her neighbors, especially Poland, Russia offered to sign a document which is known as the Litvinov Protocol, and which was actually signed on February 9, 1929.

²³ *Izvestia*, May 25, 1929.

Many times before the U.S.S.R. had offered Poland a neutrality and non-aggression pact, but in vain. Under various pretexts the Poles refused to sign any such agreement with the Russians. Now again Poland made it difficult; she wanted to act *en bloc* with the Baltic States, something she knew was opposed by Moscow. Only the advice of certain influential Americans who were worried by the financial troubles of Poland, who was spending more than half her budget on arms, forced the Poles to accept the Russian bid. Together with Estonia, Latvia and Rumania, Poland signed the Litvinov Protocol. Later on Turkey and Persia added their signatures. Finland and Lithuania abstained.

Before the end of the year 1929, another Protocol was signed by the Soviet representative at London. This was for the resumption of relations with Great Britain and negotiations to define the terms of a new treaty between the two.

Out of the period reviewed in the present chapter, Soviet Russia undoubtedly emerged much stronger not only economically and in regard to her internal situation, but especially in her international status. Most of the Powers had established trade and diplomatic relations with her, and many had signed neutrality and non-aggression pacts. She was not only invited to participate in numerous international conferences, but already was playing a prominent role in their deliberations. While the year 1927 proved to be full of serious difficulties, bringing not only numerous indignities to Moscow as well as great harm, crowned by the rupture of relations with Great Britain and near-ruptures with several other countries, the anti-Soviet intrigues failed to provoke war against the U.S.S.R., and by the end of that period it appeared as if the Moscow regime had reached a stage when peaceful co-existence with other states had become possible, even though it was not quite certain.²⁴

²⁴ For the Soviet Union the signing of Litvinov's Protocol meant a considerable diplomatic success. It marked the end of a period of constant rejection and humiliation, a period when Great Britain, the United States, China, Poland, France, even small countries like Denmark, Switzerland and Holland, had repeatedly showed their suspicion of, and contempt for, Soviet foreign policy. In the Protocol Soviet Russia had taken the initiative and assumed an important place in the diplomatic world, no matter how much Chamberlain, Kellogg, Briand, Stresemann and their coteries might dislike and resist it. (Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 255.)

CHAPTER V

Struggle for Security and Disarmament

The Chinese Conflict. World-Wide Economic Crisis. Disarmament Conference. Problem of International Police Force. Litvinov's Definition of Aggressor.

The Chinese Conflict. When Moscow joined the other Powers in signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and arranged to see it in operation even before all the signatories had completed its ratification, Russia could scarcely have foreseen that she would be the first to be reminded by the others of her obligations under that document. But, strangely enough, that was actually the case.

In 1929 the Manchurian war lords decided to try to take over the Chinese-Eastern Railway from its lawful owners, the Russians. In May, the Chinese had raided the Soviet Consulate at Harbin. In July of that year the Chinese seized that road under the pretext that the Russians were carrying on Communist propaganda in the Three Eastern Provinces.

On that occasion, Japanese authorities in Tokyo expressed their conviction that China did not possess any evidence of such activities of which either the Soviet consular officials in Manchuria or Russians working on that railway could be accused. Of course, the Japanese were more interested in blaming the Chinese than they were in defending the Russians, for the Japanese were building up an atmosphere to justify, in their opinion, their own aggressive plans in North China. Still their stand in this Sino-Soviet conflict was the correct one, as reports of several other foreign observers on the spot confirmed.

After the "strange happenings" described in the preceding chapter (the raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking and similar raids on Soviet Consulates in various other cities), there was reason to suspect foreign encouragement in this aggressive act of the Manchurian authorities.

Moscow, already well-accustomed to provocations, reacted

calmly to this hostile and clearly illegal step of a neighboring country, and certainly planned no retaliation by use of armed force. Soon, however, the Chinese began encroaching on Soviet territory. During the month beginning July 18, there were eight raids. The Soviet Government then lodged a number of protests with the German Ambassador in China (at that time Soviet interests in China were represented by the Germans). A note of September 9 cited nineteen more attacks. The third note, a few days later, enumerated additional cases of violation of the border and raids by armed troops.

Soviet patience became exhausted and on November 18, Moscow sent a punitive expedition to stop the invaders. This was accomplished swiftly and effectively. On November 21, the Governor General of Manchuria sued for peace. Russian terms were simply the restoration of the *status quo ante*, and they were accepted by the Chinese.¹

After the invaders were crushed and forced to retreat, the Soviet troops were immediately withdrawn from foreign soil.² In spite of that, on December 2, the American Secretary of State dispatched to Moscow (through Paris) and to Nanking a reminder of their obligations under the Kellogg Pact.

In reply to this, Mr. Litvinov rebuked Mr. Stimson's "unwarranted intercession interfering in the negotiations," and expressed "amazement that the United States, while refusing to recognize the existence of the Soviet Government, nevertheless gave it advice and counsel."

World-wide Economic Crisis. Aside from this rather minor incident, easily solved by Moscow, the year 1929 was marked by a considerable decrease in the openly hostile, anti-Soviet activity in foreign countries. It does not mean, of course, that basically there was a change in the attitude of the outsiders to-

¹ The Protocol signed at Khabarovsk settled the dispute only so far as the Manchurian authorities were concerned. The Nanking Government, which had at that time no official diplomatic relations with Moscow, refused to recognize the Protocol for a long time.

² On November 28, 1929, the *New York Times* published the following cable from its correspondent at Tokyo: "The news from Manchuria confirms the Japanese anticipation that the Russians did not intend an invasion. The Russians, apparently, have not occupied any Chinese towns and are back on their territory. They have given the Chinese a severe slap."

ward the U.S.S.R. Here is how the real situation in that respect was described by Arthur Upham Pope:

“The chief Powers were slow in grasping the implications of the Five-Year Plan and taking reassurance therefrom. A nucleus of the permanent staff of the British Foreign Office, with a long record of excessive conservatism, would still, as late as 1928, have been glad to see the Soviet Government destroyed, and men in this group had opportunities not only for passive resistance in opposing Russia, but also for more active sabotage.

“France, likewise, was overtly hostile, sometimes bitterly so, nor was the United States Government by any means friendly, and the tension was soon manifested in open diplomatic conflict. . . .”³

But 1929 was the year of a world-wide economic crisis of unprecedented gravity. There were too many difficult domestic problems demanding adjustment. To indulge in anything more than accusations against the Soviet State’s propaganda, or the “dumping” of her products on foreign markets, was impossible.⁴

As for the Soviet Union itself, it was not as badly affected by the crisis as the rest of the world.

At the European Commission of the League of Nations, in May 1931, Mr. Litvinov expressed this in the following way:

“I am here in a peculiar position, if for no other reason, because my country not only is spared the suffering from this crisis, but is undergoing unheard-of improvement in all branches of her economic life.⁵ . . . But it does not follow from this that the economic crisis of the world is of no concern to her, and does not affect at all the interests of the U.S.S.R. At this juncture the U.S.S.R. has trade relations with numerous European and non-European countries, and therefore cannot remain indifferent to the economic disturbances in those countries. . . . To accomplish our very ambitious plans of industrialization—and at a high-speed tempo—we have to increase the import of manufactured goods from abroad. To pay for the same my country has to rely on the export of her raw materials. The

³ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 256-257.

⁴ In October, 1929, an Anglo-Soviet Protocol was signed at London providing for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries

⁵ The U.S.S.R. at that time was already in the third year of the First Five-Year Plan. It was developing very successfully, and therefore the country was in a much stronger economic position.

recent decline of prices on raw materials, while the prices on manufactured goods remain on the old level, naturally is harmful to the economy of the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, the interests of the U.S.S.R. are suffering from certain plans (directed against her) which are being considered and in some instances even are already in practice. . . . and lastly one has to remember that relations existing between the U.S.S.R. and other European countries cannot but reflect on the development of the crisis." ⁶

In the same speech the Commissar ridiculed the attempts made in certain circles to explain the world-wide economic crisis by the mere existence of a Soviet State. The opposite was true, he said. The very fact that the U.S.S.R. was not seriously affected by the crisis and was in a position to continue purchases abroad, was beneficial to those countries that suffered from "over-production" with resultant unemployment. As for the accusation that the U.S.S.R. was "dumping" its own products on foreign markets, thereby supposedly undermining the trade of other countries, Litvinov offered convincing proof of the baselessness of this contention. He further suggested that the Commission consider an international agreement not to sell anything abroad at prices lower than those prevailing on domestic markets.

"The gravity of this crisis," continued Litvinov, "is worsened by the policy of monopolistic combines, which are striving to keep prices at a high level on the domestic markets of various countries. Nobody can deny that such a policy is making difficult the absorption of the accumulated stocks, and is creating almost unsurmountable difficulties in disposing of goods among the consumers. . . ." ⁷

The Soviet delegate then stressed the role played in the crisis by the abnormal situation created not only by the aftermath of war but also by the post-war policies of the Powers. Undying militarism with its subsequent growth of armaments, asserted Litvinov, is one of the causes of that situation. In spite of the Locarno agreements and the Briand-Kellogg Pact, the formation of military-political blocs is going on, he said. Naturally, this would result in an intensification of competition in armaments,

⁶ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, 1936, pp. 221-231

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-231.

which already had become a too-heavy burden for practically every nation. Without offering a panacea to solve the economic problems of the capitalist world (for in his opinion there can be none), Litvinov suggested something be done at least to decrease the evil effects of such factors as, for instance, the lack of confidence between nations. One of the steps in this direction, he claimed, would be to establish equality in relations among all countries, thereby eliminating any elements of discrimination. The draft of a Protocol which he submitted to the Conference suggested the conclusion of a sort of "economic pact of non-aggression."

In the opinion of the Russians such a pact could complete the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. As for the U.S.S.R., it continued to respect the principle of the peaceful co-existence of the two different economic systems, and to refrain from any aggressive designs either of a political or economic nature.

Disarmament Conference. The meeting of naval experts, held at Rome in 1924, probably could be considered as the beginning of the Soviet Union's co-operation with other Powers on matters pertaining to disarmament. Invited to take part in this international gathering, Moscow sent as its delegate Admiral Berens, a naval officer of the Tsar's time, a well-informed expert with a pleasant personality, one quite to the liking of most of the other delegates. This opened the way to a more or less fruitful collaboration of the U.S.S.R. with various technical committees of the League of Nations, and eventually to participation in the work of its conferences on disarmament.

From 1927 on, Soviet delegates participated in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. But this work failed to produce either understanding or agreement on the basic issues. All the projects submitted by the Soviet representatives were rejected under various excuses or "explanations."⁸

At the Sixth Session of that Preparatory Commission, held in

⁸ For the text of the Draft Disarmament Convention on complete disarmament, presented on February 15, 1928, and the one on reduction of armaments, see E. Korovin, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-346

April 1929, Litvinov, consistently struggling for peace, made the following statement:

“ . . . Of all the countries represented here the Soviet Union is the one that is the most threatened. It is the object of hostility and ill-feeling on the part of the whole bourgeois world. Its enemies are legion, its friends few. In case of attack, it can count only on its own armed forces, the Red Army and the Red Fleet. Nevertheless the Soviet delegation has not put forward the insecurity of the U.S.S.R. and the special conditions in which the country finds itself; it has demanded no exception from the general rule; on the contrary, it has not only applauded, but far more, it has itself proposed, the most radical forms of disarmament.”⁹

In the meantime, the Supreme Soviet, during its session of May 22, 1929 (while commenting on the absence of results from the work at Geneva), declared that the rejection of the Soviet proposals by the Preparatory Commission and the refusal of the League member-states to take the least step toward reduction of land and naval armaments constituted new proof that these states were basing their policies on preparations for a new war.

At the last session of the Preparatory Commission, in December 1930, a draft convention, prepared for the Disarmament Conference, was approved. After a detailed criticism of the draft, Litvinov declared that his country refused any responsibility for that document, considering it “clearly negative.”

Finally, in 1932, the Disarmament Conference was convoked. In his speech of February 11, 1932, Litvinov (who by then had been Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. for almost two years) again stressed the fact that the entire period after the end of the “war to end war” was characterized by incessant and systematic growth in the armed forces of all the states, and consequently by a gigantic growth of militarism. He said:

“The very origin of the League, and Article 8 of the Covenant, was nothing but a small tribute to the peoples’ demand for the fulfilment of promises made by their governments to make the

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

latest war really the last one. . . . What is required of us is to find effective means to put an end to wars . . ." ¹⁰

Litvinov then reminded his audience that the Soviet State from the very first day of its existence had wanted peace and ever since then had consistently worked to that end. At Genoa, in 1922, the Russians had suggested complete disarmament. This offer was again repeated, he said, immediately upon invitation to take part in the preparations for the present Conference. But all these efforts proved to be futile.

"Our point of view was disputed . . . our warnings about the possibility of new wars were ridiculed . . . we were accused of pessimism and exaggeration of the dangers . . . we were told that what was needed was 'security,' and that security could be achieved through a system of treaties, protocols and other international understandings . . . therefore, they said, there was no need to hurry with disarmament. . . ." ¹¹

While the Conference was in session a very real, although undeclared, war was going on in Asia. In the opinion of the Russians, expressed on numerous occasions, peace and war, today, are indivisible. There are no longer such things as isolated continents. War in China, they asserted, might easily spread beyond the bounds of Asia and even engulf the entire world.

The draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Delegation again stressed the belief that "the only effective means of contributing to the organization of peace and the establishment of security against war is the general, complete and rapid abolition of all armed forces, setting out from the principle of equality for all."

Convinced that this idea answered the sincere aspirations for peace of common men everywhere, the draft suggested that the work of the Conference be based on the principle of general and complete disarmament.

Along with this resolution, the Soviet delegates submitted Amendments to the original Russian draft on the reduction of armaments, modifying some of its recommendations.

¹⁰ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

No results were attained!

What the obstacles were to achieving an understanding may be discerned in the Preface to Professor Korovin's account of the Soviet Union's disarmament proposals, written by Dr. Nicholas M. Butler.

Here is what the President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace wrote on that occasion:

"It is to be noted that all the official proposals of the Soviet representatives consistently urge the greatest possible measure of limitation of armaments of all kinds. It is unfortunate that, when the Soviet proposals on the subject of vital importance to the present and to future generations were placed before the formal councils of the nations at Geneva there did not exist confidence in the continuity of Soviet policy through succeeding decades. The Soviet Government has maintained itself in power for fifteen years. Its principal objects are to establish Communism and to industrialize a great territory that has for centuries been devoted mainly to agriculture. In the course of these fifteen years sudden changes of method have taken place, but these two principal objects have been steadily pursued. Has not the time come for those controlling Soviet foreign policy to make new efforts to convince the other governments of the world that their disarmament proposals are not only sincerely offered by the present administration but that they will also be supported by those that may come after it?"¹²

Commenting on the futility of Geneva's performances, Professor J. T. Gerould wrote at that time:

"The deadlock at the Disarmament Conference is still unbroken. Neither France and her allies, nor the nations which follow the lead of Great Britain and the United States, are willing to give way. This *impasse* is but a single phase of the complex interplay of antagonistic forces which, unless it is somehow resolved, will endanger all democratic society. Nationalism, in its various manifestations is as insensate as was the war which caused its present resurgence, and as destructive as were the guns in Flanders.

"Thinking men the world over are not very far apart as to the causes of our present distress, and their views as to what they are have been set down again and again in the resolutions and reports of international congresses. If reason and the spirit of compromise

¹² *International Conciliation Series, op. cit.*, p. 7.

played any considerable role in human affairs, a program of readjustment would, long before this, have been discovered and accepted.

“. . . The Disarmament Conference itself seems almost to have lost hope of accomplishment, and, in excuse for its powerlessness, makes vague promises for the future.”¹³

In an attempt to salvage, if not the Disarmament Conference, at least the idea behind it, President Hoover presented, that same summer of 1932, his own plan for the reduction of armaments by one-third with total abolition of tanks, bombing planes, large mobile guns and chemical warfare. The British Government countered with a proposal of its own, somewhat similar to that of Herbert Hoover's.

When the Hoover memorandum was presented by Mr. Gibson, the American envoy, the U.S.S.R. immediately accepted it. Only Italy followed this lead. The other Powers hesitated. France did not like the project. The British were not enthusiastic either. Japan, of course, was definitely against it. Others had their doubts. Had it not come after the moratorium on reparations, granted by Hoover to Germany, made rearmament of the latter easier? Besides, it was a year of presidential election in America, and some people considered Hoover's gesture simply a maneuver projected with an eye on the coming elections. Anyhow, the proposal remained on the shelves of Geneva accumulating dust, together with Litvinov's and other proposals for the reduction of armaments including that "ridiculous" plan of the Bolsheviks for complete and immediate disarmament.

But in the year 1945, it is naturally much easier to appreciate the real meaning of certain unclear and equivocal events of the past. The years that have elapsed since the sessions of the fruitless Disarmament Conference at Geneva have demonstrated which nations were sincerely interested in peace and which were not. The work of that Conference was handicapped by mistaken suspicions of, and lack of confidence in, a country genuinely interested in the preservation of peace. Yet at the same time a strange lenience was shown toward those who were working overtime preparing for another world war.

¹³ *Current History*, June, 1932, p. 323.

Problem of International Police Force. Among numerous other proposals discussed at Geneva in connection with the problem of the prevention of wars, were those seeking for security against violators of the peace. The French project for an international armed force to police the world was severely criticized by the Russians. They remembered that such a proposal had been advanced at the time when the Covenant of the League of Nations was under discussion, and it had been voted down.

Litvinov expressed the opinion that the idea of an international police force could not meet with the approval of the Soviet Republic.

“I leave alone the question of to what extent it is possible to expect from the Soviet State that she should trust security and part of her armed forces to an international organization composed, in its overwhelming majority, of countries clearly hostile to her even to the point of refusing to have normal relations with her. Under such circumstances it seems to be more likely that the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union would see in the formation of an international army a menace to their own country. . . . The French project could not guarantee security from war, it could not be effective even in securing the very existence of any state.

“What is the guarantee that the international armed force would be used at all, and used at the proper moment, i.e. before the victim of aggression was already crushed? What are the guarantees that it will be decided who is really the aggressor? . . . To decide this is not always easy for an international organization. . . . What are the guarantees that such an international organization, having at its disposal an armed force, could and would decide who is the aggressor? . . . and would stand by the victim? . . .”¹⁴

Litvinov's Definition of Aggressor. While the Disarmament Conference was lagging sadly in the achievement of any tangible results (and finally collapsed); while the League of Nations, as a whole, was demonstrating its impotence, Japan was fighting China, and Germany was rapidly falling under the control of the Nazis. The entire international situation was speedily deteriorating.

In the three years of the world-wide economic crisis the

¹⁴ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

contradictions between various nations, victorious and vanquished, imperialist and colonial, were further aggravated.

In his report to the Party Congress Stalin, then simply the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., pointed out that:

“ . . . The bourgeoisie would seek a way out of the economic crisis, on the one hand, by crushing the working class through the establishment of fascist dictatorship, i.e., dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialistic capitalist elements, and, on the other hand, by fomenting war for the redivision of colonies and spheres of influence at the expense of the poorly defended countries.”¹⁵

That is, as we know now, exactly what happened.

In 1931 Japan embarked on a new conquest of China and thereby the first seat of war arose in Asia. The ridiculously weak and ineffective protests of the League of Nations resulted only in the withdrawal of Japan from that august body.

The advent of Fascism in Germany clearly started Europe on her road to war. After Japan, Germany also withdrew from Geneva. The Nazi Government began openly preparing for a war aimed at a forcible revision of the frontiers of Europe.

The inevitability of a new world war was hourly becoming clearer and clearer. The Soviet Union considered that menace undeniable and very serious. Making their last effort to preserve peace, the Russians suggested to the other Powers that they adopt a comprehensive formula for the definition of aggression, prepared by Litvinov. This definition, considered favorably by many, even at Geneva, was finally incorporated into the London Convention, signed on July 3, 1933 by seven countries (Afghanistan, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Poland, Rumania and Turkey). Two more, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, affixed their signatures to an identical convention the next day, and on July 5, Lithuania became the tenth country to accept the Litvinov definition of aggressor. The Convention invited the adherence of others.

Impelled by the desire to strengthen the peace which existed between their countries, and believing that the Kellogg Pact

¹⁵ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 300-301.

forbade all aggression, the signatories deemed it necessary in the interest of universal security to define, as closely as possible, a conception of aggression, in order to eliminate any pretext for its justification.

The Convention also declared that "every state has an equal right to independence, security, defense of its territory and free development of its state system."

Its Article II declared that any state would be considered an aggressor if it should be the first to commit any of the following acts:¹⁶

- 1) Declaration of war against another state;
- 2) Invasion by armed forces, even without a declaration of war, of the territory of another state;
- 3) An attack by armed bands, naval or air forces, even without a declaration of war, upon the territory, naval vessels or aircraft of another state;
- 4) Naval blockade of the coasts or ports of another state;
- 5) Aid to armed bands formed on the territory of a state and invading the territory of another state, or refusal despite demands on the part of the state subjected to an attack, to take all possible measures on its own territory to deprive the said bands of any aid and protection.

The acceptance of this definition, offered by the Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., was a diplomatic triumph for Russia, particularly as the signing of the London Convention occurred during the time the London World Economic Conference was proving to be a complete failure.

In a statement issued to the representatives of the press on the occasion of the signing of the London Convention, Litvinov underscored the fact that it had been offered at Geneva to be accepted by all. However, because of the slowness of that process, Moscow decided to hasten it by first signing with those states which were ready to do so. This was similar to the case of the Moscow Protocol of 1929, which was designed to hasten the validation of the Kellogg Pact. The Convention was open to all, and Moscow, naturally, would have been gratified to see it become a universal accord.

¹⁶ Special Supplement to *The Soviet Union Review*, July-August, 1933.

Doing her utmost to mobilize the forces of peace, the Soviet Union nevertheless realized the growing danger to herself of the Japanese activities in Asia, and began intensively to strengthen the defenses of her Far-Eastern territory.

Simultaneously, the menace of Germany under Hitler necessitated redoubled vigilance on her European borders, and preparations for any eventuality there.

Considerably strengthened by the successes of its industrialization program which provided a solid material base on which to build the defense of the country, the U.S.S.R. was steadily gaining confidence in its ability to meet any contingency. This can be seen from the following appraisal of the situation made by the official History of the party in control of the U.S.S.R.:

“In the period 1930-34 the Bolshevik Party solved what was, after the winning of power, the most difficult historical problem of the proletarian revolution, namely, to get the millions of small peasant owners to adopt the path of Socialism.

“The elimination of the kulaks, the most numerous of the exploiting classes, and the adoption of collective farming by the bulk of the peasants led to the destruction of the last roots of capitalism in the country, to the final victory of Socialism in agriculture, and to the complete consolidation of the Soviet power in the countryside.

“After overcoming a number of difficulties of an organizational character, the collective farms became firmly established and entered upon the path of prosperity.

“The effect of the First Five-Year Plan was to lay an unshakable foundation of a socialist economic system in our country in the shape of a first-class socialist heavy industry and collective mechanized agriculture, to put an end to unemployment, to abolish the exploitation of man by man, and to create the conditions for the steady improvement of the material and cultural standards of our working people.

“These colossal achievements were attained by the working class, the collective farmers, and the working people of our country generally, thanks to the bold, revolutionary and wise policy of the Party and the Government.

“The surrounding capitalist world, striving to undermine and disrupt the might of the U.S.S.R., worked with redoubled energy to organize gangs of assassins, wreckers and spies within the U.S.S.R. This hostile activity of the capitalist encirclement became particularly marked with the advent of fascism to power in Germany and

Japan. In the Trotzkyites and Zinovievites, fascism found faithful servants who were ready to spy, sabotage, commit acts of terrorism and diversion, and to work for the defeat of the U.S.S.R. in order to restore capitalism.

“The Soviet Government punished these degenerates with an iron hand, dealing ruthlessly with these enemies of the people and traitors to the country.”¹⁷

From the foregoing we can see that the consistent struggle for security brought to the Soviet Union certain results in the form of treaties and pacts for non-aggression and peaceful regulation of disputes with her neighbors. The London Convention was a valuable contribution to the clarification of the conception of aggression, which hardly was in itself a guarantee of peace, but could serve as a moral force to restrain, to some extent, future aggressors.

As for the main task of Soviet diplomacy at Geneva, namely, disarmament, or at least the reduction of armaments, it was not achieved to any degree at all, in spite of all the effort expended upon it.

The Disarmament Conference was a complete failure. The Powers were engaged in preparing for a new war, and all the good intentions of a few could not change this trend. The world was stubbornly marching toward a new catastrophe.

¹⁷ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 329-330.

CHAPTER VI

Collaboration Developing

International Economic Conference in London. The Sino-Japanese Conflict. The Role of the League of Nations. The U.S.S.R. Enters the League. Litvinov's Speech on Entering the League.

Economic Conference in London. The world-wide economic crisis, which broke out late in 1929, lasted for four years, that is, until the end of 1933. It was still on when the International Economic Conference was convoked at London in the spring of that year. The Soviet delegates, headed by Litvinov, attended, and proved to be a sensation. Here is what the *New York Times* said on the occasion:

“It was not the address of Neville Chamberlain, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, presenting the first really concrete proposals for curbing the world's economic ills, that stirred the delegates most, nor was it Secretary of State Hull's discourse, in general terms, on the evils of economic nationalism with the promise of concrete suggestions later. What really thrilled the conference was a passage in an afternoon speech by Litvinov.”¹

While acknowledging that the accomplishments of the Five-Year Plan had been somewhat retarded by the crisis,² Litvinov reiterated what he had stated at another economic conference, at Geneva, in May, 1931: that the economic crisis had not affected the U.S.S.R. as badly as it had the other nations. And he offered his audience a tempting possibility of alleviating the crisis by a considerable increase of trade with his country.

In 1931 he had suggested an economic non-aggression pact, but had met with no success: there had been no action. Now he argued that if there were an armistice (for at Geneva it had

¹ *New York Times*, June 14, 1933.

² Actually the foreign trade of the U.S.S.R. declined from \$910,000,000 in 1930 only to \$570,000,000 in 1932.

been agreed upon that peaceful co-existence of the two economic systems was inevitable) there should no longer be any discrimination against trade with particular countries, including the U.S.S.R. Economic barriers should be lifted, trade should be encouraged, and the Soviet Union, being in a position in the near future to increase her orders abroad to the amount of about one billion dollars, certainly should be considered as a market of unusually broad opportunities.

“I am sure, gentlemen, that you all realize that economic peace is feasible only on the background of a general peace in all phases of international life. Whatever excellent resolutions might be passed by the conference, they would not have any effect in alleviating the economic crisis, so long as the present state of political perturbation and uneasiness is continued with the uncertainty as to what the morrow may bring forth, and the fear of the outbreak of the most terrible manifestation of economic conflict—war. This universal uneasiness has not been allayed of late, but has rather increased. . . . We are aware of international consultations and agreements that have added to the political mistrust. To calm those fears and create an atmosphere favorable for peaceful economic relations we have to apply radical measures in the sphere of disarmament and strengthen the security guarantees by signing of bilateral and general pacts of non-aggression.”³

As for co-operation in the field of economic matters, Litvinov continued, the Soviet Union was willing, nay, anxious, to develop her foreign trade, but because she had a planned economy and imports must correspond to the exports plus credit facilities, there was a direct dependence of such a development on the availability of credits.

After giving a long list of goods which his country needed and would purchase abroad, provided credits on acceptable terms could be arranged, Litvinov expressed his opinion that the vast majority of countries represented at the Conference “might be supposed to be interested in the export of the commodities enumerated.”

Developing his idea of economic non-aggression, Litvinov suggested the suspension of all legislative or administrative measures of economic warfare.

³ Maxim M. Litvinov, *Speeches* (In Russian) Moscow, 1936, p. 236.

At least one result was obtained at once. On July 1, after a meeting between Litvinov and Sir John Simon, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the embargo on Russian purchases of British goods was lifted.⁴ Britain offered to resume negotiations for a new trade agreement.

As a whole the Economic Conference at London was a failure and hardly any other end could have been expected. Economic nationalism was on the march. President Roosevelt's interference prevented the adoption of measures to stabilize international currencies, which was sought by some of those who had planned this international gathering.⁵ But the Russians left London with certain tangible accomplishments. Not only did a number of countries which accepted his definition of aggression sign the Convention offered by Litvinov, but also, as we have seen, the British embargo on Russian purchases was lifted, and certain definite preliminary steps were made at that time to pave the way toward the establishment of normal relations with the U.S.A.

William Bullitt, privately representing President Roosevelt, visited Litvinov at the Soviet Embassy in London and discussed preliminaries for the recognition, which for all practical purposes had already been decided upon in Washington. On July 2, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs conferred with the American Assistant Secretary of State, Raymond Moley. The rumor was that they were discussing the chances for a *rapprochement*. Mr. Moley denied that this meeting had any relation to the question of recognition. The subject discussed, he said, was a definite trade transaction. A consignment of American cotton, from sixty to eighty thousand bales, was offered to the Russians, and the sale was consummated two days later on the basis of a 70 per cent credit.⁶

A curious observation on the difficulties encountered by the otherwise natural desire of American businessmen to develop

⁴ This embargo was the result of the trial in Moscow of several British engineers (of Vickers-Armstrong and other firms), accused by the U.S.S.R. of espionage.

⁵ On July 3, President Roosevelt sent a message bluntly refusing the co-operation of the United States in stabilizing currencies. MacDonald, the Prime Minister, considered this a repudiation of the understanding reached between them on his visit to Washington that spring.

⁶ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 286

the Russian market was published by the magazine *Current History* soon after the closing of the London Conference:

“Obviously, Russian-American trade relations must remain relatively chaotic so long as emotion rather than reason dictates our course of action. We can never secure this inviting one-billion-dollar market while prejudice perverts logic. So long as directors, bankers and executives of American business react to the mention of Soviet Russia with nerves instead of with thought, we must remain on-lookers while others irretrievably capture what should rightfully be ours.⁷

When discussing the London Conference one has to keep in mind that it was held not only at a time when the economic crisis was not quite over, but also at a time when the first signs of the coming World War were discernible in Manchuria, and when the orthodox capitalist countries were already faced with the new forms of economic setup in Italy and especially in Germany. Hitler and his Nazi Party were already in power. The Reichstag fire, that hint given by the German Fascists to the rest of the world as to what they intended to accomplish and what methods they would use, was already on record. The Russians were among the first to recognize the danger involved⁸ and began to give warnings to the others, but, unfortunately, not many outsiders wanted to pay any heed to Russia's efforts to do something effective to check the Fascist menace before it became too late.

The Sino-Japanese Conflict. From 1931 on Fascists of various brands were already on their march of conquest. Democracies, genuine and otherwise, were more definitely demonstrating their readiness to capitulate before those determined “conquerors” rather than to co-operate with the Soviets, who not only were doing everything in their power to preserve peace and prevent war, but were ready to co-operate almost at any cost with others who were similarly concerned.

⁷ *Current History*, September, 1933, p. 682.

⁸ About this time Dr Hugenberg, a leader of the Nationalists in Germany, came out with his Memorandum aimed at Russian territory, and inviting others to support his plans.

The Sino-Japanese War, or "Incident," as the Japanese prefer to call it, was started by Tokyo in 1931 with operations in Manchuria. The war began not only in line with the famous "Tanaka Memorial," but, obviously, with some consideration of the economic crisis that occupied the attention of the Western world. Another factor was, no doubt, the attitude of the outside world toward the U.S.S.R. and toward the Communist movement in China. Capitalizing on the animosity toward the Soviet Union, Japan "explained" her actions in the Northern provinces of China as a determination to eradicate Communism from the surface of the earth. The excuse served her intentions well; the outside world did not make any serious effort to check Japanese aggression. The attempts of Secretary of State Stimson to enlist the co-operation of London and Paris in checking Japan failed.

"France, like all the imperialist Powers," wrote the French journalist, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, "follows an aggressive anti-Communist policy. On this point the united front is well-forged among all the capitalist powers who maintain 'influence' or 'interests' in China. This policy has two aspects. First there is the anti-Soviet policy with regard to the U.S.S.R. Despite all the sweet-sounding diplomatic exchanges there remain the facts of France's support of Japanese aggression, France's friendly attitude toward Manchukuo, France's open support of Tsarist military organizations, and, in Shanghai, France's employment of Tsarist Russian military men and others in their police forces. . . . The second is the anti-Soviet policy with regard to China, which expresses itself in military and police aid to the Kuo-Min-Tang under the usual pretext of keeping the peace."⁹

When Japan started her occupation of Manchuria, she announced her determination to respect the Soviet Union's rights and interests, and promised not to interfere in the latter's operation of the Chinese-Eastern Railway. These promises, of course, were no more binding on Japan than all the other treaties and pledges disregarded by Tokyo then and later on. When in pursuit of "bandits" her troops crossed the Russian-owned railway and surrounded the Russians, the Japanese abruptly changed their tactics, and started a campaign of raids and abuse designed

⁹ *China Forum*, September, 1933.

to provoke an armed clash. (Possibly another motive was their desire to deceive the Powers, for by pretending they were engaged in fighting the U.S.S.R., they would keep the others out of the entire affair.)

To eliminate this cause of friction, the Russians decided to withdraw completely from Chinese soil. Moscow, therefore, offered the Chinese-Eastern Railway for sale. Tokyo immediately approved that idea, and tripartite negotiations among the U.S.S.R., Manchukuo and Japan were started to consummate the transaction. More than once the militarists of Japan advised their government not to spend money for a railroad they were ready and willing to take by force; but Tokyo, opposed to such a measure, insisted on continuing the negotiations, and finally, in 1935, the road was bought from the Russians.

Whatever were the motives behind Tokyo's official disapproval of high-handed action, the Japanese military representatives in Manchuria never ceased encroaching on Soviet territory and creating constant friction. However, in spite of endless provocations, the Soviet Union, always pursuing her policy of peace, continued to refrain from aggravating the situation, and only intensified her own preparations for defense. Convinced that the Japanese militarists were not disposed to understand any other argument than that of strength, the Russians started fortifying their side of the border, which now divided them from their new restless neighbor. Furthermore, they concentrated large armed forces in their Far-Eastern possessions in order to be ready to hit back in case Japan decided to strike. As a result, the well-informed Japanese General Staff, realizing the actual state of the Soviet Union's very serious preparations, decided to "soft-pedal" its arrogance and revised its policy *vis-à-vis* the U.S.S.R.

Late in 1931 Moscow offered to sign a non-aggression pact with Japan, but the latter did not even reply for almost a year. The offer was repeated by the U.S.S.R. in November 1932, but again with no results.

The Soviet attitude toward the Sino-Japanese conflict was clear. Complete neutrality was the only choice. Moscow was suspicious of the role played in this conflict by certain outsiders and realized the danger involved in it for Russia. At the same time the Soviet press expressed its conviction that the clash was

more than simply a local Asiatic affair; in their opinion it was likely to develop into a serious international conflict.¹⁰

There had been no official relations between Moscow and Nanking since 1927, but now Nanking was anxious to re-establish them. Moscow was willing. In December, 1932, this was accomplished.

Moscow acted throughout these years with great caution because it was so plainly possible that the fury of Japan could be diverted from China to an attack on the U.S.S.R., as had been planned again and again—and not only by the jingos of Japan. It seemed strange to the Russians that Nanking had failed to stand by Manchuria and had refrained from sending troops to fight the Japanese there. It also seemed suspicious that neither the League of Nations nor any individual Power was taking any effective measures to check Japan.

In a speech before the Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet, Molotov, then the Prime Minister, termed the Far-Eastern conflict “the most important problem of our policy.” In concluding his speech, Molotov said:

“The League of Nations proved its complete lack of desire and ability to check in any degree the further development of military operations in Manchuria. Its decision to send a Commission (under Lord Lytton) makes mockery of its previous decision to halt hostilities and virtually sanctions the military occupation and further development of military operations in Manchuria. All this compels us to strengthen our vigilance as regards happenings in the Far East. We must not forget that our border lies along the Manchurian lines.”¹¹

The Role of the League of Nations. The role played by the august Geneva body in the Sino-Japanese conflict exposed more clearly than any other event how weak this organization was when the situation required, not merely the eloquence of diplomat-orators, but real action to check aggressors.

Knowing quite well the weakness of the League, the Japanese delegates played their hands adroitly. First, Mr. Yoshizawa warned the Council of the League “against premature inter-

¹⁰ *Izvestia*, September 21, 1931.

¹¹ Harriet Moore, *A Record of Soviet Far-Eastern Relations, 1931-42* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942), p. 7.

vention, as it would only have the deplorable result of needlessly exciting Japanese public opinion." The same maneuver of frightening the others was tried by the Japanese again and again. On January 30, 1932, when a new case of Japanese aggression (in Shanghai) was on the agenda, the Japanese representative, Mr. Saito, warned the members of the Council not to rule on China's complaint regarding the hostilities at Shanghai, for "a very bad impression might be created in Japan."

It is true that in spite of this threat by Japan, the Council of the League decided to form a commission at Shanghai to report on the "incident" there. But, as if to accentuate her contempt for the League, on March 1, 1932, Tokyo announced the foundation of the "independent" State of Manchukuo.

Early in July of the same year the special Lord Lytton commission appointed by the League to investigate the case of Manchuria arrived at Tokyo. It was in no hurry either to arrive or to investigate. Nevertheless, its report, presented to the League, clearly accused Japan of violations of the Nine-Power Treaty, the Covenant of the League, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and other international agreements. When the Assembly of the League, on February 24, 1933, unanimously adopted this report and recommended the non-recognition of Manchukuo (following the lead of Secretary Stimson),¹² the Japanese delegation left the Assembly. Shortly afterwards Tokyo advised Geneva of its intention to withdraw from the League.

Why was there no real action? Why did not the League apply sanctions? Why were not Great Britain and France willing to co-operate with the United States, as was proposed by Henry Stimson? These questions cannot be answered adequately if one does not remember to what extent suspicion of and animosity toward the U.S.S.R. affected international affairs at that period.

Secretary-General Drummond, of the League, addressed the following note to Moscow:

"Lord Lytton, Chairman of the Commission, which is now in the Far East for the purpose of preparing a report to the Council of the League of Nations on questions of dispute between China and Japan, has confidentially notified me that, in the opinion of the Com-

¹² For the text of the resolution and summary of the report of the Lytton Commission see *International Conciliation Series*, #286, January, 1933.

mission, its problem in Manchuria would be simplified if it could procure information and evidence from Soviet citizens in official positions in Manchuria. Lord Lytton asks whether the Soviet Government would have any objection to the making of such inquiries."

Litvinov's answer to the invitation to co-operate with the Lytton Commission in such a fashion was a refusal on the basis that, although the U.S.S.R. would be ready to co-operate "with any Commission which sincerely desired to ascertain the real conditions of affairs in Manchuria and really wished to settle the military conflicts taking place in China," the U.S.S.R. could not help the Lytton Commission since it did not include any representative of the U.S.S.R. Moscow "could not take upon itself the responsibility for conclusions (based on the information of Soviet citizens) which might be drawn by the Commission."¹³

"This attitude toward the League Commission appears to have been the result of two factors. Litvinov said on a later occasion that the reason was 'first, because we did not believe in the honesty and consistency of the governments participating in those actions and primarily because we did not seek, nor do we now seek, armed conflict with Japan.' Distrust of the League activities dated back to its very foundation when the leading powers at Geneva had participated in armed intervention, against the U.S.S.R. and in subsequent years had been slow in bringing the Soviets back into the family of nations. The Soviets were perhaps even more suspicious of Anglo-American activity in the Far East where in the past they had always found themselves pursuing policies in conflict with the Western Powers as, for instance, in abolishing the old regime of special privileges in China. The fact that England and America could not get together fully on opposing Japan's policies which were clearly contrary to their interests served merely to strengthen this suspicion."¹⁴

In the opinion of some well-informed Russians, the English Government looked favorably on Japan's Manchurian adventure, hoping that this might keep England's Oriental rival away from the sphere of British interests in China. Moscow authori-

¹³ Harnet Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

ties had no doubt that in certain influential circles of Great Britain, as well as in other countries, there was hope for a Soviet-Japanese war. At that time the U.S.S.R.'s preparations were far from completed and Moscow naturally was anxious to avoid war.¹⁵

The great caution with which the Soviet authorities handled the Manchurian affair and the special effort they made in order to avoid being involved in the game played by the League of Nations were well justified. Japan herself was not such an immediate menace to Russia, even though the Japanese jingos kept her annoyed by raids on her territory, by encouragement to White Russian intrigues, and by allowing the press to slander the U.S.S.R. An attack by Japan, instigated by outsiders, was possible, of course, but not unavoidable. The attitude of the rest of the world toward Russia might have been of greater danger.

What this attitude was one may remember by reading for instance, the following abstract from an article published at that time in America:

"Speaking generally, there is in the Baltic and other border States a strong feeling of sympathy with Japan . . . a very distinct and readily intelligible satisfaction with her opposition to the Soviet Union. . . . In the present critical situation in the Far East Japan is not unmindful of these Baltic border States."¹⁶

No sympathy with China, the victim of aggression, not a word about the failure of the League to check it; on the contrary—sympathy with the aggressor because it might lead to an attack on the Soviet Union. The small Baltic republics were told so by those who actually were in control of their "independent" existence.

In such an atmosphere of constant rivalry, suspicion, animosity and armed conflict, it was not a simple matter for the League to act effectively. But the main weakness of that organization

¹⁵ The British Secretary of State for India, L. S. Amery, declared in the House of Commons on February 27, 1933, "I confess that I see no reason why either in act, or in word, or in sympathy, we should go individually or internationally against Japan in this matter. Japan has got a very powerful case based upon fundamental realities." (*Asia and the Americas*, March, 1945, p. 127)

¹⁶ *Current History*, December, 1932, p. 317.

was in its obvious lack of any sincere desire to accomplish its avowed purpose, namely, prevention of armed conflict, for ever present was the hope of a clash between the U.S.S.R. and some of its neighbors.

Japan's withdrawal from the League, followed by the withdrawal of Germany, weakened the Geneva conclave still further. That is why the efforts of those who were anxious to see it survive, whatever their purpose, had to turn toward the U.S.S.R. as a possible new member of the body which had for such a long time snubbed the workers' republic.

U.S.S.R. Enters the League of Nations. In the early days of the Soviet State most of its leaders were bitterly opposed to the Geneva organization. They considered it not only unrepresentative of the nations, that is, the people, but violently anti-Soviet. Chicherin expressed his antipathy toward the League on many occasions and was quite emphatic in refusing any contact with it. Litvinov, on the other hand, thought differently. In his opinion co-operation with the League, as with other international organizations, could be useful to the Soviet Union. He never missed an opportunity to put forth a world-wide position. He always stood for establishing as many contacts with the rest of the world as possible. He was not against entering the League, if on conditions acceptable to his country.¹⁷

French statesmen, like Briand and Paul Boncourt, were probably the first to seek Russia's participation. Fear of Germany continued to shape the political thinking of French leaders. With the advent to power of Hitler and his Nazi Party, the return of a militarily dangerous neighbor intensified France's desire for security. By that time, fifteen years after the October Revolution, some of the prejudices had disappeared, or at least had become less irreconcilable. Soviet delegates were already

¹⁷ Litvinov on many occasions had denounced the League. In 1925, when rumors predicted the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League, he made a statement to the effect that the Soviet Government considered that the existing League had failed to fulfill the hopes of its adherents. Not only had it failed to protect the rights and safety of small nations against military outrage of stronger powers, but on the main question in which the whole of humanity was interested—disarmament—it had taken no serious steps whatsoever. The Soviet Union, like the United States of America, intended, as before, to stand aloof from similar organizations. (Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 334.)

present at international gatherings, including those at Geneva, and were being welcomed by some members of such gatherings, if not by all. With Japan and Germany out of the League, and Italy very likely a candidate for withdrawal, too, it was only natural for those who remained loyal to it to try to induce the U.S.S.R. to join.

Worried by signs of a Polish-German rapprochement,¹⁸ Paris was leaning more and more in the Soviet direction. By the end of 1932, relations between the two were almost cordial. Certain events indicated that in Great Britain, as well, elements favorable to Germany were actively advocating an understanding with the latter. This is why France became exceedingly anxious to bring the U.S.S.R. into the League. The British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir John Simon, expressed his approval of this plan, too.

Stalin, as late as 1928, declared that the U.S.S.R. did not want to join the League because it considered it "an organization designed to mask preparations for war." But, in an interview with Walter Duranty in December, 1933, Stalin answered Duranty's question as to whether the U.S.S.R.'s position in regard to the League of Nations had always been negative, by saying:

"No, not always and not under all circumstances. You perhaps do not quite understand our point of view. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of Germany and Japan from the League of Nations—or perhaps just because of this—the League may become something of a check to retard the outbreak of military actions or to hinder them.

"If this is so and if the League could prove to be somewhat of an obstruction that could, even to a certain extent, hinder the business of war and help in any degree to further the cause of peace, then we are not against the League.

