

S O V I E T
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by

John Quinn

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BRITISH - SOVIET SOCIETY

This is a
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Publication

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY 1917-1947

by
John Quinn

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SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY 1917-1947

INTRODUCTION.

IN March, 1939, M. Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador to Britain, publicly made a plea for Anglo-Soviet co-operation, stating

“ You will find that in the last resort the fate of peace or war depends on the kind of relations which exist between London and Moscow.”

During the war, Mr. Eden affirmed his belief that if in 1939 unity had been established between the Soviet Union, Great Britain and U.S.A., the recent world war would have been impossible.

Both men spoke wisely, but it was the Soviet speech which came before the event. In the present state of the world the progressive strengthening of co-operation among these three great nations is again the surest guarantee of world peace.

This unity will be achieved in direct proportion as the people in these countries receive accurate accounts of the policies pursued by the several Governments, and work consistently to enforce this co-operation.

Soviet Foreign Policy was never more violently and more irresponsibly distorted by certain sections of the British and American press than it is to-day. In this critical period it has become the almost daily habit of many Diplomatic Correspondents and leader-writers first to distort, and thereafter to malign the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. Even in official and governmental circles, in the House of Commons and elsewhere, phrases have been used with reference to Soviet foreign policy which cannot be justified on the grounds of either accuracy or national interest. Indeed, some of the recent meetings of the Security Council have given cause for the belief that there are elements who would not hesitate to violate the Charter of the United Nations Organisation or to use the Council unworthily were it thus possible to put the Soviet Union into a false position.

The past history of Soviet diplomacy shows very clearly that the U.S.S.R. knows how to deal with such situations, but the history of our country's relations with the Soviet Union shows that disaster can befall our people when such dangerous manoeuvres are not exposed and defeated. These fabrications are not accidental; they are part and parcel of a policy, indeed, of a conspiracy.

Serious and responsible people try to learn from their mistakes ; these mischief-makers try to forget that they helped to obscure the betrayal of the League of Nations and found high-sounding " moral " sanction for every step that led to the betrayal of China, Spain, Czechoslovakia and the peace.

Once more mankind is trying to find a way to ensure the peace ; again these people are doing precisely the same hack's work for the same pay-masters. In February, 1945, three weeks after the Crimea Conference, Winston Churchill, in the House of Commons, said

" Sombre indeed would be the fortunes of mankind if some awful schism arose between the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union, if all future world organisation were rent asunder and if a new cataclysm of inconceivable violence destroyed all that is left of the treasures and liberties of mankind."

So sombre indeed, that no person with a shred of feeling for the peoples who have suffered would speak one word or write one line that would contribute to bring about another war. But one cannot avoid the conclusion that Mr. Churchill in his Fulton speech struck the note calculated to bring about that rift which would widen to this awful schism. Whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad. Disaster and ruin overtook Hitlerite Germany which so blatantly used the " Bolshevik Menace " as a device to divide their enemies. Those who are determined that this time the disaster and ruin shall not be shared by innocent people who seek only peace and friendship among the nations, must sweep aside the men who call upon the Western Democracies to attempt what Hitler and Mussolini failed to achieve.

This pamphlet, while concerned primarily with the policy of the Soviet Union to-day, gives a brief history of the period before 1939, in order to show that the U.S.S.R. has consistently pursued the same basic policy since 1917. This policy is clear and is easily understood. There is no mystery of the Kremlin.

SOCIALISM IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD.

THE Soviet Union is the one Socialist State in an otherwise Capitalist world. Accordingly, it has had to take this important fact into consideration when working out its foreign policy. For many years it found few governments which showed any desire spontaneously to accord it full recognition, or even such diplomatic and trade facilities as are normally granted between states not at war. On the contrary, itself threatening no one and seeking friendly relations with all, it found that it had to face hostility, threats and concerted plans to isolate and even to attack it.

Basing its policy on principles which we shall examine shortly, the U.S.S.R. set itself to apply this policy in ever-changing world conditions so as best to protect itself in its internal policy of socialist construction, and to aid such world forces as were interested in the preservation of peace and the self-determination of peoples. As M. Maisky said in 1936, addressing the Liberal Summer-school, "Within these confines, Soviet foreign policy is an expression of socialism projected into the international field"

SOVIET POLICY IS POSITIVE.

SOVIET policy in all matters affecting the relations of the Soviet Union with other States is positive and constructive, not only with regard to immediate issues, but to fundamentals concerning the whole world. It acts in the interest not only of the Soviet Union, but also of the people of the country or countries concerned. This is clearly evident in the early treaties with Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan and China, which made a contribution to the well-being and independence of these countries and to the general theory and practice of self-determination in foreign policy.