"Yes, if historical events follow such a course, then it is not impossible that we should support the League of Nations in spite of its colossal defects."¹⁹

Actually the international situation had changed in many respects, which made the joining of the League easier for the

¹⁸ On January 26, 1934, Berlin and Warsaw signed a non-aggression pact, a ten-year amity agreement. After this document was ratified, Germany announced a propaganda alliance with Poland designed to mould public opinion.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, December 25, 1933.

U.S.S.R. One objection had been that Moscow had never approved the Versailles Treaty and, considering the League its product, had rejected the idea of entering the League. Now, with Hitler in power, there was no point in continuing to hold that position, for Germany was no longer the "underdog" in need of sympathy and defense, and Hitler's intentions were quite plain. Now, Germany was preparing not only for revenge, but for conquest; Hitler was a serious menace to peace, and whatever the faults of the League, if joining it could serve the cause of peace, Moscow was willing to reconsider her objections.

Already Soviet delegates were actually participating in the work of the League on disarmament and on economic commissions. Already the treaties on non-aggression and friendship with various countries bound Moscow with the Covenant of the League, for the treaties were based on stipulations in that document. Ideologically, Soviet diplomacy was on the road to broader co-operation with the Powers, and therefore it proved to be a rather simple matter to accept the League's invitation when it was issued.

At the session of the Disarmament Conference in May, 1934, Litvinov insisted that the time for debating various methods for disarmament had passed. The international situation demanded immediate and effective measures to prevent the war. Disarmament without guarantees was out of the question. Such guarantees could be provided through mutual obligations for collective security.

By that time the threat to world peace from Nazi Germany had become very clear. The Soviet Union realized immediately, when Nazism and Hitlerism appeared on the political arena, that this meant war—total and universal war, not halting before any frontiers. The Russians did not believe Hitler's occasional tirades about peace, for they saw his preparations for aggression and the enslavement of others; they realized that he was out for world domination. What was done during his short time in power was more than enough to justify such conclusions. And what Hitler wrote in his *Mein Kampf* left no doubt about his plans for a "crusade" against the Soviet State.

French statesmen of the caliber of Louis Barthou also had no illusions about the meaning of the advent of Nazism and Hitler. Therefore Barthou was in accord with Litvinov. In his speech at

Geneva he reiterated the warning given by his Soviet colleague, and expressed his complete approval of the idea that the times demanded collective security. But collective security for France without the U.S.S.R., Germany's neighbor in the East, was inconceivable. More than ever before, the U.S.S.R. was needed in the League of Nations.

Barthou began feverishly paving the way for this event.²⁰ Dr. Benes of Czechoslovakia, as President of the Council, was helpful. Direct negotiations with representatives of various countries, members of the League, resulted in ascertaining the willingness of the overwhelming majority of them to see the U.S.S.R. in the League. Seven abstained and three small countries, Switzerland, Holland and Poland,²¹ objected, but their voices were not enough to change the determination of the big Powers, and an invitation was sent to the Russians to enter the League.

On September 18, 1934 (by coincidence or not, it was on the third anniversary of Japan's attack on the Chinese at Mukden), Litvinov made his first official appearance as a member of the League and delivered his speech of acceptance, which was quoted and discussed all over the world as an event of great significance.

Litvinov's Speech on Entering the League. After expressing gratitude to those who initiated the invitation, Litvinov underlined the significance of the Soviet State's joining the League, because of the circumstances under which it took place. He then made a swift excursion into the past to explain the evolution of the relations between the Soviet Government and the League, and continued, as follows:

"I will speak with that frankness and moderation which many of you, knowing me of old, will, I am sure, grant me, and which can only be helpful to our mutual understanding and our future cooperation.

²⁰ Early in October of 1934 Barthou died from wounds inflicted by a bomb that killed King Alexander II of Yugoslavia, at Marseilles. There were good reasons to suspect that the assassins perpetrated this crime with the knowledge and support of those who did not want the idea of collective security to materialize, and thereby hinder their aggressive plans.

²¹ Poland later changed her mind and joined those who wanted to see the U.S.S.R. in the League.

"We represent here a new State—new, not geographically, but new in its external aspects, its internal political and social structure, and its aspirations and ideals. The appearance in the historical arena of a new form of State has always been met with hostility on the part of the old State formations. It is not surprising that the phenomenon of a new State with a social political system radically different from any heretofore known should come up against intense hostility from without and manifested by literally all other countries in the world. This hostility has been not merely theoretical, but has found expression even in military action, assuming the form of prolonged externally organized attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of the new State for the purpose of getting it back to the old lines. At the time when the League of Nations was being formed to proclaim the organization of peace, the people of our country had as yet not been enabled to enjoy the blessings of peace. They still had to defend their right to internal peace with arms, and to contend for long their right to internal self-determination and their external independence. Even after the most extreme forms of intervention in the affairs of our State were over, the hostility of the outer world continued to be manifested in the most varying degrees and forms.

"All this makes it quite obvious that the relations between the Soviet State and the League of Nations could not be other than those existing between itself and the States belonging to the League. Not only this, but the people in the Soviet Union naturally feared that these nations united in the League might give collective expression to their hostility towards the Soviet Union and combine their anti-Soviet activities. It can hardly be denied that at that time, and even very much later, there were still statesmen who thought, or at least dreamed, of such collective action. On the one hand, they were inclined to underrate the internal powers of resistance of the new State, and, on the other hand, to overrate that harmony of political and economic interests in the other States which, it seemed to them, the League should have embodied. They continued to believe that the last world war would be the last war in the world, and that the order established by it was immutable and secure against any attempts at alteration by force. They dreamed of establishing at least temporary peace, which would, however, by no means have been extended to the new Soviet State. The history of the last ten years, the history of the League of Nations itself, the increasing conflicts of international interests, the prolonged economic crisis, and, finally, the development of the Soviet State, have shown the world how Utopian were these dreams and aspirations.

"Today we are happy to be able to state that the exponents of those Utopias and the advocates of the policy of ignoring and isolating the Soviet Union are no longer to be met among broad-

mindful statesmen, among the representatives of the more important States moulding international life, who think on realistic lines and understand the needs of the present day, but must be searched for among narrow-minded politicians unable to rise above their petty political passions and strong prejudices and deriving their knowledge of countries and peoples from muddled sources. It remains only to pity such people and to wish them a speedy enlightenment and a return to more reliable sources of information.

"I take this opportunity of expressing my conviction that, in the meantime, the League will see to it that such people have nothing to do with the settlement of affairs affecting the interests of the Soviet State in which impartial judgment and at least an elementary understanding of world events are necessary.

"I have already described the attitude of the Soviet Union to the League of Nations both at its formation and during the first stages of its development and have given the reasons for that attitude. To this I must frankly add that the Soviet Government could not have agreed with all the decisions of the League at that time and that, had we taken part in drawing up the Covenant of the League, we would have contested certain of its articles. In particular, we should have objected to the provision in Articles 12 and 15 for the legalization, in certain instances, of war, and that is why I stated in my letter of September 15 to the President of the Assembly our satisfaction at the proposals to alter these articles. Further, we should have objected to Article 22 on the system of mandates. We also deprecate the absence in Article 23 of an undertaking to ensure race equality.

"All this, however, has not been important enough to prevent the Soviet Union from entering the League, especially since any new member of an organization can be morally responsible only for the decisions made with its participation and agreement.

"In order to make our position quite clear, I should like further to state that the idea in itself of an association of nations contains nothing theoretically unacceptable for the Soviet State and its ideology. The Soviet Union is itself a league of nations in the best sense of the word, uniting over 200 nationalities, thirteen of which have a population of not less than one million each, and others, such as Russia and Ukraine, a population running into scores of millions. I will make so bold as to claim that never before have so many nations coexisted so peacefully within a single State, never before have so many nations in one State had such free cultural development and enjoyed their own national culture as a whole and the use of their own language in particular. In no other country are all manifestations of race and national prejudice so resolutely put down and eradicated as in the Soviet Union.

“Here, as regards equality of rights, are neither national majorities nor minorities, since no nation, either in theory or practice, has less rights and fewer opportunities for cultural and economic development than another. Many nationalities which seemed to have been doomed to die out altogether have received a fresh lease of life and begun to develop anew, and this in territories where, before the Soviet regime, all nationalities except the dominating Russian were being stamped out by violence and oppression.

“At the present time the periodical press in the Soviet Union comes out in fifty languages. The national policy of the Soviet Union and the results of this policy have received their due both from friends and foes visiting the Soviet Union and studying the national question on the spot.

“All the nationalities in our Union are, of course, united by a common political and economic regime and by common aspirations toward a single ideal, for the attainment of which they vie among themselves. The Soviet State has, however, never excluded the possibility of some form or other of association with States having a different political and social system, so long as there is no mutual hostility, and if it is for the attainment of common aims. For such an association it considers that the essential conditions would be, first the extension to every State belonging to such an association of the liberty to preserve what I might call its State personality and the social economic system chosen by it—in other words, reciprocal non-interference in the domestic affairs of the States therein associated; and, secondly, the existence of common aims.

“As to the first condition, which we have named peaceful co-existence of different social-political systems at a given historical stage, we have advocated it again and again at international conferences. We have managed to get it recognized by inclusion in some of the resolutions of these conferences. But further developments were necessary before this principle was able to gain for itself wider recognition. The invitation to the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations may be said to represent the final victory of this principle. The Soviet Union is entering into the League today as representative of a new social-economic system, not renouncing any of its special features, and—like the other States here represented—preserving intact its personality.

“With regard to common aims, these have long ago been established in many spheres. Workers in the field of science, art and social activities in the Soviet Union have long been co-operating fruitfully with representatives of other States, both individually and on organized lines, in all spheres of science and culture and on problems of a humanitarian nature.

“The co-operation of the Soviet Union with other States within the framework of the League of Nations has also long ago shown itself to be both desirable and possible in the sphere of economics. Soviet delegations have taken part in the Committee of Inquiry for European Union, which occupied itself chiefly with economic questions; in both Economic Conferences, and in other Conferences of a lesser range. It will not be out of place here to remark that at all these Conferences proposals were put forward by the Soviet delegations with a view to the utmost reduction of the existing chaos in international economic relations and in the interests common to all concerned.

“The Soviet Government has also not abstained from co-operation of a political nature whenever some alleviation of international conflicts and increase of guarantees of security and consolidation of peace might reasonably be expected from such co-operation. I will only mention the active part taken by the Soviet delegation in the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference and in the Conference itself, when, on behalf of the Soviet Government, it declared its readiness for any degree of disarmament, taking its stand on far-reaching proposals for the ensuring of peace, some of which have received world-wide recognition and even application. In this respect, I remember, not without pride, the Soviet definition of aggression, which has been made the basis of innumerable international acts.

“It needed, however, one great dominating common aim to prove incontestably to all nations, including those of the Soviet Union, the desirability—nay, the necessity—for closer co-operation between the Soviet Union and the League of Nations, and even for the entry of the Soviet Union into the League. The discovery of such a common aim has been greatly facilitated by the events of the last two or three years.

“Thirty delegations to the Assembly, comprising most of the members of the League, and representing all the big States and those of importance in international life, declared in their address to the Soviet Union that the mission of the League was the organization of peace, and that the success of this mission demanded the co-operation of the Soviet Union. They knew that the State which they were addressing had not spared, throughout the seventeen years of its existence, its efforts for the establishment of the best possible relations with its own neighbors, on the most solid foundations, for rapprochements with all States desiring this, thus making itself a powerful factor for international peace.

“For its part, the Soviet Government, following attentively all developments of international life, could not but observe the in-

creasing activity in the League of Nations of States interested in the preservation of peace and their struggle against aggressive militarist elements. More, it noted that these aggressive elements themselves were finding the restrictions of the League embarrassing and trying to shake them off. All this could not be without its influence on the attitude toward the League of Nations of the Soviet Government, ever searching for further means for the organization of peace, for co-operation in which we have been invited to come here.

"The organization of peace! Could there be a loftier and at the same time more practical and urgent task for the co-operation of all nations? The words used in political slogans have their youth and their age. If they are used too often without being applied, they wear themselves out and end by losing potency. Then they have to be revived and instilled with new meaning. The sound and the meaning of the words 'organization of peace' ought now to be different from their sound and meaning twelve or fifteen years ago. Then, to many members of the League of Nations, war seemed to be a remote theoretical danger, and there seemed to be no hurry as to its prevention. Now, war must appear to all as the threatening danger of tomorrow. Now, the organization of peace, for which so far very little has been done, must be set against the extremely active organization of war. Then, many believed that the spirit of war might be exorcised by adjurations, resolutions and declarations. Now, everybody knows that the exponents of the idea of war, the open promulgators of the refashioning of the map of Europe and Asia by the sword, are not to be intimidated by paper obstacles. Members of the League of Nations know this by experience. We are now confronted with the task of averting war by more effective means.

"The failure of the Disarmament Conference, on which formerly such high hopes were placed, in its turn compels us to seek more effective means. We must accept the incontestable fact that in the present complicated state of political and economic interests, no war of any serious dimensions can be localized, and any war, whatever its issue, will turn out to have been but the first of a series. We must also tell ourselves that sooner or later any war will bring misfortune to all countries, whether belligerents or neutrals. The lesson of the World War, from the results of which both belligerents and neutrals are suffering to this day, must not be forgotten. The impoverishment of the whole world, the lowering of living standards, for both manual and brain workers, unemployment, robbing all and sundry of their confidence in the morrow, not to speak of the fall in cultural values, the return of some countries to medieval ideology—such are the consequences of the World War, even now, sixteen years after its cessation, which are making themselves actually felt.

"Finally, we must realize once and for all that no war with political or economic aims is capable of restoring so-called historical justice, and that all it could do would be to substitute new and perhaps still more glaring injustices for old ones, and that every new peace treaty bears within it the seeds of fresh warfare. Further, we must not lose sight of the new increase in armaments going on under our very eyes, the chief danger of which consists in its qualitative still more than in its quantitative increase, in the vast increase of potential destruction. The fact that aerial warfare has with such lightning speed won itself an equal place with land and naval warfare is sufficient corroboration of this argument.

"I do not consider it the moment to speak in detail about effective means for the prevention of impending and openly promulgated war. One thing is quite clear to me, and that is that peace and security cannot be organized on the shifting sands of verbal promises and declarations. The nations are not to be soothed into a feeling of security by assurances of peaceful intentions, however often they are repeated, especially in those places where there are full grounds for expecting aggression or where, only the day before, there have been talk and publications about wars of conquest in all directions, for which both ideological and material preparations are being made. We should establish that any State is entitled to demand from its neighbors, near and remote, guarantees for its security, and that such a demand is not to be considered as an expression of mistrust. Governments with a clear conscience and really free from all aggressive intentions, cannot refuse to give, in place of declarations, more effective guarantees which would be extended to themselves and give them also a feeling of complete security.

"Far be it from me to overrate the opportunities and means of the League of Nations for the organization of peace. I realize, better perhaps than any of you, how limited these means are. I am aware that the League does not possess the means for the complete abolition of war. I am, however, convinced that, with the firm will and close co-operation of all its members, a great deal could be done at any given moment for the utmost diminution of the danger of war, and this is a sufficiently honorable and lofty task, the fulfillment of which would be of incalculable advantage to humanity. The Soviet Government has never ceased working at this task throughout the whole period of its existence. It has come here to combine its efforts with the efforts of other States represented in the League. I am convinced that in this, our common work, from now on the will to peace of the Soviet Union with its 170 million inhabitants—peace for itself and for other States—will make itself felt as a powerful factor. I am convinced that, as we observe the fruitful consequences of this stream of

fresh forces in the common cause of peace, we shall always remember with the utmost satisfaction this day, as one occupying an honorable place in the annals of the League.”²²

Commenting on this speech of Litvinov's, his biographer, Mr. Arthur Upham Pope, wrote: “It was a statement of great force and genuine nobility.”²³

After Russia entered the League officially the newspapermen who represented the world press at Geneva and who (according to Mr. Pope) had learned to like Mr. Litvinov even before that event, celebrated the occasion with a luncheon. Litvinov was the guest of honor, and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Barthou, who was instrumental in preparing for the Soviet's entrance, was the main speaker.

The menu, relates Mr. Pope, was embellished by a cartoon depicting a Russian village in which all the Geneva celebrities strolled about in Russian costumes. In the center of the composition was a young woman, called Miss Geneva, dancing with Litvinov, costumed as a Russian general. In his speech Barthou, referring to the cartoon, said: “I see the Russian general dancing with a virgin, or let us say, with a somewhat damaged virgin.” Litvinov, when acknowledging the greetings and good wishes, joined in the spirit of the occasion and remarked: “I will gladly dance with even a damaged virgin, if I know in which direction I dance.”

To be sure the “direction” was neither safe nor quite definite. Not only the few small nations which had objected to the invitation to the U.S.S.R. were openly hostile toward the Soviets, but also the great Powers were still far from being genuinely cooperative and were certainly not friendly. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colonel Beck, who was known to be violently anti-Soviet and flirting with the idea of Fascism, made a sarcastic remark in connection with the ceremony of Russian entrance: “The Third International was greeted by the Second International,” insinuating that Litvinov was representing the Comintern, that is, the Third International, while the Chairman of the Session, Sandler, belonged to the Second Interna-

²² Maxim M. Litvinov, *Speeches* (In Russian) pp. 77-85. Also *League of Nations Official Journal*, Special Supplement #125, pp. 66-69 or Malbone W. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-191.

²³ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

tional. Others, too, showed again and again that the Soviet Union was not a welcome member of their society.

Still a certain amount of success was undoubtedly achieved. Collaboration developed, although very slowly and in a zigzag manner. Before the need for Soviet help was at last realized, and the proper adjustments made, the world was to pass through a long period of uneasy waiting filled with international intrigues and the growth of national arrogance. Finally the new World War was launched by the Axis Powers, the three main members of the Anti-Comintern Pact, who for a long time had successfully frightened the others with the "Red bogey."

Aware of the weakness of her tie with the League and the ineffectiveness of that organization, and realizing that the world situation was deteriorating dangerously into a new universal armed conflict, the U.S.S.R. continued to prepare for any eventuality. Russia relied on her own forces, although at the same time she continued to strive to develop better relations with the other Powers.²⁴

At the XVIIth Party Congress, held in January, 1934, its Secretary-General, Stalin, said:

"Our orientation in the past and our orientation at the present time is toward the U.S.S.R., and the U.S.S.R. alone. . . . Those who want peace and are striving for business intercourse with us will always receive our support. And those who try to attack our country will receive a stunning rebuff to teach them not to poke their pig's snout into our Soviet garden again."²⁵

The essence of Soviet foreign policy remained its struggle for peace. The Russians considered collective security the only reliable guarantee of peace. And the prerequisite for collective security was the establishment and maintenance of normal diplomatic relations. Moscow was striving to establish such relations with all, and it was not her fault that even this minimum—normal diplomatic relations—was still not established with a few States.

²⁴ "We understand quite well that joining the League of Nations does not create a guarantee against the possibility of war. We conceive that a ceaseless vigilance, the reinforcement of the defensive possibilities of our country and of our military preparation against every danger of attack ought, as in the past, to constitute our constant and invariable preoccupation." (*Zaria Vostoka*, Tiflis, September 18, 1934.)

²⁵ *Izvestia*, January 28, 1934.

CHAPTER VII

Further Recognition and Alliances

The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreement. Treaties of Mutual Assistance with France and Czechoslovakia. Growth of the Fascist Menace.

The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreement. The abnormality of the situation created by the refusal of the U.S. State Department to recognize a regime that had been in existence for over fifteen years, and had official relations with practically every state of any importance, was felt in the United States for a long time. The menacing situation in the Far East, created by Japanese aggression in Manchuria, demanded the serious consideration of Washington. The U.S.S.R.'s position *vis-à-vis* this new menace to American interests in Asia could not be ignored. Business interests had long been demanding some understanding with Moscow, whose First Five-Year Plan had proved to be a success. Economically the U.S.S.R. was considerably stronger. Greater business between the two countries was likely if normal relations could be restored.¹

The advent of Hitler and the growing arrogance of Nazism and Italian Fascism necessitated the consolidation of forces of all who suffered from Fascist economic rivalry, or who felt uneasy about the aggressive designs of Mussolini and Hitler. Recognition of the U.S.S.R. had clearly become a necessity.²

Secretary of State Stimson was reported ready to recognize the Soviet regime early in 1933. Franklin D. Roosevelt made it clear before his election that he stood for such a step. By the time he was elected, public opinion in the country strongly supported the idea of recognition. In January, 1933, eight hundred

¹ American exports to the U.S.S.R. fell from \$132,000,000 in 1930 to a mere \$15,000,000 in 1932, for Moscow had turned to other countries.

² Alfred E. Smith, a leading figure in the Democratic party, a devoted son of the Roman Catholic Church, made a significant statement at that time before a Congressional Committee on economic recovery. "I believe we ought to recognize (the U.S.S.R.) . . . I do not know of any reason for not doing so." (Foster Rhea Dulles, *Road to Teheran*, Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 188.)

college presidents and professors addressed a message to the President-elect stating that "failure to recognize Russia has contributed to the serious situation in the Orient and prevented adopting of policies which might have frustrated the imperialistic ventures of Japan." The economic situation, too, was a factor. Bank failures, business bankruptcies, unemployment, etc., had to be met with a bold New Deal in the economic and social aspects of life.³

Preliminary negotiations, as we have seen, had been carried on for some time in 1933 and even in 1932 (at the time of William Bullitt's visit to Moscow). In October, 1933, a cable from Mr. Roosevelt to Mr. Kalinin expressed the President's regret that "these great peoples, between whom a happy tradition of friendship existed for more than a century to their mutual advantage, should now be without a practical method of communicating directly with each other," and suggested delegating a representative to be sent by Moscow to Washington "to explore with me personally all questions outstanding between our countries." Kalinin replied with a cordial cable accepting the invitation, and announced that M. M. Litvinov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., would go to Washington at a time mutually agreed upon.

On November 7, Litvinov arrived. On November 16, agreement was reached, and normal diplomatic relations were thereby established. Aside from the letters exchanged by the President and the Soviet envoy, announcing the happy event, there were a number of letters elaborating the agreement in respect to the rights of citizens of the two respective countries while visiting the other. There was also a reciprocal pledge of non-interference in the internal affairs of each country (including abstention from propaganda); an agreement to arrange for negotiations about debts and various claims and counterclaims at some later date; and Litvinov's declaration that the U.S.S.R. had decided to waive its claims for damages incurred through American participation in the armed intervention in Russia's Far East. (The Soviet authorities considered the behavior of

³ A poll conducted by the American Foundation among 1200 newspapers throughout the country reported 63 per cent of those answering the questionnaire as favoring recognition. Ten per cent were for recognition under certain conditions, and only 27% opposed it. (*Ibid.*, p. 195.)

America in that case incomparably less objectionable than was that of other Powers).

During the negotiations, as before their start, certain groups agitated against recognition of the U.S.S.R., but failed to prevent what was clearly in the interests of the United States. Litvinov's biographer, Arthur Upham Pope, listed among the groups acting in this manner, the American Federation of Labor, and such individuals as Eugene Lyons and Representative Hamilton Fish (who, as Mr. Pope explains, "had attempted to do business with the U.S.S.R. and when his propositions were rejected because of unreasonable, not to say exorbitant, profits to be reserved for himself and his associates, he had threatened in revenge to make political trouble for the Russian Government").⁴

As for the part played by Eugene Lyons, Mr. Pope revealed a rather elaborate plan of the Japanese who wanted to hinder rapprochement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The story, as given by Mr. Pope, is this:

"Much more serious was an attempt by Japan to sabotage the conference in Washington, not directly, but by using Eugene Lyons, United Press correspondent in Moscow. Eugene Lyons had come to Moscow full of enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, not sufficiently distinguishing hopes from achievements. Since hell hath no fury like a frustrated doctrinaire idealist, his good will turned to a vindictive and unreasonable animosity and he was already beginning to make an inventory of all the disagreeable things he saw, could think of, or heard about the Soviet Union. He was thus an easy victim for the Japanese schemes. 'News' of serious clashes between Russians and Japanese was furnished to him. Russian anti-aircraft guns, it was said, had fired on Japanese planes flying over Siberia, bodies of Japanese flyers were supposed to have been handed over to the Japanese at the Manchurian border, and Russian ships equipped with cannon had presumably sunk Japanese fishing trawlers in Russian waters. The incidents appeared grave. A war in the Far East seemed imminent. The implication was that Russia wanted recognition from the United States in order to have an ally in the event of war. The United States was, thus indirectly, warned to avoid recognition in the face of impending Russian disaster.

"On November 9, Lyons telephoned the Japanese story to his London office. Later, realizing that he had fallen into a trap, the

⁴ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

author said that he had written the dispatch in the subjunctive and had tried to kill it an hour later. But when it appeared in the American papers, there was no trace of the subjunctive and the story had not been killed.

"Litvinov in Washington did not mince words. He labeled the affair a Japanese plot to wreck the negotiations, and said that the American journalist had been used as a cat's paw. Tokyo, incidentally, let the correspondent down by issuing a categorical denial of the whole matter. Lyons afterwards excused himself on the ground that he had been 'framed' by the Soviet Government."⁵

In spite of all the efforts of the anti-Soviet elements, the long-delayed establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the two powerful countries was accomplished. President Roosevelt took a step ahead in the right direction. But, unfortunately for his own country, as well as for the entire world, this step in the right direction was not allowed to go on uninterrupted. The hostile forces were active and spread their influence all over the world.

Various German, Japanese and Italian emissaries were at work building dissension among the forces they considered capable of uniting in order to check Fascism.

Their emissaries were visiting various countries and whispering into the ears of those who were, or could be, receptive to such propaganda that the only serious danger to the existing order was Communism. Hitler, according to them, was the only guarantee against that menace. They found many receptive minds in practically every country, particularly in England.

Britain's mistrust of the Soviet Union even led her to welcome signs of Germany's military resurgence, as an offset to growing Russian strength. While the French were more than ever fearful of their Teutonic neighbor, the English saw no particular threat in Hitler's rearmament program, a tragic and costly error the result of both good and bad motives.⁶

This was partly the result of Germany's effort to mislead the others, partly because of inadequate information about the U.S.S.R. For instance, England's news service from the U.S.S.R. was definitely inadequate. Such an important newspaper as the *London Times* for many years had no correspondents of its

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

own in Moscow, or anywhere in the U.S.S.R. Consequently it had to rely, as did numerous other newspapers elsewhere, on dangerous nonsense passed on from anti-Soviet sources, a slight example of which was offered in the above story of Eugene Lyons as reported by Mr. Pope. The famous Sisson Documents on Soviet Russia, which proved to be apocryphal, or the "Zinoviev letter" (which served to usher the Tory Government into power in 1924, although it was a crude fabrication of anti-Soviet emigrés and the Polish Secret Service), naturally did not help to build a reliable picture of what the U.S.S.R. represented. The Germany of Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg did its utmost to keep up suspicion and promote hostility against the U.S.S.R. And she succeeded in doing so to the detriment of the people who wanted peace but were being relentlessly pushed into a new war.

Treaties with France and Czechoslovakia. The establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. naturally affected a wide range of world affairs. Other countries accepted the event as a step forward in the cause of international peace. Among those who were encouraged to demonstrate more confidence toward the Soviet State were France and Czechoslovakia.

From 1932 on, when Paris and Moscow had signed a non-aggression and neutrality pact, the relations between France and Russia had more or less steadily improved. Hitler's advent to power, as we have seen, served to accelerate that process. The economic difficulties experienced by France during that period, and growing internal unrest, intensified by the activities of French Fascists, organized in the Croix-de-Feu, called for serious measures of self-defense. France needed friends. France was aware of the growing military strength of her former ally. She had been instrumental in bringing the U.S.S.R. into the League of Nations; she wanted more. On December 5, 1934, the two countries signed the Franco-Soviet Protocol, by which "continued collaboration of the two states in their endeavors to consummate the long-sought Eastern Regional Pact" was agreed upon.

The idea of an "Eastern Locarno" had been discussed for a

long time. Italy and Great Britain (somewhat hesitatingly) approved it. Germany and Poland were against it. Germany opposed it because she was not content with her eastern boundaries; Nazi Germany would not sign an all-around guarantee of the *status quo*. As for Poland, she was under a dictatorship and was strengthening her friendship with Hitler, after having signed a non-aggression treaty with Berlin. She was anxious not to offend the Reich. With the U.S.S.R. Poland also had an understanding, pledging non-aggression for ten years. A new pact would not serve to change much in that respect. But above all, Warsaw disliked any steps that would increase the prestige of her eastern neighbor. Under such circumstances the plan for an Eastern Locarno was dropped.

Instead of an Eastern Locarno, a series of mutual assistance pacts were signed by France with the U.S.S.R. and by the latter with Czechoslovakia, providing a trilateral arrangement supplementing the security pacts embracing the countries of north-eastern Europe.

The Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance was signed at Paris on May 2, 1935, by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Laval, and the Soviet Ambassador to France, Potemkin.

On signing this document, the contracting parties announced that they wanted to have similar treaties with Germany. But circumstances did not permit the conclusion of such agreements, much as they were desired.

The Treaty pledged immediate consultation in the event that the other party should prove to be an object of a threat or in danger of an attack from any European state. In case of an unprovoked attack, immediate assistance and support was pledged, in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁷ The treaty was to be ratified as soon as possible at Moscow; it was to remain in force for five years; and if there were no advance notice before the expiration of that period of

⁷ When the draft of the new "Stalin" constitution was discussed late in 1936 French authorities asked for clarification of the wording of an article in it, dealing with the tasks of the Red Army. They were worried about the statement that the armed forces were built for the protection of the Fatherland. To satisfy the French this wording was modified by the inclusion (Art. 49 3) of the words, "or whenever required to fulfil international treaty obligations concerning mutual defense against aggression."

the desire not to renew it, the treaty would continue valid indefinitely.⁸

On May 13, Laval arrived at Moscow, and the pact was ratified. Litvinov, in his speech at the banquet in honor of the French Minister, stressed the significance of the visit as a solemn demonstration of the importance of that international act, designed to preserve peace, directed against none, and open to adherence by everyone. Litvinov reminded his audience and the guest that the pact was the result of the labors of three different French Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which made it so much stronger, for it meant that various shades of French public opinion were in agreement on its desirability. The Soviet Commissar closed his remarks by expressing the hope that this was only the good beginning of collaboration between the two countries in the interest of peace and good will among nations.⁹

On his way to Moscow, Laval made a stop at Warsaw, where he wanted to assure the Poles that the newly concluded agreement with Moscow did not in any sense threaten the interests of their country. The Poles suspected the existence of secret clauses; there were none. They did not like the possibility of being asked to allow the passage of Red troops through their land in case war with Germany made it necessary. Before Laval left Warsaw an official communiqué declared that he and Colonel Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, had renewed the "close solidarity of the Franco-Polish alliance."

⁸ The increasing danger created by the advocates of aggression prompted this new step in the joint struggle of the U.S.S.R. and France for peace. Moscow's policy was well known to the entire world. Soviet Russia had not the slightest desire to see her construction of the economic life of her own country disturbed, and she had no reason or intention to attack other countries. There could be no doubt that she was signing this new instrument of peace without any thought of breaking it.

France undoubtedly wanted peace as much as did Russia. That is why Premier Edouard Herriot and Pierre Cot, Minister of Aviation, visited Moscow and persuaded their colleagues to sign the non-aggression and neutrality pact. That is why Louis Barthou, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, was anxious to see the U.S.S.R. in the League of Nations. After this had been accomplished, France signed the Geneva Protocol which led to the signing of the Mutual Assistance Treaty. The French people, as a whole, definitely strove for peace, and a treaty with the powerful U.S.S.R. was demanded as a sort of guarantee. Laval was forced to abide by it. Laval did sign the accord. But did he approve of this "deal" with the Bolsheviks? Hardly. Events in the years that followed answered this important query.

⁹ Maxim M. Litvinov, *Speeches*, pp. 284-285.

While in Moscow, Laval renewed his efforts to consummate a revised Eastern pact with the participation of other states. On May 15, a joint statement to that effect was issued by him and Litvinov. It was an invitation to join the Eastern Locarno as a multilateral non-aggression compact without military obligations.

The British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir John Simon, declared at Stresa that he was still hopeful that the German Government might look with favor on such a revised compact; Poland was expected to take a similar stand, although there were difficulties to be ironed out.

Actually these expectations proved futile.¹⁰

Meanwhile, on May 16, Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. signed at Prague a Mutual Assistance Treaty, similar to that signed on May 2, in Paris, by the U.S.S.R. and France, but with one important difference. Clause 2 of the Protocol on the signing of the Czechoslovakian treaty made their mutual obligation of assistance conditional on the fulfillment by France of her pledge. This clause stated:

“Both Governments declare that the obligations covered by Article I, II and III of the present treaty, which has been concluded with the desire to co-operate in the creation of a regional system of security in eastern Europe, the beginning of which was laid by the Franco-Soviet Treaty of May 2, 1935, are restricted by those limits established in Paragraph 4 of the protocol on the signing of the above-mentioned treaty. At the same time, both Governments recognize that the obligations of mutual assistance will be effective between them only in so far as, under the conditions provided for in the present treaty, aid will be accorded by France to the party who is the victim of attack.”¹¹

In June of the same year, Dr. Eduard Benes, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, arrived at Moscow too. Litvinov's speech on this occasion sounded more cordial than that when Laval was feted. Relations between the two Slavic nations

¹⁰ Captain Eden's visit to Warsaw in March, 1935, hardly gave any signs of Poland's willingness. During 1934 her Government showed a growing chilliness toward her old friend, France, and growing cordiality toward Germany. This reflected the views of Pilsudski, whose hatred of Russia was pronounced.

¹¹ Melbone W. Graham, *The Peace Policy of the Soviet Union*, p. 210.

were more intimate. The role played by the Czechoslovak legionnaires in the Russian counterrevolution was a dark spot, but it was a matter of the past. Trade relations between the two countries had been established in 1921. And the next year, during the Conference at Genoa, Benes and Litvinov had signed an agreement, one of the clauses of which had pledged neutrality, demonstrating their mutual desire to refrain from any aggressive designs against one another. Dr. Benes had for years advocated close co-operation between the two. In 1933 Czechoslovakia affixed her signature to the convention defining aggressors. Litvinov's struggle for collective security found a willing co-worker in the person of the Czech Minister. Benes, together with his French colleague, Barthou, worked to bring the U.S.S.R. into the League of Nations. In other words, for years the two countries had found a fertile field for co-operation, for both were deeply interested in the preservation of peace.

The arrival of Dr. Benes in Moscow for the ratification of the Mutual Assistance Treaty was considered by Litvinov and the Soviet people as a happy augury of the solidarity and growing understanding between the two Slav nations. The international situation, said Litvinov, "is far from guaranteeing peace in Europe. Enemies of the collective security idea continue their systematic attacks on it, and do their best to hinder its materialization. That is why those who are interested in seeing it applied to as many nations as possible, have to double their efforts in this direction."

Growth of the Fascist Menace. The advent of Hitler in the role of the "Führer" of Germany along with the growing arrogance of Mussolini and the unabated thirst for conquest of their Asiatic counterpart, Japan, clearly indicated that the storm was gathering. Various efforts, ineffective because not always sincere (and often naïve) to check the aggressively disposed elements were failing one after another, bringing catastrophe closer and closer.

Numerous international conferences proved to be useless. The League of Nations was futile in the face of rising Fascism, partly because certain members of the League were far from condemning this new trend which promised, so they thought, restoration of the order which had been "disturbed by the suc-

cessful revolution in Russia." The world-wide economic crisis further intensified the difficulties facing agreement between various countries, which were rivals in the struggle to control foreign markets. And the rise of economic nationalism precluded genuine co-operation.

In 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, the real meaning of Hitler's *coup* was not properly understood by the ruling groups of various countries, although it undoubtedly was recognized as a challenge to the existing setup. But soon the withdrawal of the Reich from the Disarmament Conference, which had refused to allow her to rearm, and Hitler's decision to quit the League clearly indicated the direction in which the Nazis intended to go.

The American Ambassador-at-large, Norman Davis, who represented President Roosevelt, himself strongly disapproved of the stand taken by Germany at Geneva. At his meeting with Dr. Rosenberg at London in May, 1933, he declared that America would never consent to any form of rearmament by any nation. Germany's demand for military strength imperiled the very existence of the Disarmament Conference, the collapse of which would profoundly disturb the peace of the world, and Germany would be held responsible. Moreover, Mr. Davis told Dr. Rosenberg, failure at Geneva would jeopardize the prospects of the World Economic Conference, scheduled for June.

A few days later a joint communiqué issued in Washington by the President of the United States and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, on behalf of Germany, declared that there could be no solution to the world's economic problems without military disarmament. But, the same day, Joseph Paul Boncour, speaking for the French Government, declared that France was now prepared to take a strong aggressive stand and join all the foes of the Nazi regime in an effort to crush it by peaceful means. He again spoke of publishing the famous secret dossier on Germany's illegal armaments. There was also talk in Paris of preparing "economic sanctions."¹²

Provoked by this statement of Paul Boncour and the decision of the Disarmament Conference that the Nazi Storm Troops and the Steel Helmets were part of the armed forces of the Reich, Hitler summoned the Reichstag, and announced that he

¹² *Current History*, July, 1933, p. 454.

would address it on May 17, 1933. The crisis was being brought to a head.

Exactly on the eve of Hitler's appearance before the Reichstag, President Roosevelt issued an appeal to the rulers and heads of fifty-four States, urging all nations to abolish offensive weapons, to agree not to increase their armaments while the Disarmament Conference was working to achieve their aims, and to pledge that they would not send armed forces across their frontiers. Without mentioning Germany by name, the President sounded a warning against the responsibility that would be hers should the Disarmament and Economic Conferences fail.

Hitler's speech turned out to be fairly conciliatory. He did not want war. Germany's new regime, he declared, was not a menace to peace. Germany's only desire was to be able to preserve her independence and protect her borders. She was "the only nation whose fear of invasion could really be justified." She was ready to dissolve her whole military establishment and destroy her arms, provided her neighbors did the same. But, added Hitler, "German people must not be asked to sign anything that would perpetuate Germany's disqualification. Any attempt to overpower Germany by a mere majority decision in contravention of the clear spirit of treaties could be dictated only by the intention to force her out of the conferences."

Regardless of appeals, speeches, declarations and the like, the world was definitely and unavoidably heading straight into a new calamity. Security was unattainable while the forces facing one another were irreconcilable. Their leaders, consciously or not, were not doing all they should and could to check the growth of the Fascist menace to the peace of the world. In Moscow at least those who were responsible for the future of their country were not lulled by the peaceful professions of Hitler.

To Moscow there seemed to be something suspicious in the attempts to build a Four-Power Pact, proposed by Italy and supported by Great Britain. On May 21, 1933, Mussolini conferred with Sir Ronald Graham of England, Captain Goering of Germany, and Henri de Jouvenil, of France. They came to an agreement, but the treaty was not signed because of the opposition to it in France. In retrospect, one might ask if there was not in 1933 a first attempt to come to an agreement similar

to the one finally achieved at Munich in 1938? There was no place for the U.S.S.R. in the 1933 conference just as there was none at Munich in 1938.

In the meantime, the Economic Conference at London was unable to prevent a further split among the nations for most of them were no longer advocates of *laissez faire*. Nor was the Disarmament Conference able to survive the inevitable withdrawal of Germany. Berlin declared its decision in October of the same year, 1933.

The following January Germany signed a non-aggression pact with Poland, which was already drifting into the German orbit and showing definite signs of interest in the new ideas inaugurated by the various brands of Fascism.

In June, 1934, Berlin proclaimed a transfer moratorium and suspended cash payments on her foreign debts. About that time Hitler gave his followers a blood bath through a purge at home. In July, Nazis in Vienna shot the Austrian Chancellor, Dolfuss, for having been unwilling to accommodate them. This method of eliminating those who balked the plans of the Nazis and Fascists was extending beyond their own territories. Early in October, 1934, Louis Barthou, the man who brought the Soviet representatives to Geneva, and thereby strengthened the League, was shot at Marseilles. Rumors persisted that the assassins came from Germany.

How seriously these events and the position of Nazi Germany were disturbing her neighbors by that time was demonstrated in a dramatic debate in the British Parliament, late in November, 1934. Winston Churchill demanded larger air appropriations because Germany had a powerful and well-equipped army with an immense reserve of trained men and munition factories working under practically war conditions. But Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, declared that there was no immediate menace and no ground for serious alarm.¹³ Soon afterwards Parliament voted much larger appropriations for armaments and the air forces.

About that time the French Premier, Flandin, also denied in a speech before the Senate that the German Army was a menace to France. But in both cases, in Great Britain and France, this

¹³ *Ibid.*, January, 1935, pp. 451-452.

optimism was not shared by most of those who were not bound by official position and a policy of appeasement to minimize the danger. The French also voted extra funds for the Army.¹⁴

By the end of the year 1934, Italy had showed her hand in the way in which she handled the clashes between the Ethiopian and Italian soldiers on the disputed frontier of Somaliland. These clashes bore all the signs of careful preparation.

In January, 1935, citizens of the Saar Territory voted, under the supervision of an international group appointed by the League of Nations, for their return to Germany. If this step had been designed to appease Germany, it only succeeded in giving her more confidence in her power. Two months later, Hitler broke the Versailles Treaty by ordering universal military service and started the open expansion of the German armed forces.

The clouds were rapidly gathering. Already Japan was on the march in Asia; Mussolini warned Italy to be ready "for the war of today" and was ready to attack practically unarmed Ethiopia; and Hitler, feverishly arming, was finishing his blueprints for embroiling the whole world in a new, this time global, war.

No wonder that the world was dismayed. Only some of the leaders of Great Britain still thought it unimportant. For instance, the *London Times* commented as follows: "If Herr Hitler's move is simply a rather crude method of asserting German equality, then no irreparable harm has been done. The negotiations can go forward."¹⁵

The Russians did not share this Olympian calm. Litvinov at Geneva, reviewing the situation, again sounded a warning:

"The question . . . deserves . . . attention . . . we are faced with an act of violation of an international treaty by a State which is formally still a member of the League . . . constituting a menace to peace . . . all peace-loving States have the right to arm for the defense of their security. However, while calling for equality in armaments, we must base ourselves on the assumption that these armaments will be used exclusively for defensive purposes, for the protection of the existing frontiers and for the security of the nation concerned.

". . . What is to be done if a country which demands or assumes the

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, February, 1935, p. 580.

¹⁵ *London Times*, March 17, 1935.

right to arm is exclusively led by people who have publicly announced as the program of their foreign policy a policy which consists, not only in revenge, but in the unrestricted conquest of foreign territory and the destruction of the independence of whole States—under the leadership of people who have publicly announced such a program and who, far from repudiating it, are ceaselessly disseminating it and educating their people in its spirit? . . .”

The growing menace of Nazism, as we have seen, prompted not only the invitation to the U.S.S.R. to enter the League, but also served to bring about Mutual Assistance Pacts between that country and France on the one hand and Czechoslovakia on the other. But the Soviet State does not place complete faith in treaties and has never felt that treaties alone can safeguard its people from attack. “Diplomatic agreements and diplomacy are not decisive factors in history. They are merely tools. But their action may serve the cause of peace, may become the expression of the peace aspirations of the masses,” said Russian newspapers commenting on the Soviet-French accord.

While using all the available instruments for helping to preserve peace, including conferences, treaties, pacts, etc., the U.S.S.R. still placed its main reliance on the constant growth of its industries and agriculture, on strengthening its own Red Army and Red Navy, and building up the morale of its own peoples.

As the result of the First Five-Year Plan, completed before the expiration of its term, and the successful development of the Second Five-Year Plan, already in its third year, the U.S.S.R. was rapidly emerging as a powerful State capable of defending itself against any assault. Its heavy industry was approaching the point where all the necessary tools of modern warfare could be produced locally. Mining was expanding and nearing the point where all the needs of modern war could be satisfied without too much reliance on imports. Now came the problem of building adequate reserves of skilled artisans, engineers, and leaders of men. This was considered most urgent, and special attention was given to solving the problem.

In a speech made before the graduates of the Red Military Academies in May, 1935, Stalin said:

"Formerly we used to say that 'technique decides everything.' This slogan helped us to put an end to the dearth in technique and to create a vast technical base in every branch of activity for the equipment of our people with first-class technique. That is very good. But it is not enough, it is not enough by far. In order to set technique going and to utilize it to the full, we need people who have mastered technique, we need cadres capable of mastering and utilizing this technique according to all the rules of the art. Without people who have mastered technique, technique is dead. In the charge of people who have mastered technique, technique can and should perform miracles. . . .

"It is time to realize that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and most decisive is people, cadres. It must be realized that under our present conditions 'cadres decide everything.' If we have good and numerous cadres in industry, agriculture, transport and army—our country will be invincible. . . ." ¹⁶

On the other hand, Hitler, in a speech on May 21, made two things perfectly clear: first—that he was determined to keep his hands free for war in Eastern Europe, and in particular against the U.S.S.R., and second—that he still was trying to wean England away from the peace-desiring countries, in order gradually to split the forces of peace, and to secure a pact in Western Europe that would cover his rear for an attack on the Soviet Union.

Apparently Hitler's efforts in that direction were not quite futile. Here is what a brilliant British journalist, R. P. Dutt, wrote in the *Labour Monthly* for June, 1935:

"Nazi Germany is the main center of the war danger in Europe and the world today; but without British support it would never have reached its present position; and the suspicion that British support is behind the Nazi expansionist plans in Eastern Europe is the decisive factor underlying the menace to the present position in Europe. Against this menace the only break in the imperialist front at the present moment, which hinders the launching of the attack, is the Franco-Soviet Pact; and the Franco-Soviet Pact thus reflects the direct interest of the international working class. But British influence is using all its resources to draw France into the Western imperialist front away from the line of the Franco-Soviet Pact. And

¹⁶ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 337-338.

strong forces in France are working in the same direction. French fascism is openly pro-Hitler, even at the expense of French national interests." ¹⁷

On the other side of the Soviet Union's territory there was another menace, jingoistic Japan. Already rumors of a secret agreement between Berlin and Tokyo were circulating freely and the activities of Japanese militarists in Manchuria undoubtedly served to justify this rumor.

Under these circumstances Moscow intensified the work on fortifications along the Manchurian frontier, increased its garrisons in the Orient, and offered special inducements for migration to that region from other parts of the country.

The collaboration between Japan and Germany became obvious in 1934, when a Japanese squadron paid a visit to German waters; later Japan sent military and naval experts to Berlin, at which time trade negotiations designed to increase their economic interdependence were begun.

The rapprochement between its two aggressively inclined neighbors was, naturally, alarming to the U.S.S.R. Not only the Soviet Union, but the foreign press, too, considered a Japanese-Soviet war, with Germany attacking from the other side of Russia, quite possible.

Along with this possibility of co-ordinated operations between Germany from the West and Japan from the East, other disquieting rumors aggravated the situation: Poland was flirting with Japan, too, as she had done with Germany. Finland showed signs of willingness to co-operate with the enemies of the U.S.S.R. as well. If Japanese empire-builders, of the Araki type, were dreaming of expansion on the mainland of Asia at the expense of the U.S.S.R., and the Polish nationalists were continuing to advocate Greater Poland, from the Baltic to the Black Sea,¹⁸ certain Finnish nationalists were also advocating a greater Finland, up to the Urals.

Those were not idle rumors, either. The construction of the Mannerheim Line on the eastern border of Finland, facing the

¹⁷ Quoted by the magazine *Soviet Russia Today*, August, 1935, p. 6.

¹⁸ Late in 1934 Poland declared at Geneva that she would no longer co-operate with international bodies in carrying out the requirements of the minorities treaties.

U.S.S.R., and in dangerous proximity to Leningrad, and of numerous airfields, far beyond anything that Finland herself needed or could ever need, naturally increased the worries of Moscow.

In order to reduce the danger somewhat, the U.S.S.R., as we have seen, offered to sell the Chinese-Eastern Railroad to Japan, and, after prolonged negotiations, hindered by the militarists, the transaction was finally consummated; in 1935 the road was sold. To some extent the tension in the East seemed abated, but not for long.

Violations of the Soviet frontier from Manchuria continued. Another victim of these provocations of the Japanese was the Mongolian People's Republic. The close relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Mongolian Republic were known, of course, to Japan, and therefore it was obvious to the latter that the U.S.S.R. could not remain indifferent to such attacks. Japanese raids on Mongolia were actually aimed at Russian interests, and were looked upon as such by Moscow. Having consolidated her position in Manchuria and Northern China, Japan seemed to be preparing for an assault on Outer Mongolia and on the U.S.S.R. itself.

When, in 1935, the crisis on the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier reached a head, Gendun, President of the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian People's Republic, went to Moscow. In an interview he declared that Japan was planning to set up a second Manchukuo in his country to serve as a base for further attacks on China and the U.S.S.R., and he expressed his confidence that the Soviet Union would support the Mongols if they were attacked.¹⁹ On January 25, 1936, according to Soviet reports, the Mongol Government asked for a mutual assistance pact with the U.S.S.R. Soon such a pact was actually signed.

¹⁹ *Izvestia*, January 3, 1936.

CHAPTER VIII

Futile Efforts to Build a United Front Against Fascism

Comintern Offers Co-operation. Italian War in Ethiopia. Economic Sanctions, and the U.S.S.R.'s Participation. The Montreux Conference. The Anti-Comintern Pact.

Comintern Offers Co-operation. Early in 1935 fighting was resumed on the border of Ethiopia and Somaliland. Already in January of that year Italy had mobilized some seventy thousand troops. The Negus sent a protest to the League, but to no avail.

In March Anthony Eden went to Moscow and held conferences with Stalin, Molotov and Litvinov. In May the two Mutual Assistance Pacts were signed by the U.S.S.R. with France and Czechoslovakia, and the diplomatic position of Moscow was considerably strengthened. The U.S.S.R.'s role became not only that of a sincere advocate of peace, but also that of a mighty potential ally in case of war, and was widely recognized as such; which was exactly why its enemies were redoubling their efforts to damage its prestige. Nazis and Fascists intensified their activities on all fronts. The international situation continued to be tense, and was growing worse. Mussolini declared "we reject the absurdity of eternal peace, which is foreign to our creed and our temperament." The necessity for the collaboration of those who were anxious to check the Fascist aggressors became obvious.

Still, there were those who preferred to rely on the appeasement of those forces which constituted a menace to peace. In June, 1935, England consented to sign an agreement with Germany by which the latter "promised to limit her Navy to thirty-five per cent of the British Navy." This was a strange prize presented to the Nazis, in contradiction to the Versailles Treaty, and the Stresa agreement.

The *White Paper* issued by the British Government on June 18, 1935, announcing the signing of the pact, startled the world

like an exploding bomb. Only a few days earlier London had informed Paris that negotiations then in progress between the British and German delegates were merely exploratory, and hinted that no definite steps were contemplated. But the new Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, and his new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Samuel Hoare, decided differently. The treaty giving the Third Reich the right to a fleet as large as thirty-five per cent of Britain's (and almost equal in size to that of France) had been signed, sealed and put into immediate effect.¹

The news provoked wild jubilation in Germany and sharp resentment in France and the Soviet Union. Others had not been consulted on that abrupt step. The agreement reached only a short time before at Stresa by Great Britain, France and Italy was now scrapped, just as Germany had already scrapped by unilateral action the arms section of the Versailles Treaty.

The policy of appeasing the aggressors was becoming a vogue. It not only encouraged further contempt for existing treaties and commonly accepted rules of international behavior, but invited new adherents into the fold of Fascism. Political commentators all over the world were surprised by this act of Great Britain's. While talking favorably about "collective security" as the best guarantee of peace, to have concluded a bilateral agreement of such importance, and so definite a threat to security, without consulting anyone, was disquieting indeed.²

It was in such an atmosphere that the Seventh Congress of the Third International, or Comintern, met in Moscow on July 25, 1935. This was its first meeting after a long period of recess. In consideration of the fact that the world was being divided into two camps (one anxious to preserve peace and the *status quo*, and to avoid violent disturbances; the other composed of those who wanted a revision of the Versailles Treaty and redistribution of land, by conquest, if necessary), the Congress came to a very important decision. It decided to abandon, for

¹ *Current History*, August, 1935, p. 506.

² A few days after this Anglo-German accord was consummated, the unofficial peace ballot, concluded on June 27, showed that more than ten million Britons favored the League of Nations' platform disarmament and abolition of the private manufacture of arms. One wonders if the action of the British Government reflected this attitude of its people? Could they, really, have been so naïve as to see in the arming of Germany a guarantee of peace?

the time being, the stressing of the class struggle, and to swing the proletarian forces into an alliance with all those who were alarmed by the growing menace of Fascism. The decision was prompted by the realization of the urgent necessity for cooperation among all those interested in the preservation of peace, irrespective of their political affiliations. Accordingly, a resolution was passed recommending that all Communist Parties, members of the Third International, concentrate their efforts on the creation of understandings with other political parties within each country. The purpose was to build a united front designed more effectively to fight Fascism, as the greatest danger of the moment.

This appeal, emanating from Moscow, but not from any official of the U.S.S.R., and addressed to the members of the Comintern, was interpreted in Great Britain and the United States as interference in the internal affairs of these countries and it was vigorously protested by them. The protest was based on the pledge to refrain from propaganda, and the mutual promise not to allow the formation or residence within the respective countries of organizations plotting the overthrow of existing regimes. The fact that representatives of the Communist Parties of the United States and Great Britain attended the Congress was declared to be a breach of these pledges.

Leaving aside the question of whether the Soviet Government was responsible for the actions of the Comintern, it seems clear by now that it was unfortunate that a case had been made out of the whole affair.³ The real meaning of the *démarche* was definitely a step toward reconciliation, not toward any aggravation of the then-existing relations. The Congress of the Comintern even went so far as to pass a resolution demanding that this central body avoid direct interference in the internal work of the national parties.⁴

The danger of Fascism was so evident, the necessity of checking it by a united effort so urgent, that the rebuff was most ill-advised. Instead of building unity (which became a reality only

³Undoubtedly the delegates from the U.S.S.R. also voted for this resolution of the Comintern; and most likely it coincided with the desires of the Soviet Government, too, for it was obvious that unity of anti-Fascist forces was urgently needed.

⁴*Current History*, October 1935, p. 105.

after the world was plunged into war), the opponents of the U.S.S.R. demonstrated to the aggressor nations that they had no need to fear any co-ordinated obstruction to their plans.

Ambassador Bullitt and his British colleague at Moscow handed notes of protest to the Soviet Government. Narcomindel replied by rejecting the protests, as having been sent to the "wrong address." Again relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Anglo-Saxon countries were marred, to the great satisfaction of the Fascists.⁵ Eventually, it was admitted that the attacks on the U.S.S.R. and the various cases of friction (created by misunderstanding or inadequate information) were the work of the Fascists, whose main occupation was to split the anti-Fascist forces, primarily by playing up the "Bolshevik menace."

The Russians were firm in believing that if the others really wanted to organize peace, guarantee collective security, and counter the forces of aggression with the existing forces of peace, as the Soviet Government had been advocating for a long time, they could not manage without the U.S.S.R. The aggressors, realizing quite well that the Soviet Union was the bulwark of peace, were exerting every effort to isolate the West from the U.S.S.R. In the opinion of Litvinov it was "not a question of isolating the U.S.S.R., but of isolating the other countries of Europe, with the aim of making them defenseless and submissive to the aggressor."

But not all those in power could be convinced. No united front with the Communists was desired. No united front was even possible with the opposition to such co-operation as strong as it was in 1935. It took a long time before there was a realization that this was an erroneous policy, and one detrimental to the interests of all peace-loving peoples.⁶

Italian War in Ethiopia. The skirmishes on the Italo-Ethiopian border of Somaliland which began late in 1934, and were re-

⁵"It is tragic that the two most powerful nations and those whose interests are most nearly identical should quarrel without reason," was the comment of the *New Republic*.

⁶"Soviet Russia took the lead in demanding a United Front, calling upon the democracies to uphold collective security at whatever risk. But their conservative leaders appeared to fear Communism as a possibly even greater menace than Fascism. Chamberlain and Daladier followed the sorry road of appeasement, while Roosevelt, under isolationist pressure, subscribed to a program of illusory neutrality." (Foster Rhea Dulles *op. cit.*, p. 204.)

newed early in 1935, soon developed into a real colonial war. By October, Italian forces had invaded Ethiopia. It was not a war between two equal or even approximately equal nations. It was nothing but an assault by a greedy well-armed modern imperialist country on the land of a primitive, almost unarmed, people. At the same time, it was not only an unsavory example of Mussolini's method of building an empire for his King, but another clear sign of what the Fascists were up to.

In February, 1935, the Italian Council declared that Italy was ready for war. The following month Ethiopia and Italy agreed on a neutral zone. The Italians continued to send troops and war material to Africa. In the middle of May Ethiopia protested to the League of Nations, begging for speedy measures to put an end to the danger of war. Though representatives of Great Britain, France and Italy had met in April, at Stresa, the question of Ethiopia had not been discussed. Also in April, at a special meeting of the Council of the League, the Ethiopian appeal was again not put on the agenda. At a regular meeting of the same body in May a formula was devised which again postponed the whole issue. Two Italian and two Abyssinian conciliators were assigned to discuss the question of the responsibility of the Wal Wal border incident, without even suggesting a method for dealing with the general issue of relations between Italy and Ethiopia. By that time it was quite clear that the Wal Wal incident had been a mere pretext, and the Italian press was openly stating that Italy's object was the conquest of Ethiopia.

In July the Emperor of Ethiopia made an appeal to the United States and asked Washington to remind Italy of her obligations under the Kellogg Pact. Washington preferred not to interfere.⁷ It was not until September that Secretary Cordell Hull invoked the Paris Pact in a plea to both sides.

Additional urgent appeals from Abyssinia were ignored. Postponing any discussion of that embarrassing problem, the League finally decided to meet on September 4. Before that session of the League there was a meeting of Great Britain, France and Italy at Paris with no representative of Abyssinia. The British and French Governments offered concessions in

⁷ *International Conciliation Series*, November, 1935, pp. 505-508.

Abyssinia to Mussolini, which was a violation of their obligations under the Covenant of the League to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence. It appeared as if they were prepared to let Italy use war as an instrument of national policy to secure these concessions if the Negus refused to yield them. Their only condition was that nothing be allowed to prejudice the recognized rights there of the United Kingdom and France.⁸ The result was to encourage Mussolini in his bellicose intentions.

A somewhat different attitude was taken by the U.S.S.R. In a speech before the Central Executive Committee, on January 10, 1936, Molotov, the Prime Minister, summed it up this way:

"In the Italo-Abyssinian War, only the U.S.S.R. took an attitude different in principle, alien to any notion of imperialism and devoid of any intention of colonial conquest. Only the Soviet Union declared openly that it took for its starting point the principle of equality and independence of Abyssinia, which, *à propos*, is a member of the League, or of any individual capitalist country intending to destroy this independence and equality."⁹

On September 14, 1935, the Soviet Government issued a decree prohibiting the export of war materials to Italy. On November 14, another decree provided for the application by the U.S.S.R. of financial sanctions against Italy, limited the importation of goods from Italy, and extended the embargo on exports to certain additional articles which could be used for war.

The Council of the League of Nations voted on October 7, 1935, that is, immediately after it became known that Italian troops had invaded Ethiopia, to consider Italy the aggressor.¹⁰ Two days later the Assembly of the League concurred with this resolution. Only three neighbors of Italy, Hungary, Austria and Albania, did not dare to do so, lest Mussolini feel offended. On October 5, President Roosevelt embargoed arms for Italy and Ethiopia alike. On November 18, the League went even further,

⁸ *Ibid.*, December, 1935, p. 585.

⁹ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

¹⁰ Text of the Report on Italy's Aggression, adopted by the League of Nations' Council, can be found in the *International Conciliation Series*, November, 1935, pp. 524-527.

and voted to apply sanctions. On December 12, the League stiffened the sanctions. Fifty-three nations had decided that they would not extend loans to Italy; fifty had declared that they would send her no goods; only four states—the three enumerated above and Paraguay—decided that they would not take part in any sanctions; four others, Switzerland, Uruguay, Iran and Peru, made reservations and suggestions.

The Russians wanted to see oil included in the list of goods prohibited for shipment to Italy, but a powerful group, headed by the British and French, prevented it. It was well established that neither Laval, then the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor his British counterpart, Sir Samuel Hoare, wanted the inclusion of oil in the list. Laval definitely was working for his friend Mussolini,¹¹ and the British Tory Government of Baldwin, knowing that the British people were for sanctions, did not oppose sanctions until the results of the general elections had become known. When the elections were won by the Conservatives, Baldwin and Hoare felt free to embark on an anti-sanction policy. Together with Laval they succeeded in keeping oil off the list. By the middle of December there were rumors of scrapping sanctions entirely. Around that time Neville Chamberlain was quoted as declaring that the continuation of sanctions was but "a midsummer madness."

Before long the infamous Hoare-Laval Pact was conceived by those two opponents of sanctions, masquerading as a measure in the interest of peace. Actually it was a shameless betrayal of Ethiopia. It was met with outraged resentment in both France and England, and was stopped. Hoare was forced by public opinion in England to resign.¹² His successor at Geneva, Anthony Eden, however, did not press the oil sanctions; the discussion was postponed until it was too late to do anything about it. The Italians were rapidly occupying the Ethiopian lands, and oil or no oil, Mussolini was proceeding with his plan of conquest, practically undisturbed.

Were the Western Powers unprepared or unwilling to take a decisive stand or, possibly, both? In the opinion of many po-

¹¹ In a speech before the League, Laval made it clear that he considered friendship with Mussolini a great asset not to be lost. (*New York Times*, September 14, 1935.)

¹² Even the respectable *London Times* exposed the Pact as dishonest.

litically enlightened observers of the international scene, had they taken a firm stand, had they closed the Suez Canal, had they decided to bar any delivery of oil to Italy, Mussolini would have been more willing to abide by the Covenant of the League and could have been stopped short of annexing Abyssinia.

Instead, the Powers hesitated; some influential circles worked against any pressure on Mussolini, against sanctions, and, no matter what, against the stoppage of oil deliveries. Hitler, in the meantime, did his part in helping his partner. Early in 1936 he exploded a new bomb. In March he ordered German troops to enter the demilitarized Rhineland zone, again breaking the Versailles Treaty. France could not do much alone. England was not interested. No wonder the conquest of Ethiopia was completed at about that time. By May 5, Mussolini declared the war over, and Victor Emmanuel III could crown himself Emperor of that ancient land.

Economic Sanctions and the U.S.S.R.'s Participation. The Soviet Union's attitude toward the Ethiopian question had been clear, but certain misinterpretations were unavoidable.

A number of speeches made by Litvinov at Geneva left hardly any doubt that the Soviet Union condemned the high-handed Italian policy, but wanted first to prevent minor clashes from developing into a real war. The U.S.S.R. therefore acted tactfully, avoiding giving offense to any side in the dispute. It advocated arbitration and immediate use of the League of Nations as the machinery for the prevention of war. But when Mussolini's stubbornness precluded a peaceable settlement, Russia not only was among those who voted for economic sanctions, but she actually applied them independently, even before the question was discussed at the League's sessions.

Judging by the Soviet Union's actions, it was obvious that she was anxious to prevent war in Ethiopia, and later to stop it, after Mussolini had refused to arbitrate, had refused to abide by the Covenant and the Kellogg Pact. Litvinov proposed to include not only oil, but also iron, coal and steel in the list of goods embargoed by the League. But such an embargo could not be effective unless it were collectively and universally applied and strictly adhered to by all, without exception. When

no unity developed, and Great Britain, one of the greatest producers of oil, did not support the idea, the embargo, limited to one country, say the U.S.S.R., could neither hinder nor check the aggressor.

The very fact that oil was not included by the League in the list of goods embargoed justified the continued shipments of oil from the U.S.S.R. if others were sending oil too. But those hostile to the Soviet State began condemning her for "helping Italy make war on Ethiopia." Some went even further and declared that Soviet exports of oil to Italy had increased. Actually, in 1935 the Soviet export of oil to Italy decreased from eighteen million rubles to only twelve million rubles, which constituted hardly 10 per cent of the total trade with Italy, while in 1934 it accounted for 22 per cent of that trade.¹³

The Soviet Union had contracts with Italy for deliveries of oil. Moscow did not seek to stop deliveries when the others refused to do so. That would have been a unilateral act, and Italy, undoubtedly, would call it an unfriendly act, with all the possible consequences. The international position of the Soviet Union was still far from good; friends were neither numerous nor powerful. Her enemies were both. To create a precarious situation simply because the U.S.S.R. disagreed with the policy of Italy, and opposed her aggression in Abyssinia, was not in the interests of a country that was anxious to preserve peace and was not secure on its own borders. To demonstrate its sympathy for the Ethiopian people by single-handedly dealing with Italy was neither possible nor sensible. It was not possible because the boycott of Italy by the U.S.S.R. alone would not have stopped the flow of oil, and therefore Italian aggression would not have been checked.

There was no disposition on the part of the League of Nations to push the vital oil sanction, a question which was referred to a Committee of Experts on January 22, 1936. The report issued on February 12, suggested that such a move would be valueless without the adherence of the United States, and although the British forwarded it at the next meeting of the Committee of Eighteen on March 12, the matter was allowed

¹³ *Soviet Russia Today*, March, 1936, p. 3; also *Current History*, March, 1936, p. 617.

to drop. The proposed closing of the Suez Canal met with a similar fate.¹⁴

There was very likely another consideration which influenced Moscow against taking a decision to stop shipments of oil to Italy alone. That was the importance to the Soviet State of not jeopardizing her trade opportunities with the rest of the world at a time when she was busily building her national economy, and preparing intensively for war, which she considered a real danger. It had been a long and hard process for the young socialist country to achieve a return to foreign markets. Oil, in particular, had been the object of hostile actions by such rivals as Sir Henry Deterding and other oil trusts. For a number of years Soviet oil had been boycotted. By this time Soviet trade had been established with the rest of the world. Soviet oil was sold on the markets of Europe and Asia. Trade with Italy was of definite importance to the U.S.S.R., and not only from a commercial point of view. It was hardly advisable to lose a market to those who themselves would supply oil to Italy during the war and afterwards, or to antagonize anyone, including Italy. To stop shipping oil to Italy without any chance of hindering Il Duce's operations in Africa, that is, without a chance to help the Ethiopian people, would have been to indulge in a quixotic gesture, and a quixotic gesture, however impressive as a moral example, was not sensible in view of the consequences that would ensue.

The whole situation was extremely alarming. To aggravate it could not be in the interests of the Soviet Union, who wanted peace and realized that she was the most likely potential object of her aggressive neighbors, Germany and Japan. The League of Nations had unquestionably demonstrated its weakness. But even so, there was some hope of collective action. The League was still needed; such was the opinion of the Soviet Government. Such was the stand taken by its chief delegate at Geneva, Litvinov, when he addressed the Assembly after Ethiopia had been sacrificed, and her Emperor, the Negus, had made his pathetic declaration and had predicted calamity for those who failed to stand by his country.

Litvinov's speech was called "a funeral oration to the murdered country," but in his speech he not only set forth the prin-

¹⁴ *Current History*, January 1937.

ciples which had guided Soviet policy throughout the Italo-Ethiopian incident, but also made an appeal to preserve this international organization, as the one remaining chance for collectively defending peace against the mounting menace of the Fascists.

“We are gathered here to close a page in the history of the League of Nations, the history of international life, which it will be impossible to read without a feeling of bitterness. We must terminate an action commenced in the performance of our duties as members of the League for the purpose of guaranteeing the independence of one of our co-members, but not carried through to the end. Each one of us must feel his degree of responsibility and guilt, which is not the same for all and depends not only on what each of us has actually done, but also on the degree of his readiness to support any common actions that circumstances required.

“While expressing this opinion I must state that the Government I represent did from the outset of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict adopt a perfectly clear and firm standpoint, issuing by no means from its own interests or its mutual relations with the belligerents, but exclusively from its understanding of the principle of collective security, international solidarity, the League Covenant and the duties made incumbent upon it by this Covenant.

“. . . The Soviet Government expressed its readiness to take part in common international action against Italy, in defense of a country with which it did not even have any relations. . . . At all stages of the discussion of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, my Government has declared that it will take part in all actions provided for by the Covenant, accepted and jointly undertaken by the rest of the League members. All the decisions of the Co-ordination Committee have been operated by my Government without exception and with the utmost fidelity.

“However, sooner than might have been expected, the moment arrived when it became perfectly clear that the measures adopted at Geneva had to be revised from the point of view of their further expedience—namely, when the resistance of the gallant Abyssinian troops was broken, when the Emperor and Government of Abyssinia left their territory and a considerable portion of the territory was occupied by the Italian Army. It transpired beyond doubt that by economic sanctions alone there was no possibility of ousting the Italian Army from Abyssinia and restoring the latter’s independence, and that this aim could be achieved only by more drastic sanctions, military included. The question of such measures could have been

raised only in case one or several States could be found which by virtue of their geographical position and special interest would agree to bear the brunt of a military clash. No such States were to be found among us, and had there been any, the rest of the States, before venturing to take any part in this serious measure, would have demanded guarantees that when other cases of suppressing an aggressor came up they could rely on similar common action being taken. These guarantees were the more necessary since certain moves and actions of a certain European State, whose aggressive intentions are quite beyond doubt and are even announced by that State itself, indicated that aggression was being prepared at an accelerating rate in more than one direction. The attitude which certain States adopted to these actions and their gracious treatment of the authors shook the belief that the guarantees I have mentioned would be immediately forthcoming. In these circumstances, even during the May session of the League Council, I came to the conclusion that it was useless to apply economic sanctions against Italy any longer and that it was impossible to give Abyssinia any practical help by this method. Apparently, practically all the League members have come to this conclusion.

"I say that every member of the League must now realize his individual responsibility for the failure of the common action in defense of the independence of a co-member of the League, because there have been noticeable attempts in and outside the League to attribute this failure to the League Covenant, its imperfections and the present membership of the League. Hence far-reaching conclusions are being made which may have the result that the League itself will be buried together with the independence of Abyssinia. Such attempts and conclusions must be vigorously rebutted. . . .

"The sanctions could have taken effect only in case their application had been more prolonged and they had been combined with the military resistance of Abyssinia herself. The latter, however, was broken much sooner than our best informed advisers expected. . . .

"Let us be frank. The League is now experiencing by no means its first reverse. There have been cases of military attacks not less but more flagrant made by certain members of the League against others where the League did not react in the slightest and left the victim of aggression to face the aggressor alone in unequal battle. However, the question of the unfitness of the Covenant or its revision was not raised then. If there were no grounds for it then, there are even less now. As for myself, I would rather have a League of Nations that tries to render at least some assistance, even if it proves ineffective,

to a victim of aggression, than a League of Nations that closes its eyes to aggression and lets it pass unperturbed.

"Now, more than ever before, the League of Nations is an international necessity. It must live. It must be stronger than ever."¹⁵

The Montreux Conference. The Soviet Union wanted collaboration with the League and with the Powers conscious of the inevitability of a global war. But the U.S.S.R. was not often fortunate enough to find support in its efforts to preserve peace. A rather rare exception was the case of the conference held in June, 1935, at Montreux, Switzerland, to establish a new regime for the Turkish Straits. If in 1922-23 all the efforts of the Soviet delegates to persuade the others to keep these Straits closed had failed, now the international situation had so changed as to make the old arrangement undesirable, even from the point of view of those who were fighting the Soviet contentions on that or any other question of world significance.

Demilitarization of the Straits, imposed by the Powers in 1923, was no longer logical, since the Fascists in general, and Italy in particular, were menacing peace in that part of the world. Turkey insisted that, under the circumstances, she had to fortify the Straits. The Soviet Union supported this demand. It was not simply a desire to stand by a country with which the Soviets had been on a very friendly footing since the Revolution. It was, certainly, a matter of following their own interests. To return the control over the Dardanelles to the Turks meant elimination of the control established by the Powers in the past. This would clearly be advantageous to Russia. She had every reason to be uneasy over the control of the important gateway to the Black Sea, that is, to the Soviet coasts, established by those who had for years systematically demonstrated their hostility toward her.

Not all the Powers consented to participate in the Conference. Italy was against it, for Mussolini had plans about Turkey which would be hampered by a change in the existing regime. Great Britain hesitatingly agreed to fortification of the Straits, but did not approve the idea of abolishing the International Commission which was in control over them. What Great Brit-

¹⁵ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-377.

ain really wanted was the right to control passage of Soviet naval units through the Straits. That is why the main contenders at the Conference were the British and the Russians.

The Soviet point of view finally won. An agreement was signed by Great Britain, France, Turkey, Japan, the Balkan countries, and the U.S.S.R., by which all the states bordering on the Black Sea were to be allowed to send their ships through the Straits after notification to the other Powers. The non-Black-Sea Powers were to be allowed to send their ships into that sea, but were restricted by the definite tonnage of their naval vessels there.

This was a diplomatic victory for the U.S.S.R. It was an important victory, but still an isolated one in the abnormal position that the country held. There were numerous treaties of non-aggression, neutrality, friendship and mutual assistance, but there was no certainty about their inviolability. The U.S.S.R. was a member of the League, but what kind of a guarantee could that ineffectual organization give? The Soviet Union was clearly needed by others as a bulwark of peace and as a mighty military State. But the entire international atmosphere was uncertain and tense. The aggressors were busier than ever. They were accelerating their preparations for a decisive showdown with the democracies.

The Anti-Comintern Pact. Successful in preventing the formation of an anti-Fascist front, the Fascists and Nazis themselves were striving for unity in their own ranks.¹⁶ Hitler pretended that the refusal of the Disarmament Conference to allow Germany to rearm was designed to keep her forever as an inferior State. He interpreted the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaty as a threat to the Reich and a violation of the Locarno agreement. Therefore, he intended to build a strong bloc of similarly minded Powers and was working to that end. The

¹⁶ Even the ties which had existed before and had bound the "democracies" were being broken. After the remilitarization of the Rhineland, which remained unchecked by the Powers, Belgium declared, in 1936, that she would no longer consider herself obligated in any way to co-operate with France in case of war. Some commentators attributed this decision to the disappointment felt by the King of Belgium in the futility of the League. Others suspected it was due to his disapproval of France's pact with the U.S.S.R.

Japanese proved to be willing. Their activities in China, since 1931, were steadily increasing.¹⁷

The first link in this bloc of the aggressors was forged by the formation of the Berlin-Rome Axis in October, 1936. It was openly directed against "Communism." The next step was the formation of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany in November of the same year. Italy joined them the following year. The smaller States, Hungary and Austria, followed. This tightening of the Fascist bloc could not mean anything but a further growth of the menace to world peace. If the name "Anti-Comintern" sounded reassuring to some, who feared or hated the U.S.S.R., more sober people immediately realized that behind this name, serving as a screen, were intentions far different from the desire to settle ideological differences alone. The bloc was formed not to fight Communism or Bolshevism, but to consolidate the forces of aggression, hungry for conquest and the domination of other nations.

While the Soviet Union was engaged in constructive work on a Herculean scale, the building of a new life in an enormously large country, enough to occupy its energies for decades,¹⁸ the Fascist States were busily fomenting war and preparing for it. They had no other course. They could not do otherwise if they wanted to.

"Fascism is the dictatorship of the plutocratic few at the expense of the living standards of many. Hitler must have alarums, provocations, crises and finally war to keep the minds of his people off ill-filled stomachs. Fascism can only destroy. Fascism means war and war is Hitler's object."¹⁹

In his speech before the National-Socialist Party Congress at Nuremberg on September 7, 1936, Hitler reiterated what he had said on many other occasions regarding the danger of Communism:

¹⁷ Unchecked by Tokyo, the raids of the Japanese over the Soviet and Mongolian borders prompted various measures of defense on that side. In March, Moscow signed a Mutual Assistance Treaty with the Mongolian People's Republic.

¹⁸ In 1936 the U.S.S.R. adopted a new Constitution

¹⁹ *New York Post*, August 28, 1936

"In a period in which bourgeois statesmen are discussing non-intervention, the Jewish revolutionary headquarters in Moscow are using the radio and every available financial and other agent to accomplish revolution on this continent. Do not tell us that by constant reference to these dangers we are creating a fear psychosis within Germany. We are National-Socialists. We have never been afraid of Bolshevism.

"We are not, however, members of that absurd bourgeois guild who sing 'Who is afraid of the big bad wolf?' on the edge of a catastrophe; who close their eyes and are unable to distinguish between white and red until, when their eyes are finally opened by brutal facts, they jump under the bed, teeth chattering. . . .

"We are not afraid today of a Bolshevist invasion of Germany, not, however, because we think it impossible, but because we are determined to make the nation so strong that it will be able . . . to face this doctrine of world hate and to resist viciously every foreign attack. . . . I, therefore, decreed the immediate introduction of a two-year term of military service. . . . I regard with profound joy this proudest accomplishment of the National-Socialist Government and the National-Socialist soldiery. Now generation after generation will make the most noble sacrifices that can be demanded of man. . . ." ²⁰

But, obviously, Hitler could not be satisfied with the accomplishments of the Nazis at home and their willingness to sacrifice the lives of "generations and generations" of the German people; he needed others to participate in this crusade against the Bolsheviks, and, incidentally, to strengthen his own chances for overpowering his rivals on the economic field, the other capitalist nations.

On November 7, 1936, TASS, the official Soviet news agency, announced that it had learned from authoritative sources that the negotiations between Japan and "a third party," which the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arita, admitted was Germany, had resulted in the initialing of such a treaty.

After the publication of the news that an anti-Soviet war pact had been signed by Berlin and Tokyo, which appeared in the *New York Times* on November 18,²¹ the Japanese Government hastened to deny that any agreement against the U.S.S.R. had

²⁰ *International Conciliation Series*, November, 1936, pp. 553-554.

²¹ In an early edition.

been concluded, insisting that the treaty was aimed "simply against Communism."

The consensus of the well-informed, nevertheless, was that this new addition to a series of agreements between the aggressor nations was aimed at making their bloc strong enough to impose its will upon the world. It would be a fatal error, advised the commentators, to entertain the illusion that the new pact was directed solely against the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union might be the principal target of the Fascist war makers but it certainly was not the only one.

Nazi propaganda was already referring to Britain's "stolen colonies" and mandates; Nazi textbooks were telling school-age boys and girls that Alsace-Lorraine belonged to Germany. Mussolini was not eradicating Communism in Ethiopia any more than Japan was trying to do so in Manchuria. What the Fascists of various brands were preparing for became clearer and clearer.

A perusal of the provisions of the Italo-German accord should have been sufficient to dispel any illusions the Western democracies might have had that the activities of the Fascist war makers were directed against the Soviet Union alone. The Berlin agreement referred not only to a common front against "Communism" (and the Fascist definition of Communism was extremely broad and elastic), but also mentioned Italo-German co-operation in the Danube, recognized General Franco as the "representative" of a majority of the Spanish people, and called for a new Locarno agreement strictly limited to Western Europe. Revealed in this document were some of the major aims of the Fascist aggressors: the division of the Balkans into Italian and German spheres of influence, the establishment in Spain of a Fascist dictatorship subservient to Germany and Italy, and the isolation of France from the Soviet Union.

In the Far East the aims of the signers of the Anti-Comintern Pact were also not limited to their hope to see Communism eradicated from that part of the globe. Easily detectable are the shadows of Singapore, the oil of the Dutch East Indies, the rubber of the Malay Archipelago. In 1941 and after, the true purposes of the famous Pact were demonstrated.

In a speech before the Supreme Soviet late in November, 1936, Litvinov commented on it in the following terms:

"As for the Japanese-German Agreement which has been published, I would recommend you not to seek for any meaning in it, since it really has no meaning, for the simple reason that it is only a cover for another agreement which was simultaneously discussed and initialled, probably also signed, and which was not published and is not intended for publication.

"I declare with full sense of responsibility for my words that it was precisely to the working out of this secret document, in which the word "Communism" is not even mentioned, to which were devoted the fifteen months of negotiations between the Japanese military attaché and the German super-diplomat.

"All the three States, well-known for their aggressiveness and their attempts against the territories of others, are fighting against the principle of collective security and the indivisibility of peace. This in itself lends a sinister character to these agreements and indicates their menace to universal peace, security and the interest of many countries. . . .

"Nor will the reputation for sincerity of the Japanese Government be enhanced: this Government assured us of its desire for the establishment of peaceful relations with the Soviet Union and urged us for the sake of this to meet it in the settlement of several questions in dispute in which it was interested. Now, however, it has concluded a secret aggressive agreement with Germany. The Japanese Government also assured us that it was still considering the non-aggression pact we proposed to it and that such a pact might be concluded after the settlement of all questions in dispute; now, however, it has made the conclusion of such pacts dependent upon Germany's consent, lessening thereby the independence of its own foreign policy.

"The anti-democratic aggressive Fascist countries have had their say. They have stated that they do not want to participate in general international co-operation for the organization of peace, for guaranteeing security to all nations. They issue one challenge after another to peace-loving and, in the first place, to the democratic nations. It now rests with these nations to speak."²²

Unfortunately "these nations" were neither ready to speak, in convincing terms, to condemn the aggressors, nor were they ready to accept the inevitability of a war as the result of their policy of appeasement. Somehow the ruling groups preferred to forget what history makes so plain, that aggression and expansion are insatiable. Every concession made in order to stop

²² Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-407.

them actually served only to further their expansionist ambitions. The policy of weakness and compliance to the aggressors had merely led to their increased impudence. The Japanese example of conquest unchecked either by the League of Nations or by any of the Powers, served to tickle the appetite of Italy. The Italian success, in its turn, whetted the appetite of the Nazis, and the unavoidable finally happened. This policy of appeasement resulted in the Second World War.²³

²³ "Italy and Germany agreed by their October, 1936, Pact to defend European civilization against Communism, to work toward the conclusion of a new Locarno pact, which would exclude Russia, as a basis of European peace, and to cooperate economically in the Danubian region within the framework of the Rome Protocol and the Austro-German agreement of July 11, 1936. The Catholic Church had come to terms with Hitler as the embodiment of anti-Communism, the Papal Pro-Russian Commission, originally formed to assist Tsarist emigrés, was carrying an active propaganda in Poland, Belgium and Czechoslovakia; associations such as Pro-Deo had started in Switzerland and were spreading, finally, Catholic-Communist co-operation for humanitarian purposes—one of the factors making for the success of the French Popular Front—had been expressly forbidden by the Vatican. All this was not necessarily pro-Fascist, but it was irrefutably devoted to the purpose of enrolling the voters against Communism, the arch-enemy which was definitely on the retreat." (*Current History*, December, 1936, pp. 18-19)

CHAPTER IX

The U.S.S.R. During the Wars in Spain and China

Spanish War and Non-Intervention Committee. U.S.S.R.'s Stand with the Loyalists. Japan in China and the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Japan Gets a Taste of the Armed Might of the U.S.S.R.

Spanish War and Non-Intervention Committee. Encouraged by the lack of any serious opposition to their aggressive actions in Manchuria and in Abyssinia, and realizing the inability of the League of Nations to do anything to check them, and believing that no collaboration between the other Powers was threatening them, the Fascists proceeded with their plans more boldly.

In the summer of 1936, Germany and Italy started military intervention against the Spanish Republic. Of course, the Fascists immediately declared that they were interested simply in fighting the Reds, and harbored no other designs. The other Powers, without much delay, washed their hands of this affair. France, under her new Premier, the Socialist Leon Blum, was among the first to turn her back on the recognized government of her neighboring State, although both were "popular front" governments.

The civil war broke out in Spain on July 17, 1936. The counterrevolution had been planned for some time. Its leader, General Sanjurjo, who had visited Germany several times to assure himself of the co-operation of Hitler, was killed in an airplane accident. The man who took his place, General Francisco Franco, unfurled the banner of military insurrection in Spanish Morocco, and began shipping his Moroccan troops to Spain. In a few days Spain was engulfed in the flames of a fratricidal war.

Faced with his own Fascists, the Croix-de-Feu, and their friends, who openly approved the insurrection, Premier Leon

Blum made no real attempt to stand by the recognized government of Spain. Instead, he followed the advice of Chamberlain, and asked other Powers to remain aloof, to proclaim neutrality in the Spanish domestic quarrel.

In August a hands-off policy was established and a special Non-Intervention Committee was formed. This was contrary to the usual procedure in international relations, which permits the supply of arms to the recognized government of another country and prohibits such supplies to insurgents in a country with which diplomatic relations are maintained.

Consistent in their efforts to "exterminate the nonsense of democracy," declaring that the Loyalists' popular front government of Spain was "Red" (although it was a coalition of Leftists and Liberals), the Fascists and Nazis did not desert their fellow-conspirators there. They immediately started helping them by the shipping of war materials and instructors, with some "volunteers" to fight the "Communists."

When invited by the others to join the Non-Intervention Committee at London, Germany and Italy accepted the invitation and on September 9, joined it, as if to underline their contempt of the "democratic" camp. Portugal agreed to join a few days later. By doing this, the Fascists acquired a legal standing in the organization, the destruction of which was their aim. Now they were able to sabotage its work should this international assemblage seriously attempt to hamper assistance to the Spanish Fascists. Two months later Hitler and Mussolini formally recognized the Franco "government."

The Powers explained their position as a desire to prevent the Spanish Civil War from developing into a larger one. Of course, they knew that the Spanish trouble had been fomented by the other Fascists. Of course, they remembered that only a few weeks earlier Mussolini had completed his conquest of Ethiopia and that Japan was not only solidly entrenched in her puppet state of Manchukuo, but was preparing for another grab. They certainly could not have missed the meaning of the reoccupation of the demilitarized Rhineland by the Nazi troops. But, they heard that Berlin had signed an agreement with Vienna promising to respect Austrian territory and sovereignty, which meant that Germany and Italy were nearing an accord on a question on which the two Fascist dictators did not see eye to eye. This

was a bad augury. Germany had immediately recognized the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. They were on the eve of the forming of the "Axis."

The very acceptance by the Fascists of the invitation to join the Non-Intervention Committee could be interpreted, by those who wanted to, as a proof that this committee was a reliable device by which the democracies could somehow control the further steps of the warmakers. Furthermore, was not the Spanish Government too far to the Left? Was not the growth of popular front governments rather distasteful to reactionary elements in various countries? Did not what the Fascists were doing in Spain present an opportunity to break the backbone of the "common people," who were getting out of control?

Those who thought along these lines found some satisfaction in what Hitler was soon discussing at the Nuremberg meeting of his Party. He told the German people that they would prosper if they could possess the fertile fields of the Ukraine, the wealth of the Urals, etc. Here was a hint of what the "Führer" had in mind. This was quite in accord with his much-advertised program of action, called *Mein Kampf*.

By the end of the year Germany had signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan; by then she had already formed the Berlin-Rome Axis. The latter was not seeking peace, of course, but . . . if seen in conjunction with the compact concluded with Tokyo, which proclaimed a crusade against Communism, it didn't sound so bad. At least, for those who looked at the Fascist performance through the rosy glasses of optimism. The Russians did not. In their opinion the situation was becoming almost hopeless. In their estimation the new world war was actually on

In the South of Europe, they said, in the zone of Austria and the Adriatic, and in the extreme West of Europe, in the zone of Spain and the waters washing her shores, new war-knots were being tied. In the Pacific, in the zone of China, another war knot had been tied even earlier.

"All these facts show that a second imperialist war has actually begun. It began stealthily, without any declaration of war. States and nations have, almost imperceptibly, slipped into the orbit of the second imperialist war. It was the three aggressor states, the Fascist ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan, that began the war in

various parts of the world. It is being waged over a huge expanse of territory, stretching from Gibraltar to Shanghai. It has already drawn over five-hundred-million people into its orbit. In the final analysis, it is being waged against the capitalist interests of Great Britain, France and the United States, since its object is the redivision of the world and of the spheres of influence in favor of the aggressor countries and at the expense of the so-called democratic states.

"A distinguishing feature of the second imperialist war is that so far it is being waged and extended by the aggressor powers, while the other powers, the 'democratic' powers, against whom in fact the war is directed, pretend that it does not concern them, wash their hands of it, draw back, boast of their love of peace, scold the Fascist aggressors, and . . . surrender their positions to the aggressors bit by bit, at the same time asserting that they are preparing to resist.

"This war, it will be seen, is of a rather strange and one-sided character. But that does not prevent it from being a brutal war of unmitigated conquest waged at the expense of the poorly defended peoples of Ethiopia, Spain and China.

"It would be wrong to attribute this one-sided character of the war to the military and economic weakness of the 'democratic' states. The 'democratic' states are, of course, stronger than the Fascist states. The one-sided character of the developing world war is due to the absence of a united front of the 'democratic' states against the Fascist powers. The so-called democratic states, of course, do not approve of the 'excesses' of the Fascist states and fear any accession of strength to the latter. But they fear even more the working-class movement in Europe and the movement of national emancipation in Asia, and regard Fascism as an 'excellent antidote' to these dangerous movements. For this reason the ruling circles of the 'democratic' states, especially the ruling Conservative circles of Great Britain, confine themselves to a policy of pleading with the over-weening fascist rulers 'not to go to extremes,' at the same time giving them to understand that they 'fully comprehend' and on the whole sympathize with their reactionary police policy toward the working-class movement and the national emancipation movement. In this respect, the ruling circles of Britain are roughly pursuing the same policy as was pursued under Tsardom by the Russian liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, who, while fearing the 'excesses' of the Tsarist police, feared the people even more, and therefore resorted to a policy of pleading with the Tsar, and, consequently, of *conspiring* with the Tsar against the people. As we know, the liberal monarchist bourgeoisie of Russia paid dearly for this dual policy. It may be presumed that history will exact retribution also from the ruling

circles of Britain, and of their friends in France and the United States.”¹

Following their policy of using the “Red bogey” as the slogan best fitted to frighten the bourgeoisie everywhere, Hitler and Mussolini had no difficulty in bringing about a situation favorable to their Fascist friends in Spain, that is, “neutrality” of the Powers. The Soviet Union had no choice but to join the international body, formed to check the Spanish Civil War from developing into an all-involving one. Not that Moscow was sure of its efficacy, but Russia was willing to participate in the interests of solidarity with those whose co-operation she needed in building collective security. Therefore, she sent her delegates to the Non-Intervention Committee at London.