Time and again in the League of Nations M. Litvinov, on behalf of the U.S.S.R., put forward suggestions and proposals for making the collective security system so effective that the peace forces of the world and not the aggressive forces would have the initiative at every stage. Litvinov's proposals would have made the peace forces dynamic instead of, as they turned out to be, passive and ineffective.

Appeasement of our enemies was a negative policy. Far from weakening the Axis forces, it strengthened and encouraged them. Events proved that it was not productive of peace but provocative of war. From the first moment that this policy began to be practised, even indirectly, the Soviet Union condemned it, and in no uncertain terms warned the world of its ultimate consequences. It put forward the constructive policy of the Peace Front, the adoption of which would not merely have prevented aggression, but would have brought about the internal collapse of Fascism, as was clearly proved at the Nuremberg Trial.

So, in its policy towards the ex-enemy countries in defeat, the Soviet Union has not merely sought to eliminate Fascism but has taken practical steps to encourage and make possible the development of democratic influences in these countries.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

SOVIET foreign policy is based on the following four principles :—

1. Devotion to Peace.
2. Self-determination for all peoples.
3. Co-operation with all States interested in working for aims shared by the Soviet Union.
4. Renunciation of secret diplomacy.

DEVOTION TO PEACE.

ON the second day of the Revolution the Soviet Government issued the following decree :—

" The Workers' and Peasants' Government . . . proposes to all warring nations and their governments to begin immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace. Such a peace the Soviet Government considers to be an immediate peace without annexations and without indemnities."

During the cruel years of the Wars of Intervention, the Soviet Government made repeated peace proposals but the governments of the intervening States always rejected them. From that early beginning the Soviet Union has gone forward, first under Lenin, then under Stalin, successfully expanding its economic, social and cultural life within its own confines and working assiduously for peace abroad, as essential to its own development.

By 1939 all men and women who were sincerely interested in peace had long recognised that its most consistent champion was the Government of the U.S.S.R. Throughout the world vast numbers of ordinary people had come to appreciate that the Soviet Union alone put forward a policy that could avert the growing danger of war. This work had been carried on for 20 years against the greatest difficulties. There was the long fight for recognition and the breaking down of diplomatic and economic boycott. With admirable patience and restraint the Soviet Government met the campaign of slanderous misrepresentation, the studied insults of the British, French and other statesmen, and such tragic buffooneries as the Arcos Raid and the Zinoviev Letter forgery. It is no exaggeration to say that the Foreign Offices of Britain and France by their hostile and disreputable treatment of the Soviet Union sacrificed such reputation for correct and honest dealing as they might formerly have enjoyed.

The evidence of the Soviet Union's work is available in the documents of each of the European Conferences attended by Soviet representatives in the period between the wars. All

students of the period are indebted to W. P. and Zelda K. Coates whose indispensable "History of Anglo-Soviet Relations" makes so much of this material conveniently available.

The Genoa and Hague Conferences (1922) were in great measure concerned with Tsarist debts and compensation to foreigners for property nationalised by the Soviet Government. The Soviet representatives made every reasonable effort to reach a compromise agreement although the French Government hardly concealed its determination that no settlement should be achieved. The Conference was abruptly terminated when Litvinov put forward a proposal so conciliatory that the Non-Russian Commission could no longer face the exposure of its negative aims.

In the Preparatory Disarmament Commission (1927) the Soviet representatives were unable to participate until the fourth session. Up till then not a single concrete proposal had been discussed. The entry of Litvinov swept aside the atmosphere of utter futility. As Mr. Wilson Harris (now M.P. for Cambridge University) wrote at the time :

"He then entered on his main statement, the essence of which was the revolutionary doctrine that the right way to bring about disarmament was to disarm."

In this Commission, Litvinov put forward a resolution which proposed the calling of a Disarmament Conference within a few months and concluded his statement with the forthright words, "The Soviet Government is pursuing and always has pursued a policy of peace with all possible energy, not only in words but by deeds." At the Disarmament Conference (1932), the Soviet proposals were not accepted, but were obviously so much more practicable than any others put forward they they did receive a welcome from many sections of the British people and some sections of the British press. The late Arthur Henderson, as President of the Conference, made a public acknowledgment of the help given him by the Soviet delegation in the effort to make the Conference successful.

Similarly, at the World Economic Conference (1933), the Soviet Union put forward concrete, constructive proposals for the alleviation of the economic crisis that was then raging in all parts of the world outside the Soviet Union. These also were shelved with disastrous consequences to plain men and women who wanted work.

It was while he was in London for this Conference that Litvinov, on behalf of the U.S.S.R., and in conjunction with the representatives of States bordering on the U.S.S.R., concluded Pacts for the definition of an aggressor.