U.S.S.R.'s Stand with the Loyalists. But it did not take her long to see that the Committee was nothing but an unworthy comedy. Not only did the Fascists openly continue their help to the Spanish rebels, without any serious attempt by that Committee to stop them, but on some occasions direct or indirect help to Franco was forthcoming even from other “democratic” members of that committee. One such occasion was reported when Great Britain ordered Gibraltar closed to the naval units of the Loyalists, thereby shielding the insurgents from being fired upon by those vessels, and thereby allowing the rebels to cross from Africa to Spain unmolested. Of all the offenders Portugal was probably the worst. This little pro-Fascist dictatorship was not much more than a subservient semi-colony of the British Empire, and could have been stopped by the latter, but never was.

In the Soviet Union there was no hesitation in recognizing the issues. It was perfectly clear that the Fascists, who never concealed their contempt for democracy, and openly proclaimed their determination to see it smashed, now started to put their theories into practice in Spain. The Loyalists of Spain were the people standing behind the constitutionally established government, recognized by other governments. Franco and his followers were rebels against the lawful government. To the Rus-

¹*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp 333-334.

sians there was no question as to which of the two was the lawful authority and which was not. Immediately after the outbreak of this Fascist counterrevolution workers all over the U.S.S.R. began collecting funds to send food and clothing to the Spaniards. Considerable sums were collected and the goods were shipped to Spain. Rumors circulated that the U.S.S.R. was also shipping arms and ammunition.

"We are taking the banner of democracy" said Litvinov in an address before the Supreme Soviet late in 1936, "the banner of liberty, which is falling from the feeble hands of democracy in Europe, and becoming the bulwark of democracy and freedom."

The Spanish Civil War soon became a delicate international issue. Part of the world stood by the democratic regime of Spain, while the others either openly assisted the rebels (intending to establish Fascism in their country), or pretended that by keeping out of the conflict, through the establishment of the Non-Intervention Committee, and refusing to send arms to the recognized government, they served the cause of world peace.

The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alvarez del Vayo, late in September, warned the League of Nations that the world war was on its way. At the same time he asserted that the Non-Intervention Committee and American "neutrality" amounted to a *de facto* blockade of the Madrid Government. The Soviet Union had long before asserted the same opinion and considered the behavior of the Committee shocking. It was no more than a screen concealing military assistance to the rebels. On October 7, the Soviet Government expressed its fears that the situation created by repeated violation of the non-intervention agreement made it non-operative, and declared that if violations were not halted at once Russia would consider herself free of any obligations resulting from the agreement.

For stripping the veil of hypocrisy off the "non-intervention into the intervention" farce, the U.S.S.R. was accused of breaking diplomatic etiquette.

One week later, the U.S.S.R. demanded a meeting to consider a blockade against Portugal, the most cynical offender. Great Britain refused to convoke such a meeting. Portugal was essential to the Fascist scheme. British friends of Franco were patently unwilling to do anything to offend Germany and Italy.

A few days later the Moscow delegate served notice that the U.S.S.R. did not feel bound to respect the agreement "to any greater extent than the other participants."

Next day the Committee was asked to consider four cases of alleged intervention, of which three were charged against the U.S.S.R., and one against Italy. Italy (and Portugal) were obligingly whitewashed. All three "cases" in which the U.S.S.R. was suspected proved to be unfounded.²

In a speech on November 28, 1936, Litvinov said:

"Germany and Italy declare without a blush that they support General Franco because they do not want to have a democratic government in Spain . . . and want to see there a government based on Fascist principles. . . ." ³

The direction the Civil War in Spain was taking was quite clear. Fascism was spreading. Pro-Fascist governments among the small nations were on the increase. The Rumanian Minister, Victor Antonescu, was trying to create an anti-Communist front with Yugoslavia "in support of the Spanish rebels." His chief, Tartarescu, wanted Yugoslav support against Russia.⁴

The "Rexists" in Belgium were no longer a negligible force. Neither was the Croix-de-Feu of France. In England, too, the group behind the British Fascist, Sir Oswald Mosley, was active enough to influence the trend of British policies.⁵

The new British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, was already developing into the leader of all the forces of reaction and an advocate of the policy of appeasing the aggressors. His role in the Spanish Civil War clearly indicated that with all the power at his command, he would consistently oppose every feature of the Soviet program.

"Chamberlain's basically reactionary mind had been inflamed with hostility by fear founded on ignorance and deliberately stimulated by the long course of Fascist propaganda. Influential men of the City and a few well-known English aristocrats had convinced

² *Current History*, December, 1936, p. 18.

³ Maxim M. Litvinov, *Against Aggression*, New York, International Publishers, 1939, p. 65.

⁴ *Current History*, December, 1936, p. 118.

⁵ Sir Oswald Mosley's sister-in-law was a close friend of Hitler's.

Chamberlain that the Spanish conflict was not a civil war, but a war between Germany and Russia. By maintaining strict neutrality, he was led to believe, England would help defeat the Bolsheviki and thereby prevent their advance to the West, which would ultimately threaten the very existence of Britain." ⁶

Aside from the Prime Minister, a number of high-ranking officials of the British Foreign Office, like Lord Halifax, Sir John Simon, and especially Sir Horace Wilson, had long been hostile to the U.S.S.R., while at the same time they were slow to take seriously any warnings about the danger presented by the Fascists, particularly Germany under Hitler. Many British reactionaries counted on doing business with Hitler, and ridiculed the idea that their mighty Empire would ever need the help of the Soviets.

But there were some elements who, if not exactly friendly toward the U.S.S.R., were at least conscious of their common danger and were unwilling to take part in the attempts of others to isolate the Soviet State. Among the leading statesmen of Europe who understood this were: Dr. Eduard Benes of Czechoslovakia, a strong advocate of continued collaboration with Moscow; Anthony Eden of the United Kingdom, another strong supporter of the idea that the U.S.S.R. could be of great help should the democratic countries be faced with a war, which, in his judgment, was no longer avoidable; Winston Churchill, who gradually arrived at the same conviction. He wished to cooperate with the U.S.S.R., having realized how serious was the menace to peace, and the need for collective security.

At the time of the Spanish War these better-informed and sober statesmen were outnumbered by those who still wanted the U.S.S.R. checked and, if possible, eradicated. The Soviet State was still an enemy in their estimation.

When the U.S.S.R. definitely established that the Non-Intervention agreement had become inoperative, it began sending war materials, instructors and engineers to Spain. The only other country that showed loyalty to the Spanish popular front government and helped the Loyalists, was Mexico. Strangely enough, Mexico was not on speaking terms with Moscow. For a short time these two nations had had their envoys in Mexico

⁶ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 428-429.

City and Moscow respectively, when, for a never clearly stated reason, Mexico decided to break relations with the Soviet Union, and the only Soviet Legation at that time in all the Americas was closed. Now the two were on the same side, though probably not for the same reasons.

However extensive the material aid going to Spain from Mexico and the U.S.S.R. it was no match for what the others were able to do for Franco and what they actually did to see him win. The Fascists even went so far as to sink Soviet ships in the Mediterranean if they suspected them of carrying war supplies for the Loyalists. In the late summer of 1937, the U.S.S.R. sent notes to Rome protesting this piratical behavior. For a short time it was stopped, only to resume later on, until the Nayon Conference made it difficult for Mussolini to continue this sort of brigandage.

All the protests of Spain at Geneva and in all the capitals of the world proved to be in vain. The people of Spain had not enough genuine friends among the democracies, and it was no wonder if the pro-Fascist or simply Fascist countries were openly or otherwise fighting against the Loyalists.

Endorsing the protests of Madrid against the intervention of Germany and Italy, Litvinov exposed the real situation in a speech at Geneva on May 28, 1937, in the following words:

"Tens of thousands of foreigners, well trained and well armed, many of them lately in the military service of foreign States, poured into Spain to help the mutineers, and formed a considerable military force on the territory of Spain. In some cases big battles have been fought with the Spanish republican army exclusively by these foreign military units, under the command of foreign generals. . . .

"It is not only the question of Spain. The events in Spain have created one of the greatest dangers to European and world peace. This menace arises in consequence of an attempt at armed intervention in the internal affairs of a European State . . . if this attempt succeeded and went unpunished there would be no guarantee that it would not be repeated in other countries.

"The Government of the country which I represent has its ideology; it would, of course, be very glad if other countries were imbued with this ideology. However, it has never tried and will never by any methods, let alone forcible ones, try to thrust its ideology on other States. We, as a State, were little concerned with the

order existing in Spain, a country with which, when the mutiny broke out, we did not even have diplomatic or consular relations, a country where there was not a single Soviet citizen at that time. . . .

"The circumstances of the case fully justify the appeal of the Spanish Government to the League of Nations. . . . I would like to express the confidence that the League Council . . . will throw its word into the scale and render all possible support to the Spanish people." ⁷

On another occasion⁸ the Foreign Commissar characterized the constant accusation against the U.S.S.R. of wanting to establish Communism in Spain as "fairy tales for little children and big fools." Spain was, in his estimation, only the first "attempt at a forcible implantation from without of a Fascist system." The ultimate attempt, he said, might be made against the U.S.S.R., for it was started by forces openly working for the destruction of Communism, and supported, or at least tolerated by others, who were not as outspoken (as frank), as were Italy, Germany and Japan, but sympathized to a certain extent with the plans of the Fascists.

In 1938 Franco's superior arms and the numerical strength of his imported troops began to tell. In January of the next year Barcelona was captured, Catalonia had fallen. The end of the Loyalists was near. In February, 1939, Great Britain and France recognized Franco. On March 26, the Spanish "Civil" War was over. On April 2, the United States also recognized the Franco regime.

The sad outcome and tragedy of the fratricidal war in Spain, inspired and supported by Fascists of all shades, is a matter of common knowledge. It would be difficult to deny now that there and then the Fascists received the final license for plunging the world into a new war.

Near the end of the conflict Hitler had already annexed Austria (March, 1938). France was passing through one of her endless political crises.⁹ England witnessed the dismissal of Anthony

⁷ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, pp 83-85

⁸ November 28, 1936 *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁹ Genevieve Tabouis in *They Called Me Cassandra* (Scribner, 1942) relates a conversation with the late Louis Barthou, in which he said "everything has degenerated in France, our conception of the State, of public duty . . . we have reached the place where we do not know what to do about it all . . . the Parliamentary regime is through in France, and the nation itself is lost," p. 200.

Eden from the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs (February 20, 1938), almost certainly because he insisted on checking Hitler. Eden's successor, Lord Halifax, was sent by Chamberlain to Berlin on another mission, that of courting Herr Hitler. Hitler began to threaten Czechoslovakia. Small nations everywhere were in a panic. Japan was on the march again in China. Russian leaders, naturally, became alarmed.

Japan in China and the Soviet-Chinese Non-Aggression Pact. While Germany and Italy were jockeying for better positions in Europe in preparation for the world war, their friend, Japan, had renewed her march on China. The "incident" at Marco Polo Bridge, near Peiping, on July 7, 1937, started this new phase of the gradual conquest of China. Soon the local skirmish developed into larger hostilities in the North and at Shanghai in the South. In a short time it became a large-scale though undeclared war.

Some ten days after the outbreak of hostilities in China, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, issued a statement setting forth certain principles of international action necessary for the maintenance of world peace. The declaration stated that wars anywhere in the world have an impact upon the fate of all countries and that therefore treaties must be rigidly regarded, obligations maintained, commercial barriers shattered, and armaments reduced.¹⁰

Moscow immediately replied by reiterating its belief in the principles that all nations abstain from the use of force in international conflicts and from interference in the internal affairs of other nations, and concluded by giving assurance of the readiness of the Soviet Government to support any move for peace and to contribute its share to the general cause of international pacification.

But no action followed. Declarations of general principles, useful otherwise, were not enough. Japanese militarists, like all Fascists, preferred action. When they, too, issued statements, they were usually in glaring contradiction to the principles which were proclaimed by the American Secretary of State and strongly supported by the Soviet authorities and people. The

¹⁰ *International Conciliation Series*, October, 1937, p. 733.

Japanese Government's reply to Secretary Hull's general statement, in a note handed to him by the Japanese Ambassador at Washington, was as follows:

"The Japanese Government wishes to express its concurrence with the principles contained in the statement made by Secretary of State Hull, on the 16 instant, concerning the maintenance of world peace. It is the belief of the Japanese Government that the objectives of those principles will only be attained in their application to the Far Eastern situation, by a full recognition and practical consideration of the actual particular circumstances of that region"¹¹

The Russians, however, entertained no illusions about the situation. Here is how their leading newspaper editorialized on the world situation soon after the Japanese renewed their aggression in China:

"No make-believe of non-intervention, no dreams about neutrality, no plans to allow this privilege or that to peace-breakers, and no attempts to divide the territories where the aggressors are most active into spheres of influence, can change the cardinal fact that aggression, once started, threatens all peace-loving countries, no matter what their attitude toward the aggression. . . . A few score States want peace, but three States are forcing them into war. This is the fact that must be looked straight in the face. . . ."¹²

About a month after this new Japanese aggression began, the Soviet Consulate in Tientsin was raided by "White Russians." The Soviet Ambassador to China lodged a protest with the Japanese Embassy, because there was evidence that this had happened with the connivance of the Japanese. The Japanese apologized. Nevertheless, a short time later a similar raid took place on the Soviet Consulate in Shanghai.

At the end of August, 1937, the U.S.S.R. and China had signed a non-aggression pact. Such a pact had been suggested by the Russians long before (in 1932), but for various reasons, signing had been repeatedly postponed. Now, of course, it was to the advantage of China to have such a pact, and it was signed. Tokyo authorities were furious; they asserted that this pact

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 769.

¹² *Izvestia*, August 11, 1937.

served to confirm what they had suspected long ago, that China was in a conspiracy with the Communists. Japan was still declaring that her actions in China were prompted by her desire to see Communism eradicated.

Although it was not much more than a gesture, still by this pact, signed when China was in need, the Soviet State did more than the others. The League of Nations again proved its impotence. Instead of doing something effective to check this new case of aggression, this conclave decided to refer the embarrassing problem to a Commission of Powers, signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington, by which China had been promised (in 1921-22) that her political and territorial integrity would be respected.

At the plenary session of the League, held on September 21, 1937 (to which China sent a plea), Litvinov pleaded for collective action:

“In addition to the masked aggression in the South-West of Europe, there has been undisguised aggression on the Asiatic continent. Two States, two members of the League . . . are being subjected to invasion . . . Collaboration with violators of peace is impossible . . . but the League stands aloof from these events, without reacting to them . . . it is supposed that the aggressor may be combatted successfully only in collaboration with the aggressor himself. . . . The Spanish question was withdrawn from the League of Nations and submitted to the specially formed London Committee of so-called Non-Intervention in order to gain the collaboration of the chief culprits of the Spanish tragedy, who cannot bear the atmosphere of Geneva. . . . Of course the London Committee has not achieved even one of its purposes. . . . I am sure that the League, even with its present membership, can give Spain as well as China stronger aid than these countries so modestly ask, and in so doing it would lessen, not increase, the chances of new international complications. . . .

“I know that there are political wiseacres who think that aggression can be got rid of best by concessions. They reproach the Spanish people for their heroic resistance to the mutinous generals and the States behind them. They think that China, too, would behave wisely if she yielded to the ultimatum of the aggressor without a fight and become his vassal voluntarily. But the League of Nations does not exist for the purpose of giving such advice; neither is the League's existence justified if, while abstaining from such advice, it

remains passive itself, pleading weakness. . . . It may now be considered an axiom that the passivity of the League during the Manchurian conflict had its consequences a few years later in the attack on Abyssinia. The League's insufficient activity in the case of Abyssinia encouraged the Spanish experiment. The League's failure to take any measures in aid of Spain encouraged the new attack on China. . . . I firmly believe that a resolute policy of the League in one case of aggression would have spared us all the other cases . . . but not by circulating questionnaires, but only by giving aggression a collective rebuff, by a collective defense of peace, which we all need and the benefits of which we shall all enjoy." ¹³

Nevertheless, the League referred the Sino-Japanese conflict to a commission of the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty. That commission was convoked late in October and opened on November 6, 1937, at Brussels. Berlin and Moscow were invited. Berlin declined. Italy refused to participate and so did Japan. But on November 6, Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, and in December of the same year she served notice of her decision to withdraw from the League of Nations.

Moscow, although not a signatory of the Nine-Power Treaty, accepted the invitation, faithful to the policy of not refraining from any effort designed to combat aggression and preserve peace. Litvinov was assigned as the chief delegate. On leaving for Brussels he seemed to be very pessimistic. He did not expect any better results from this group than from the League.¹⁴

About a month before the session of the Brussels Conference was opened, on October 5, 1937, President Roosevelt made his famous "quarantine" speech at Chicago. He advocated the checking of aggressors.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the high hopes which

¹³ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-101.

¹⁴ Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1943), p. 212.

¹⁵ The President said: "When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease."

An interesting postscript to this speech was given in a letter to the *New York Times*, October 7, 1937, by Colonel Stimson, former Secretary of State: ". . . but this is very far from saying that the only alternative is inaction or a passive and shameful acquiescence in the wrong that is now being done. The lamentable fact is that today the aggression of Japan is being actively assisted by the efforts of men of our own nation and men of the other great democracy in the world—the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is not only being actively assisted, but

were evoked by this speech failed to materialize. Nothing happened. The Brussels meeting proved to be as fruitless as was the session of the League. Japan was not checked any more than Italy had been. Aggression proved profitable. Instead of checking the aggressors, the Powers preferred the policy of appeasing them.

If the stand of the United States in this new conflict in China was indicative at least of some alarm and willingness to take some measures collectively with others which would check Japan, the British policy was regarded by Moscow with extreme suspicion. The Anglo-Italian agreement on the Mediterranean, signed in January, and notes exchanged by the two countries in August met with the disapproval of Moscow. To Moscow it appeared as if London were trying to avoid a clash with the aggressors by simply splitting them through separate agreements, agreements based on appeasement. Moscow felt that British diplomats were just as ready to bargain with Nippon as Moscow suspected them to be willing to arrange for a deal with Germany.

The Soviet Union, unsuccessful in its attempts to spur the League of Nations to action, or to build a solid force for collective security, had to rely on itself. In the Far East, as in Europe, Moscow remained isolated. This isolation became even worse after the famous Moscow Trials. And there were no signs of a change.

On May 4, 1938, the *New York Times* editorialized as follows:

“The almost complete eclipse of Russia as a factor in European policy, together with the comparatively unimportant or at least inconspicuous part it seems to be playing in the developing drama in the Far East, is a phenomenon of the greatest interest and importance. During the crowded months when the political map of Europe has decisively altered, Moscow has been the one passive element in the situation. . . . As far as the participation in the contemporary drama is concerned, Russia might as well be off the map of Europe. . . .”

our assistance is so effective and predominant that without it even today the aggression would in all probability be promptly checked and cease.”

On the Soviet-Manchurian and Manchurian-Mongolian borders the situation remained tense. Japan was not anxious to adjust it.

After having signed the Non-Aggression Pact with China, Moscow was ready to do even more to help the Chinese in their hour of need. Moscow was willing to assist them by sending war supplies. Japan protested, but in vain. Japan did not consider herself at war with China; according to her interpretation it was merely an "incident." There was then no legal basis for protesting. If China was not at war with Japan, then the Russians were, according to the letter of the law, within their rights in continuing to trade with her, even if this trade was not to the liking of Japan. As for the moral rights involved, hardly any one would dispute the fact that the U.S.S.R. was doing the only decent thing under the circumstances.¹⁶

Long afterwards, Madame Chiang Kai-shek publicly declared that the Soviet State was helping China more than all the other countries combined. In an article published in New York Mme. Chiang Kai-shek wrote:

"While a large group of justice-loving Americans have tried to aid China, others have amassed profits by selling to Japan the necessities of war. . . . Eighty per cent of Japan's war supplies came from America—and 95 per cent of the aviation gasoline which was used by Japan in her ruthless bombing was American. . . .

"Intellectual honesty constrains me to point out that throughout the first three years of resistance, Soviet Russia extended to China, for the actual purchase of war materials and other necessities, credits several times larger than the credits given by either Great Britain or America. . . . Furthermore, at the meetings of the League of Nations, it was Russia who took an uncompromising stand in support of China's appeal that active measures should be adopted to brand Japan as the aggressor. Russia acted similarly during the Brussels Conference. On both occasions Britain, France and other member nations compromised their consciences. When Japan protested through the Ambassador in Moscow that the aid extended to China

¹⁶ Aside from shipping a considerable amount of war supplies to China, Moscow administered pressure of an economic nature on Japan. Trade with Japan was almost stopped. From the peak of fifty-four million yen in 1934 it decreased to less than six million in 1937, and to a mere 300,000 in 1939 (*The Oriental Economist*, November 4, 1940.)

by Russia was a breach of neutrality, Russia did not wilt, or surrender, or compromise, but continued to send supplies of arms to China. . . . I may point out that Russian help has been unconditional. . . ." ¹⁷

Similar testimony was offered by Joseph E. Davies:

"The Soviet Union, from the beginning, never faltered in giving aid and assistance to China.

"Throughout their participation in the League of Nations, the Soviet government led the fight for the protection of little nations vigorously and boldly. This was the fact in the case of Ethiopia and Spain. . . ." ¹⁸

Japan, unchecked, was becoming more and more arrogant. The treatment accorded by her representatives to Britons in China was something that the subjects of His Majesty had never experienced before, especially in Asia. This was exactly what Japan wanted. She wanted to demonstrate to other Asiatics that they need not fear the Westerners, particularly the British, whose behavior in Asia had made them few friends. For a time the Japanese made efforts not to antagonize Americans in China. But late in December, 1937, the American gunboat *Panay* and several American-owned barges were bombed and sunk on the Yangtze River.

During 1937 friction on the Soviet border was also increasing. Japan never missed a chance to start some sort of provocation there. Soviet protests did not help much, if at all. Late in December, 1937, a Soviet plane carrying mail was forced to land on Manchurian soil. The Japanese authorities arrested the pilot and held the plane. Despite Soviet protests and diplomatic notes the Japanese refused to release them.

At the January, 1938, meeting of the Supreme Soviet, demands were made for a more resolute attitude toward Japan. A few days later Moscow took retaliatory action by suspending parcel-post service to Manchukuo. In February and March the Japanese seized and held two Soviet ships which had called in at Japanese ports. Then Manchukuo refused to pay its March instalment on the Chinese-Eastern Railway. In return, the

¹⁷ *Liberty*, January 21, 1941.

¹⁸ Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

Soviet authorities seized some Japanese fishing boats, demanded the closing of the Japanese Consulate at Oha, in Sakhalin, and refused to grant certain requests of the Japanese concessionaires there.

On April 4, 1938, the Soviet Ambassador at Tokyo asked Japan for a general settlement of all these points of dispute. Hirota, the Japanese Foreign Minister, replied that some of these questions should be settled directly with Manchukuo. And to settle the others he suggested that a long-term fishery agreement should first be signed. The Soviets answered by rejecting these terms.

At just about this time Hitler achieved *Anschluss* with Austria, with Italy's approval. Litvinov called on all the peaceful Powers to take joint action immediately to halt aggression; he reiterated the readiness of his country to participate in any practical measures which circumstances might demand to check the further growth of aggression and warned that "tomorrow may be too late"!

At the other end of the world, Secretary Hull issued a warning to his own people that an isolationist policy was extremely dangerous and he insisted on the recognition by all nations of the sanctity of treaties, the renunciation of force as an instrument of national policy, and the abstention from interference in the internal affairs of other nations. This speech of Secretary Hull's was interpreted by some as indicating not only a definite rejection of an isolationist position but also a hint that under certain conditions the United States would consider co-operation with others. But it was still a long distance from the actual collaboration which was forced by the events of the years that followed and finally brought about World War II.

Japan Gets a Taste of the Armed Might of the U.S.S.R. The Anti-Comintern Pact, even if it was not simply and exclusively directed against the U.S.S.R., required military co-operation on the part of its signers in certain emergencies. Therefore the military preparedness and prowess of the various partners were of definite interest to each of them. Occupied with her "incident" in China, Japan was not in a particularly favorable position to aggravate her relations with the U.S.S.R. It would have been natural for her to refrain from anything which might

involve the risk of war there. On the other hand, she had to show once in a while that she was on the alert there, too. This was considered useful by the General Staff to keep friends reassured and opponents confused.

The political difficulties of Moscow, then in the midst of numerous trials that exposed wide-spread plots involving persons in important posts, including diplomats and high-ranking army officers, evidently made Russia a tempting target for Japan's audacity. Rumor had it that the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and seven other Red generals constituted such a blow to the morale of the Red Army that it would hardly be capable of serious action in the field. Tokyo wanted to check on these rumors. The Japanese Army of Manchukuo was charged with this task.

In the course of military preparations to cope with any eventuality in the Far East the Soviet Union had taken various measures designed to strengthen its position there. These included fortification of her frontiers and a concentration of troops, placed so as to be prepared to resist in case of attack. This meant the occupation by Red troops of certain hills on the Korean and Manchurian borders near Lake Hassan.

In July, 1938, the Japanese Ambassador at Moscow, Shigemitsu, asked for the withdrawal of those Soviet troops, asserting that the hills occupied by them belonged to Japan. Narcomindel rejected this demand as unfounded on fact. The Japanese claimed that the map that was attached to the Hunchung treaty between Russia and China, and which the Russians asserted proved their contention, had not been published before and therefore was not known to Japan. And Japan warned that if the Red troops remained where they were at the moment, the Japanese might resort to force to have them withdrawn. Litvinov again refused to comply. As for the Japanese threat, he reminded the Japanese Ambassador that "even if the Japanese had found intimidation an effective diplomatic weapon elsewhere, Shigemitsu need not expect to score any success in Moscow by using threats."¹⁹

On July 31, fighting began in earnest, with artillery brought into action. Four days later Shigemitsu visited Litvinov and

¹⁹ Harriet Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

declared that Japan was ready to settle the incident by peaceful means and he suggested that they return to the situation prior to July 11. Litvinov's reply was that it was up to the Japanese to stop the attack, and the Russians would be glad to negotiate after the invaders had withdrawn and returned to the position they had occupied prior to the attack.

The fighting continued and the Japanese were badly beaten. On August 11 Shigemitsu accepted most of the points on which the U.S.S.R. was ready to negotiate and an armistice was signed. This was the first bitter lesson that the Japanese jingos learned from the Russians in fighting on a scale much more serious than that of the previous encounters on the Manchurian borders. In the battle of Changkufeng (at Lake Hassan) both sides lost a considerable number of troops and artillery, even of heavy caliber.

In a report made by Mr. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, he commented on the Changkufeng incident in the following words:

“. . . Take the events of the Soviet Maritime Province near Lake Hassan. There is no need to reconstruct now these events which took place the end of July and the beginning of August. Their substance is well known. In the full light of day the Japanese militarists tried to bite off a piece of Soviet territory in the Far East. In such cases the Japanese Fascists don't exert themselves to find a pretext. In defiance of obvious facts and international treaties they proclaimed a section of Soviet territory near Lake Hassan as the territory of Manchukuo, that is, as Japanese territory, after which they set in motion not only their 'diplomacy,' well versed in such affairs, but also Japanese troops. Of course they failed and could not help failing to seize Soviet territory. They simply did not realize with whom they were dealing. We had to convince them by the kind of arguments which they understand. If the Japanese Fascists wanted our artillery and aviation to speak in a convincing manner, they achieved this. After receiving a sound rebuff and probably a sound lesson, the Japanese retreated to their own territory and the Soviet frontier was fully restored.

“Now a few words as to the meaning of these events. We now know precisely that the question of the seizure of Changkufeng, and consequently the whole problem of these events near Lake Hassan, was

decided, strictly speaking, not in Tokyo but elsewhere . . . some place in Europe, most likely in Berlin. Probably the Japanese militarists wanted to support their German Fascist friends, and without taking the trouble to think, were caught in a trap by some of their petty agents. If the Japanese and German Fascists desired to test first the firmness of our foreign policy and second the fighting quality of the Red Army, they received a clear and enlightening reply on both points. . . ."²⁰

The Japanese received another and more severe lesson from the Red Army the next year on another side of their border. This time they apparently wanted not only to demonstrate more effectively their military prowess to their partners, but also to find out to what extent the Soviet-Mongolian treaty of mutual assistance was operative in case of an attack on the Mongolian People's Republic.

In January, 1939, Loyalist Spain was already clearly doomed. In March the war had been won by Franco. This was the after-Munich period. Czechoslovakia had been partitioned by Hitler with the blessings of Chamberlain and Daladier. Mussolini had invaded Albania and had added it to the crown of his monarch, whom he had made Emperor of Ethiopia a year earlier. What the U.S.S.R. was facing was rather clear to the Tokyo authorities. They considered it not particularly risky to repeat their previously unsuccessful assault on the Soviet State, and on May 11 began by attacking the U.S.S.R.'s Mongolian ally.²¹ A few days later Berlin and Rome strengthened their ties by signing a ten-year military alliance.

At Nomongan, near Lake Buir on the Mongolian border, the Red Army, together with Mongolian troops, administered to the Japanese invaders such a crushing defeat that Tokyo hastened to sue for peace.²² An armistice was signed on September 16, 1939. This time the loss in lives and material (though much more serious than was the case in 1938) was not the only reason

²⁰ *Soviet Russia Today*, December, 1938, p. 24.

²¹ Possibly this was an attempt to frighten the British away from a pact with the U.S.S.R.

²² On March 11, 1936, a Mutual Aid Treaty was concluded by Moscow and the Mongolian People's Republic. "If Japan should venture to attack the Mongolian People's Republic and encroach upon its independence, we will have to help the Mongolian People's Republic . . ." declared Mr. Stalin in an interview with Mr. Roy Howard, of the Scripps-Howard newspapers.

for seeking an end to hostilities. Hitler had just succeeded in signing a non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R., and Japan considered it a betrayal by her ally. Tokyo felt deserted by Germany. Hitler was apparently disappointed by the not-so-successful military operations of the Japanese against the Soviets, and was no longer interested in collaboration with Dai-Nippon. For a while two of the partners of the Anti-Comintern Pact were estranged.

By resolute action at the proper time Soviet Russia had gained a respite in the Far East. She needed it for the much more sinister events that awaited her in the West.

CHAPTER X

The Munich Conference and the U.S.S.R.

Why the Soviet Union Was Not Invited to Participate. Why Hitler Balked. The U.S.S.R. Continues Loyal to Czechoslovakia Despite What the Others Did.

Why the Soviet Union Was Not Invited to Participate. When the Soviet Union signed the Mutual Assistance Pacts with France and Czechoslovakia, Germany protested, declaring that these agreements were not in accord with the Covenant of the League of Nations. In vain did Moscow and Paris try to explain that the agreements were purely defensive, were based on the Covenant, and had no aggressive designs against any country. The Nazis insisted on their own interpretation. They wanted to see these agreements, especially the Franco-Soviet Pact, killed, and were working to that end. Italy co-operated with them. As a means of achieving their purpose, the two Fascist States balked the plans of Great Britain and France to revive the Locarno agreements. They conditioned their approval of these negotiations by demanding that the Franco-Soviet Pact be annulled. Their scheme was quite clear: first, isolation of the U.S.S.R.; and second, the weakening of France to make her more compliant to German plans.

The majority of the French leaders no doubt realized that the military might of the Soviet Union was a better guarantee for their country than any agreement with Germany (especially since Great Britain at that moment was neither a sure nor a willing ally). But various anti-Soviet elements in France were working against the supplementing of the Franco-Soviet Pact with a military alliance. To be anti-Soviet meant, more often than not, to be, to a certain extent, pro-Fascist. If the Franco-Soviet Pact should not be supplemented by a military convention, France would need a better understanding with the United Kingdom, which was not certain, or a rapprochement with Germany and Italy, which they wanted.

About the time of the Italo-Abyssinian War, and especially during the Spanish Civil War, influential circles in the Third Republic were actively supporting the idea of reconciliation with the Fascists and Nazis. Great Britain was working for a similar rapprochement, and not without success. In other words, to break the Franco-Soviet Pact was not only a German scheme; others were willing to see it done as well.

Calumnies are always among the weapons of diplomacy. Sometimes they serve as trial balloons. Rumors began to circulate that Moscow and Berlin were not so antagonistic to each other after all, and might come together. A German-Soviet pact was therefore considered a possibility in the chancelleries of Europe. The basis for these rumors could possibly have been found in the well-known pro-German orientation of some high-ranking officers of the Red Army. When the new Soviet Constitution was discussed, late in 1936, the French authorities expressed their worries about the wording used in that Constitution in defining the aims of the Army, as the force created for the defense of the Fatherland. The French wished to ascertain that this was not meant as precluding the use of the Soviet armed forces beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. They wanted to be sure that in case of an attack on France by Germany Soviet troops could and would be sent to fight the Germans wherever they were needed. Moscow complied, and changed the original wording so as to make it clear that the Red Army would be used to fulfill the international commitments of the U.S.S.R.

Rumors about the pro-German orientation of some of the most important Soviet officers still persisted. They did not disappear even after the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and his group. These were the people who actually had been pro-German when it had been proper to be so, but had remained pro-German after the advent of Hitler and after the Franco-Soviet Pact had been signed, that is, when it had become definitely wrong to advocate German orientation. The anti-Soviet elements kept spreading those rumors, along with a host of others, to frighten the French people and force the government to abandon its reliance on and co-operation with the Bolsheviks.

It is true that Moscow, in its turn, was not quite satisfied with the behavior of France. It was becoming more and more clear to Russia that she could not be certain of the stand France

would take in case of an attack by Germany on Czechoslovakia. Moscow could not be certain, and was not, of the stand France would take in case of an attack on the U.S.S.R. Soviet leaders continued building up their own country's defense. By this time they were confident of the strength of their own armed forces. In 1938 French help meant less to the U.S.S.R. than it had at the time the Pact was signed. The military power of the Soviet State and the strength of industry behind it had increased considerably, while the position of France, strategic, economic and political, had progressively deteriorated as the latter had succumbed to Fascist lies.

“Today, therefore, the Soviets see little future in the prospect of pulling democratic chestnuts out of the European fire; they are just about ready to tell the owners of these chestnuts to show a little more courage and foresight in looking after their own possessions. Hence, Moscow demands that, if the Pact is to be maintained, it should be placed upon a more effective basis, and that it should be re-enforced by what the Soviets regard as its corollary, a military alliance. . . .”¹

But France at that time was not in a mood to reinforce her ties with the U.S.S.R.; on the contrary, the forces which were working for the dissolution of this (in their opinion distasteful) marriage were in the ascendancy. They had powerful support in other countries, especially in the England of Neville Chamberlain. Germany and, to a lesser extent, Italy were working overtime to prevent the unification of democratic forces. They found numerous friends among powerful people in other lands.

The Spanish Civil War was nearing an end with the Fascists victorious. The popular front in France was dead. Now the last one, in Spain, was doomed. Next on the agenda of the reactionaries was the destruction of the most stubborn of all these “common-men's revolts,” the Soviet Union. Gradually the stage was being set for this “last act.” The friends of the U.S.S.R. were not numerous enough; anyhow they were not in power. Among the democracies there were those who considered a temporary siding with the Fascists (as was the case in Spain), justified by the necessity to put an end to the menace of the “atheistic, immoral, brutal, dictatorship.” If to do so it was

¹ *Current History*, May, 1937, p. 18.

necessary to destroy the U.S.S.R., the country which prevented the realization of their own "plans" for peace and prosperity, they were willing to close their eyes, and let it be done. The Fascists never missed anything that could be used to their advantage.

They doubled their efforts to develop this trend of thought; they filled gullible minds with shocking "interpretations" of the "Moscow Trials," predicting the utter collapse of the Soviet system; they frightened others with fantastic descriptions of what the Bolsheviki were planning to do to them, contradicting their own stories about the impotence of the U.S.S.R.; they misled others about the military preparedness of the U.S.S.R. and the might of the Red Army. They found plenty of stooges, some of whom were simply naive, while others were so hostile to the U.S.S.R. that they were willing to believe or invent anything that might be detrimental to that country.

Soon after Chamberlain became the head of the British Government the German Minister of War, Field Marshal von Blomberg, paid him a visit, and, it was intimated, the two discussed a common front against the Bolsheviki. This idea had been carefully developed by the most reactionary and anti-Soviet circles. Their purpose was to convince Chamberlain that Hitler should be given a free hand to fight the Russians.

The propaganda mills of Europe were working overtime in the hope of achieving this end. Various "documents" were circulated purporting to reveal the weakness of the U.S.S.R., and the worthlessness of its armed forces. Sir Horace Wilson, indefatigable foe of Russia, was reported to have been instrumental in passing "documents" to that effect, which had been submitted for his consideration by Ribbentrop, the German Ambassador. This valuable information had presumably been secured from the Polish Secret Service. It showed beyond a doubt that when several Soviet generals, including Tukhachevsky, had been executed in 1937, the Red Army had been decapitated; there were no leaders left.

Although the Japanese had failed in their attempt to prevent the establishment of normal relations between Moscow and Washington by belittling the strength of the U.S.S.R. and insinuating the existence of sinister designs by Moscow, the Germans played the same game, but much more skillfully. They

pointed out to the British authorities that there was no advantage to them in aligning with Soviet Russia. In case of war between Germany and Great Britain the U.S.S.R. could be of no use to the latter. The safe and clever course for England, they argued, would be to get Germany to fight Soviet Russia, and this was exactly what Chamberlain was out to achieve.

The clique that encouraged the Prime Minister in this project was small. Even in his own party there were men who realized, with bewilderment and dismay, that his foreign policy was bringing England to the brink of an abyss. And their alarm was shared by many who had opposed Soviet Russia in the past, but who now saw that Russian and British interests coincided. The strongest and most outspoken in this group was Winston Churchill.²

The better informed knew that after the two Five-Year Plans had been successfully completed by the U.S.S.R., that country had become quite strong economically. Some of these people knew that the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. were of a very high order. Numerous experts from various countries had publicly expressed themselves to that effect. Among them were the Japanese and German Military Attachés at Moscow (the latter, General von Koestrich).³

Nevertheless, those who were determined to check the success of the Soviet Union could not be stopped. It was becoming obvious that nothing could divert Chamberlain, for the crusade against the U.S.S.R. had become a "fixed idea" with him. There is even reason to believe that he actually pressed Hitler (at Godesberg and Munich) to start a war against the U.S.S.R.⁴

Such was the atmosphere in which the Munich Conference was convened to arrange for "peace in our time," according to Neville Chamberlain's announcement to the world. For obvious reasons the Soviet Union was not invited to participate in this "peace conference."

As we have seen, Anthony Eden was forced to resign in February, 1938, because Chamberlain did not agree with his attitude toward Germany and Italy. On what lines this disagreement had developed might be judged by the events that coin-

² Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

³ Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

⁴ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

cided with and followed this important change in the British Foreign Office. About that time King Carol of Rumania abolished parliamentary government, or what remained of it in his country. Rumania was definitely moving into the Fascist orbit. A month later the bewildered world witnessed the strange disappearance of the independent state of Austria. Its Chancellor, Schuschnigg, was removed by Hitler's order and the *Anschluss* of Austria with the Third Reich was an accomplished fact with little opposition voiced by the Powers. The following month Britain and Italy signed a "peace and harmony pact," (contingent upon the withdrawal of Italian forces from Spain).

In May Hitler ordered mobilization of his troops and their concentration on the Czechoslovakian border. President Benes responded by a similar mobilization of Czechoslovak troops. Hitler was furious at such insolence on the part of his small neighbor. He was indignant, he complained to others, but he did nothing. Early in August England sent a "conciliator and adviser" to Prague in the person of Lord Runciman. A few days later, on August 15, Germany began maneuvers on an unprecedented scale. It was no secret any longer that Hitler wanted to annex the Sudetenland. On August 22, Moscow informed Berlin that she would stand by her 1935 pact with Czechoslovakia, and would honor her pledge to support that country in the event of an attack.

On the other side of the German border events were progressing in a different manner. On September 18, Daladier, the Prime Minister of France and his Foreign Minister, Bonnet, conferred with the British, and agreed on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia (officially an ally of France!) in order to appease Hitler, who claimed he wanted the Sudetenland and nothing else.

The last half of September, 1938, was tense with fear. Statesmen, now thoroughly alarmed, yet helpless in their impotence, were busy contriving desperate expedients to avert impending war.⁵

After a series of visits by Chamberlain to Berchtesgaden and Godesberg, to kowtow before the Führer, the Munich Conference was convened, and in the shortest possible time, on September 30, the Munich Pact was signed by its participants—

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Chamberlain, for Great Britain; Daladier, for France; Mussolini, for Italy; and Hitler, for Germany, or rather, for them all. Czechoslovakia was betrayed. Her fate was sealed.

Before this final act of betrayal of Czechoslovakia by the Western Powers was signed, Litvinov, on September 21, 1938, delivered a speech of great importance to the Seventh Plenary Meeting of the Nineteenth Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations.

After reminding his audience that the League of Nations was created as a reaction to the World War and its horrors, and that its object was to preserve peace and safeguard all nations against aggression by replacing the system of military alliances with collective organizations and assistance to the victims of aggression, he bluntly accused the League of doing nothing of the kind. Austria and Ethiopia had lost their independent existence as the result of violent aggression. A third state, China, was at that moment a victim of aggression and foreign invasion for the second time in seven years, and a fourth state, Spain, was in the third year of a sanguinary war owing to the armed intervention of two aggressors in her internal affairs. Now, the fifth state, Czechoslovakia, was being subjected to interference in her internal affairs, and was being publicly and loudly menaced with attack.

The agenda of the session of the League had no place for this latest development. Czechoslovakia's plight was not even mentioned. Obviously there was no desire to act differently in this case than had been done in the cases of China, Spain and Ethiopia. The disappearance of Austria as an independent state had passed unnoticed by the League. Now the fate of Czechoslovakia was likewise of no concern to the Assembly. The League's very existence was being jeopardized:

"At a moment when the mines are being laid to blow up the organization on which were fixed the great hopes of our generation, and which stamped a definite character on the international relations of our epoch; at a moment when, by no accidental coincidence, decisions are being taken outside the League which recall to us the international transactions of pre-war days, and which are bound to overturn all present conceptions of international morality and treaty obligations; at a moment when there is being drawn up a further list of sacrifices to the god of aggression, and a line is being drawn under

the annals of all post-war international history, with the sole conclusion that nothing succeeds like aggression—at such a moment, every State must define its role and its responsibility before its contemporaries and before history. That is why I must plainly declare here that the Soviet Government bears no responsibility whatsoever for the events now taking place and for the fatal consequences which may inexorably ensue. . . .”⁶

Realizing the significance of *Anschluss*, and particularly of Czechoslovakia, to the fate of Europe, the Soviet Government officially approached the other European Powers with a proposal for an immediate collective deliberation on the possible consequences of that event, in order to adopt collective preventive measures. But the U.S.S.R. found no support in any quarter. Bound to Czechoslovakia by a pact of Mutual Assistance, the Soviet Union abstained from any intervention in the negotiations of the Czechoslovak Government with the Sudeten Germans; Moscow, certainly, did not advise Prague to yield to the demands of those who acted on behalf of Hitler. When the French Government, bound by a similar treaty, inquired as to the attitude of Moscow in the event of an attack on that country, Soviet authorities replied that the U.S.S.R. intended to fulfill its obligations under the Pact, and, together with France, to afford assistance to their mutual ally. Moscow declared that it was ready to participate in a conference with representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments, in order to discuss the measures appropriate to the moment. Litvinov suggested that the League immediately mobilize public opinion, and ascertain the position of other states. In other words, the U.S.S.R. asked for immediate international consultation in order to decide on the terms of a collective *démarche*.⁷

Two days before the meeting of the Assembly the Czechoslovak Government addressed a formal inquiry to the Soviet Government as to whether it was prepared to render her immediate and effective aid if France, loyal to her obligations, would render similar assistance. To this Moscow answered in the affirmative.

⁶ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-127.

⁷ President Roosevelt also appealed for a conference for the settlement of that crisis.

"I believe it will be admitted," said Litvinov later, "that both were replies of a loyal signatory of an international agreement and of a faithful servant of the League. It is not our fault if no effect was given to our proposals, which, I am convinced, could have produced the desired results, both in the interests of Czechoslovakia, and in those of all Europe and of general peace. Unfortunately other steps were taken, which led, and which could not but lead, to such a capitulation as is bound sooner or later to have quite incalculable and disastrous consequences.

"To avoid a problematic war today and receive in return a certain and large-scale war tomorrow—moreover, at the price of assuaging the appetites of insatiable aggressors and of the destruction or mutilation of sovereign States—is not to act in the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations. To grant bonuses for saber-rattling and recourse to arms for the solution of international problems—in other words, to reward and encourage aggressive super-imperialism—is not to act in the spirit of the Briand-Kellogg Pact.

"The Soviet Government takes pride in the fact that it has no part in such a policy, and has invariably pursued the principles of the two pacts I have mentioned, which were approved by nearly every nation in the world. Nor has it any intention of abandoning them for the future, being convinced that in present conditions it is impossible otherwise to safeguard a genuine peace and genuine international justice. It calls upon other Governments likewise to return to this path."⁸

But, as we have seen, the heads of four European nations paid no attention to what the Soviet Union representative at Geneva had told the League nor did they pay any attention to the rest of the world. They went to Munich and committed one of the most hideous (and at the same time most stupid) of crimes. No wonder the Soviets were not invited to take part in that conclave. The Russians had made it clear that they were not interested in plotting. However, the participants could not ask the Russians to join them for another reason. What they had come to discuss with Hitler and his friend, Mussolini, was not primarily the future of the Sudetenland. They knew, of course, or at least the French Premier might have reminded them, that the U.S.S.R. was a co-guarantor of Czechoslovakia's inviolability together with France. If the main question to be discussed at Munich was Hitler's demand for the right to annex the western

⁸ Maxim M. Litvinov, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

part of Czechoslovakia, then the U.S.S.R. would naturally have to be asked to pass on this proposition.

Moscow was not asked to come because the main topic discussed at Munich was the U.S.S.R. itself. It was hardly necessary for Chamberlain and Daladier to travel to the Bavarian capital city to sign what had already been decided upon before their arrival. The fate of the Sudetenland had been sealed earlier. The conferees came to discuss the U.S.S.R., not Czechoslovakia.⁹

Why Hitler Balked. With the blessings of Munich bestowed on September 30, Hitler ordered his troops to cross the border the next day, and German troops were on Czech territory on October 1. By November 2, the partition of Czechoslovakia was completed.

Chamberlain was jubilant. In a speech at Birmingham, he defended the Munich agreement as "only an incident in a constant and unwavering policy." "Peace in our time" seemed to him guaranteed. Had not Hitler given him a "Peace Declaration"? But soon it became manifest that the Führer was not yet satisfied. He knew, of course, that he was expected to turn his attention eastward and to take care of the U.S.S.R., but he also knew that in the East his going would not be very easy. Hitler's preparations for war, apparently, were not yet completed. He had his own plans, which, as we know by now, did not coincide with those of his benefactors and anxious collaborators in the proposed destruction of the Soviet State. Instead of turning his fury eastward, Hitler served some new demands on his Western neighbors. He wanted the African colonies back. Mussolini also demanded territorial concessions there. That was more than Chamberlain was prepared to pay for Hitler's collaboration. Neither Britain nor France cared to part with their colonial possessions. Under these circumstances Hitler was not willing to "play ball" with them.

Chamberlain's "peace and harmony" proved to be an illusion. Hitler was in no mood to work toward attaining such chimerical goals. He had to keep things moving, for otherwise his New

⁹ According to Arthur U. Pope (*op. cit.*, p. 11), Chamberlain suggested to Hitler through Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador at Berlin, that he convoke an international conference omitting Russia.

Order could not last long. March seemed to be his month for daring action. In March, 1939, he decided to dismember Czechoslovakia, and so he did. His solemn declaration at Munich that after the Sudetenland was restored as German territory, he would make no other territorial demands, no longer held. London was not particularly interested in that far-away country. France did not seem to remember that she had a contract by which she was obligated to support her ally. But Moscow did not desert Czechoslovakia. Moscow offered to assist Prague, even though, after the refusal of France to honor her pledge, the U.S.S.R. was no longer obligated to do so.

A few days before Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia, Stalin, in his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress, on March 10, gave some pointed warnings to those states which had abandoned the policy of collective security and the policy of resistance to aggressors, and were finding solace in a position of neutrality.

“In actual fact,” he said, “the policy of non-intervention is tantamount to connivance at aggression, to unleashing war—consequently, to its transformation into world war.

“Take Germany, for instance. They let her have Austria, despite the obligation to defend Austria’s independence, they ceded the Sudeten region, they left Czechoslovakia to her own fate, thereby violating all and every obligation, and began to lie vociferously in the press about the ‘weakness of the Russian Army,’ about the ‘demoralization of the Russian air force,’ about ‘riots’ in the Soviet Union, urging the Germans to march further east, promising them easy pickings and prompting them on: ‘Just you start against the Bolsheviks and then everything will proceed nicely.’ It must be admitted that this, too, looks very much like egging on, like encouraging the aggressor.

“The fuss raised by the British, French and North American press about the Soviet Ukraine is characteristic. The gentlemen of this press grew hoarse shouting that Germans were marching on the Soviet Ukraine, that they now had in their hands the so-called Carpathian Ukraine. It looks as if the object of this suspicious fuss was to raise the ire of the Soviet Union against Germany, poison the atmosphere and provoke a conflict with Germany without any visible grounds for it. . . .

“It is still more characteristic that some European and American politicians and newspapermen who have lost patience waiting for ‘the march on the Soviet Ukraine’ are themselves beginning to reveal

the real background of the policy of non-intervention. They openly state and write in black and white that the Germans have 'disappointed' them cruelly, that instead of marching on further to the East, against the Soviet Union, they have turned to the West, if you please, and demand colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany as the price for undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, and now the Germans refuse to pay the note, telling their creditors to go chase themselves.

"Far be it from me to sermonize about the policy of non-intervention, to speak of betrayal, of treachery, and so on. It would be naive to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics are politics, as old and hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game which adherents of the policy of non-intervention have started, may end in serious failure for themselves. . . .

"The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and understandable. These are its main points: 1) We stand for peace and for the strengthening of businesslike relations with all countries. This is our position and we will adhere to it as long as these countries maintain identical relations with the Soviet Union, as long as they make no attempt to violate our country's interests. 2) We stand for peaceful, close and neighborly relations with all neighboring countries which have a common frontier with the U.S.S.R. This is our position and we shall adhere to it as long as these countries maintain identical relations with the Soviet Union, as long as they make no attempt to trespass directly or indirectly on the integrity and security of the frontiers of the Soviet State. 3) We stand for the rendering of support to nations which have fallen prey to aggression and are fighting for the independence of their countries. 4) We are not afraid of threats from the aggressors and we are ready to retaliate with two blows for one against instigators of war who attempt to infringe on the integrity of Soviet borders."¹⁰

This was the speech of a man confident in the strength of his country, and he closed his remarks by enumerating the considerations on which the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. relied, as follows:

1. Its growing economic, political and cultural strength.
2. The moral and political unity of Soviet society.
3. Its Red Army and Navy.
4. The friendship between the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

¹⁰ Text of Stalin's speech, quoted in *Soviet Russia Today*, April, 1939, pp. 7-11.

5. The Soviet Union's policy of peace.
6. The moral support of the working people of all countries to whom the preservation of peace is of vital concern.
7. The common sense of countries which for one reason or another are not interested in the violation of peace.

As a warning to outsiders, Stalin suggested to his listeners "to be careful not to allow our country to be involved in conflicts by instigators of war who are used to getting other people to pull chestnuts out of the fire for them; to strengthen the fighting power of our Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost."

One has to read this speech of Stalin's (at that time only Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.), bearing in mind that it was made in 1939, that is, when the Second Five-Year Plan had already been successfully completed, and the country was entering its Third Five-Year Plan backed by staggering figures of past performances and a gigantic program for the future.

According to the Second Five-Year Plan the output of industry was to have increased from 43,000,000,000 rubles to 93,000,000,000 rubles, whereas in reality the output of industry in 1937 reached 96,000,000,000 rubles. According to the Third Five-Year Plan the national income of the country was to increase from 96 to 174 billion rubles. The volume of output of industry in 1942, the last year of the Third Five-Year Plan, was set at 180,000,000,000 rubles, that is, it had to increase, as compared with 1937, by 88 per cent. Of these enormous figures a very large part was assigned to the defense of the country.

One has also to keep in mind when reading Stalin's speech and examining the above figures depicting the colossal growth of Soviet industry, that the rest of the world at that time was experiencing a new economic crisis. In the second half of 1937, when the capitalist countries had hardly succeeded in recovering from the blows of the crisis that began in 1929, they found themselves face to face with a new one. Unemployment figures were rising again, and in 1939 the number of idle workers was estimated as 18,000,000. Rivalry among various countries striving to increase their foreign trade was intensified. To reach understandings on matters of an economic character was becoming more difficult. Co-operation among the rivals, whose

interests conflicted, was not a simple problem. Disagreements were more than likely to occur.

The Economic Conference held in London in 1933 had been a failure; the Ottawa Conference certainly did not promote Anglo-American co-operation. In 1939, about the time that Hitler invaded and then partitioned Czechoslovakia, the British-American economic conflict had developed to a point that might have brought about serious repercussions, had the plans of the "Federation of British Industries" not been frustrated by unforeseen circumstances. The plan was to conclude a commercial agreement with the corresponding organization of German industries, which amounted in substance to an offensive-defensive alliance of British and German industries directed largely against the trade of the U.S.A.¹¹

Under such circumstances, it was natural that those who wanted to see the U.S.S.R. checked also found it difficult to build a strong united front of anti-Soviet forces. With the defeat of Loyalist Spain at hand, that is, with the disappearance of the last existing popular-front government, anti-Soviet elements considered it timely to administer a blow at the only proletarian state, the U.S.S.R. They wanted it done without delay because they were worried about the growing strength of the Soviet Union. If Hitler balked and did not turn against the U.S.S.R. immediately after Munich because he knew its strength, it is likely that the others, those who wanted its dissolution, were aware of that strength as well.

The U.S.S.R. Continues Loyal to Czechoslovakia. Strong as it was, the U.S.S.R. wanted peace and continued to do everything in its power to check the aggressors and prevent a new world war. This was revealed by Litvinov in a speech at Geneva. Before the League of Nations Assembly on September 21, 1938, Litvinov reiterated his faith in the League, as "still strong," deplored the attitude of those who opposed sanctions, appealed for more resolute action, according to the principle of collective security, recapitulated the role played in the League by his own country, and lamented the passivity of the League in such cases as that of China, Ethiopia and Spain.

¹¹ D. N. Pritt, *Light on Moscow—Soviet Policy Analyzed*. (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1939), p. 61.

"Such an event as the disappearance of Austria passed unnoticed. . . . Realizing the significance of this event for the fate of the whole of Europe and particularly Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Government, immediately after the *Anschluss*, officially approached the other European great powers with a proposal for an immediate collective deliberation on the possible consequences of that event in order to adopt collective preventive measures.

"To our regret, this proposal which, if carried out, could have saved us from the alarm which all the world now feels for the fate of Czechoslovakia, did not receive its just appreciation.

"Bound to Czechoslovakia by a pact of mutual assistance, the Soviet Union abstained from any intervention in the negotiations of the Czechoslovak government with the Sudeten Germans, considering this to be the internal business of the Czechoslovak state. . . .

"We value very highly the fact that the Czechoslovak government up to the last few days did not even inquire of us whether we would fulfill our obligations under the pact, since obviously it had no doubt of this.

"We intend to fulfill our obligations under the pact, together with France, to afford assistance to Czechoslovakia by the way open to us; our War Department is ready immediately to participate in a conference with representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments in order to discuss measures appropriate to the moment. . . .

"We said further that it was necessary to exert all means of avoiding an armed conflict and we considered one such method to be immediate consultation between the great powers of Europe. . . .

"It is not our fault if no effect was given to our proposal, which I am convinced could have produced the desired results. It was in the interest of Czechoslovakia and the interests of Europe and general peace. . . .

"Unfortunately, other steps were taken which have led, and which could not but lead, to such a capitulation as is bound sooner or later to have quite incalculable and disastrous consequences. To avoid a problematic war today and make certain of one tomorrow is the price which the insatiable aggressors ask. . . ." ¹²

The U.S.S.R.'s loyalty to its ally was confirmed by President Benes who, on his visit to the United States, stated that even after he had accepted the British and French conditions, the U.S.S.R. was still willing to aid Czechoslovakia, if she were at-

¹² Maxim M. Litvinov, *Czechoslovakia and the World Crisis* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 12-15

tacked. The Soviet Minister at Prague, M. Alexandrovsky, gave such assurance to Dr. Benes. The Czechoslovak President had a telephone conversation with Stalin. His Minister at Moscow, Zdanek Fierlinger, was in constant touch with the Narcomindel. There was no doubt whatsoever about the Soviet stand. "Russia was faithful to the very last moment" after his country was occupied by the Germans, said Dr. Benes in Chicago.

In the tragic days of the Munich Conference, when the fate of their country was being decided, the Czech Government was in permanent session at the Presidential Palace of Hradchany. It could not reach a decision even after Chamberlain let it be known that England and France would not fight for Czechoslovakia if she rejected the Munich settlement.¹³ "So the British and French Ambassadors in Prague went to work on Benes, informing him during the fatal night of September 29 to September 30, that he must accept the Munich settlement. Otherwise France and England not only would leave Czechoslovakia to her fate, but would actually participate on Germany's side in imposing military sanctions against her."¹⁴

On March 15, 1939, German troops occupied what used to be Czechoslovakia. On March 18, Moscow notified Berlin that it would not recognize her "conquest." The political and historical justifications expounded in the German note informing the Soviet Government of the inclusion of Czechia (Bohemia-Moravia) in the Third Reich, Litvinov stated clearly, were incorrect and not corresponding to facts.

"In view of the above, the Soviet Government cannot recognize the inclusion of Czechia (Bohemia-Moravia), and also, in one form or another, of Slovakia, into the German Empire to be legitimate and in conformity with generally accepted standards of international law and justice or the principle of self-determination of nations. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, the actions of the German Government, far from eliminating any danger to universal peace, have, on the contrary, created and enhanced this danger, violated political stability in Central Europe, increased elements of alarm already previously

¹³ When a short time later Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia the signers of the Munich settlement forgot that by this pact they had guaranteed the independence of that country.

¹⁴ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

created in Europe and dealt a fresh blow to the security of peoples.”¹⁵

On the same day the Soviet Government proposed a conference of Great Britain, France, Poland, Turkey and the U.S.S.R. to clarify their position *vis-à-vis* German aggression. London replied that this Soviet proposal was “premature.” This was the opinion of the head of the British Government, Neville Chamberlain. Others, in England and elsewhere, thought differently.

Sir Archibald Sinclair, speaking for the Liberals, criticized the stand of the Prime Minister, saying:

“Russia made its proposals. It is time now that the government carries it a stage further and makes practical concrete proposals, before it is too late, to Russia and tries to get them to a round table to make plans for military assistance.”

Winston Churchill voiced the same criticism on the floor of the House of Commons, and again stressing the need for Soviet collaboration, he stated, in an article in the *New York Herald Tribune*:

“The loyal attitude of Soviet Russia to the cause of peace and their obvious interest in resisting the Nazi advances to the Black Sea impart a feeling of encouragement of all the Eastern States now menaced by the maniacal dreams of Berlin.”¹⁶

Declaring the Soviet proposal for an immediate conference “premature” (obviously an evasion) the British Government, pressed by public opinion, came out with a counterproposal, the issuing of a joint declaration against aggression signed by Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R. and Poland. Moscow pointed out that this was not a very satisfactory alternative, but agreed to the proposal, and suggested that as much weight and authority as possible should be lent to it by affixing to the formal declaration the signatures of the Prime Ministers as well as those of the Foreign Secretaries of the four states. Now Poland balked. Her government refused to sign any document side by side

¹⁵ For the whole text see *Soviet Russia Today*, April, 1939, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ Quoted from *Soviet Russia Today*, May, 1939, p. 6

with the U.S.S.R., and the suggestion was dropped.¹⁷ The reason for Poland's objection was obvious; she was not in a position to denounce aggression when she was a partner of Nazi Germany in the despoliation of her neighbor, and Slavic sister, Czechoslovakia.

Neither the loyalty of Russia, and her readiness to stand by her ally after the others had deserted, nor the efforts of the U.S.S.R. to check further aggression by the Nazis and Fascists were of any use. Events were rapidly bringing the world into the war.

¹⁷D. N. Pritt, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

CHAPTER XI

Conference at Moscow—An Attempt to Frighten Hitler

Chamberlain's Game. Poland's Role. The Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact. Molotov's Speech. Comments by Some Foreigners.

Chamberlain's Game. After the seizure of Czechoslovakia, outraged public opinion in England had to be appeased by the appearance of a change in policy, on the part of Chamberlain, through the pretense of stiffening against the Fascist Powers. The declaration that it was "premature" to convoke an international conference to discuss measures for checking aggressors, as was suggested by Moscow, evoked indignant protests. For that reason Chamberlain proposed the issuance of a verbal condemnation of aggression, which was frustrated by Poland. But world events made an understanding with the U.S.S.R. more essential than ever, and London had to do something about it.

Moscow had been ready at any moment to conclude a pact, based on equality and reciprocity, provided such a pact would be effective against aggression. This was made clear by the firm stand of the U.S.S.R. against war-makers, by the exchange of notes with other countries and by the speeches of her representatives at Geneva and elsewhere.¹ It was reiterated by Molotov, who became Commissar of Foreign Affairs in May, 1939, after Litvinov, the staunchest advocate of collective security and therefore of close co-operation with the Western Powers, had resigned, because his policy had proved inoperable at the moment.

¹ In answer to President Roosevelt's cable to M. Kalinin, on April 15, 1939, on the desirability of organizing collective negotiations on economic and political questions connected with fascist aggression, the Soviet Union once more urged the calling of a peace conference. (Alexander Troyanovsky, *For World Peace and Freedom* (New York: National Council for American-Soviet Friendship, 1943), p. 13.)

Making his first report before the Supreme Soviet on May 31, 1939, Mr. Molotov said:

"Certain changes in the direction of counteracting aggression are to be observed in the policy of the non-aggressive countries of Europe. . . . How serious these changes are still remains to be seen. As yet it cannot even be said whether these countries are seriously desirous of abandoning the policy of non-intervention, the policy of non-resistance to the further development of aggression. May it not turn out that the present endeavor of these countries to resist aggression in *some* regions will serve as no obstacle to the unclashing of oppression in *other* regions?² We must therefore be vigilant. We stand for peace and for preventing the further development of aggression. But we must remember Comrade Stalin's precept 'to be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.' Only thus shall we be able to defend to the end the interests of our country and the interests of universal peace. . . .

"In connection with the proposals made to us by the British and French Governments, the Soviet Government entered into negotiations with them regarding measures necessary for combating aggression. This was in the middle of April. The negotiations begun then have not yet ended. But even at that time it was apparent that if there was a real desire to create an effective front of the peaceable countries against the advance of aggression, the following minimum conditions were necessary: that an effective pact of mutual assistance against aggression, a pact of an exclusively defensive character, be concluded between Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R.; that a guarantee against attack by aggressors be extended by Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. to the States of central and eastern Europe, including all European countries bordering on the U.S.S.R., without exception; that a concrete agreement be concluded by Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. regarding the forms and extent of the immediate and effective assistance to be given to each other and to the guaranteed States in the event of attack by aggressors.

"Such is our opinion, an opinion we force on no one, but to which we adhere. We do not demand the acceptance of our point of view, and do not ask anybody to do so. We consider, however, that this point of view really answers the interests of security of the peaceable States.

² This was a very plain hint of the suspicion that the game of diverting the aggression of Hitler to the East was still being played. (D. N. Piitt, *op cit.*, p. 71.)

"It would be an agreement of an exclusively defensive character, operating against attack on the part of aggressors, and fundamentally differing from the military and offensive alliance recently concluded between Germany and Italy.

"Naturally the basis of such an agreement must be the principle of reciprocity and equality of obligations.

"It should be noted that in some of the British and French proposals this elementary principle did not meet with favor. While guaranteeing themselves from direct attack on the part of aggressors by mutual assistance pacts between themselves and with Poland, and while trying to secure for themselves the assistance of the U.S.S.R. in the event of attack by aggressors on Poland and Rumania, the British and French left open the question whether the U.S.S.R. in its turn might count on their assistance in the event of its being directly attacked by aggressors, just as they left open another question, namely, whether they could participate in guaranteeing the small States bordering on the U.S.S.R. and covering its north-western frontiers, should these States prove unable to defend their neutrality from attack by aggressors.

"Thus the position was one of inequality for the U.S.S.R.

"The other day new British and French proposals were received. In these proposals the principle of mutual assistance between Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. on the basis of reciprocity in the event of direct attack by aggressors is now recognized. This, of course, is a step forward although it should be noted that it is hedged around by such reservations—even to the extent of reservation regarding certain clauses in the League of Nations Covenant—that it may prove to be a fictitious step forward. As regards the question of guaranteeing the countries of central and eastern Europe, on this point the proposals mentioned show no progress whatever from the standpoint of reciprocity. They provide for assistance being given by the U.S.S.R. to the five countries which the British and French have already promised to guarantee, but say nothing about their giving assistance to the three countries on the north-western frontier of the U.S.S.R., which may prove unable to defend their neutrality in the event of attack by aggressors. But the Soviet Union cannot undertake commitments in regard to the five countries mentioned unless it receives a guarantee in regard to the three countries on its north-western frontier.

"That is how matters stand regarding the negotiations with Great Britain and France.

"While conducting negotiations with Great Britain and France, we by no means consider it necessary to renounce business relations with countries like Germany and Italy. At the beginning of last year,

on the initiative of the German Government, negotiations were started for a trade agreement and new credits. Germany offered to grant us a new credit of 200,000,000 Marks. As at that time we did not reach unanimity on the terms of this new economic agreement, the matter was dropped. At the end of 1938 the German Government again proposed economic negotiations and a credit of 200,000,000 Marks, the German side expressing readiness to make a number of concessions. At the beginning of 1939 the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade was informed that a special German representative, Herr Schnure, was leaving for Moscow for the purpose of these negotiations. Subsequently, the negotiations were entrusted to Herr Schulenburg, the German Ambassador in Moscow, instead of Herr Schnure, but they were discontinued on account of disagreement. To judge by certain signs, it is not precluded that the negotiations may be resumed.

"I may add that a trade agreement for the year 1939 of advantage to both countries was recently concluded with Italy. . . ."

The new proposals of Britain and France, which Molotov described to his audience, were received on May 27, after almost two months of dilatory tactics by Chamberlain. One week after his refusal to consider the Soviet proposal for a Conference as "premature," Hitler seized Memel. Next day Chamberlain told the Commons, when asked about his attitude toward the Soviet plan, that he was not anxious to set "blocs" of nations in Europe opposed to one another. Still, he was obviously alarmed by this new aggression of Hitler's, and therefore on March 31, without even consulting Moscow, he gave Poland a solemn guarantee to stand by her. How he planned to achieve this, without the U.S.S.R., he did not reveal (then, nor when Poland actually was attacked a few months later).

In the meantime Mussolini, encouraged by the success of his collaborator in the north, sent, on April 7, Italian troops to invade Albania. This conquest proved to be easier than that of Ethiopia. The Albanian crown was not offered to the King of Italy and Emperor of Abyssinia but to a princeling.

Apparently in retaliation for this move Chamberlain announced on April 13, again without consulting the U.S.S.R., that Greece (another neighbor of Italy and Rumania) was also guaranteed by Great Britain. Two days later, probably after having been asked how he was planning to do this, the Prime

Minister proposed to Moscow that it undertake a unilateral guarantee of Poland and Rumania. The U.S.S.R. replied on the seventeenth with a program for a triple defensive alliance. That apparently was not the solution sought by Chamberlain! At least, so it would appear, for he did not answer Moscow's proposal, but, on April 24, sent back to Berlin his Ambassador, who had been withdrawn as a gesture of protest against the rape of Czechoslovakia.

To show his gratitude for this act by Great Britain, two days later Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, and also the German-Polish Pact.

The British people certainly realized how badly their foreign policy was being managed by Neville Chamberlain. They sensed the inevitability of war. On April 27, the House of Commons passed the Conscription Bill.

From the U.S.S.R. they had received an alarm signal in Litvinov's resignation on May 3. The French statesman, Edouard Herriot, was reported to have evaluated this event by saying "the last friend of collective security is out."

But Chamberlain was still not very perturbed. To a suggestion voiced in Parliament that he see Stalin, he sneeringly rejected such an idea. Two days after this, on May 7, Germany and Italy announced that they had decided to conclude a military alliance for ten years. This alliance was actually signed on May 22. Chamberlain had to do something. So on May 9 he dispatched a reply to the Soviet proposal of April 17, which was practically his own original proposal, slightly modified. Moscow repeated her proposal, for the U.S.S.R. wanted to stop aggressors everywhere. Almost two weeks later Chamberlain accepted in principle the Soviet idea of a Triple Pact of Mutual Assistance, possibly with a military convention attached, but wanted to limit it to Poland and Rumania, that is, to exclude the other states bordering on the U.S.S.R. (namely, the Baltic Republics).

It was obvious to Moscow that to leave only a few border states unguaranteed would mean to invite aggression, through them, against the U.S.S.R. As for Chamberlain, possibly he considered that negotiations with Moscow would silence not only his critics at home, but, who knows? might also frighten Hitler and make him more compliant.

For those who still had any doubts about Chamberlain's

game, this was not a bad eye-opener, especially after his statement in Parliament (on May 19) that he was not in a hurry to decide on the Soviet proposal because there were "other governments," besides that of the U.S.S.R., to be considered. Which those "other governments" were was answered by the final signing of the military alliance between Italy and Germany, just three days after this statement by Chamberlain. But there were other events, on the other side of the globe, that also probably influenced his actions. On May 11, 1939, fighting was started by Japan on the border of the Mongolian People's Republic, the ally of the U.S.S.R. In the opinion of London here was a chance to make Moscow more accommodating.

Poland's Role. Poland was proving to be a valuable collaborator of Chamberlain's in his complicated game. As we have pointed out, it was Poland who balked the proposal of the U.S.S.R. to issue a joint declaration condemning aggression immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler. It was again Poland who balked the Soviet plan of April 17 for a triple alliance which would guarantee the border states. She declared that she did not need any protection.

"Poland has informed Great Britain and Russia that she refuses to participate in any efforts to draw the Soviet Union into the anti-aggression 'peace front' being organized by Britain, it was announced officially tonight. Poland has a 'negative attitude' toward permitting Soviet troops or planes to march or fly over Polish territory, the announcement said."³

Colonel Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, for years had been working and plotting against the U.S.S.R. Soon after the conclusion of the Polish-German Non-aggression Pact, in August, 1935, he visited Helsinki to explore the chances of enlisting Finland in an alliance against Communism.⁴ He failed; an open anti-Soviet alliance was not yet considered timely by those in power in Finland, for anti-Fascist elements were still strong in that northern state. Beck returned home without having achieved his plan. But late in 1937 Poland

³ *New York Herald Tribune*, April 20, 1939.

⁴ *Current History*, October, 1935, pp. 100-101.

established closer relations with Germany with the definite understanding of acting in accord against "Communism." In the partition of Czechoslovakia Poland was recompensed for this with the award of the Teschen region.

During the conference held in Moscow in the summer of 1939, it was again the stand taken by Poland that was chiefly responsible for the failure to reach an understanding.

By the end of May London had decided that negotiations with the U.S.S.R. could no longer be evaded. That was the decision of which Molotov told his audience in his speech on May 31, quoted above. To this Moscow replied, on June 2, that negotiations should certainly be continued, and that a pact would be welcome, provided it were based on the principles of equality and reciprocity, and included a guarantee for all the border states without exception.

Even then some Britons continued to balk. On June 8, Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, delivered a speech in the House of Lords, which was interpreted as a reversion to the policy of appeasement. He offered a conference to the German aggressor. He talked of the "adjustment of rival claims" and once again expressed his distaste for "division into potential hostile groups."⁵ This was hardly an advocacy of the Triple Alliance to check the aggressors. Lord Davies, taking part in the debates that followed this pronouncement by the Foreign Secretary, said, on June 12: "The Russian Government know perfectly well that in certain quarters in this country there was lurking a hope that the German Eagles would fly eastwards, and not westwards, as it was apparently intended that they should do at the time when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*. . . . sometimes I wonder whether, even now, the Cabinet are really in earnest, or whether these negotiations are not merely another sop to public opinion."⁶

On June 14, Mr. Strang, a minor official of the Foreign Office, arrived in Moscow. Negotiations were dragged out for several weeks because of the lack of authority of the foreign delegates; they had to consult with their superiors at home on every detail. In the meantime strange things were going on in London and

⁵ D. N. Pritt, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

elsewhere. Sir Francis Lindley, former Ambassador to Tokyo, gave an address in the Commons, attacking the U.S.S.R. and advising against any pact with it. Mr. Robert Hudson, a member of the Cabinet, was reported having discussions with Herr Wohltat, high-ranking official of Germany, about the possibility of a loan, amounting to one billion pounds sterling.⁷ That same summer, Lord Baldwin, the former Prime Minister and tutor of Neville Chamberlain, told his audience at Carnegie Hall in New York, that the real enemy was not Germany but Communism. All this did not create the best atmosphere for successful negotiations at Moscow. Naturally, some people thought it strange; suspicion was mounting.

On June 29, one of the important Soviet officials, Andrey Zhdanov, seriously questioned the good faith of the British and French Governments in permitting the long delay in negotiations. In a signed editorial in *Izvestia* he wrote:

"I permit myself to express a personal opinion in this matter, although my friends do not share it. They still think that when commencing the negotiations on a pact for mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R. the British and French Governments had serious intentions of creating a powerful barrier against aggression in Europe. I believe that the British and French Governments have no wish for an equal treaty with the U.S.S.R., that is, for the only kind of treaty on which a self-respecting State can agree, and that is precisely what has caused the state of stagnation into which the negotiations have entered. . . . It seems to me that the British and French desire not a real treaty acceptable to the U.S.S.R., but only talks about a treaty in order to speculate before public opinion in their countries on the imaginary unyielding attitude of the U.S.S.R., and thus make easier for themselves the road to deal with the aggressors. . . ."

Public opinion in Great Britain, by that time, was gravely disquieted, too. On the same day that Zhdanov published his editorial, David Lloyd George in a speech expressed this uneasiness in energetic terms. After pointing out the impossibility of Britain's fulfillment of the guarantee given to Poland without the assistance of the U.S.S.R., the venerable Welshman said:

⁷ David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy; 1939-1942* (Conn.: Yale University Press, 1943), pp. 47-48.

“Negotiations have been going on for four months with Russia, and no one knows how things stand today. You are dealing with the greatest military power in the world; you are asking them to come to your help; you are not negotiating terms with an enemy but with a friendly people whose aid you want. Mr. Chamberlain negotiated directly with Hitler. He went to Germany to see him. He and Lord Halifax made visits to Rome. They went to Rome, drank Mussolini’s health, shook his hand, and told him what a fine fellow he was. But whom have they sent to Russia? They have not sent even the lowest in rank of a Cabinet Minister; they have sent a clerk in the Foreign Office. It is an insult. Yet the Government want the help of their gigantic army and air force, and of this very brave people—no braver on earth—who are working their way through great difficulties to the emancipation of their people. If you want their help you ought to send somebody there who is worthy of our dignity and of theirs. As things are going on at present we are trifling with a grave situation. I cannot tell you what I think about the way things are being handled. Meanwhile, Hitler is fortifying Danzig. Danzig is becoming a fortress, and before that treaty is signed Danzig will be as much a city of the German Empire as Breslau or Berlin. They (the National Government) have no sense of proportion or of the gravity of the whole situation when the world is trembling on the brink of a great precipice and when liberty is challenged.”⁸

Finally, tired of the dilatory tactics of London, Moscow suggested, on July 23, that staff talks be started without any further delay. In response to this, military missions were appointed by Great Britain and France. They were composed of men of no importance, who were authorized neither to decide anything, nor to sign anything. On August 5, they started their leisurely journey by boat and train, as if to underline the fact that there was no hurry to reach any accord. On August 11 the missions arrived at Moscow.

In the very early stages of the negotiations that were begun on August 12, the Soviet representatives pointed out that because the U.S.S.R. had no common frontier with Germany, it would be essential, if it were to render any military assistance to Poland, to have definite arrangements for the Red Army units to pass over Polish territory in order to make contact with the enemy. France and Great Britain undertook to make the

⁸ D. N. Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

necessary *démarche* in Warsaw to this end, and brought back the answer that the Polish Government did not require Soviet aid at all, would not accept it, and was adequately prepared to meet a German attack without it.⁹

When Poland's strange attitude was made known, and was rightly deplored by the British people, the *New Statesman and Nation* commented on the role played by Polish authorities as follows:

"The resolute refusal of the Polish Government to permit Russian troops on its soil could hardly have encouraged Stalin to believe in the effectiveness of a Peace Front even if it was formed. In these circumstances adherence to an alliance whose leaders he had every reason to distrust may have seemed more risky than a nicely balanced policy of detachment."¹⁰

What was the attitude of British and French authorities toward this refusal of Poland's? Apparently they did not consider it proper or desirable to press Warsaw to take the only sensible stand in this case, that is, to accept Moscow's offer. Contrary to their attitude in the case of Czechoslovakia, when their envoys at Prague put high pressure on Dr. Benes to force his acceptance of the terms of the Munich agreement, they let the Polish Government remain adamant, and thus break the Conference.

Of course Poland's stand was not the only reason for this break. A very serious role in the disaster was also played by the refusal of Great Britain and France to accept as valid the Soviet delegates' assertion that the Baltic Republics were too weak, and therefore unable, to defend themselves, and that this made it imperative for Russia to fortify certain positions in these states and send her own troops to man them.

Although England had guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium and Holland without asking their consent, Chamberlain rejected a parallel guarantee against aggression of the Baltic States, without their consent, as the U.S.S.R. demanded. This stand of the Prime Minister was assailed by Winston Churchill, who stated that "The Russian claim that the Baltic States should

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰ *The New Statesman and Nation*, August 26, 1939.

be included in the triple guarantee is well-founded. It is certain that if Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were invaded by the Nazis or subverted to the Nazi system by propaganda and intrigue from within, the whole of Europe would be dragged into war. Why not then concert in good time, publicly and courageously, the measures which may render such a fight unnecessary?"¹¹

From the very beginning Moscow insisted on the inclusion of the three Baltic Republics in the general guarantee. To the very end the British and French refused to yield.

As a last warning, on August 19, the U.S.S.R. signed a trade agreement with Berlin, which Molotov had told the world in his speech of May 31 was a possibility. This had no effect. Three days later, the Russians accepted the German offer of a non-aggression pact.¹²

The Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact. In all probability negotiations between Berlin and Moscow about the possibility of a non-aggression pact had been going on for some time.¹³ There was a rumor that Hitler had supplied the Russians with records of conversations that had been held by British and German authorities, serving to prove the anti-Soviet position of Chamberlain's Government. Whether it was true or not is of no particular importance. Moscow had plenty of reasons to be suspicious of London's attitude. On August 20, Lord Kemsley, owner of a number of newspapers, and a rather influential figure in British politics, published in his *Sunday Graphic* a leading article advocating a Four-Power conference of Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The refusal of Poland to allow the passage of Red troops through her territory in case of an attack by Hitler, and the refusal of the Powers to include the Baltic States in the joint guarantee, forced the Soviet Government to accept the only alternative left to it in order

¹¹ *Morning Post*, June 8, 1939. Quoted by Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

¹² The French Ambassador to Berlin, Robert Coulondre, did warn his government that unless France and Great Britain came to an agreement with Moscow there was grave danger that the Soviet Government would accept the German offer, as the only way out of the impasse.

¹³ Arthur Upham Pope quotes John T. Whitaker as saying that Litvinov predicted late in 1937 that "when the Germans are prepared at last to embark upon their new adventures, these bandits will come to Moscow to ask us for a pact." (*op. cit.*, p. 450)

to prevent (or postpone) an attack by Germany, namely, Hitler's offer to sign a non-aggression pact.

This pact was signed in Moscow on August 23, by Molotov and Ribbentrop, who arrived by plane to represent the Fuhrer.

It was not a choice between a peace front with the democracies and a pact with Nazi Germany. There was no room for any choice; the U.S.S.R. did the only possible thing. For years the U.S.S.R. had been working for peace, but what she found at Geneva and elsewhere is well known. Moscow was anxious to have collective security, but failed to find real friends. For months she negotiated for a treaty with Britain and France, on a basis of equality and reciprocity, but could not obtain one. Great Britain of Chamberlain and France of Daladier, after Munich, were not disposed to co-operate with the U.S.S.R.; they expected Hitler to act, and made the conclusion of such a pact impossible. They encouraged Poland in her stand against the agreement. Chamberlain and his friends continued to intrigue with the Nazis.¹⁴ There were signs of preparations for a new Munich. Not only was Chamberlain's emissary carrying on negotiations with Hitler, or Kemsley still demanding a conference between the Western Powers, but there were also plans emanating from the Vatican calling for a similar conference.

Former American Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph E. Davies, in a Memorandum to Harry Hopkins, wrote on July 18, 1941, as follows:

"I believe that outside of the President of the United States alone no government in the world saw more clearly the menace of Hitler to peace and the necessity for collective security and alliances among non-aggressive nations than did the Soviet Government. They were ready to fight for Czechoslovakia. They cancelled their non-aggression pact with Poland *in advance of Munich*, because they wished to clear the road for the passage of their troops through Poland to go to the aid of Czechoslovakia if necessary to fulfill their treaty obligations. Even after Munich and as late as the spring of 1939, the Soviet Government agreed to join with Britain and France if Germany should attack Poland and Rumania, but urged that an international

¹⁴The *Economist* of London wrote: ". . . the facts of the past twelve months offer no evidence to deny that the Western democracies' policy, *faute-de-mieux*, has been to encourage the *Drang nach Osten*." (Quoted from *Soviet Russia Today*, May, 1939, p. 7).

conference of non-aggressor states should be held to determine objectively and realistically what each could do and then serve notice on Hitler of their combined resistance. They claimed that this was the only thing that would stop Hitler's aggression against European peace. The suggestion was declined by Chamberlain by reason of the objection of Poland and Rumania to the inclusion of Russia; and the disastrous unilateral agreements were then promoted and entered into by Britain.

"During all the spring of 1939 the Soviets, fearful that they were being used as the 'cat's-paw' to 'pull the chestnuts out of the fire' and would be left to fight Hitler alone, tried to bring about a definite agreement that would assume unity of action and co-ordination of military plans to stop Hitler.

"Even as late as August, 1939, the commissions of France and Britain were in Moscow for that purpose. Britain, however, refused to give the same guarantees of protection to Russia with reference to the Baltic states which Russia was giving to France and Britain in the event of aggression against Belgium and Holland. The Soviets became convinced, and with considerable reason, that no effective, direct and practical general arrangement could be made with France and Britain. They were driven to a pact of non-aggression with Hitler."¹⁵

Only when Moscow had become quite convinced that all her efforts were in vain, that no agreement was sought by Chamberlain, did she decide to accept Hitler's proffer and agree to sign the following document:

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the Government of Germany, led by a desire to consolidate the cause of peace between the U.S.S.R. and Germany and proceeding from the basic provisions of the treaty of neutrality concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Germany in April, 1926, arrived at the following agreement:

"Article I. The two contracting parties undertake to refrain from any violence, from any aggressive action and any attack against each other, either individually or jointly with other powers.

"Article II. In the event that either of the contracting parties should be subjected to military action on the part of a third power, the other contracting party will not lend that power support in any form.

"Article III. The Governments of the two contracting parties will

¹⁵ Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 455-456.

in the future maintain contact for consultation in order to inform each other on matters affecting their common interests.

“Article IV. Neither of the contracting parties will participate in any grouping of powers which either directly or indirectly is aimed against the other contracting party.

“Article V. In the event of disputes or conflicts arising between the contracting parties on matters of one or another kind, the two parties will solve these disputes or conflicts exclusively in a peaceful way through an amicable exchange of views or, in case of need, by setting up commissions for the settlement of the conflict.

“Article VI. The present pact is concluded for a term of ten years with the provision that unless one of the contracting parties denounces it one year before the expiration of this term, the term of the validity of the pact will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years.

“Article VII. The present pact is subject to ratification within the shortest possible space of time. The exchange of the instruments of ratification shall take place in Berlin. The pact comes into effect as soon as it is signed.

“Done in Moscow in two originals in the German and Russian languages on August 23, 1939, signed on the authorization of the Government of the U.S.S.R. by Molotov; for the Government of Germany, by Ribbentrop.”

The signing of this pact evoked a furious barrage of accusations against the U.S.S.R. It was accused of giving Germany the “green light” to attack in the West. As a matter of fact, it was a pact of peace. A pact against war. Hitler promised not to war on the U.S.S.R., which was a change for him. For years he had been preaching war on the U.S.S.R.; for years he had been preparing for it (with help from others). Now he promised not to attack.

The U.S.S.R., consistent in her desire to avoid war, already had non-aggression pacts with her neighbors, and even with France and Italy. A similar pact with Germany was, certainly, no guarantee against eventual attack by the Nazis, but it at least afforded a breathing space. The other states were not precluded from joining it, if they wanted peace as much as the U.S.S.R. did. The question was did they, or did they not?

Of course it was not an alliance of Nazism and Communism, as was asserted by those people who were disappointed that their hopes of seeing a war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. were

frustrated by that brilliant and successful stroke of Soviet diplomacy. The Associated Press admitted as much, when it said: "On the whole observers are giving Russia credit for having achieved a major diplomatic triumph. Moscow has maneuvered the Soviet Union into one of the strongest, if not the strongest, positions of any European Power."¹⁶

In signing this pact Moscow did not make any concessions to Berlin, for she had never planned to attack Germany. It was Germany who made the concessions. The U.S.S.R. simply accepted Hitler's promise not to attack, which was an important change in Germany's attitude toward the U.S.S.R. The Germans came to Moscow, not the Russians to Berlin; that meant something. Some observers suggested that Russia need not have done that much, for she could simply have stayed aloof from the trouble then developing in Europe. Such reasoning was hardly valid. Moscow held strongly to the belief that peace and war are indivisible. Should Russia have refused Berlin's offer, her enemies would have felt much stronger when carrying on their intrigues with Hitler. The world situation was too tense; Moscow could not wait any longer and risk the consequences. The mere signing of a pact with Germany prompted Japan to ask for an armistice with the U.S.S.R. On September 15, after having suffered a severe defeat at Nomongan, Japan asked for a cessation of hostilities, and the U.S.S.R. consented. With one stroke Moscow neutralized both her enemies, even if only for a short time.

Marshal Voroshilov, who represented the U.S.S.R. in the negotiations with the British and French military missions sent to Moscow, in an interview given to *Izvestia* made clear the reasons for the U.S.S.R.'s decision, prompted by the dilatory tactics of those missions. Asserting that the negotiations were broken off in view of the serious differences which were revealed, Voroshilov stated:

"The Soviet military mission considered that the U.S.S.R., having no common frontier with the aggressor, can render assistance to France, Great Britain and Poland only if its troops will be allowed to pass through Polish territory, because there is no other way for Soviet troops to establish contact with the aggressor's troops. . . .

¹⁶ Quoted in *Soviet Russia Today*, September, 1939, p. 6.

"Despite the perfectly obvious correctness of this position, the French and British military missions disagreed with this position of the Soviet mission, while the Polish Government openly declared that it did not need and would not accept the military assistance of the U.S.S.R. This made military collaboration of the U.S.S.R. with these countries impossible."

When asked by the interviewer if the statement issued by Reuters to the effect that "Voroshilov told the heads of the military missions that in view of the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Germany the U.S.S.R. regarded further negotiations with Great Britain and France as purposeless" was in conformity with the facts, the Marshal answered:

"No, it does not conform with the facts. The military negotiations with Great Britain and France were broken off not because the U.S.S.R. concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany, but on the contrary the U.S.S.R. concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany, among other reasons, as a result of the fact that military negotiations with France and Great Britain reached a deadlock in view of insuperable differences."¹⁷

Molotov's Speech. A few days after the signing of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact Molotov made a report before the Supreme Soviet, in which he explained how Poland's rejection of military aid led to the breakdown of Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations, and how Germany's changed attitude to the U.S.S.R. made the non-aggression pact possible:

"The Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations lasted four months. . . . The conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance against aggression would have been of value only if Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union had arrived at an agreement as to definite military measures against an attack of the aggressor. Accordingly, for a certain period, not only political but also military negotiations were conducted in Moscow with representatives of the British and French armies. However, nothing came of the military negotiations. They encountered the difficulty that Poland, who was to be jointly guaranteed by Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R., rejected military assistance on the part of the Soviet Union. Attempts to overcome the objections of Poland met with no success. Furthermore, the negotiations showed that Great Britain was not anxious to overcome these

¹⁷ *Izvestia*, August 27, 1939.

objections of Poland, but, on the contrary, encouraged them. It is clear that such being the attitude of the Polish Government and its principal ally toward military assistance on the part of the Soviet Union in event of aggression, the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations could not bear fruit. After this it became clear to us that the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations were doomed to failure.

“What have the negotiations with Great Britain and France shown? The Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations have shown that the position of Great Britain and France is marked by howling contradictions throughout. Judge for yourselves.

“On the one hand, Great Britain and France demanded that the U.S.S.R. should give military assistance to Poland in case of aggression. The U.S.S.R., as you know, was willing to meet this demand, provided the U.S.S.R. itself received like assistance from Great Britain and France.

“On the other hand, Great Britain and France brought onto the scene a Poland who resolutely declined military assistance on the part of the U.S.S.R.

“Just try, under such circumstances, to reach an agreement regarding mutual assistance, when assistance on the part of the U.S.S.R. is declared beforehand to be unnecessary and intrusive.

“Further, on the one hand, Great Britain and France offered to guarantee military assistance to the Soviet Union against aggression in return for a like assistance on the part of the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, they hedged around their assistance with such reservations regarding indirect aggression as could convert this assistance into a myth and provide them with a formal legal excuse to evade giving assistance and place the U.S.S.R. in a position of isolation in the face of the aggressor. Just try to distinguish between such a ‘pact of mutual assistance’ and a pact of more or less camouflaged chicanery. . . .

“What is the root of these contradictions in the positions of Great Britain and France? In a few words it can be put as follows: On the one hand, the British and French Governments fear aggression and for that reason would like to have a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, provided it helped to strengthen them, Great Britain and France. But, on the other hand, the British and French Governments are afraid that the conclusion of a real pact of mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R. may strengthen our country, the Soviet Union, which, it appears, does not answer their purpose. It must be admitted that these fears outweighed other considerations. Only in this way can we understand the position of Poland, who acts on the instructions of Great Britain and France. I shall now pass to the Soviet-German non-aggression pact.

"The decision to conclude a non-aggression pact between the U.S.S.R. and Germany was adopted after the military negotiations with France and Great Britain had reached an impasse, owing to the insuperable differences which I have mentioned. As the negotiations had shown that the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance could not be expected, we could not but explore other possibilities of ensuring peace and eliminating the danger of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. If the British and French Governments refused to reckon with this, that is their affair. It is our duty to think of the interests of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. All the more since we are firmly convinced that the interests of the U.S.S.R. coincide with the fundamental interests of the peoples of other countries. . . .

". . . Stalin warned us against 'warmongers who are anxious in their own interests to involve our country in conflict with other countries. . . . It looks as if the object of this suspicious hullabaloo was to incense the Soviet Union against Germany, to poison the atmosphere and to provoke a conflict with Germany without visible grounds,' said Stalin.

"In the spring of this year the German Government made a proposal to resume commercial and credit negotiations. . . . This agreement is advantageous to us. . . . Why should we reject such an advantageous economic agreement? Surely not to please those who are generally averse to the Soviet Union having advantageous economic agreements with other countries? When the German Government expressed a desire to improve political relations as well, the Soviet Government had no grounds for refusing. . . .

"Since 1926 the political basis of our relations with Germany has been the treaty of neutrality which was prolonged by the present Government of Germany in 1933. This treaty of neutrality remains in force to this day. The Soviet Government had considered it desirable, even before this, to take a further step toward improving political relations with Germany, but circumstances have been such that this has become possible only now.

"It is true that it is not a pact of mutual assistance that is in question, as in the case of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations, but only a non-aggression pact. . . .

"The chief importance of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact lies in the fact that the two largest states in Europe have agreed to put an end to enmity between them, to eliminate the menace of war and to live in peace with one another, making narrower thereby the zone of possible military conflicts in Europe. . . .

"The Soviet Union signed the pact with Germany fully assured that peace between the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and Germany is in the

interests of all peoples, in the interests of universal peace. Every sincere supporter of peace will realize the truth of this.

"This pact . . . proves that no important questions of international relations, and questions regarding Eastern Europe even less, can be settled without the active participation of the Soviet Union; that any attempts to shut out the Soviet Union and decide such questions behind its back are doomed to failure.

". . . It must open to us new possibilities for further consolidation of our position, for a further growth of the influence of the Soviet Union on international developments.¹⁸

Comments by Some Foreigners. A well-known London lawyer and member of Parliament, D. N. Pritt, commenting on the German-Soviet Pact, the factors which made it inevitable and the accusations heaped on the U.S.S.R. for signing such an agreement with the Nazis, wrote:

"It was inevitable that, when the pact¹⁹ was lost and the non-aggression pact with Germany appeared instead, the many elements hostile to the Soviet Union in this country would exploit the situation to the full in order to inflame public opinion, none the less virulently because they must have realized that the defeat of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, which they had so earnestly desired, had been followed by the non-aggression pact with Germany, constituting a substantial diplomatic defeat for Britain for which she would one day be held responsible. . . .

"The accusations I have mentioned must nevertheless, in the light of the history set out above, seem ridiculous; but the shortness of public memories, and the general misunderstanding of the Soviet Union produced by twenty-two years of press and government misrepresentation, have lent force to more ridiculous accusations in the past, and the accusations must accordingly be answered in detail. I think it is fair to say by way of preamble that the persons who accuse the Soviet Government of having betrayed democracy (whatever they may precisely mean by 'democracy'), are in the main identical with those who for the last twenty-two years have at different stages carried on open warfare against the Soviet Union in the form of intervention, have boycotted it commercially and politically, hated, reviled, and slandered it, described it as the enemy of democracy,

¹⁸ Text of Molotov's speech as quoted by *Soviet Russia Today*, October, 1939, pp. 30-32.

¹⁹ Meaning the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact, that was desired by the British people.

and in general done everything they possibly could at every stage to ensure that the British Government should never either negotiate with it for an agreement or make any agreement with it. They are also identical with the people who supported the 'Munich' betrayal in general, and in particular the cold-shouldering of the U.S.S.R. both in the years before and in the negotiations at that time, and who supported the pressure put upon the Czechs not to accept Soviet aid to defend themselves against aggression. . . ." ²⁰

Another student of Soviet Foreign Policy, Arthur Upham Pope, commented as follows:

"The Russo-German agreement was the product of dire necessities, the bitter fruit of twenty years of misunderstandings, suspicions, and conflicts, which neither the urgency of the moment nor mutual interest could fully overcome. In the preceding negotiations with the representatives of the Allied Powers there was every reason to distrust the complete sincerity of the British and French Governments. In any case, the pact was promptly denounced by the Western world as a monstrous betrayal by Stalin. The Russians were wildly charged with double-dealing; they were accused of having enticed the French and English into negotiations for the purpose of extracting their military secrets, which is just what some Russians, equally unfairly, charged against the French and British.

"They were accused with gleefully touching off the war so that the rest of the world might exhaust themselves in bloody conflict, leaving an undamaged Russia to take possession of the ruins and re-create a state in her own image. Such fancies are the result of misunderstanding, of long, lingering hostility and the human necessity of always shifting blame to some scapegoat." ²¹

As a matter of fact the U.S.S.R. was very anxious to conclude a pact that would be effective in preventing the war. But Neville Chamberlain definitely did not want any pact with the Soviet Union. Such was the opinion expressed, among many other well-informed people, by David Lloyd George. In an article to *Le Soir* he wrote:

"Neville Chamberlain, Halifax and John Simon do not want any agreement with Russia.

²⁰ D. N. Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

²¹ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-452.

"The whole story is one of muddle, bungle and blunder without parallel; and fits in well enough with the rest of the policy which has landed us, over a period of five years, from a position of absolute security into one of mortal peril."²²

In 1941, when the U.S.S.R. was attacked by Germany, it became easier for many foreign observers, and for some of those who had accused Moscow of every imaginable crime for signing the pact with Germany, to evaluate the real meaning of that decision. "It was the failure of the democracies to co-operate with Soviet Russia that had forced this mighty people to turn to isolationism and a pact with Nazi Germany," wrote John T. Whitaker.²³

Walter Lippmann, who was not particularly friendly toward the U.S.S.R., and was very critical at the time of the signing of the German-Soviet Pact in 1939, later on wrote as follows:

"Stalin did not join the Franco-British Alliance because he believed, correctly enough, that Russia would receive the brunt of the attack, and because he feared, not without some justification, that the Western Powers might be tempted to let the war become an anti-Communist crusade. He made his agreement with Germany in order to avoid having to fight Germany, and out of the partnership he got at no cost all the best strategic frontiers which it is possible for Russia to have. . . ."²⁴

Stalin's attitude and that of the Soviet Government in this case was well described by Arthur Upham Pope, when he wrote:

"What proof did Stalin have, what proof could the reactionary governments of Britain and France give (him) that their long and vindictive hostility was in a twinkling of an eye turned into good will, confidence and fidelity? What proof could they give that they would not as circumstances might change, revert to their old hostility and in a pinch leave Russia in the lurch?"²⁵

²² Quoted by Stanley Marks, in *The Bear That Walks Like a Man*, (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1943), pp. 75-87.

²³ Quoted by Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 452.

²⁴ *New York Herald Tribune*, April 20, 1940.

²⁵ Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-451.

Yes, obviously, the Soviet Government did not feel confident about the sincerity of Chamberlain and his ilk. But it certainly did not entertain any illusions about the reliability of Herr Hitler either.

According to the story told by Henry C. Cassidy, the Associated Press man in Moscow, Stalin told Sir Stafford Cripps that he knew that Hitler would tear up the treaty anyhow.²⁶

Various people asserted at that time that the pact concluded by Moscow with Berlin had strengthened Hitler and Fascism. On the contrary its immediate effect was to crack the Fascist bloc. Hitler offended his ally, Japan. He alienated his secret collaborators, Chamberlain and Daladier. He lost his financial supports among certain foreign bankers. It is very likely that he expected that after the Non-Aggression Pact with the U.S.S.R. was concluded his demands on Poland would be granted without resort to arms. This might possibly have happened had not the hands of Chamberlain been forced by the British people. Hitler's calculations proved to be wrong. He expected Chamberlain to arrange a capitulation on the part of Warsaw. However, Chamberlain advised Warsaw not to yield, and the Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, seems to have taken Chamberlain's promise to stand by Poland seriously. Beck did not want the Red Army's help; he expected to resist Hitler with the aid of Chamberlain. The horrible price the Polish people have had to pay for this is well-known.

After Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R., Stalin commented on that Pact as follows:²⁷

"Non-aggression pacts are pacts of peace between two states. It was such a pact that Germany proposed to us in 1939. Could the Soviet Government have declined such a proposal? I think not a single peace-loving state could decline a peace treaty with a neighboring state even though the latter was headed by such fiends and cannibals as Hitler and Ribbentrop."

²⁶ Henry C. Cassidy, *Moscow Dateline* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943), p. 2.

²⁷ From Stalin's speech on July 3, 1941. Quoted in *Soviet War Documents*, published in Washington, D.C. by the Soviet Embassy, 1943, p. 4.

CHAPTER XII

World War II and the U.S.S.R.

Eastern Poland. Zones of Occupation. War and Peace with Finland. The Baltic States. Bessarabia and Bukovina. Molotov's Visit to Berlin. The Soviet-Japanese Pact.

Eastern Poland. After a short interlude following the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Moscow and Berlin, and with no signs of any other Power desiring to join in this agreement, Hitler started his war with an attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. In a few days it became quite obvious that Poland was doomed. Colonel Beck's arrogance was simply a bluff.¹ His boasting about the readiness of Poland to resist the enemy and defend her independence without any help from the U.S.S.R. (which was advanced by the Polish Government as the excuse for its refusal to co-operate with the Soviet Union) was nothing short of criminal. Two weeks after the Polish border had been violated by the Germans, the country was deserted by its "rulers." Even the Commander in Chief, Marshal Rydz-Smigli, preferred to escape to Rumania, rather than fight with his troops and people.²

In view of these circumstances and realizing that Hitler's legions would soon occupy all of Poland if allowed to continue their advance unchecked, Moscow undertook to prevent this from happening. Foreign Commissar Molotov announced that "a situation has been created in Poland which demands special care on the part of the Soviet Government in regard to the security of its country," and Moscow, therefore, ordered the

¹ Ambassador Joseph E. Davies (in his *Mission to Moscow*, p. 402) related a conversation with a Polish Minister, in which the latter said "that his Government would show them (meaning the Germans. V Y.) up to the world; within three weeks after the outbreak of war Polish troops would be in Berlin; the West Wall or 'Siegfried Line' was nothing but a 'cotton line.' Poland did not need Russian aid; they could handle the Germans alone and easily."

² Arthur Upham Pope asserts that the Polish Government "vanished" as early as September 5.

Red Army to cross the border and occupy Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine, i.e., the eastern part of Poland, the same regions that were incorporated into Poland by Pilsudski against the wishes of the League of Nations and the population of those lands. These were territories inhabited predominantly by non-Poles. On September 17, the Red troops crossed the border. They met with practically no resistance, for the Polish troops were demoralized, disorganized and left leaderless, while the population met the Russians with open arms as liberators from the yoke of the Polish "pans," landlords, police and gendarmes.

The effect of this liberation of the oppressed Byelorussians and Ukrainians by the Red troops was remarkable in many respects. Yugoslavia, who did not have diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R., for she had failed to recognize the Soviet regime, hastened to extend recognition and exchange envoys; Rumania rushed a new Ambassador to Moscow; Bulgaria took immediate steps to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

Other neighbors of the U.S.S.R. also showed their renewed interest in that country. The Estonian Minister went to Moscow to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the Soviets, in which Estonia granted important naval bases on the islands of Oesel and Dagoe in return for commercial and military aid. A similar agreement was reached between Latvia and the U.S.S.R. A short time later Lithuania also concluded a mutual assistance pact with the U.S.S.R., in accordance with which Moscow restored to Lithuania the City of Vilna and surrounding territory³ in return for military bases and the right to fortify Lithuania's western frontier. All these were steps taken by Moscow, as a defense against possible future invasion or the attempt of any one to use the Baltic States again as a springboard for an attack on the U.S.S.R.⁴

If the reason for all these preparations made by the U.S.S.R. were not clear enough to some foreign observers, it became clear enough when Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R. (as everybody expected him to do). Moscow, the heart of the U.S.S.R., was

³ Vilna had been illegally occupied by the Poles and remained in their hands in spite of the protests of Lithuania and the League of Nations. It was taken by the Russians when they entered those territories in checking the Nazis.

⁴ Maxwell Stewart, "The Month in Soviet Foreign Policy," *Soviet Russia Today*, November, 1939, p. 13.

better protected because of this buffer of territories to the west, and for that reason the U.S.S.R. was able to check the invaders before they reached the Soviet capital. This proved, in its turn, of great advantage to all the United Nations.

“That the Russian armies should stand on this line,” said Winston Churchill in a broadcast on October 1, 1939, commenting on the Russian advance into the eastern part of Poland, “was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. . . . Thus (at some risk of being proved wrong by events) I will proclaim tonight my conviction that the second great fact of the first month of the war is that Hitler, and all that Hitler stands for, have been and are being warned off the East and South-East of Europe.”⁵

It was the same Winston Churchill who admitted then and afterwards that the Curzon Line was justified as the dividing line. His predecessor in Downing Street, David Lloyd George, expressed his opinion on that point in the following words:

“It is essential to draw a distinction between the action of the Soviet Republic and that of the Nazis. The latter is seeking to annex territories essentially Polish. The German invasion was designed to annex to the Reich provinces where a decided majority of the population was Polish by race, language and tradition. On the other hand, Russian Armies marched into territories which were not Polish and which were forcibly annexed to Poland after the Great War despite fierce protests and armed resistance by the inhabitants. Inhabitants of the Polish Ukraine are of the same race and speak the same language as their neighbors in the Ukrainian Republic of the Soviet Union. . . . White Russia was annexed by Poland as the result of a victorious war against Russia.

“It would be an act of criminal folly to place the Russian advance in the same category as that of the Germans, although it would suit Herr Hitler’s design to do so. . . . My contempt goes and still is reserved for the Government which fled for safety in a foreign country whilst their brave soldiers were still fighting desperately for the remnants of their country against overwhelming odds. . . .

“It is a notorious fact that the Polish peasantry are living in great poverty owing to the operation of the worst feudal system in Europe. That aristocracy has been practically in power for years. All the promises of concessions made from time to time to the peasants have

⁵ Quoted from *The Soviet Union Today*, (New York: The American-Russian Institute, 1943), p. 75.

been thwarted by its influence on recent Polish Governments. That is why the advancing Russian troops are being hailed by the peasants as deliverers. . . ."⁶

Zones of Occupation. The enemies of the U.S.S.R. immediately took this occasion to slander that country for its "invasion" of Poland, "in accord with Hitler." When an understanding was reached between Moscow and Berlin as to the limits of occupation of Polish lands by German and Soviet troops, accusations were made of a "new partition of Poland," agreed upon "by Hitler and Stalin" at the time of the signing of the Non-aggression Pact.

Now, here are the facts. In the Proclamation of War on the U.S.S.R., which was read by Ribbentrop the morning after the actual attack on that country had been launched by the Germans, Hitler said among other things:

"However, already during our advance in Poland, Soviet rulers suddenly, contrary to the treaty, also claimed Lithuania."

As a matter of fact, the Soviet rulers did not "claim" anything, but the Russian advance, designed to check further penetration of the Eastern part of Poland by Germany, certainly was as unexpected to Hitler as was Moscow's demand to keep hands off Lithuania. When the question of demarcation of zones of occupation arose, Moscow drew the line so as to exclude any really Polish lands from the zone to be occupied by the Red troops. This line followed very closely the so-called Curzon Line.⁷

After Hitler started his ill-fated attack on the U.S.S.R., General Sikorski, then Polish Prime Minister of the Government in Exile, signed a treaty with the Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, on July 30, 1941, re-establishing diplomatic relations and agreeing to render aid and support of all kinds in the war against Hitler's Germany. The Soviet authorities declared that agreements reached by them with Ger-

⁶From a letter by Lloyd George to the Polish Ambassador to London, dated September 28, 1939, quoted in *The Soviet Union Today*, pp. 75-76.

⁷The origin of that Line and its acceptance as the most reasonable frontier between the then reconstituted Poland and Soviet Russia by British, American, French and all other delegates at Versailles (with the exception only of Poland) was described in Chapter III.

many about Poland had lost their validity. Later on it was agreed by the Soviet and Polish representatives to postpone the final settlement of the border question until after the end of the war.

In a speech before the Fifth Extraordinary Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on October 31, 1939, Molotov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, explained what had happened in Poland, and what the role of his country had been:

“The war between Germany and Poland ended quickly owing to the utter bankruptcy of the Polish leaders. As we know, neither the British nor the French guarantees were of help to Poland. To this day in fact, nobody knows what these ‘guarantees’ were. . . .

“It is known that our troops entered the territory of Poland only after the Polish state had collapsed and actually ceased to exist. Naturally, we could not remain neutral toward these facts, since as a result of these events we were confronted with urgent problems concerning the security of our state, which had to be considered. Furthermore, the Soviet Government could not but reckon with the exceptional situation created for our brothers in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, who had been abandoned to their fate as a result of the collapse of Poland. . . .

“Permit me now to dwell on events directly connected with the entry of our troops into the territory of the former Polish State. . . . There is no need to prove that at the moment when the Polish State was in a state of complete collapse our government was obliged to extend a helping hand to our brother Ukrainians and Byelorussians inhabiting the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. That is what it did. When the Red Army marched into these regions it was greeted with the general sympathy of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian population who welcomed our troops as liberators from the yoke of the Polish landlords and capitalists. . . .”⁸

The areas liberated by the Red troops had a population of about thirteen million, of which hardly two million were Poles, the rest being non-Poles, of which more than seven million were Ukrainians, more than three million, Byelorussians, and more than one million, Jews.

The elections held in those liberated areas for the National Assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia on the

⁸ For the complete text of this speech by Molotov see *Soviet Russia Today*, November, 1939, pp. 5-8 and 47-50.

basis of universal, direct, equal suffrage and secret ballot, showed that at least nine-tenths of the population, demonstrated by vote, had long been ready to rejoin the Soviet Union. The Assemblies applied for reincorporation into the U.S.S.R. Accordingly on November 1 and 2, 1939, they were incorporated into the Byelorussian and the Ukrainian Soviet Republics, and thus became parts of the Soviet Union.⁹

War and Peace with Finland. As we have seen in Chapter II, the Russian representatives of the old regime, in their Memorandum presented to the Peace Conference at Paris, had insisted that independence for Finland would be of great danger to Russia (under whatever regime), because this independence could not be but illusory; Finland would be used by some other, stronger Power, and in case of hostilities directed against Russia by such a Power, Finland could, and most likely would, be used as a springboard for an attack on the weakest flank of Russia. Whether Russian anxiety was justified was convincingly proved by events that followed.

After the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the status of Finland assumed grave importance to the U.S.S.R. Moscow knew about the strong fortifications that had been built, with plenty of outside assistance, in very dangerous proximity to Leningrad, her former capital city and second largest industrial center. From these fortifications, called the "Mannerheim Line," Leningrad could be shelled. Moscow was aware of numerous airfields constructed on Finnish territory, also not without outside help, both financial and engineering, and was worried by the fact that these airfields were certainly incommensurate with the limited air forces of Finland and far beyond her needs. Therefore, at the beginning of the World War II, Soviet authorities were anxious to know what were the intentions of that neighbor, whose dependence on various foreign countries was too well-known.

On Soviet initiative, negotiations between Finland and the U.S.S.R. were started. The Soviets were particularly concerned

⁹ Even Neville Chamberlain admitted on October 26, before the Commons, that the occupation of Eastern Poland by the U.S.S.R. was a necessary defense measure. Winston Churchill, as we have shown, was even more emphatic in his approval.

with the Gulf of Finland, which is the approach to Leningrad from the sea, and also with the land border which hung over Leningrad, some twenty miles away. At that time the population of Leningrad was almost equal to the entire population of Finland (3,500,000 and 3,650,000 respectively).

Speaking of these negotiations, Molotov branded as "sheer fabrications and lies, not even worth refuting," the assertions of some foreign observers that in these negotiations Moscow demanded the cession by Finland of Viipuri (Viborg) and Lake Ladoga, and even of the Aland Islands. Actually Moscow's demands at that time were very modest, and were confined to the barest minimum of adjustment which would safeguard the security of the U.S.S.R., and at the same time put relations with Finland on a firm footing.

Finnish delegates Juho Paaskivi and V. A. Tanner were sent by their government to Moscow to participate in the negotiations. The Soviet representatives proposed the signing of a Soviet-Finnish pact of mutual assistance approximating the other pacts which the U.S.S.R. had with her Baltic neighbors, but the Finns declared that such a pact would contradict Finland's position of absolute neutrality. So the proposal was withdrawn.

Then the Russians proposed to discuss the problem of the security of the U.S.S.R. from the sea and from the land, and suggested shifting the Soviet-Finnish border on the Karelian Isthmus so as to remove the danger to Leningrad. In exchange for this, the U.S.S.R. proposed to transfer to Finland part of Soviet Karelia, double in size compared to the territory which Finland was asked to transfer to the U.S.S.R., as a measure of security to Leningrad. The Finnish delegates seemed to be agreeable, but Helsinki balked. Somebody was pulling the strings.

Reaching no agreement with the Finns, the Soviets took a number of steps to meet them halfway. The Russians expressed their willingness to drop their objections to the fortification of the Aland Islands, provided this were done by the Finns themselves, i.e., without any foreign participation. Then the Russians proposed that Finland disarm the fortified zone along the Soviet border, (the Mannerheim Line), and expressed their readiness to reinforce the existing pact of non-aggression with additional

mutual guarantees. Moscow also offered to develop economic relations between the two countries, which was of great importance to Finland. The U.S.S.R. entertained the hope that Finland would not frustrate the proposed agreement, and would not yield to anti-Soviet influences which were trying to prevent any agreement between Moscow and Helsinki.

But Moscow's hope proved futile. The anti-Soviet forces were stronger at that time than those who wanted co-operation with the U.S.S.R., and prevention of the extension of the war.¹⁰ By the end of November the world was shocked to hear that war had broken out between the U.S.S.R. and Finland, not because the two nations had any desire or any reason to fight, but because Finland's misleaders, instigated by certain outsiders, plunged their people into that horrible situation.

At midnight, November 29, Molotov spoke as follows:

"Men and women, citizens of the Soviet Union, the hostile policy pursued by the present Government of Finland toward our country compels us to take immediate measures to insure the external security of our state.

"You know that in the course of the past two months, the Soviet Government has patiently conducted negotiations with the Government of Finland concerning proposals which, in the present alarming international situation, it regarded as the minimum essential for insuring the security of our country and especially for the security of Leningrad.

"In these negotiations the Government of Finland adopted an attitude of irreconcilable hostility toward our country. Instead of finding grounds for agreement in a friendly manner, the present rulers of Finland, to please foreign imperialists who instigate hostility toward the Soviet Union, took a different course.

"Despite the concessions we made, the negotiations ended without yielding any results. The consequences of this are known. In recent days abominable provocations have been initiated by the Finnish militarists on the frontier between the Soviet Union and Finland, including even artillery firing on our troops near Leningrad, which caused grave losses in the Red Army units.

"Attempts of our Government to forestall repetition of these prov-

¹⁰ In the October 17, 1939, issue of the *Daily Mail* of London a special correspondent, writing on the forthcoming "Three Kings Conference" at Stockholm, stated, "If President Kallio . . . can obtain a definite assurance of military as well as moral and financial aid Finland may stand firm."

ocations by means of practical proposals addressed to the Government of Finland, far from finding any support, again met with the hostile policy of the ruling circles of Finland. As you know from yesterday's note of the Soviet Government, they replied to our proposals by a hostile refusal and a brazen denial of the facts, by a derisive attitude toward the victims we have lost and by undisguised striving to continue to keep Leningrad under the immediate threat of their troops in the future.

"All this has definitely shown that the present Government of Finland, which became entangled in its anti-Soviet ties with the imperialists, does not wish to maintain normal relations with the Soviet Union. It continues in its hostile attitude toward our country and has no wish to pay due regard to the provisions of the non-aggression pact concluded between our countries. It desires to keep our glorious Leningrad under military threat. From such a Government and from its thoughtless military clique, we can now expect only fresh, insolent provocations.

"The Soviet Government was therefore compelled yesterday to declare that henceforth it considered itself free from the obligations undertaken under the non-aggression pact concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Finland, and violated in an irresponsible manner by the Government of Finland. . . . The Government of the U.S.S.R. has arrived at the conclusion that it can no longer maintain normal relations with the Government of Finland and has therefore found it necessary immediately to recall its political and economic representatives from Finland. Along with this, the Government has given orders to the Chief Command of the Red Army and Navy to be ready for any surprise and immediately to check possible fresh sallies on the part of the Finnish military clique."

At 8:00 A.M., on November 30, the troops of the Leningrad military area crossed the Finnish border at the Karelian Isthmus and a number of other places and advanced several miles into Finland.

This action unleashed a wide-spread campaign of vilification against the Soviet Union, which developed into preparations for a world-wide drive against that country, under the pretext of defending "little, democratic, Finland"¹¹ against the big bad wolf, the U.S.S.R., whose "imperialist designs of aggrandizement at the expense of her innocent neighbor" aroused indig-

¹¹ Actually the Finland of those days was controlled by a pro-Fascist, pro-German group with a long record of hostility toward the U.S.S.R.

nation from "justice-loving" elements of the entire world. These justice-loving elements were apparently hopeful that Hitler's war could still be switched to the North. There was no limit to the slandering of Moscow and its leaders. When, after the first month of successful advances, the Red troops were checked on some sectors by the gallant Finnish troops, a real bacchanal was started by some reporters from the front (mostly at a safe distance from the real fighting fronts, and often from the far-away, comfortable rooms of Helsinki hotels). They bombarded their newspapers with fantastic descriptions of the events in Finland; it looked, from their dispatches, as if the Red Army, poorly clad, badly armed and led by nondescripts, was losing one battle after another. The misinformed public was fed these exaggerated stories, and expected the complete collapse of the U.S.S.R.¹² Preparations were made to send British and French troops to help Finland end the war even more promptly. Guns, ammunition and other supplies were shipped to Finland. Collections were being made to help the Finnish population. The moribund League of Nations, in solemn wrath, condemned the U.S.S.R. and, on December 14, 1939, expelled it from that august body of righteous men.¹³

Of course not all foreigners took this stand of condemnation against the U.S.S.R.; many knew the real background of the clash between the Soviet State and little Finland, which was being used as a pawn by very big plotters in a not very clean game.

George Bernard Shaw stated in the *Daily Mail*:

¹² A British officer, Major A. S. Hooper, who witnessed the Soviet-Finnish War, in his report *The Soviet-Finnish Campaign. December 1, 1939-March 13, 1940*, published in London, with a foreword by George Bernard Shaw, said. "In Finland the Red Army, in a race against time, achieved what no other modern army has yet dared to attempt, that is, it attacked and broke a modern defensive system of fortifications by frontal assault. The campaign was won in what is perhaps the most difficult terrain in Europe, in a sub-arctic climate and during mid-winter, the severest winter experienced for 70 years. As a feat of arms it stands out in all history as unique. Only military ignorance or political prejudice would dare to deny it." (p. 24).

¹³ The League which failed to act when Japan invaded Manchuria and then again attacked China; the League which shamelessly betrayed Ethiopia just to please Mussolini; that League had the nerve to expell the U.S.S.R. with indecent haste just two weeks after the outbreak of war between the U.S.S.R. and Finland, and, very likely, knowing that the U.S.S.R. could hardly be blamed for it.

"No power can tolerate a frontier from which a town such as Leningrad could be shelled, when she knows that the power of the other side of the frontier, however small and weak it may be, is being made by a foolish government to act in the interests of other great powers menacing her security . . . it is not at all a question of Russia, a great power, attempting to subject Finland, which is a small power. This is a question of Russia seeing to her security."¹⁴

Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, wrote:

"Russia feared, with reason, a united Western attack. We, through many years, desired Germany to be the spearhead of that attack. Many influential persons still desire and work for it. Russia knows that."¹⁵

Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P., and later British Ambassador to Moscow, said:

"And I for one see no reason for blaming Russia in a situation into which she has been driven . . . for taking every step to strengthen her position. . . . Now, naturally, all of Russia's enemies talk about the sacredness of Finnish democracy, not because they love democracy but because they hate Russia. . . ."¹⁶

But soon came the end of this Soviet-Finnish War, and the results exposed many ugly things and gave the lie to many accusations, and embarrassed many accusers. The "impregnable" Mannerheim Line, which was built by the best experts of Europe, and considered stronger even than the Maginot and Siegfried Lines, had been turned inside out by the Russians. Mannerheim's troops were badly beaten, and Finland asked for an armistice. On March 12, 1940, an armistice was signed at Moscow. To the amazement of the world the victorious Soviet Union did not annex Finland (which it could have easily done);¹⁷ did not even ask for the demilitarization of Finland

¹⁴ *Soviet Russia Today*, February, 1940, pp. 19-23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Some people criticized the U.S.S.R. for the "soft" terms she had dictated to Finland. In their opinion the U.S.S.R. should have annexed Finland in order to prevent it becoming an ally of Hitler and springboard for a new treacherous attack on the Soviet State in 1941, when the defenders of "little, democratic" Finland learned its real status, that of a wholehearted ally of the Nazis.

(which, again, it could have demanded and got); did not even impose an indemnity for the high cost of the armed conflict that it had not wanted, had not provoked, but, on the contrary, had done everything in its power to prevent. The world was bewildered. How was it possible for a victor not to demand compensation? Those who had accused the U.S.S.R. of imperialism, of a desire for aggrandizement at the expense of "little, democratic Finland," were given the lie. All that Moscow demanded was a strip of land on her border to insure security.¹⁸

Long before the end of the Soviet-Finnish "Winter War," one British weekly¹⁹ expressed an interesting opinion about the whole matter. The reason for the alarm of the imperialist powers over the possibility that the Soviet Union might achieve its aim in Finland of securing the approaches to Leningrad by land and by sea, was that it would end the possibility of intervention against the Soviet State.²⁰ As a matter of fact, after the defeat of Mannerheim, the chances for shifting the war to the Russian side were dimmed. It was hardly a coincidence that only after the inglorious end of the Finnish plot was the war started in earnest by Hitler, in Norway in the North, and against all the European nations in the West.

When Finland wanted to end her war with the U.S.S.R., some influential outsiders advised her against it, and even refused to act as intermediaries. Some of the reasons for this position were revealed by a British journalist, who wrote in January, 1940: "The first lesson for us and France is that we must keep the war going in Finland as long as we possibly can, not only in the Finns' interest but also in our own. . . ." ²¹

On the eve of the signing of Soviet-Finnish peace, Neville Chamberlain stated that "if asked, Britain and France would proceed immediately and jointly to help Finland with all avail-

¹⁸ This was more than the U.S.S.R. asked originally. As for the 30-year lease of Hango Peninsula, Moscow agreed to pay handsomely in cash, 8,000,000 marks annually.

¹⁹ *The Week*, November 29, 1939

²⁰ "I want to emphasize my belief that powerful influences among the ruling groups in the United Kingdom and elsewhere have developed and brought near to fruition a plan for switching the war by forming a common front of capitalist nations against the U.S.S.R.," wrote D. N. Pritt, the British barrister and M.P. in *Soviet Russia Today*, March, 1940

²¹ Candidus in the *Daily Sketch*. Quoted by D. N. Pritt in his article "Light on the Soviet-Finnish Conflict" in *Soviet Russia Today*, March, 1940, pp 8-9.

able resources at their disposal." On the other side of the Atlantic a similar attitude toward the Soviet-Finnish War existed. Finland must be kept fighting at all costs, said some. Peace must be prevented, insisted others. "The army of General Weygand in the Near East will be deprived of any excuse for intervention the moment that Finland and Russia conclude peace," editorialized an influential paper.²²

Peace was concluded. The war was not "switched" to the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union was left out of the general war for another fifteen months.

The Baltic States. Not having been allowed to think of the eventualities in case of a German attack eastwards, during the mock negotiations carried on in Moscow by Chamberlain and Daladier in the summer of 1939, the Baltic States hastened to improve their very precarious positions after World War II had started. Taking a cue from the events in Eastern Poland, these three Republics, (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) came to realize the dangerous position into which they might fall. The necessity for relying on a stronger neighbor became evident. One after another they concluded agreements with Moscow.²³ But their governments remained as Fascist or pro-Fascist as they had been for years before the war was started. Their agreements with Moscow were what the population desired, but not what the anti-Soviet and pro-German groups in power wanted. The Soviet troops stationed in accordance with these agreements in the three Baltic States experienced this anomaly in various ways, which made their stay and the performance of their duties unpleasant and difficult.

Russian history shows that the Baltic States have again and again been used as the most convenient approach for an attack on Russia. After the Revolution of 1917 these countries played the same role. They were the links in the "*Cordon Sanitaire.*"

²² *New York Herald Tribune*, March 8, 1940.

²³ "It is significant," wrote Gregory Meikins, "that the pro-Nazi puppets in the Baltics who had refused to let their countries become links in a strong chain of mutual security for all of Europe, feeling forsaken by Germany, now found it possible to come to terms quickly with the Soviet Union. In October, 1939, upon the initiative of the Soviet Government, a series of mutual assistance pacts were signed with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania" (*The Baltic Soviet Republics*, New York: National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 1944, p. 31.)

Moscow realized, of course, that it was not for nothing that the Britain of Chamberlain and the France of Daladier had refused to include the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the guarantees offered to other countries during the mock negotiations at Moscow. That is why Moscow herself offered to bring security to the Baltic areas. When, after the beginning of World War II, and the fall of Poland, the three Baltic Republics accepted this offer of their powerful neighbor, Hitler invited the Germans living there to come to the Third Reich. Some 160,000 of such Germans accepted the invitation and thus most of the big landlords and a considerable number of pro-Nazis left these countries.

After the departure of these Germans, the position of the pro-Fascist elements still in power became weaker. The peoples of these Republics took advantage of the change, and before long the three dictatorships were forced out of office.²⁴ The new regimes created in their stead were naturally of the Left. It was neither unexpected nor strange that their composition should be pro-Soviet. To continue an "independent" existence of the sort they had experienced after their withdrawal from the Russian Empire, was possible only by reliance on some other more powerful country. Germany under Hitler was not a country to appeal to the ordinary population which for centuries had suffered from the Germans; it was doubly impossible for them to rely on Germany because the enemies of the people, the Germans, headed by pro-Fascist dictators, were now in Germany ready to co-operate with the Nazis and to return to their estates protected by German bayonets. There was no choice but to turn eastward. That is what the peoples of the three Republics did by voting for reunion with the U.S.S.R., that is, with Russia, a part of which they had been for more than two hundred years.

Lithuania on August 3, Latvia on August 5, and Estonia on August 6, became parts of the U.S.S.R., as the fourteenth, fif-

²⁴ What the attitude of these pro-Fascist regimes was may be judged from Hitler's Proclamation of War with the U.S.S.R., where among other interesting revelations one can read the following: "The German Reich never had any intention of occupying Lithuania and not only failed to present any such demand to the Lithuania Government, but on the contrary *refused the request of the then Lithuania to send German troops to Lithuania for that purpose*, as inconsistent with the aims of German policy."

teenth and sixteenth Soviet Republics. This change in the status of the three Baltic States was immediately attacked by foreigners. Attempts were made to misrepresent the situation as one forced upon these people by the Bolsheviks whose troops were on their territories. Even before this incorporation was sanctioned by the Supreme Soviet, President Roosevelt ordered the sequestration of the property of the three Baltic Republics, and Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, later on issued a statement condemning the admission of those states into the U.S.S.R. The opinion expressed in the early days after the Revolution of 1917 by American officials about the inevitability of the re-entry of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the Russian orbit was evidently forgotten.²⁵ The diplomatic representatives of the three Republics were still recognized as their legal representatives, although the governments by which they had been accredited no longer existed, at least as far as their own people were concerned. This was a repetition of what took place after the Russian Revolution of October 1917, when the diplomatic representatives of the defunct regime continued to be recognized in various countries.

Bessarabia and Bukovina. In the meantime events in Western Europe were hardly such as to justify such an attitude toward the U.S.S.R., the country whose aid was indispensable for checking the Germans. After the defeat of Mannerheim and the instigators of his group, the "phony war" was abruptly ended by Hitler. In a few days he invaded Denmark, then Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium and on May 11, France. Chamberlain was replaced by Churchill, which was a step toward a better understanding between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. By June 6, the evacuation of Dunkirk had been completed. On the tenth, Italy declared war on France. Four days later the Germans entered Paris. The Reynaud Government resigned, giving place to Marshal Petain, who sued for peace. On June 22 he concluded an armistice with the Germans.

Moscow knew that the time was getting short. She urgently needed to strengthen her position. To further secure her western border after the incorporation of Western Byelorussia, the

²⁵ See Chapter II.

Western Ukraine and the three Baltic States, it was necessary to turn to the remaining southern part of the border.

Bessarabia, whose annexation by Rumania in the days of the Soviet Union's greatest weakness, had never been recognized by Moscow, now had to be reincorporated into the U.S.S.R. without any delay, for it constituted a buffer covering the approaches to the southern part of the U.S.S.R., wherein lay its port of Odessa, its rich mining region in the Don River basin, and its numerous metallurgical plants.

On June 29, King Carol of Rumania, in response to the Russian demand, ceded that old Russian province together with a part of adjacent Bukovina, inhabited mostly by Ukrainians.

That this would happen was foreseen by such an astute student of the Soviet Union's affairs as Joseph E. Davies. While still in Brussels as the American Ambassador to Belgium, late in November, 1939, he made the following entry in his Journal:

"Russia, as early as last summer, had become a proponent of Bulgaria's claims to Dobrudja, in Rumania, and it is quite within the range of probability that as soon as the Soviets clean up Finland they will turn their attention to Rumania and Bessarabia . . . the result, in all probability, will be that Carol of Rumania will make his peace on the best terms possible. . . .

"This all spells out a situation none too advantageous for Hitler. He has given up the Baltic and uprooted and transplanted a German civilization of 400 years; he has cut himself off from the Ukraine; he is confined to an economic power only over Rumania and, as well, to only a limited influence over Bulgaria and Hungary. The Russian Bear will not support the Germans in the Black Sea.

"But there are indications that the Russians will not really cooperate; that the Soviets are pursuing an independent policy based solely on self-interest and that Hitler is not too happy about it." ²⁶

Mr. Davies' remarks proved to be well founded. In a speech before the Supreme Soviet on March 29, 1940, Molotov said: "We must maintain a position of neutrality and must refrain from participation in the war between the great powers." Next month Molotov handed a note to the Rumanian Minister at Moscow demanding the immediate cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. "King Carol made his peace on the best

²⁶ Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-411.

terms possible." Bessarabia was returned to her lawful position as a part of the U.S.S.R., heir of the Russian Empire, to which Bessarabia had belonged since 1812, more than a century. On August 2, 1940, these territories, together with the former Moldavian Autonomous Republic (a part of the Ukraine), became the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.

By now all the Soviet frontiers had been moved considerably to the west, which later on, after Hitler had embarked on his "conquest" of the U.S.S.R., proved to be of great help in hindering his advance toward the heart of the country, Moscow.

Molotov's Visit to Berlin. In November of the same year, 1940, i.e., long after the capitulation of France and the establishment by the Germans of their control over most of Europe, Molotov paid a "return call" to Berlin. The official communiqué issued at the end of his visit said that "it led to an agreement on all important questions of interest to Germany and the Soviet Union."²⁷ But judging from Hitler's Proclamation of War with the U.S.S.R., read by Ribbentrop the morning after the Germans began their attack, such was not the case.

Hitler complained in that document that Molotov demanded clarification of Germany's intentions in the Balkans. Undoubtedly the U.S.S.R. was worried about German activities in those regions. In March, 1941, it was reported abroad that a Soviet speaker over the Moscow radio had declared that "if Germany intended marching through neutral territory, she must expect to have to fight for it." The Soviet official news agency, TASS, declared that this report, appearing in a Swiss newspaper, was not correct. But soon the Bulgarian Government advised Moscow that it had consented to the entry of German troops into Bulgaria, in order to "consolidate peace in the Balkans." The Soviet Foreign Office (Narcomindel) formally notified the Bulgarian Minister that it did not agree with the Bulgarian Government as to the correctness of its attitude, for such action would lead to the extension of the sphere of war not to peace.

"This is going pretty far in opposition to Hitler's plans," commented Joseph E. Davies on these new developments.²⁸

²⁷ There was a rumor that Hitler suggested on that occasion that the U.S.S.R. join the Axis Powers, and that Molotov politely but resolutely staved off the "invitation."

²⁸ Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

In relation to Turkey, Moscow also made its stand clear. It not only declared as untrue the rumor that should Turkey become involved in war the Soviet Union would take advantage of the situation to attack her, but it also formally declared that should Turkey be compelled to resist aggression and thus find herself forced to defend her territory, she could rely upon Russia's entire compliance with the non-aggression pact between the two, and count on the neutrality of the U.S.S.R.

A short time later, on April 5, 1941, Moscow signed a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Yugoslavia. Next day, April 6, Germany invaded Yugoslavia with the help of that part of its government which was yielding to the pressure of Berlin. In a few days Yugoslavia was overrun by the Nazis.

By the end of the same month, German troops, infantry, tanks, artillery, landed in Finland. Rumors persisted that German troops were also massing in large numbers in Rumania and in Poland.

Apparently Molotov's visit to Berlin had not resulted in many points of agreement.

Immediately after Molotov's visit to Berlin, three neighbors of Germany joined the Axis: Hungary, Rumania and Slovakia. If there was any truth in the rumor at that time that Hitler sought to bring the U.S.S.R. into the Fascist orbit, certainly his plans failed miserably. The U.S.S.R. wanted to preserve peace, but not at the price of submission to the Nazis.

The Soviet-Japanese Pact. Late in 1940 the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Matzuoka (of Geneva fame), visited Moscow and offered a non-aggression pact. Such a pact had been suggested by the Soviet Union first in 1931 and then several times later, but Nippon had not been inclined to sign it. Tokyo obviously had different plans. A pact of non-aggression would constitute an obstacle to her unrestrained policy of aggression. Now the Japanese had changed their minds, and their Foreign Minister came to Moscow asking for a pact. Moscow, considering the new situation, was willing to agree not to a non-aggression, but to a neutrality accord. On April 13, 1941, such a pact was signed. The two contracting parties agreed not to attack each other should they be involved in war. The agreement was to last for five years with a proviso that unless one of the parties should

renounce the pact not later than one year before the expiration of its term, the treaty would remain in force for another five years.

When President Roosevelt decided to establish normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1933, he obviously realized the importance of having the U.S.S.R. on the American side in case of war between the U.S.A. and Japan. Unfortunately, he was not always supported by some elements in his country, and as a result relations between the two countries were not normal for a number of years. By the time Moscow consented to sign the neutrality pact with Tokyo, American-Soviet relations had deteriorated to a very dangerous point. This process of deterioration had been seriously aggravated by the anti-Soviet attitude taken by a number of Americans during the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-40. The endless flow of war supplies (scrap iron, steel, oil, cotton, etc.) going to Japan from the United States from 1931 on was regarded by some Russians with suspicion: might this not mean possible help for Japan by foreigners for a war against the Soviet Union?

Persistent rumors of plans for an attack on the U.S.S.R. from the west by Hitler simultaneously with one from the east by Japan, were circulating freely and not alone in Moscow. The German menace was postponed by the Non-aggression Pact of 1939, when, after Munich and the futility of the so-called Moscow Conference, the U.S.S.R. accepted the German offer. Now, for similar considerations, to protect the country against an attack from the other side, Moscow accepted the Japanese proffer and signed a contract with Tokyo promising mutual neutrality.²⁹

Jockeying for a better position should Hitler break his obligation of non-aggression, the U.S.S.R. created a broad buffer on its western border, and protected itself in the east by a pact with Japan. The time she gained by the then misunderstood 1939 "accord" with the Nazi leader, was utilized brilliantly by Moscow. The U.S.S.R. was also enabled to strengthen her armed forces (partly by using the machines delivered by Germany in

²⁹ Article II of the Neutrality Treaty stated: "Should one of the contracting parties become the object of hostilities on the part of one or several third powers, the other contracting party will observe neutrality throughout the duration of the conflict."

exchange for grain and oil, according to the commercial agreement reached in August, 1939). For another twenty-odd months Russia continued to build her war industries and materially improved her strategic position for the opening phase of war. In general, she was preparing herself to become the decisive factor in turning Fascism's initial successes into a rout and thus paving the road to final victory.

In a speech in February, 1942, in New York, Mr. Litvinov, then Ambassador to the United States, said:

"Current events are proving that the Soviet Government is entitled to claim credit, not so much for advocating collective security and international solidarity in the face of common danger, as for the measures it adopted at the same time to be in a position to fulfill the international obligations it was prepared to undertake. The Soviet Government knew that Hitler was not to be impressed by mere international declarations, pacts, mutual-aid treaties, and all that, till he was convinced that these documents were backed by material forces. The course of military events has already shown that we really did prepare these material forces.

"If we had limited ourselves to talking about peace, and not at the same time prepared for an alternative in the event of these talks proving fruitless, our Army, however numerous it might be, could never have resisted the onrush of the Nazi hordes and Hitler's monstrous war machine. And if we had not put up the necessary fight, Hitler would have been the big boss and would have added the vast riches of our country to his other big conquests. And then, it is most likely, the United Nations, every one of them, would have had a poor chance to escape defeat. We may therefore claim, with pardonable pride, that by our preparedness we have done yeoman service not only for ourselves but for all other peace-loving countries."⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Quoted from Arthur Upham Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 465-466.

CHAPTER XIII

Soviet Union in World War II

Germany Breaks the Treaty and Attacks the U.S.S.R. Building Partnership in War. Material Aid. The U.S.S.R.'s Position in Asia. Clearing Up Misunderstandings. United Nations. "Second Front in Europe." Renewal of German Advance. Stalingrad as the Turning Point of the War. Allies Land in Europe. Making Friends out of Enemies.

Germany Breaks the Treaty and Attacks the U.S.S.R. Less than two months after the Soviet-Japanese Pact was ratified, namely, on the night of June 21-22, 1941, Hitler began his long-prepared attack on the U.S.S.R. Without presenting any claims, without giving any reason, without any declaration of war, he ordered his troops to cross the Soviet border and invade the Soviet Union. Rumanian and Finnish troops acted simultaneously. The following morning Ribbentrop read over the radio the famous Proclamation of War by the Führer. Italy declared war on the U.S.S.R., too; so did Hungary and Slovakia. The Vichy Government of France, on June 30, severed diplomatic relations with Moscow.

The surprise attack forced the Russians to retreat. This was inevitable before a surprise attack, as was demonstrated by all the European nations in a similar case, but with the U.S.S.R. there was one difference. The others could not offer successful resistance because they were "houses divided" (peoples and governments were not the same), whereas the Red Army and the population of the U.S.S.R. began fighting in earnest, at once, and made the invaders pay a very high price for every inch of Soviet ground they occupied.

The Red Army had not yet been completely mobilized. The decree for the mobilization of all those born between 1905 and 1918 was issued only after the night attack by Germany which started the war. The troops stationed on the border were forced to retreat for lack of strength. Their task was to delay the ad-

vance of the invader and to gain time for mobilization and preparation in the rear. Why had not the Russians mobilized before the attack was launched? The answer seems to be that they did not wish to give their enemies abroad an excuse for accusing them of aggressive plans. Animosity toward the U.S.S.R. was well known to the Russians. The presence of Rudolf Hess in Scotland was regarded as an indication that Hitler was trying to stop the war in the West in order to concentrate his fury on the East. A similar plan had been considered in 1939-40, while the war in Finland was on. In order not to give any justification to those in Britain who might have considered favorably the Fuhrer's offer, Moscow apparently preferred to risk the dangerous consequences of an attack by Hitler while she was not quite prepared than to do anything that might contribute to the success of Herr Hess's mission.¹

Such is, partly at least, the probable explanation of what took place in the early days of the war in the East in Europe. The enemies of the U.S.S.R. and those who were not well informed, predicted its collapse. The most extreme anti-Sovieteers said it would not take Hitler longer than three weeks to "smash the Reds." Those who were a little more generous predicted that the end would come within three months.

But those who were adequately informed thought, from the very beginning of the conflict, that the Red Army would emerge victorious. The real worth of the Soviet armed forces and their military preparedness was known to many experts. The German Military Attaché at Moscow, General von Koestrich, when asked point-blank by Ambassador Joseph E. Davies for his opinion of the fighting qualities of the Red Army, replied "that the Russian army, generally speaking, was a good army; that the human material—manpower—was excellent, physically strong, brave, and fine soldiers; that the mechanized forces were good, not so good as the German army, but good; that the air force was numerically strong; their flying and reconnaissance planes very good, but that their bombers were heavy and poor. That as a whole, barring superiority in numbers, it could not compare

¹ Arthur Upham Pope (*op. cit.*, p. 461) asserted that "Stalin had expected the war, but it came earlier than he had calculated. He had hoped and believed that the Germans would be held up longer in the Balkans, so that the attack on Russia would not start until the autumn of 1941."

with the German air force; that the Russian flyers were, however, superb—none better; that their parachute troops were excellent. . . .”²

When ex-Ambassador Davies was informed by a correspondent of the United Press about the outbreak of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R., he said:

“It was all to the good for the Western Democracies . . . in my opinion the extent of the resistance of the Red Army would amaze and surprise the world; and even though Hitler were to take a substantial part of the Ukraine, his troubles would then just begin. . . .”³

Again Mr. Davies was right. The Red Army did what it was prepared to do in such a case, even though many people (even among those whose business it was to know better) predicted its swift rout. Instead the marvelous exploits of the Red Army not only made those prophets ridiculous, but served to change the entire outlook of the world.

Building Partnership in War. After the attack one thing was instantly clear: the fact that Hitler had turned his attention eastward meant a respite for England. How long the Russians would be able to occupy his troops could not be predicted, but at any rate here was a gain in time at least. That is why immediately after the world was startled by the news of Hitler's treachery and the attack on the U.S.S.R., the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, declared his readiness to help anybody who was fighting the Nazis. What he said next about his dislike of Communism made it obvious that when he said “to help anybody,” he meant “even those terrible Bolsheviks.” President Roosevelt followed this by announcing that America, too, would help the U.S.S.R. with war supplies.

Most of the American and British press approved this decision of their governments.

“Those who have experienced Nazi savagery . . . know it is not a question of helping Stalin, but helping themselves. . . . The pos-

² Joseph E. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

sibilities of collaboration, which before did not exist, are now virtually unlimited. . . ." said an editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune*.

"The Fascist power that Adolf Hitler leads . . . must be destroyed. We have a new ally in its destruction. With Churchill and the British we welcome new allies," commented another New York paper, *P.M.*

"Nothing could be more fatuous than the contrary belief, expressed by some Congressional isolationists, that now that Germany attacked Russia we can sit back complacently and 'let the two dictatorships fight it out' or 'destroy each other.' . . . What the British and American democracies do or fail to do in these next few weeks may determine the whole future history of the world. . . ." wrote the *New York Times*.⁴

Winston Churchill acted with his characteristic boldness and by July 15, he was able to announce before the House of Commons that an agreement for mutual assistance had been concluded three days earlier (on July 12), at Moscow, between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. To make quite clear what this pact meant, he said: "Of course, the Anglo-Russian agreement is an alliance, and the Russian people are now our allies." Churchill of course understood quite well what the attack on Russia by the Nazis meant for his own country. As soon as Hitler turned eastward, he left Britain alone. His bombers stopped visiting London. Their new job was too serious to allow for a division of the German effort. England was thus permitted to enjoy a long, well-deserved respite after having stood alone for almost a year against the Teutonic fury.

On July 18, the Czechoslovak Government, now in London, also signed a mutual assistance agreement with the Soviet Union. The latter gave consent to the formation of Czech troops on Soviet territory. This was followed, on July 30, by a Polish-Soviet Treaty for war-time co-operation.⁵ On December 4, 1941, a Declaration of Friendship and Mutual Assistance was signed by Poland and the Soviet Union.

While the governments of various countries concluded new and significant treaties with the U.S.S.R., for now it was engaged in their war, the peoples of Europe, subjugated by the

⁴ All three quotations are taken from *Soviet Russia Today*, July, 1941, pp 8-9.

⁵ For the text of this agreement see the *New York Times*, July 31, 1941.

Axis Powers, immediately began intensified guerrilla warfare against the invaders. It seemed as if the "common man" considered Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R. a signal indicating the beginning of a new phase of the war. The peoples of those countries apparently felt that the time had come when their interests were paramount. One may sense this, for instance, in the following quotation from an article by Marshal Tito:

"Whereas, before the attack on the Soviet, the only joint struggle (outside the cities) had been carried on in certain parts of the Bosnia and Herzegovina mountains the guerrilla movement rapidly spread across the rest of the country after the Soviet Union had been invaded."⁶

By the middle of August it became obvious that the anti-Fascist forces were nearing a merger. The Anglo-American declaration of August 14, 1941, on the occasion of the meeting on the high seas between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, when the Atlantic Charter was conceived, proclaimed that their joint aim was the final destruction of Nazi tyranny. The joint message they sent to Mr. Stalin, proposing a Three-Power Conference to determine the military needs of the Soviet Union, was an indication that at this juncture the interests of their three countries coincided. At a meeting of the representatives of various European nations at London on August 25, the Soviet representative endorsed the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

Material Aid. Before Roosevelt and Churchill met, Harry Hopkins, representing the President, visited Moscow to ascertain if the U.S.S.R. was a good "bet," and on his return made a report advocating material help to that country. By the end of September Lord Beaverbrook, representing England, and W. Averell Harriman, representing the United States, arrived at Moscow to discuss this matter. In November, after receiving the two reports, President Roosevelt wrote to Mr. Stalin saying that a decision had been reached to start shipments of goods needed by the Soviet Union for war purposes.

Those individuals who had spread the idea that Hitler would

⁶ *Free World*, June, 1944, pp. 493-494.

crush the Russians in a very short time did everything in their power to sabotage not only the development of genuine and close co-operation between the three nations, but even the materialization of the help promised to Russia by Britain and America. These anti-Sovieteers insisted that it would be foolish to ship anything to the U.S.S.R., for these supplies would fall into the hands of Hitler anyhow. Their work was not without effect. As a result, during the most difficult months of the war against Germany the U.S.S.R. had to rely, and actually did, almost exclusively on her own resources and her own wits, for the shipments were delayed.⁷ And even those limited quantities which eventually were shipped were, in considerable part, sunk by the active and at that period successful German submarines.

Late in November, 1941, the Red Army reoccupied Rostov-on-the-Don; on December 6, the Germans were forced to retreat from the approaches to Moscow, and soon the entire Russian front was moving westward. The Germans were in retreat. The military success of the "Reds" proved to be a very convincing factor in building understanding and promoting co-operation between those countries which soon found themselves "in the same boat" with the Russians. The activities of the three Fascist aggressor-states, Germany, Italy and Japan, made such co-operation imperative.

The sneaking attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor, with its disastrous losses to the United States (unprepared for modern war), accelerated the forging of this unity. On January 1, 1942, the Soviet Union, together with twenty-five other countries, signed the Declaration of the United Nations, which became a contract for joint action in the war.

"Having subscribed to a common program of purposes and principles embodied in the joint declaration of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, dated August 14, 1941, known as the Atlantic Charter, being convinced that complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, inde-

⁷ The understanding had been reached in October. It was in November that President Roosevelt announced the decision. The following March he had to demand that the shipments be expedited. By that time the most difficult period of war, as far as the Soviets were concerned was over. After December, 1941, the Red troops were on the offensive.

pendence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands, and that they are now engaged in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world, declare:

"1) Each government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such government is at war.

"2) Each government pledges itself to co-operate with the governments signatories hereto and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies."⁸

The continued brilliant military successes of the Russians served to strengthen this first step toward co-operation in war and to build the foundation for a world-wide organization for peace.

The U.S.S.R.'s Position in Asia. As one can see from the wording of the above Declaration of the United Nations, the U.S.S.R. was excluded from participation in the war with Japan. There were two reasons for this. First, Moscow had a neutrality pact with Tokyo by which she had contracted not to attack Japan should the latter be involved in war. Second, as was emphasized by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, it would be contrary to the interests of the United Nations to see the U.S.S.R. involved in a war in the East, while she was doing so well in the European theater against the main common enemy, Hitler. To divide the armed forces, and to split the efforts of the Russians, would have been contrary to one of the basic principles of strategy, which is to concentrate on one thing at a time.

Still, even without entering the Asiatic war as a belligerent, the Soviet State was able to contribute a great deal to the effort of the others on that front. Despite her own shortage of supplies, Moscow continued to ship war materials to China, ignoring the protests of Japan. Japan pretended that she was not at war with China, but was simply trying to settle an "incident" there. From a legal point of view the U.S.S.R. was within its rights in con-

⁸ Quoted from "War and Peace Aims," Special Supplement #1 to the *United Nations Review*, published by the United Nations Information Office, New York, January 30, 1943, p. 116.

tinuing trade with China, regardless of how this trade might affect Japan. After the loss of the Burma Road to the Allies, this help from the U.S.S.R. made it possible for China to keep on fighting Japan.

Here is what Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Generalissimo, said about this Russian aid:

“Intellectual honesty constrains me to point out that throughout the first three years of resistance, Soviet Russia extended to China, for the actual purchase of war materials and other necessities, credits several times larger than the credits given by either Great Britain or America. Both these countries, indeed, circumscribed their advances with conditions which prevented even one cent of the money being used for badly needed munitions, equipment, or war material of any kind. Furthermore, at the meetings of the League of Nations, it was Russia who took an uncompromising stand in support of China’s appeal that active measures should be adopted to brand Japan as the aggressor. Russia acted similarly during the Brussels Conference. On both occasions Britain, France and other member nations compromised their consciences. When Japan protested through her Ambassador in Moscow that the aid extended was a breach of neutrality Russia did not wilt, or surrender, or compromise, but continued to send supplies of arms to China. It will doubtless be said that Russia has been aiding China for selfish interests. In reply to this I may point out that Russian help has been unconditional . . . that China has never asked any nation to fight for her.”⁹

Aside from this material aid to China, the U.S.S.R.’s role in the war in the Pacific and on the mainland of Asia was of considerable importance to the belligerents in another respect. The mere presence of two large Red Banner armies in the Soviet Far East served to pin down to the Soviet border a large number of the crack troops of Nippon. But for that those troops could and would have been used to make trouble for General MacArthur, or to conquer India, or even to land on American soil in much larger numbers than they were able to do when they occupied the Aleutians. The formidable air force of these two Red Armies kept a considerable number of Japanese aircraft immobilized, and away from American targets. The numerous

⁹ *Liberty*, January 21, 1941.

submarines and surface vessels of the Red Navy stationed in Far Eastern waters immobilized a corresponding number of the Japanese Navy, which otherwise could and would have been used against the Allies.

To do more would have been inadvisable, even if there had been no neutrality agreement making it legally impossible. To have offered its naval and air bases in the Far East for the war use of the Allies (for which some ill-informed people clamored) would immediately and automatically have involved the U.S.S.R. in war with Japan, which, as the leaders of the U.S.A. and Britain had said, was contrary to the best interests of the United Nations.

Clearing Up Misunderstandings. It was during the war, when the peace-loving democracies were combining to pursue their common aim of defeating the Fascists, that some of the misunderstandings of the past began to vanish. The accusation that the Soviet Union had aggressive designs against "little, democratic Finland" received a shocking answer when that same Finland of Mannerheim and Ryti participated in the war against the U.S.S.R. on the side of Hitler. Just as in the "winter war of 1939-40," it was not the Finnish people who wanted that war, but their rulers, who proved to be more interested in helping outsiders than in serving their own people.

Here is how an author, whose hostility toward the U.S.S.R. has been well-established by his writings, described the entrance of Finland into the war on Hitler's side:

"On June 20 . . . the trade unions and the Finnish Social-Democratic party together with a number of other organizations issued a proclamation demanding that Finland adhere to her neutrality. From all sides pressure was being exerted upon Helsinki to refrain from joining in the war on the side of Germany, but in his speech of June 22, Hitler said, referring to Finland: 'German divisions . . . in co-operation with the heroes of Finnish freedom under their Marshal are protecting Finnish soil.' . . . On June 22, without waiting for a formal declaration of war on the part of Finland, German bombers took off from Finnish territory and bombed the Kronstadt area; this was followed by infantry action on the 24th."¹⁰

¹⁰ David J. Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

"Little, democratic Finland," under Mannerheim, Tanner and Ryti, turned out to be not so very democratic, but clearly Fascist (as was in due time admitted by Cordell Hull), and not so innocent as some influential people wanted others to believe when in 1939-40 they were planning to switch the war in Europe from the West to the East and were prepared to send not only the sinews of war, but even troops of their own to help the "little, democratic" clique of Mannerheim. Even England finally declared war on Finland, although she never entered it in a fighting capacity.

United Nations. The inevitability of the gradual reconciliation and the eventual collaboration of all those who were interested in the defeat of the Fascists was foreseen by the Russian leaders. In a radio address to the nation, on July 3, 1941, Stalin said:

"What did we gain by concluding the non-aggression pact with Germany? We secured our country peace for a year and a half and the opportunity of preparing its forces to repulse fascist Germany should she risk an attack on our country despite the pact. This was a definite advantage for us and a devastating disadvantage for fascist Germany. What has fascist Germany gained and what has she lost by treacherously tearing up the pact and attacking the U.S.S.R.? She has gained a certain advantageous position for her troops for a short period, but she has lost politically by exposing herself in the eyes of the entire world as a bloodthirsty aggressor. There can be no doubt that this short-lived gain for Germany is only an episode, while the tremendous political gain of the U.S.S.R. is a serious and lasting factor that is bound to form the basis for the development of decisive military successes of the Red Army in the war with fascist Germany.

". . . Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. It will be a united front of peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement and threats of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies."¹¹

This merger predicted by Stalin in July, 1941, actually was achieved. Officially it was started by the treaties with England,

¹¹ For the complete text of Stalin's speech see *Soviet War Documents*, published by the Soviet Embassy at Washington, D.C. (June, 1941-November, 1943), pp. 3-7.

Czechoslovakia and Poland, and completed with the signing, on January 1, 1942, of the Declaration of United Nations. It was further consolidated by a number of conferences that followed along with the successful development of the war, in spite of the efforts of some "irreconcilables" to split the war partners and prevent their collaboration for peace.

In a speech made on November 6, 1941, on the eve of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin, among other things, gave a good idea of what the U.S.S.R. was fighting for and what were *not* her aims:

"Lenin differentiated between two kinds of wars—wars of conquest, which are unjust wars, and wars of liberation, which are just wars.

"The Germans are now waging a war of conquest—an unjust war, with the object of seizing foreign territory and conquering other peoples. Therefore, all honest people must rise against the German invaders as against enemies.

"Unlike Hitler Germany, the Soviet Union and its Allies are waging a war of liberation—a just war for the liberation of the enslaved peoples of Europe and the U.S.S.R. from Hitler's tyranny. Therefore all honest people must support the armies of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the other Allies as armies of liberation.

"We have not and cannot have such war aims as the seizure of foreign territories and the subjugation of foreign peoples—whether it be peoples and territories of Europe or peoples and territories of Asia, including Iran. Our first aim is to liberate our territories and our people from the German-fascist yoke.

"We have not and cannot have such war aims as the imposition of our will and our regime on the Slavs and other enslaved peoples of Europe who are awaiting our aid. Our aid consists in assisting these peoples in their struggle for liberation from Hitler's tyranny, and then setting them free to rule in their own land as they desire. No intervention whatever in the internal affairs of other nations!"¹²

Clear as were these words, some people still continued to sow distrust of the U.S.S.R. Such people still continued to work against co-operation with that country. In the early days of the war on the Soviet front their efforts were concentrated on sabotaging help to the Red Army. Gradually these efforts were

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

defeated, and by 1943-44 the flow of various goods to the soldiers who were fighting so magnificently on the Eastern front, attained impressive dimensions, speeding up the final defeat of the common enemy.

Second Front in Europe. Then the efforts of the anti-Sovietees were concentrated on the opposition to the opening of the so-called Second Front in Europe. In May and June, 1942, Molotov visited London and Washington on the invitation of their respective governments. His visit to England resulted in the signing of a twenty-year treaty of alliance in the war and collaboration and mutual assistance thereafter. This formal treaty replaced (confirmed and strengthened) the previously arrived-at agreement. "In virtue of the alliance," said its first Article, "the High Contracting Parties mutually undertake to afford one another military and other assistance and support of all kinds in the war against Germany. . . ." Article III declared "Their desire to unite with other like-minded States in adopting proposals for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period."

This visit of Molotov's to the two Anglo-Saxon capitals also resulted in the issuance of similarly worded official communiqués, declaring that "full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942."¹³

Military reverses in Africa, in the summer of 1942, necessitated a visit by Prime Minister Churchill to Moscow in August, during which he explained why a "second front in Europe in 1942" had become impossible to realize. But there were signs that political pressure also played a role in this delay. While the first winter campaign of the Red Army was developing in a most satisfactory way (for six months the German armies were pushed back by the relentless advance of the Soviet forces), some voices were heard advising against starting military operations in Europe, for otherwise, they asserted, the Russians would be enabled to cross the German border and, who knows, might establish Soviet regimes there and elsewhere.

¹³ See Molotov's report to the Supreme Soviet on June 18, 1942, i.e., after his return from this trip, in *Soviet War Documents*, p. 132.

Renewal of German Advance. But, in the late spring of 1942, the Russian drive actually was checked by the Germans, for they were able to concentrate on the Russian front an enormous preponderance of manpower and machines (manufactured for them by the entire industrial force of subjugated Europe, and not required elsewhere). The Nazis again succeeded in breaking the Russian front, although this time only on a limited sector in the south, and penetrated deep into Soviet territory. There was the danger of their acquiring control over the oil fields of the Caucasus, and some commentators even considered the possibility of a merger of German and Japanese forces somewhere in or near India.

For a while the situation looked alarming. The Red Army had to fight alone against practically the entire military might of Germany. The problem of the "second front in Europe" was heatedly discussed in many places. When the Moscow correspondent of the Associated Press, Henry C. Cassidy, presented to Mr. Stalin a list of questions on that subject, the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R. gave him the following answers:¹⁴

Question: What place does the possibility of a second front occupy in Soviet estimates of the current situation?

Answer: A very important place, one might say, a place of first-rate importance.

Question: To what extent is Allied aid to the Soviet Union proving effective and what could be done to amplify and improve this aid?

Answer: As compared with the aid which the Soviet Union is giving to the Allies by drawing upon itself the main forces of the German-fascist armies, the aid of the Allies to the Soviet Union has so far been little effective. In order to amplify and improve this aid, only one thing is required: that the Allies fulfill their obligations fully and on time.

A few days later, in his speech on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, November 6, 1942, Stalin defined the aims of the fighting alliance between his country, Great Britain and the United States, in the following terms:

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

"The program of action of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition is: Abolition of racial exclusiveness; equality of nations and integrity of their territories; liberation of enslaved nations and restoration of their sovereign rights; the right of every nation to arrange its affairs as it wishes; economic aid to nations that have suffered and assistance to them in attaining their material welfare; restoration of democratic liberties; destruction of Hitlerite regime."¹⁵

On November 8, 1942, the American Expeditionary Forces under General Eisenhower landed near Oran in Africa.

This landing of American troops on the northern coast of Africa was hailed by the Soviet people and their leaders. Answering the questions on this event addressed to him by Mr. Cassidy of the Associated Press, on November 13, 1942, Mr. Stalin said: "The Soviet view of this campaign is that it represents an outstanding fact of major importance, demonstrating the growing might of the armed forces of the Allies and opening the prospect of the disintegration of the Italo-German coalition in the nearest future. . . . It is yet too soon to say to what extent this campaign has been effective in relieving immediate pressure on the Soviet Union¹⁶ . . . but that is not the only thing that matters. What matters first of all is that, since the campaign in Africa means that the initiative has passed into the hands of our Allies, the campaign changes radically the political and war situation in Europe in favor of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition."¹⁷

Stalingrad as the Turning Point of the War. About the time of the American landing in Africa the Russians began their second winter campaign. On November 16, two large concentrations of troops, one to the north of Stalingrad, another to the south, started moving westward, and a few days later joined hands at Kalach on the River Don, thereby creating an enormous trap which encircled the German army besieging Stalingrad. An

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁶ Actually the landing did not relieve the German pressure on the Soviet front. The Russian all-out offensive prevented Hitler from moving any of his troops from the Eastern Front.

¹⁷ Stalin's letter of November 13, 1942, can be found in *Soviet War Documents*, p. 45.

attempt made by Hitler to help the trapped troops by sending a new, strong force failed. That force was defeated near Kotelnikovo. Soon the entire Russian front began moving westward, too. Again, for about five months, the Germans were forced to retreat under the pressure of the Red Army, which was liberating Soviet soil.

The heroic defense of Stalingrad, hailed as the greatest epic of the war, and the brilliant campaign for its liberation, marked the turning point of the entire war in Europe, for then and there it became clear that Hitler's plans had been hopelessly frustrated by the Russians. It also marked the beginning of a real appreciation by the other nations of what the Russians were doing for the common cause. It was the beginning of a wide-spread admiration for the gallant peoples of the U.S.S.R., and an increased interest in collective security, for which that country's diplomacy had been working for years.

After the magnificent victory at Stalingrad, followed by a number of other great successes of the Red Army, Hitler made only one large-scale attempt to renew his offensive.¹⁸ That was in July, 1943, at a narrow sector near Orel and Kursk, about in the center of the front. The Germans again succeeded in concentrating large forces on the Eastern front because there was still nothing menacing them on the other side of Europe. But in a week they were checked. And on July 16, the Russians began their own offensive, which soon spread all over their enormously stretched front.

Hitting hard in one sector, the Russians would force the Germans first to retreat, and then, in an effort to stem a Russian advance, to bring up reserves from other sectors. The Red Armies would thereupon launch an attack in another, far-away sector weakened by the withdrawals. The purpose was always the same: to destroy as many German troops as possible, at as low a price as practical, by using outflanking, or more often than not, encirclement tactics. The Russians outwitted the Nazis, outfought them, outgeneraled them, and finally not only forced them out of Soviet territory, but also began the liberation of their neighbors from the Nazi yoke. By the end of 1944 the victorious Red Armies were fighting on German soil.

In the meantime, after having defeated the Germans and

¹⁸ For a while he also succeeded in reoccupying Kharkov.

Italians in Africa, and having landed on the Italian coast, the Anglo-American forces demanded the capitulation of Italy, and succeeded in achieving this goal. The armistice terms dictated to the Italians by General Eisenhower, in agreement with the British and Soviet authorities, although they did not bring an end to the war in Italy, created a new situation, which was the beginning of the disintegration of the Axis. Mussolini, saved by his friend Hitler, continued to pretend that he was still Il Duce, was still fighting the Allies, but Hitler knew better.

Allies Land in Europe. On June 6, 1944, the Allies landed in the North of Europe. A brilliantly conceived, thoroughly prepared and splendidly executed operation, it resulted in the opening of a real "second front" in Europe. A short time after the landing on the coast of Normandy, another landing on the French Riviera brought more American and French troops to the mainland of Europe. Soon all of France and Belgium were liberated. Grand in its daring plan and swift execution, the operation led by the American General Patton (with considerable help from the French patriots, the "Maquis") was probably the main factor in the rapid and spectacular success of the Allied offensive. But the comparatively low losses in this grandiose operation were possible because of the fighting on the Eastern Front, where the Germans had constant trouble, making it impossible for them to shift their already weakened forces to check the Allies in the West. The number of German troops on the Western side of Europe was limited because of the necessity to resist the almost ceaseless attacks by the Red Armies in the East, which not only kept the Nazis busy, but inflicted such enormous losses on them that their reserves soon became practically exhausted, and there was not much, if anything, left to shift from one side of Europe to the other. Now at last there were two fronts, but by this time there was neither enough German manpower to continue the fight successfully on both sides, nor enough oil to keep German airplanes flying and motors running.

In August, 1944, the Red Army routed the German and Rumanian troops in Rumania and occupied that country. Thereupon the last large source of oil was lost to the Nazis. Already in May of that year, when the Red detachments crossed the

Rumanian border, Moscow authorities immediately issued a declaration, in which they reassured the population that "the U.S.S.R. does not pursue the purpose of acquiring any part of Rumanian territory or of changing the social system existing in Rumania," and that "the entry of Soviet troops into Rumania is dictated exclusively by military necessity and by the continued resistance of enemy troops."

Making Friends Out of Enemies. The further advances of the Red Armies resulted in the liberation of one neighboring country after another. Rumania was the first, then came Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, then Finland, followed by Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria.

Armistice terms dictated to the former satellites of Hitler by the Soviet authorities, in agreement with the Allies, demanded that those countries declare war on Germany, and they did so. The enemies of yesterday became co-belligerents, fighting on the side of the Allies. Gradually, as the ordinary citizens received a chance to express their opinions about their form of government, as was promised in the Atlantic Charter, and as the Fascist and pro-Fascist elements were asked to vacate office, as was promised in documents issued at the Moscow Conference of 1943, the enemy countries, one after another, turned into friendly nations. The role played by the Red Armies in this welcome change was so apparent that only a very few die-hard anti-Sovieteers refused to admit it.

As was to have been expected, the remarkable military success of Soviet arms produced not only a profound impression on the rest of the world, but also resulted in a pronounced change in the attitude of the other nations toward the U.S.S.R.

The conference of the Foreign Secretaries of Great Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R., held in Moscow in October-November, 1943, was a convincing indication that relations between these three countries were being established on a firm basis. The conference at Teheran, which followed some four weeks later, sealed the decisions of the one at Moscow and further demonstrated that the Big Three were not only steadfastly bound together for the winning of the war, but also were anxious to continue united after the war was over.

The Soviet State, which had proved to be an excellent "friend

in need" at the time of calamitous adversity for Great Britain and the United States, was clearly gaining in its persistent struggle for collective security. There were signs that this time the long-cherished dream of bringing the peoples of good will together for the common good of all of humanity might be realized.

There was a hard road behind, a real "*via dolorosa*." The change came only after a horrible war had been forced on the world; only after millions of victims had been sacrificed on the battle fields that covered practically every continent. But, by 1945, the atmosphere began clearing up. By then, the hope for collective security had attracted enough attention in every corner of the globe to command its serious consideration by all, irrespective of their political, social and economic differences.

CHAPTER XIV

The Conferences at Moscow and Teheran

Surrender of Italy. Poland—the Stumbling Block. The Quebec Conference. The Recall of Maisky and Litvinov. Hull and Eden in Moscow. The Teheran Meeting. Roosevelt-Stalin-Churchill Declaration.

Surrender of Italy. Early in 1943 President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at Casablanca in North Africa, where their troops were preparing for the next jump. This was one of a series of conferences held by the leaders of the two Anglo-Saxon countries without their third partner-in-war, Stalin. The Premier of the U.S.S.R. had been invited to join them in this particular meeting, but asked to be excused because of his preoccupation with the large-scale offensive operations on the Soviet front. There was a rumor that actually this explanation was no more than an excuse, for someone else could have been assigned to represent the Soviet State, were it necessary. Apparently Moscow did not consider it desirable to have its representative present at a conference in North Africa, where the mystery of the deal with Admiral Darlan and the strange case of Monsieur Peyrouton had not been quite cleared up. To have been represented there might have been interpreted by some outsiders as an indication that the U.S.S.R. had approved of these dealings, undertaken by the Allies without Moscow's knowledge.

One of the important decisions taken by Roosevelt and Churchill at that meeting was a determination to demand of the enemy nothing less than "unconditional surrender."

By that time one of the Axis Powers, Italy, was clearly showing its complete inability to continue fighting. The downfall of Mussolini (in July) was soon followed by the surrender of Italy. When King Victor Emmanuel III assigned Marshal Badoglio to the vacant post of Premier, he proclaimed that Italy was determined to continue to abide by its obligations to Ger-

many. But, with Allied troops in Sicily preparing to invade the Italian mainland, and with no chance to defend herself successfully, Italy could have no other choice but surrender.

The people of Italy, especially in the industrial north, demanded peace. Along with the demands for peace, demonstrations in many parts of the country also asked for the resignation of Badoglio. His role in the Ethiopian affair and his reactionary tendencies were known only too well. Badoglio had to surrender, but it was done in such a way that he retained his post. Protracted negotiations for "unconditional" surrender, unfortunately, not only gave the elderly Marshal enough time to curb the "revolt" and check popular indignation, but also enabled the Nazis to retain control over a large part of Italy, thereby continuing defensive operations there at a high cost to the Allies.

On September 3, the armistice was signed by General Eisenhower for all the Allies, including the U.S.S.R. Five days later the world was informed about it but in a very general form. The terms of the armistice were not made public. This pre-eminently political "success" was the result of military operations by American and British forces, which had been victorious in Africa and had then crossed the water to land in Sicily, and later on the mainland of Italy.

Immediately after the landing in Sicily, General Alexander, the Allied Commander, issued a proclamation which indicated a determination to oust all Fascist leaders. Actually the military governments which were established by the Allies there, and in other parts of Italy, did not demonstrate any haste in putting this promise into practice. Moscow found it necessary to protest. To deal with this situation an inter-allied military-political Commission was formed on the initiative of Moscow. Vishinsky, one of the Assistant Commissars for Foreign Affairs, was assigned to represent the U.S.S.R. At the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the Big Three held at Moscow in October, 1943, this matter was not only further discussed, but its solution was offered in one of the documents signed on that occasion, namely, the Declaration Regarding Italy.

According to this Declaration: "All institutions and organizations created by the Fascist regime shall be suppressed. All Fascist or pro-Fascist elements shall be removed from the ad-

ministration and from institutions and organizations of a public character. Democratic organs of local government shall be created."

The Allied landing in Italy coincided with the start of the great offensive of the Red Armies which eventually resulted not only in the complete clearing of German troops from Soviet territories, but also in the liberation of all the U.S.S.R.'s neighbors from the Nazi yoke. But the real meaning of this drive was not quite clear to some people, who continued to oppose the whole-hearted co-operation of their countries with the Soviet State. The material help stemming from the lend-lease agreement was by that time considerable and continued to grow,¹ but genuine co-ordination of the military effort was still lacking.

Poland—the Stumbling Block. Added at this time to a number of other problems was one created by the severance of diplomatic relations between Moscow and the Polish Government in Exile, stationed at London. This situation contributed considerably to the worsening of the already not-too-perfect relations between the partners in the war. It served to increase suspicion, engender new or fan existing animosity toward the Soviet State, and thus endangered the coalition.

Early in 1943 the Nazi propaganda machine issued a sensational statement about the "discovery" by the Germans near Smolensk of a huge grave, where some ten or twelve thousand Polish officers and soldiers, killed by the Bolsheviks, were buried. Apparently the so-called Polish Government had never heard that the Nazis sometimes engaged in wholesale killings, and very often amused themselves by telling lies. The Government in Exile immediately accepted this announcement by Hitler's lie-disseminators as the truth, and without even asking Moscow for an explanation, demanded that an international commission be sent to Smolensk to find out all the facts on the spot.

Naturally no such commission was sent on such a ridiculous

¹ While in 1941 the U.S.S.R.'s share in the total shipments abroad by the U.S.A. was only 0.1 per cent, in 1942 it was 27.6 per cent, and in 1943 reached 29 per cent. By January, 1943, some 3,200 tanks, 2,600 airplanes, 81,000 trucks, food and other supplies were officially reported shipped to the U.S.S.R.

errand as finding facts under Hitler's supervision, for at that time Smolensk had been occupied by the Nazis for almost two years. Knowing only too well of the unhealthy condition prevailing among the Poles in London (a considerable section of the Government in Exile was bitterly opposed to the policy of its Prime Minister, Sikorski), Himmler's ingenuity did not fail to use it for the Führer's benefit. The provocation was well planned and gave results. But only for a time. The Soviet Government invited the Polish Ambassador to leave the country, explaining that the behavior of his government was anything but that of an ally. It looked very much to the Russians as though the pro-Nazi elements in the Polish Government were co-operating with the Nazis, the enemy, in their schemes against the U.S.S.R., the ally of Poland.

A short time after this rupture of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Government in Exile, representatives of the *New York Times* and of the *London Times* addressed a letter to Mr. Stalin in which they asked: "Does the Government of the U.S.S.R. desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler's Germany?" To which Stalin replied: "Unquestionably it does." To the second question put by the same correspondents: "On what fundamentals is it your opinion that the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war?" Stalin replied: "Upon the fundamentals of solid good neighborly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire, upon the foundation of an alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland." ²

When, in July of the same year, General Sikorski died in an airplane accident, the situation became practically hopeless, for the anti-Soviet elements in the Polish Government acquired complete control.

Unfortunately for all concerned, the very large Polish population in the United States began (with considerable help from Polish official propaganda lavishly financed by the London group) an anti-Soviet campaign of such intensity that soon the "Polish question" was, in a most distorted form, on the pages

² *Soviet War Documents*, June 1941-November 1943. Soviet Embassy. Washington, D.C., p. 57.

of practically every newspaper. It was soon on the lips not only of all the anti-Sovietees, but of numerous others, who, it had seemed, had begun to admire the heroism of the Russians and their military exploits, which were serving their interests well, but who now once again, under the barrage of this heavy anti-Soviet artillery had become dubious and were again inclined to accuse the Soviet State of "imperialism" and every other imaginable sin.

No wonder that, under such circumstances, genuine co-operation was hardly possible. President Roosevelt was no doubt worried by this turn of affairs, for, he was working to build mutual confidence and attain complete co-operation. Not only had he expressed on numerous occasions his appreciation of what the Russians had done and still were doing for the eventual victory over the common enemy, but he was also anxious to find a ground for mutual trust and understanding. Such were his words, for instance, in a radio address to the nation on February 12, on his return home from Casablanca:

"The overwhelming courage and endurance of the Russian people in withstanding and hurling back the invaders—and the genius with which their great Armies have been directed and led by Mr. Stalin and their military commanders—all speak for themselves. . . .

"The tragedy of the war has sharpened the vision of the leadership and peoples of all the United Nations and I can say to you from my full knowledge that they see the utter necessity of our standing together after the war to secure a peace based on principles of permanence. . . ."

In the same radio speech the late President gave some hint as to why real co-operation had not yet been attained; in spite of his efforts, he complained, certain selfish people were sabotaging co-operation:

"I could not deny to our troops that a few chiselers, a few politicians and a few publicists—fortunately a very few—have placed their personal ambitions or greed above the nation's interests."

About this time (May, 1943) the Third International, that is, the Comintern, whose existence and activities were irritating

to so many foreigners, was dissolved by a unanimous agreement of its multinational membership.

In answering a letter addressed to him by a British representative of the news agency Reuters, Mr. Stalin gave the following explanation of the meaning of the disappearance of the Comintern:

“The dissolution of the Communist International is proper and timely because it facilitates the organization of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy—Hitlerism. The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because:

“(a) It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that ‘Moscow’ allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to ‘Bolshevize’ them. An end is now being put to this lie;

“(b) It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of Communism within the labor movement, to the effect that Communist parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interest of their people but on orders from outside. An end is now being put to this calumny, too;

“(c) It facilitates the work of patriots in freedom-loving countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation—for unfolding the struggle against fascism;

“(d) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organization of a companionship of nations based upon their equality.

“I think that all these circumstances taken together will result in a further strengthening of the united front of the Allies and other United Nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerite tyranny.

“I feel that the dissolution of the Communist International is perfectly timely because it is exactly now, when the fascist beast is exerting its last strength, that it is necessary to organize the common onslaught of freedom-loving countries to finish off this beast and to deliver the peoples from fascist oppression.”³

Soon after the decision taken by the Comintern to end its existence, whether by coincidence or not, President Roosevelt

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

asked his friend and former envoy to the U.S.S.R., Joseph E. Davies, to visit Moscow and deliver his personal letter to the Soviet Premier. The next month, June, the lend-lease agreement was renewed. In September, Wendell Willkie visited the U.S.S.R. and gave a glowing report on what he saw there. In London, too, various steps were taken as if to placate the Russians. The Polish press in England, in its animosity toward the U.S.S.R., overstepped the limits of decency, and was investigated and advised to behave.

The Quebec Conference. In August Roosevelt and Churchill met again, this time at Quebec in Canada. Stalin was not present, for, the explanation went, the main topic for discussion was the war in the Far East, and because the U.S.S.R. was not involved in war there, it preferred not to be embarrassed by possible misinterpretations of its presence at such a gathering. Reuters and some other agencies asserted that Stalin had been invited, but had declined; the official press agency of the U.S.S.R., TASS, denied this. The Soviet Union was actually again engaged in a large-scale offensive operation, but this time no plans for Stalin's participation had been made.

To what extent these speculations were true is not quite clear, but the absence of the Russians at the Quebec meeting, regarded in the light of the deterioration in the Anglo-American-Soviet relations, was disturbing. Aside from the Polish question, there were other points of disagreement and divergence of opinion, such as the difference between the U.S.S.R. and its Anglo-Saxon partners regarding the urgency for a speedy end to the war, i.e., the problem of the second front in Europe. The Red Army's losses had been enormous. While the Anglo-American peoples had been spared the miseries of actual invasion and wished to hold their casualties to a minimum, the Russians wanted to see the second front opened without delay, and were asking for it. There was also divergences of opinion over post-war boundary questions and the nature of the regimes to be set up in liberated Europe.

The Recall of Maisky and Litvinov. Exactly at the time of the Quebec Conference the Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Lit-

vinov, was removed from his post. This, together with the recall a month earlier of Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador to London, was naturally interpreted as a sign of "Soviet displeasure with the British and American war record and plans for future action." ⁴ The recall of Litvinov was especially disquieting, for he was considered the symbol of collective security, the advocate of the closest possible co-operation with the Western Powers.

The Moscow move was interpreted as a warning that Anglo-American relations with the U.S.S.R., on which it was admitted, the future of the war and the peace largely depended, needed immediate attention. It became clear that so far these relations had not been solidly established, and that something must be done to prevent their further deterioration, or rupture.

Some commentators, in a panic, even discussed the possibility that the U.S.S.R. might halt the offensive operations, then brilliantly developing, and take a "rest." This would give Hitler a chance to move a considerable part of his forces from the east, where so far most of them were being kept busy by the Russians, and concentrate them against the Anglo-Americans in the west. This would naturally be an extremely unwelcome development. There were no indications whatsoever that Moscow contemplated anything of the kind, but those who feared the danger of further deterioration of the alliance thought it at least conceivable.

Hull and Eden in Moscow. For some time even before the Quebec Conference the desirability of a meeting of the Big Three, the heads of the American, British and Soviet Governments, was discussed in earnest. Now it had obviously become imperative. As a first step toward this end a conference of the Foreign Secretaries of the three great Powers was arranged for. The conference was convoked at Moscow. An attempt to shift the meeting place from Moscow to London was politely but firmly objected to by the Russians. It was a matter of prestige. The U.S.S.R. had no reason to play the role of a poor relative, to whom the others condescended. Her part in the war had so far been decisive, her sacrifices for the common cause were incom-

⁴ *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, August 27, 1943.

parably higher than those of the other partners, and her grievances against some of them were a matter of common knowledge.

The conference took place in Moscow from October 18 to 31, 1943. Secretary Cordell Hull, accompanied by the newly appointed American Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Averell Harriman, and a staff of assistants arrived at Moscow with Anthony Eden, the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and his staff, on October 18. By the end of the month the deliberations of the conference had ended in complete accord, and on November 2, the results were made public.

The agenda included all the questions submitted by the three governments. In the first place there were frank and exhaustive discussions of the measures to be taken to shorten the war against Germany and her satellites in Europe. Second only in importance to the hastening of the end of war, was the recognition by the three governments that it was essential in their own national interests and in the interests of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and cooperation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities, and that only in this way could peace be maintained and the political, economic and social welfare of their peoples be fully promoted.

This last conviction was expressed in a Joint Four-Nation Declaration, which was signed by the Foreign Secretaries of the Big Three and by the Chinese Ambassador at Moscow on behalf of his government.

This important document stated:

“1) That their united action, pledged for the prosecution of the war against their respective enemies, will be continued for the organization and maintenance of peace and security.

“2) That those of them at war with a common enemy will act together in all matters relating to the surrender and disarmament of that enemy.

“3) That they will take all measures deemed by them to be necessary to provide against any violation of the terms imposed upon the enemy.

“4) That they recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and

open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"5) That for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the re-establishment of law and order and the inauguration of a system of general security, they will consult with one another and as occasion requires with other members of the United Nations with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations.

"6) That after the termination of hostilities they will not employ their military forces within the territories of other States except for the purposes envisaged in this declaration and after joint consultation.

"7) That they will confer and co-operate with one another and with other members of the United Nations to bring about a practicable general agreement with respect to the regulation of armaments in the post-war period."⁵

The other documents that emerged from this conference were the Declaration Regarding Italy, mentioned before in connection with the question of various difficulties in dealing with Italy after her surrender; a Declaration on Austria, by which that country was promised the restoration of its independence; and finally the Statement on Atrocities, signed by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Stalin, and made public simultaneously with the documents signed at Moscow by the three Foreign Secretaries.

The general result of this historic meeting was the cementing of the coalition. It was greeted with relief and satisfaction by practically everybody in the countries united for the execution of the war. There were a few dissenting voices. A few publications expressed fear of the growing importance of the Soviet ally.

On November 6, in his speech on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin emphasized that the year 1943 had been not only the year marking a radical turn in the course of the war (with the enormous success of the Red Army, which had liberated nearly a million square kilometers of territory in spite of the fact that most of the German forces were on the Eastern Front), but also a year which brought about the consolidation of the anti-Hitler coalition and

⁵ *International Conciliation Series*, #395, December, 1943, pp. 601-602.

the disintegration of the Fascist bloc. "Now," he said, "our united countries are filled with determination to deal the enemy common blows which will result in final victory over him."⁶

A significant event in this connection was the adoption by the American Senate of the revised Connally resolution, which was an indication that this august body, on whose vote depend the chances of ratification of any international agreement of a treaty nature, was slowly but definitely moving in the direction of approving in principle the commitments made by Cordell Hull.

The Soviet press greeted the results of the conference as the real consolidation of Soviet-American friendship. "The recently concluded Moscow Conference showed that the collaboration between the U.S.S.R., the United States and Great Britain, which grew stronger during the war against Hitlerite Germany, has every basis for continuing to grow stronger, as a foundation for the quickest termination of the struggle against Hitlerite Germany and her satellites, and as a basis for the post-war collaboration of all large and small peace-loving peoples."⁷

The Teheran Meeting. Less than a month after the publication of the results of the successful conference held at Moscow, the main meeting, that of the heads of the Big Three, took place. First President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met with the Chinese Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, at Cairo, in Egypt, and discussed the Far-Eastern theater of war. Then the former two went to see Stalin at Teheran. The meetings were held at the Soviet Embassy, i.e., technically on Russian territory. They continued from November 28, to December 1, and resulted in three important statements. First, the Big Three declared that they had "reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of operations which will be undertaken from the east, west and south" against Germany, thus disposing of the "second front" issue. Second, they invited the satellites of Hitler to desert the Nazis and join the United Nations by declaring that they would seek "the co-operation and active participation

⁶ *Soviet War Documents*, pp. 59-69.

⁷ Editorial in *Izvestia*, quoted by the *Information Bulletin* of the Embassy of the U.S.S.R., Washington, November 18, 1943.

of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and in mind are dedicated, as are our own peoples, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance." Third, they assured Iran that they were at one with its government "in their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran."

The Declaration, signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin at the conclusion of the Teheran Conference, said: "We came here with hope and determination. We leave here friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose." This unity had become possible because it was clear to all concerned that it was necessary in their own interests.

The impression left by this first meeting of the Big Three was most gratifying to the anti-Fascist coalition. To the Hitlerites and their friends, who were working for a split between the Anglo-Saxon countries and the U.S.S.R., this solid accord between America, Britain and the U.S.S.R. came as a bitter blow. The good start made at Moscow had been carried further to a point where the chances of finding solid ground for genuine and lasting co-operation between the "two worlds" became much brighter. Just as the great epic of Stalingrad was considered the turning point in World War II, for it spelled the doom of Hitler's might, so the Teheran Conference was considered by many as a turning point in human history, as the start of a period when nations, separated for years by distrust and animosity, could decide to work together in the interests of the entire human race.

It was hailed as a cancellation of the so-called Munich policy, as the end of years of bitter and unreasonable struggle between the "old" and the "new" based on lack of understanding, as the beginning of a more realistic policy of coexistence and co-operation.

"Apart from their implications as to united action for the defeat of Germany and a future world organization for peace, the conferences at Moscow and at Teheran held out striking promise for the continued collaboration in international affairs of the United States and the Soviet Union. The two nations had been drawn closer together than at any time since the Communist revolution, perhaps than in all their history. . . .

“ . . . The past history of Russian-American relations reveals that the two countries are almost inevitably drawn together in time of crisis. They had no grounds for conflict that could have involved them in war against each other, and they should be able to continue to live together in harmony. But the challenge of today overshadows any such limited conception of their international responsibilities. It is a challenge to work together for world peace. . . . The road which has led to Teheran should in the future link Washington and Moscow even more closely.”⁸

Roosevelt-Stalin-Churchill Declaration. The text of the Declaration signed by the Big Three at the end of their meeting revealed an agreement between these most powerful nations of such importance to the future of the world that it became the foundation for the policies of the United Nations for future years. It said:

“We, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Premier of the Soviet Union, have met in these four days past in the capital of our Ally, Teheran, and have shaped and confirmed our common policy.

“We express our determination that our nations shall work together in the war and in the peace that will follow.

“As to the war, our military staffs have joined in our round-table discussions and we have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of operations which will be undertaken from the east, west and south. The common understanding which we have reached guarantees that victory will be ours.

“And as to the peace, we are sure that our concord will make it an enduring peace. We recognize fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the nations to make a peace which will command good will from the overwhelming masses of the peoples of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations.

“With our diplomatic advisers we have surveyed the problems of the future. We shall seek the co-operation and active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as are our own people, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance. We will welcome them as they may choose to come into the world family of democratic nations.

⁸ Foster Rhea Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

"No power on earth can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U-boats by sea and their war plants from the air. Our attacks will be relentless and increasing.

"Emerging from these friendly conferences we look with confidence to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives untouched by tyranny and according to their varying desires and their own consciences.

"We came here with hope and determination. We leave here friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose."

Naturally this agreement, as anything else, was interpreted variously by different groups and individuals. There were those who considered it almost a complete reversal of past policy between nations, and the ushering in of an era of brotherhood automatically guaranteeing complete understanding and imperturbability. Others, cynically inclined, refused to see in it anything more than another "scrap of paper." But the majority of people were obviously impressed by it as really promising a change for the better in international relations.

The press of the U.S.S.R. and the reports from the fronts clearly approved it. Soviet fighting men attached immense significance to these declarations, seeing in them an expression of the strength and power of the anti-Hitlerite coalition and the growth of mutual understanding among the Allies.

The famous Soviet historian, Academician Eugene Tarlé, commented on it in the following words:

"The Teheran Conference winds up a very interesting page of history of the gradual disillusionment of the Hitlerite hordes. After the German debacle at Stalingrad, Hitler pinned his main hopes not only on total mobilization, but also on a split between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxon powers, which seemed to him possible. Recourse was had to an old ruse: the threat of the 'Bolshevization' of Europe in the event the Allies continued to support Russia. Of Hitler's flunkys, it was the Finns who most assiduously helped in this propaganda during 1943.

"Today it must be admitted that just as hope in 'total mobilization' collapsed, along with the collapse of the German summer offensive and subsequent military reverses, so the hopes of the Germans for a split between the Allies ignominiously collapse at Teheran . . .

“... Now we are definitely confirmed in our hope that this time the Germans will not be able to deceive their victors. This time they will suffer their deserved punishment.”⁹

On the other hand, the Teheran agreement aroused uneasiness and fear in certain quarters. The compromise, which attempted to combine recognition of the equal rights of all nations, large and small, to a voice in the determination of their future destiny, with a graduated scale of responsibilities for each nation, determined roughly by the power at its command, worried some commentators.

“To effect the transition to a world order where all nations would enjoy equality of rights, and assume responsibilities commensurate with their strength, will not be an easy matter.”¹⁰ This remark was made in a speech made by the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, Field Marshal Jan Smuts, soon after the Moscow Conference. The elderly statesman urged Great Britain to draw within her orbit some of the smaller nations of Europe in order “to counterbalance the growing might of the U.S.S.R. and the United States.” Naturally, such a statement only served to arouse the U.S.S.R.’s suspicions and prompted her to take certain steps to check any attempt to build a new “*Cordon Sanitaire*.”

If the African statesman sounded a false note in suggesting measures for counterbalancing the growing might of the U.S.S.R., he was hardly wrong in asserting that this might was on the ascent. The Moscow and Teheran Conferences undoubtedly served this end.

Though the second front in Europe, promised in 1942, had not yet been opened by the time these two meetings were held (the operations in Italy were never considered by the Russians as constituting such a front), after Teheran there was no longer any reason to doubt that such a front would be opened before long. It was not only a matter of a change in the military situation; there was a serious clarification of the political situation as well. The delay in starting large-scale operations on the continent of Europe was dictated not by military but by political considerations. To start or not to start such operations was

⁹ *Information Bulletin* of the Embassy of the U.S.S.R., December 14, 1943.

¹⁰ *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, December 10, 1943.

a question of accepting or opposing the inevitable increase of the prestige and power of the U.S.S.R. The brilliant success of the Red troops made the decision easier: with or without such help from the Allies, sooner or later the U.S.S.R. would defeat Hitler anyhow.

The argument offered in the past by sceptics or enemies of the U.S.S.R. who predicted defeat of the "Reds," was no longer convincing. To prolong the war was clearly against the interests of all the belligerents. To risk any further cooling of relations with the U.S.S.R., with all the consequences of such a rupture, was obviously inadvisable. Reports coming from numerous observers, representing various opinions and divergent interests, left no doubt as to either the intentions, or resources and capacities of the U.S.S.R. Everything dictated a radical change in the political atmosphere. At Teheran the thick and evil fog of distrust, that had kept the Anglo-Saxon world separated from and unfriendly toward the U.S.S.R., was lifted. Genuine co-operation became the new slogan for the good of all concerned.

The wording of the Declaration indicated that the political consequences of the agreement were weighed and accepted. The Big Three "have surveyed the problems of the future." In other words they were no longer opposed to receiving the country representing new ideas into their midst as an equal, and wanted to build the world order on the basis of this understanding. This was, certainly, quite a change, and a change that promised a brighter future.

"Second only to the importance of hastening the end of the war was the recognition by the three governments that it was essential in their own national interests and in the interests of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and co-operation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities, and that only in this way could peace be maintained and the political, economic and social welfare of their peoples fully promoted," said the joint communiqué of the Moscow Conference. Teheran not only sanctioned the agreements of Moscow, but elaborated on them. Now the highest authorities of the three great Powers announced that a new era in international relations had been inaugurated.

A short time after the conclusion of the Teheran Conference

Dr. Eduard Benes, the President of Czechoslovakia, arrived in Moscow. Up to that time his plans to visit the U.S.S.R. had not met with the approval of London authorities. Now there were no more obstacles. On December 12, 1943, a twenty-year treaty of mutual assistance, friendship and post-war collaboration between the two countries was signed in his presence. Basically this was a treaty similar to that concluded by the U.S.S.R. in 1942 with Great Britain. Its terms pledged mutual assistance in the war against Germany and her satellites, as well as mutual aid after the war was over should either party become the victim of a new aggression; promised economic collaboration and assistance; pledged not to interfere in each other's internal affairs, and agreed not to enter into any alliances directed against the other contracting party.

The Protocol to the Treaty provided that any third party bordering on the U.S.S.R. or Czechoslovakia which had been the object of German aggression in World War II, might join the treaty "thus making it a tripartite agreement." This naturally referred to Poland, and was a confirmation of the Soviet policy of fostering a free and independent Poland.

Those who were worried lest the Teheran agreement would endanger the status of small nations, received a reassuring reply in this new treaty concluded between a big Power, the U.S.S.R., and one of the smallest, Czechoslovakia.

Commenting on this Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote as follows:

"Just as the Teheran declaration guaranteed Iran against any Soviet designs on her sovereignty or territorial integrity, so this twenty-year alliance with the Czechs shows that in the west as in the south Stalin's policy rejects aggressive or imperialist solutions. He clearly intends to regain every inch of soil lying within what he considers to be Russian national boundaries, but beyond them the security of the country is to be based on the maintenance of the existing smaller nations, on establishing closer relations with them and on a system of collective order in Europe as a whole."¹¹

By this time Moscow had established or re-established diplomatic relations with a number of countries which had stub-

¹¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, December 14, 1943.

bornly refused to do so before. The Governments in Exile of Norway and Belgium established such relations in 1941, soon after Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R.; Holland, in July of the next year; Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa during 1942, as well as Cuba, Mexico and the Government in Exile of Luxembourg. In the course of 1943 several of the South American Republics found it advisable to join the others. Ethiopia and Egypt also "recognized" the U.S.S.R. in 1943.

On the other hand, Moscow recognized the French National Committee of Liberation under General de Gaulle in August, 1943, and did it without any strings attached. As early as September, 1941, the Soviet Ambassador to London, Maisky, had exchanged letters with General de Gaulle, which was a sign of trust in the latter's chances of acquiring the support of the French people and a sign of willingness to cultivate relations for the eventual rapprochement between the two traditional allies.

From the very beginning of the war Moscow also worked for the unity of the various Slavic peoples, with marked success. Not only were all the Slavs victims of Hitler's aggression, but the Führer openly proclaimed his determination to exterminate the Slavs, or at least to reduce them to the role of slaves working for his *Herrenvolk*. A number of All-Slav Congresses were held at Moscow during the war years in which representatives from practically every Slavic country participated. Unity was being welded, not only for the duration of the war, but with the long-range view of keeping firmly together after the war.¹²

Generally speaking, the international position of the Soviet State by that time became substantially what it should be. Its prestige was high and still gaining in strength. Its ties with its neighbors and other anti-Fascist countries were extended and solidified. Its role in winning the war was commonly recognized. Its right to a leading position in the affairs of the world was confirmed by the results of the Moscow and Teheran Conferences. Moscow's diplomatic position was, beyond doubt, exceptionally strong.

¹² The great military victories of the Soviet armies, coupled with the hatred of the Southern Slavs for the Germans, their traditional oppressors, and the re-establishment of the role of the Orthodox Church in Russia served to increase enormously the prestige of the "Big Brother," the U.S.S.R., in the Balkan area, and among the Western Slavs, too, with the exception of the anti-Soviet Poles.

What was the Soviet Union planning to do with this new, very advantageous, position? Essentially what she had always wanted to do. Prior to the war her economic objectives were the industrialization of the country and the collectivization of agriculture. Her political objectives were the firm establishment of the Soviet regime and the gradual introduction of democratic processes. "To achieve these goals Moscow's foreign policy was directed toward the maintenance of peace. This basic aim of Soviet foreign policy was never changed, has not changed and is unlikely to be changed in the future."¹³

¹³ Heinz H. Eulau, "Russia's Political Offensive," *New Republic*, October 18, 1943, p. 509.

CHAPTER XV

The Early Post-Teheran Period

Dumbarton Oaks Conference. Bretton Woods Conference. Great Victories Yalta Conference. San Francisco Conference. Planning the Foundation for Post-war Co-operation.

Dumbarton Oaks Conference. On May 30, 1944, the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, issued an invitation to the other three of the Big Four Powers to send their representatives to Washington to discuss further the plans laid down at Moscow and Teheran to organize the world for peace. This was made possible by the favorable reaction of public opinion in these countries, and particularly by the reaction of the Senate of the United States, which was interpreted as approving the idea, at least in principle.

The meetings, begun on August 21, were held at an estate called Dumbarton Oaks, and the conference and the proposals made there became known by this name. For the first thirty-nine days representatives of Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the United States met and agreed on the principles upon which a general international organization for peace and security could be built. Then for another nine days the discussions continued between the British, American and Chinese representatives (Russia refrained from attending the meeting with the Chinese, since she was not involved in the war in Asia).

A statement issued giving the tentative proposals resulting from these meetings indicated in detail the wide range of subjects on which agreement had been reached. The governments represented in the discussions agreed that, after further study of these proposals, they would, as soon as possible, take the necessary steps for preparation of complete proposals which would then serve as the basis of discussion at a full United Nations conference.

It was proposed to establish an international organization under the title of The United Nations. A tentative draft for the

Charter of that organization was prepared, and made available to the public everywhere.

“All of us have every reason to be immensely gratified by the results achieved at these conversations,” stated Secretary Hull. “To be sure, the proposals in their present form are neither complete nor final. . . . These proposals are now being studied by the four governments which will give their urgent attention to the next steps which will be necessary to reach the goal of achieving the establishment of an effective international organization. . . .”¹

Some 90 per cent of all the subjects discussed brought definite agreement; others, like the question of voting procedure in the Security Council, the most important of the proposed principal branches of the United Nations Organization, were left for further consideration. The Soviet Union insisted on the right of veto in certain cases. This was taken by those who are suspicious about anything Russian as an indication of her lack of desire to co-operate. But as a matter of fact the extent of the agreement reached was most remarkable in view of the long period of mutual mistrust, misunderstanding, and even open animosity.

Commenting on this in his speech on the occasion of the twenty-seventh Anniversary of the Soviet regime, Marshal Stalin said:

“The past year was a year of triumph of the common cause against the German coalition, for the sake of which the peoples of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the U.S.A. have united in military alliance. . . .

“The decision of the Teheran Conference for joint action against Germany and the brilliant putting into practice of those decisions constitute one of the clear indications of the stabilization of the front against the Hitlerite coalition. . . .

“It is also without doubt, on the other hand, that successful realization of the Teheran decisions could not fail to serve to consolidate the front of the United Nations.

“The decision of the Conference at Dumbarton Oaks on the question of the organization of post-war security should be regarded as an equally clear indication of the stability of the United Nations.

¹ Department of State *Bulletin*, XI, No. 276, October 8, 1944.

“There is talk of differences between the powers on certain questions of security. Differences do exist, of course, and they will arise on a number of other issues in the future. Differences occur even among people of one and the same party. All the more so should they occur between representatives of different States and different parties.

“One should not be surprised because differences exist, but because there are so few of them, and that they are as a rule solved almost every time after the united and co-ordinated action of the three great Powers. It is not a question of the differences, but that the differences should not be solved against the interests of the unity of the three great Powers; and that in the final count they are solved in the direction of the interests of that unity.

“It is known that more serious differences existed for us on the question of the opening of the second front. But we know equally well that these differences were solved in the long run in a spirit of complete agreement. I can say exactly the same concerning the differences at the Dumbarton Oaks conference. . . .”²

The decisions of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference were generally regarded as clear indications of the stability of the front against Germany. All the efforts of Hitler and his friends to disunite the United Nations and to set them against each other failed before, and there was not a chance left for them to succeed in the future. Lack of agreement on a few questions which were left for further consideration, including that of the voting procedure, actually proved to be temporary; the differences were ironed out at a later meeting of the Big Three in the Crimea.

Bretton Woods Conference. Between the time when invitations for the Dumbarton Oaks meeting were issued, and its actual work, another international gathering, on a much larger scale, was convoked to discuss measures designed to prepare better conditions for international trade after the war. The Conference was called to meet at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, and started its work on July 1, 1944. Forty-four nations, including the U.S.S.R., were invited and sent their representatives. Preliminary conversations of experts took place in the United States and elsewhere. One of these conversations, an important one,

² For Stalin's complete speech see *Soviet Russia Today*, December, 1944.

was held with the Russians on the desirability of continuing to respect gold as the basis for international monetary transactions. The Russians agreed.

The Bretton Woods Conference ended on July 22, with the signing of the Final Act, which outlined the proceedings and included the details of agreements that were to be placed before the various governments. The conferees suggested the institution of a Bank (for Reconstruction and Development) and of an International Monetary Fund.

One of the most difficult controversies, which was only resolved toward the end of the conference, concerned the amount of each country's contribution to the Fund. There was an effort on the part of many countries to reduce the amount to be put into the Bank, and only prolonged negotiations produced a schedule acceptable to the conference. At the last moment, the Russians, having gained the right to a smaller quota (\$900 million) than that which had first been assigned, in a dramatic gesture, increased their share to the original one and a fifth of a billion.³ Again the Russians demonstrated their eagerness to co-operate to the very limit of their ability.

Great Victories. In the meantime great victories on the Russian front continued, and on June 6, the long-awaited landing in the North of France spectacularly opened the second front in Europe. A short time later another landing was executed by the Allies in the South of France. The plans made at Teheran were now in full development. Hitler's Wehrmacht was under attacks from the east and west and south. Military collaboration had become an accomplished fact.

At the time of the Dumbarton Oaks meeting the Red Armies had completed the occupation of Rumania, and, in agreement with the Allies, dictated, on September 12, armistice terms to that satellite of Germany, which were accepted by the rest of the world with satisfaction. They were a confirmation of what the Soviet authorities had declared on several occasions before, that the U.S.S.R. was not interested either in annexing any territories belonging to other nations, or in forcing her own political ideas on other states.

³ *Foreign Policy Reports*, New York, Foreign Policy Association, September 1, 1944.

One week later, on September 19, armistice terms were dictated by the U.S.S.R. to Finland; again, of course, in agreement with the Allies. By that time Bulgaria was also forced out of the war against the United States and Great Britain by the Russians, and as in the case of Rumania, declared war on her erstwhile friend, Germany, and began fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the Red Armies. Soon Hungary, too, thanks to the further advances of the Red Armies, joined the fight beside the Allies, along with the Yugoslavians, Rumanians and Bulgarians. Further victories followed on the Allied fronts both in Europe and in the Pacific, although complete co-ordination of military operations had still not quite been achieved; for, while there was an organization to co-ordinate the military operations of the Anglo-American allies, there was none to do the same for the Soviet ally.

In his speech on November 6, Marshal Stalin summed up the military achievements of the Red Armies up to that time, in the following terms:

“Today the Soviet people celebrate the twenty-seventh anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Revolution in our country. For the fourth time our country is celebrating the Revolution in conditions of the patriotic war against the German Fascist troops. This, of course, does not mean that the fourth year of war does not differ from the preceding three years of war. On the contrary, between them a radical difference exists.

“The previous years of war were years of the offensive of the German troops. Their advance deep into our country obliged the Red Army to conduct defensive battles.

“The third year of war was a year of radical change on our front, when the Red Army developed powerful offensive battles, smashed the Germans in a series of decisive battles, cleared the German Fascist troops from two-thirds of our soil and forced the enemy to pass to the defensive.

“The Red Army, moreover, still continued to wage war alone against the German troops without serious support from our Allies.

“The fourth year of war turned out to be a year of decisive victories over the German troops on the part of the Soviet Armies and the armies of our Allies. The Germans, forced to wage war on two fronts, found themselves hurled back to the frontiers of Germany.

“During the past year there has been achieved the expulsion of German troops from the confines of the Soviet Union, France, Bel-

gium, and middle Italy and the transference of military operations to the territory of Germany.

"The decisive successes of the Red Army this year and the expulsion of the Germans from the confines of the Soviet Union were achieved by the series of crushing blows struck by our troops on the German troops. The blows were begun this year before Leningrad and Novgorod when the Red Army broke down the permanent defenses of the Germans and hurled them back to the Baltic Sea.

"The result of this blow was the liberation of the Leningrad region. The second blow was struck in February and March of this year on the Bug River, when the Red Army routed the German troops and hurled them back beyond the Dnieper. The result of this blow was that the western Ukraine was liberated from the German Fascist invaders.

"The third blow was struck in April and May of this year in the Crimea area, when the German troops were thrown into the Black Sea. As a result of this blow the Crimea and Odessa were liberated from German oppression.

"The fourth blow was struck in June of this year in Karelia, when the Red Army smashed the Finnish troops, liberated Viborg and Petrozavodsk and hurled the Finns back into the interior of Finland.

"The result of this blow was the liberation of the major part of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic.

"The fifth blow struck the Germans in July of this year, when the Red Army ground down and smashed the German troops before Vitebsk, Bobruisk, and Mogilev and accomplished its blow on the encircled German divisions in the Minsk area.

"The result of this blow was that our troops completely liberated the White Russian Soviet Republic, reached the Vistula and liberated a considerable part of Poland allied to us; reached the Nieman and liberated the major part of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, forced the Nieman and reached the frontiers of Germany.

"The sixth blow was struck in July and August this year in the area of the Western Ukraine when the Red Army smashed the German troops before Lwow and hurled them back beyond the San. The result of this blow was that the Western Ukraine was liberated. Our troops crossed the Vistula and beyond the Vistula formed a powerful bridgehead west of Sandomierz.

"The seventh blow was struck in August of this year in the area of Kishinev and Jassy when our troops utterly routed the German Fascist troops and completed their blow by surrounding twenty-two divisions before Kishinev, not counting the Rumanian divisions.

"The result of this blow was that the Moldavian Soviet Republic

was liberated, that Rumania, Germany's ally, was put out of commission and declared war on Germany; that the road was opened for our troops into Hungary, the last ally of Germany in Europe; and that the opportunity was presented for stretching out a hand of aid to our ally Yugoslavia against the German invaders.

"The eighth blow was struck in September and October of this year in the Baltic Sea area when the Red Army smashed the German troops before Tallinn and Riga and drove them from the Baltic area.

"The result of this blow was that the Estonian Soviet Republic was liberated, Germany's ally Finland was put out of commission and declared war on Germany. More than thirty German divisions found themselves cut off from Prussia, caught in pincers in the area between Tukums and Libau, and they are now being smashed by our troops.

"In October of this year the ninth blow was launched by the movement of our troops between the Tisza and the Danube in Hungary which aimed at bringing Hungary out of the war and turning her against Germany. The result of this blow, which has not yet reached its culmination, is that our troops have rendered direct aid to our ally Yugoslavia in the work of driving out the Germans and liberating Belgrade. Our troops obtained the opportunity of advancing through the Carpathians and stretching out a hand of assistance to our ally Czechoslovakia, part of whose territory is already liberated from the German invaders.

"Lastly, at the end of October of this year, a blow was dealt the German forces in north Finland when the German troops were knocked out of the area of Pechenga and our troops, pursuing the Germans, entered the territory of Norway, our ally. . . .

". . . what is new in the past year in the war against Hitlerite Germany is the fact that the Red Army conducted its operations against the German troops not in isolation, as had been the case in the preceding years, but jointly with troops of our allies. . . ." ⁴

Yalta Conference. In 1945 great victories continued to accumulate on all the fighting fronts, with one exception, in China, where the political situation prevented the concentration of forces and efforts to fight the Japanese.

In February President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, accompanied by a large number of top military and diplomatic aides, came to Yalta, on the southern shore of the

⁴ *International Conciliation Series*, #406, December, 1944, pp. 803-15.

Crimea, by the Black Sea, and held conferences with Soviet officials, headed by Marshal Stalin. The end of the war in Europe was in sight. In addition to the military aspect of hastening the war's end, it was also clearly desirable to have an exchange of opinion and an agreement on a number of problems arising out of the war and the period immediately following it. In addition, problems arising out of the plans for a lasting and enduring peace, the preliminaries of which had been agreed upon at Dumbarton Oaks, were still to be thrashed out.

For eight days, from February 2 to 11, the Big Three conferred not only on military, but on various political problems, and on February 12 a statement, issued by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Marshal Stalin, was published. It announced that military plans for the final defeat of the common enemy, Hitler's Germany, had been considered and determined, and that the Big Three had agreed on common policies and plans for enforcing the unconditional surrender terms to be imposed on the Nazi State. Under the agreed plan, the forces of the three Powers (and of France, if the latter should so desire) would each occupy a separate zone of Germany, and a Central Control Commission, with headquarters at Berlin, would co-ordinate the administration of that country.

In order to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to insure that Germany would never again be able to disturb the peace of the world, the conferees declared their determination to disarm her, to break up her General Staff, to remove or destroy all German military equipment, and to eliminate or control all German industry that could be used for military production.

They came to an agreement about the punishment of all war criminals. And, declaring that it was just that Germany be obliged to make compensation in kind for the damage caused by her to the Allies, the conferees decided to establish a special commission (working at Moscow) to consider the question of the extent and methods of compensating for the said damage.

Then, discussing the future of the liberated countries of Europe and former Axis satellites, the conferees agreed on the procedure to be followed to foster such conditions in these countries that their peoples might exercise their right to choose the form of government under which they would live. (Accord-

ing to the Atlantic Charter: "The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice.")

A very important agreement was also reached on Poland, where a new situation had been created as a result of the complete liberation of her territory by the Red Army. The old dispute about the frontier between the U.S.S.R. and Poland was settled in the only possible way on the basis offered by Moscow long ago, namely, by accepting the Curzon Line, i.e., the frontier approved in 1919 by the Allies. As for the recognized necessity of establishing a Polish provisional government to bring about and maintain order, the joint Statement said: "This calls for the establishment of a Polish provisional government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of western Poland. The provisional government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new government should then be called the Polish provisional government of national unity."

Since one of the purposes of the meeting held at Yalta was to continue "to build the foundation for an international accord that would bring order and security after the chaos of the war, that would give some assurance of lasting peace among the nations of the world," it was agreed that a conference of United Nations should be called to meet at San Francisco on April 25, 1945. This conference would prepare the charter of such an organization, along the lines proposed in the informal conversations at Dumbarton Oaks.

In order that other countries which were not in the war on one side or another have a chance to take part in this new conference, it was agreed that invitations be extended to those who would declare war on Germany not later than March 1st. This resulted in a rush of "declarations of war," and the number of nations to be represented at San Francisco was thereby considerably increased.

The results of the Yalta Conference were most gratifying, as was said by Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt, in their

reports to the British Parliament (on February 27) and to the Joint Session of the Congress (on March 1), respectively. Both appealed to their legislative organs for approval of their decisions.

“Speaking in all frankness, the question of whether it is entirely fruitful or not lies to a great extent in your hands, for unless you, here in the Halls of the American Congress, with the support of the American people, concur in the general conclusions reached at that place called Yalta, and give them your active support, the meeting will not have produced lasting results.

“The conference in the Crimea was a turning point, I hope, in our history and, therefore, in the history of the world. There will soon be presented to the Senate and to the American people a great decision that will determine the fate of the United States—and I think, therefore, the fate of the world—for generations to come.

“There can be no middle ground here. We shall have to take the responsibility for world collaboration, or we shall have to bear the responsibility for another world conflict.”⁵

While the Yalta Conference was in progress there gathered in London representatives of the organized labor movement of some forty countries. Their deliberations also resulted in further strengthening the accord between the United Nations. At that meeting a new world-wide organization of trade unions was launched. It was decided to set up a new World Trade Union Congress, and a committee was organized and charged with the preparation of a draft constitution and with the convening of a constitutional congress of the new body in Paris to be held in September, 1945.

But along with these imposing strides toward international understanding and accord, various individuals and groups inimical to “foreign entanglements,” especially to any co-operation with the Soviet Union, were busily engaged in creating or reviving suspicion against Russia, spreading their own interpretations of the simplest steps taken or plans designed by the Russians. The Polish question again became the favorite topic: “Poland was betrayed at Yalta,” shouted the enemies of Roosevelt’s policy. Or accusations were made that the U.S.S.R. was

⁵ From President Roosevelt’s Report to the Congress. See *International Conciliation Series*, #410, April, 1945, pp. 319-334.

engaging in "unilateral" actions, in imperialism, in attempts to Sovietize Europe. Again the anti-Sovieters became very active.

But what were the facts? On the Polish question Moscow had made a number of concessions; the detailed delimitation of the borders (revision of the Curzon Line) could be only to the advantage of Poland. The Warsaw (former Lublin) Government would be reorganized to include other Poles from among those who remained in their country and even from among those who were abroad, provided they were not Fascists or pro-Fascists, and, naturally, not definitely anti-Soviet. As for the change of government in Rumania, which was bitterly criticized by some foreigners, who accused the U.S.S.R. of forcing that change, what actually took place was in accordance with the agreement on governing Italy, concluded by the Allies at Moscow in 1943. The war was still on, Red troops were fighting on the borders of Rumania and their communication lines passed through Rumanian territory. Naturally the Russians could not be indifferent to what was going on in their rear. When it became obvious that the Rumanian Government was acting as any "good" Fascist government would, Soviet military authorities demanded a change, in accordance with the Moscow Conference and the armistice terms. The change was accepted by the other Allies as an indispensable step dictated by the necessities of war.

In no case on the entire frontier did the Soviet Government force its own political ideas on the occupied countries. Nor did it foster any radical changes, beyond its insistence on removing Fascists from official positions. In other words, Moscow was acting strictly in accordance with the pledges given by her leaders, orally or in writing. Still the anti-Soviet attacks continued, and in some instances even surpassed in their vehemence (and viciousness) all that had been said before. Obviously the success of the Red Armies, and the growing prestige of the U.S.S.R., were not to the liking of these people.

San Francisco Conference. When Moscow announced that her chief delegate at the San Francisco Conference would be the Ambassador to Washington, Gromyko, protests were heard from various circles: Does this not indicate that the Russians are not interested in this conference? Does this not mean that they are not for it to succeed? Why did they not send their top

man, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, as the other countries had done?

Then came the request from Moscow asking that the Polish Government of Warsaw be invited to the Conference. Britain and the United States refused. The request was repeated, and again rejected, for "the Warsaw group did not represent Poland"; a "new" government was expected to take its place. No agreement had been reached as yet as to the composition of that "new" government, and until such a new government was formed and recognized by Washington and London, there would be no place for Poland at the San Francisco meeting.

On April 12, the world was shocked to learn that President Roosevelt had suddenly died. This sad news implied a possible change in the foreign policy of the United States. The new President, Mr. Truman, immediately announced his determination to continue the policy of his predecessor, and stated in particular that there was to be no change in the plans for the San Francisco Conference. The new Chief Executive of the United States directed his Ambassador at Moscow to inform the Soviet Government that if Commissar Molotov would come to head the Soviet delegation at the conference, he would be welcome. (Another variant of this story is that Marshal Stalin himself, on learning of the death of Roosevelt, asked the new President what he could do to be of help.) At any rate, it was announced by Moscow that Molotov would come. This was interpreted as a fresh indication of Moscow's willingness to co-operate. It was also hailed as President Truman's first diplomatic success.

Before Molotov's arrival, the American Ambassador at Moscow, Harriman, and his British colleague, Carr, reached Washington after a record flight. These two members of the Commission, set up by the Yalta Conference for the discussion of the ticklish question of the reorganization of the Polish provisional government, were in a hurry to arrive before Molotov in order to have time to make preliminary reports on the "impasse" deadlocking their Commission.

Molotov, coming via Siberia, was delayed by weather conditions (such at least was the official version) and arrived at Washington only two days before the scheduled opening of the San Francisco Conference. His conversations with the President and

Mr. Stettinius, the Secretary of State, as well as British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, did not result in settling the Polish question. It was announced that conversations would continue at San Francisco.

A few days earlier Moscow had declared to the Japanese Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. that the Soviet Government no longer considered it sensible to allow the automatic prolongation of their neutrality pact, concluded in April, 1941, beyond its original term, expiring in 1946, because the situation which had existed in 1941 had thereafter been changed. Germany had attacked the U.S.S.R., and Japan was helping her ally, Germany. In addition, Japan had attacked the United States and Great Britain, the Allies of the Soviet Union; which made such a renewal inconsistent with the terms of the pact. This "denunciation" of the pact (as most of the commentators and writers called it) was received with jubilation in both Great Britain and the United States. Speculation was rife as to what further steps Moscow might contemplate *vis-à-vis* Japan. High hopes that the U.S.S.R. would declare war on Japan not having materialized at once, expectations for a change after Hitler's defeat took their place. Moscow remained silent. No commitments of any kind were made. More sober observers abroad realized that it was not only what the U.S.S.R. was planning, but to the Russians it was also important to know what the rest of the coalition was planning to do with Japan, and what they were planning to do about the unhealthy political situation in China.

Two days before the arrival in Washington of the Soviet Foreign Commissar, Moscow made public the Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-war Collaboration, signed on April 21, with the Polish Government. This was understood as an indication that Stalin had decided to stand by the Warsaw (Lublin) government and this new agreement with all the might of the U.S.S.R. It was considered a death blow to the London group, which was still "recognized" by England and America. In spite of the declaration made by the former Premier of the Government in Exile, Mikolajczyk, that he recognized the Yalta settlement, in spite of the support of his candidacy by the Anglo-Saxon governments, his compatriots apparently were not inclined to invite him to join the Warsaw (Lublin) government, for he had declined their invitation to do so twice before on his

visits to Moscow and his meeting with them. The deadlock continued.⁶

At the signing of the treaty with Poland, Stalin made a speech in which he expressed his opinion that this agreement was of great historical importance:

“The importance of this treaty consists, in the first place, in that it signifies a radical turn in relations between the Soviet Union and Poland toward alliance and friendship, a turn which took shape in the course of the present liberation struggle against Germany and which is now being formally consummated in this treaty.

“It is known that the relations between our countries in the course of the past five centuries abounded in elements of mutual estrangement, unfriendliness and not infrequently in open military conflicts. . . .

“In the course of the past 25-30 years, that is, in the course of the last two world wars, the Germans succeeded in making use of the territory of Poland as a corridor for an invasion of the East and as a springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union. This became possible because at that time there were no friendly allied relations between our countries. The former rulers of Poland did not want to have relations of alliance with the Soviet Union. They preferred a policy of playing up Germany against the Soviet Union. And, of course, they played themselves into trouble. . . .

“The importance of the present treaty consists in that it puts an end to the old and ruinous policy of playing up Germany against the Soviet Union and replaces it by a policy of alliance and friendship. . . .

“But matters are not confined to that. The present treaty has also great international significance. As long as there existed no alliance between our countries, Germany was able to take advantage of the absence of a united front between us, she could oppose Poland to the Soviet Union and vice-versa. Things changed radically after the alliance between our countries took shape. . . . Now there exists a united front between our countries from the Baltic to the Carpathians against the common enemy, against German imperialism. . . .

“Undoubtedly if this barrier in the East is supplemented by a barrier in the West, that is, by an alliance between our countries and our Allies in the West, one may safely say that German aggression will be curbed and it will not be easy for it to run loose.

⁶ Finally the Provisional government was formed and Mikolajczyk together with several other Poles from London was included in it.

“No wonder, therefore, that the freedom-loving nations, and in the first place, the Slav nations, impatiently await the conclusion of this treaty, for they see that this treaty signifies the strengthening of the united front of the United Nations against the common enemy in Europe. Therefore, I do not doubt that our Allies in the West will welcome this treaty. . . .”⁷

Probably the peoples and some of their governments did welcome this treaty, but adverse comments were not lacking. Accusations and suspicions also abounded that Moscow had made any agreement on Poland even more difficult, that Stalin had something else “up his sleeve.”

Aside from this “complication” in connection with the Polish question, there was another reason for the renewed attacks on the U.S.S.R.: the expected demand by the Russians for two additional seats in the Assembly of the new World Security Organization, one for the Ukrainian and one for the Byelorussian Republic. It was revealed by the late President Roosevelt that this proposal had been discussed at Yalta and that he and Churchill had pledged their support to this Russian request. Then, after the Washington Government had decided not to demand three seats (as had been planned to “compensate” for the Soviet demand), some people expected that the Russians, too, would withdraw their demand. Instead of waiting to hear what the Soviet delegates would actually ask for, and why, the ever-alert anti-Sovietees immediately began to attack from this angle.

The general impression created by these attacks, accusations and name callings, was that the U.S.S.R., not Germany, was the enemy. Walter Lippmann, in one of his regular columns, even considered it necessary to warn against this ridiculous, but also dangerous, tendency.

“In the days just preceding the opening of the conference, this dangerous tendency has manifested itself very clearly. It can best be countered by reporting it bluntly and starkly. It has shown itself in the fact that the main preoccupation of so many here has been, not Germany, but the Soviet Union. . . .

“It is true that the future depends upon the relations between the Soviet Union and the other countries. But these relations will be-

⁷ *Information Bulletin*, Embassy of the U.S.S.R., April 26, 1945.

come hopeless if we yield at all to those who, to say it flatly, are thinking of the international organization as a means of policing the Soviet Union. We cannot police the Soviet Union and we must not flirt with the idea of attempting it. . . .

"It is only by collaboration in this central business of the post-war years that we can establish the good relations which are so essential to all mankind. For if we think this very real war is finished and start off thinking about another hypothetical war, we shall almost certainly get the other war because we have not actually finished this one."⁸

President Truman made his attitude clear toward the problems facing the world at this time of global crisis, when he said: "We have learned to fight with other nations in common defense of our freedom. We must now learn to live with other nations for our mutual good."

Some newspapermen and a few radio commentators now asserted that the new Administration had decided to get-tough-with-the-Russians. The refusal of President Truman to yield on the question of inviting the Poles was interpreted as a proof of this. Those who did not want to see the San Francisco Conference succeed became quite busy at the time of its meeting, and one of the devices they used was the demand for "justice" toward the small nations. The real meaning of their solicitude was clear enough; what they wanted was a crack-down on the Soviet Union.

But the Russians continued to assert that the parley would accomplish its task. Moscow broadcasts said that the meeting was being held at the right time from every point of view, and that it would accomplish what it was called for. Why? Because, in the opinion of the Soviet authorities, realistic conditions demanded it. The United Nations, and in particular the United States, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. needed a durable and solid peace. The whole world needed it, and it must be accomplished.

It is clear that if the strongest states of the world find a common platform for the preservation of peace there will be peace on earth. If this common platform is not found, no clause in the constitution of any organization whatever will help.

⁸ "At the Golden Gate," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 26, 1945.

In his speech at the first plenary session of the San Francisco Conference Molotov made it quite clear that the U.S.S.R. was not only willing to help the Security Conference succeed, but was anxious to see the Dumbarton Oaks plan, with necessary changes, amendments, etc., passed and a charter for the world organization for peace accepted. In this speech he brought to the attention of his world-wide audience a few facts from the past which, in his opinion, explained many unfortunate developments and the very war in which the nations were still engaged, but he made it abundantly clear that Moscow now was interested primarily in building for future peace, and was not unduly impressed by the antics of those who were striving to keep the nations apart, especially from co-operation with the Soviet State.

After having lauded the late President Roosevelt for his struggle to achieve a lasting peace and for his part in the preparation of this historic conference, Molotov gave a brief evaluation of Hitler's responsibility for World War II, and then reminded his listeners of the role played by the U.S.S.R. before this war and during it:

"Long before the direct attack on its neighbors, Hitlerism openly prepared a criminal war which it started at a moment of its own choosing. It is well known that Hitlerism found unscrupulous henchmen and sanguinary accomplices. It is also well known that when German Fascism, which had made an easy tour of all Europe, invaded the Soviet Union it faced an unflinching adversary. The country of Soviets, which has saved European civilization in bloody battles with German Fascism, with good reason now reminds the governments of their responsibility for the future of peace-loving nations after the termination of this war. This is no time to explain at length why this happened. It cannot be proved that there was no desire to prevent the war. It has been fully proved, however, that the governments which once claimed the leading part in Europe manifested their inability if not their reluctance to prevent the war, with the consequences of which it will be not so easy to cope. . . ." ⁹

He recalled the mistakes of the League of Nations, which had been called upon to lay the foundation for the future security of nations, but proved to be unable or unwilling to cope with

⁹ *New York Herald Tribune*, April 27, 1945.

this problem. It betrayed the hopes of those who believed in it, and, in the opinion of Mr. Molotov, no one wished to restore that League. But, he continued:

“The Soviet Government is a sincere and firm champion of the establishment of a strong international organization of security. Whatever may depend upon them and their efforts in their common cause of the creation of such a post-war organization of peace and security of nations will be readily done by the Soviet Government. We will fully co-operate in the solution of this great problem with all the other governments genuinely devoted to this noble cause. We are confident that this historic aim will be achieved by the joint efforts of peace-loving nations in spite of all the obstacles in the way of its achievement. . . .

“The work which was carried out at Dumbarton Oaks last year and which is well known to all of us, is an important contribution to this cause . . . at the suggestion of the late great President Franklin Roosevelt, the Crimean conference made important supplements to this draft. As a result this conference has a sound basis for successful work.

“We must not minimize the difficulties involved in the establishment of the international security organization. . . . We must warn of these difficulties in order to overcome them and, avoiding illusions, to find at last a reliable road to march along toward the achievement of this noble objective. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, I should like to assure the conference at this time that in our country the whole people are brought up in the spirit of faith in and devotion to the cause of setting up a solid organization of international security. . . .

“. . . You must definitely know that the Soviet Union can be relied upon on the matter of safeguarding the peace and security of nations. . . .

“I conclude my speech by expressing my heartfelt wishes for our joint success in the work of the conference.”¹⁰

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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