"Peace is indivisible" is a maxim given to the world by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union knew the importance of its acceptance; the world paid the cost of its rejection. Its acceptance would have meant that the Japanese troops would have been thrown out of China and that Italy and Germany would never have dared those aggressions against Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Albania, which they thought would enable them to challenge the world.

The Soviet Union's proposals and actions to meet each of these emergencies will long be remembered. The British and French reaction to them would be better forgotten were it not that critical lessons of importance for the future can be drawn from a study of them. To the victims of aggression the Soviet Union gave the fullest moral and material support possible in the circumstances.

In September, 1938, when Czechoslovakia was seriously threatened, the Soviet Union, in accordance with the Soviet-Czech Pact, informed the Czechoslovak Government that it was prepared to carry out its obligations to give immediate and effective aid. But it did more. It proposed an immediate meeting of the great Powers of Europe to decide on ways and means of maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia. Whitehall did not reply. It was too busily engaged thinking out the steps towards the Munich Betrayal.

Again, after the Chamberlain-Daladier-Hitler policy stood fully exposed and when Poland and Rumania were the next to be threatened, the Soviet Government took the initiative by proposing collective preventive action by the countries opposed to aggression. It proposed a conference of Great Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey and the Soviet Union. The British Government replied that the proposal was premature, by which it meant, presumably, that the Nazis had not yet attacked.

Again and again during the succeeding months the Soviet Government made proposals designed to save the peace and, if that could not be done, to ensure the defeat of Germany by a broad defensive alliance, the core of which should be France, Britain and the U.S.S.R. On April 17, 1939, it presented an 8-point programme proposing a Triple Defensive Alliance of France, Britain and the U.S.S.R., a Military Convention and effective guarantees for all threatened States. The British reply ignored the proposal for a Triple Alliance.

On May 14 the Soviet Government replied to the British Note repeating its proposals in a simplified form. Chamberlain, still rejecting the only adequate solution, collective action, had

in the meantime given guarantees to Poland, Rumania, Greece and Turkey, all uni-lateral guarantees which, as events proved, he was in no position to honour. On June 2 the Soviet Government again put forward concrete proposals.

All the evidence points unmistakably to the conclusion that throughout these interchanges the Soviet Government on the one hand, wanted a concrete, effective agreement for such action as might be necessary, while the British and French Governments, on the other, wanted only a vague declaration which could not tie them down to effective action in the event of Hitler's eastward aggression.

At a Conference held in Moscow on August 12, the British and French representatives asked what the U.S.S.R. was prepared to do to help Poland should Germany attack. The Soviet representative replied that the Red Army was ready to co-operate in defence of Poland but that naturally, in order to do so, it would have to cross Polish territory to meet the Germans. When the Polish Government was informed of this it said that it did not require armed help from the Soviet Union if Britain and France would assist it, and that in no circumstances would it permit units of the Red Army to enter Polish territory. It said, however, that it was prepared to accept military supplies from the Soviet Union. As the British and French Governments made no attempt to persuade Poland to depart from this hostile position, the Soviet Government had no alternative but to draw the obvious conclusion. The Polish Government of that day did not intend that Poland should be saved from German aggression.

SOVIET-GERMAN-NON-AGGRESSION PACT.

EVERYTHING that the Soviet Union could do to save Europe from war and from defeat if war should come, had been done. It was obvious that a British-French-Soviet Pact was unobtainable. The motives of the Polish Government could not but be gravely suspect. A serious responsibility rested upon the Soviet Government; the responsibility of protecting its peoples. It had rejected several German proposals for a Non-Aggression Pact. In view of the final rejection of its efforts to save Europe it had no alternative but to sign the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany.

The Anglo-French rejection of the Soviet proposals made war certain. The Soviet Non-Aggression Pact could not prevent it; equally truly it could not cause it. But it altered the character of the war and gave the Soviet Union a respite. It was this that caused hysteria amongst those of the West who found that their plans had gone astray. How else can we interpret certain parts

of Lord Lloyd's book, "The British Case," published at the beginning of the war and given the blessing of the then Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax? Speaking of the Pact, Lord Lloyd said :—

"This was Hitler's final apostasy: It was the betrayal of Europe."

The implications of these two sentences should be carefully considered by all. The Pact was not an Alliance. By it Hitler promised not to attack the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union promised not to attack Germany. That, and that only, was the meaning of this Pact.

We cannot be surprised that Mr. Chamberlain's friends in their dilemma in late 1939 kept shouting, "This is no ideological war" and swore that they were not fighting to destroy Fascism. The ideological war, the war against the Soviet Union, had slipped their grasp.

SOVIET-FINNISH WAR.

THE war with Finland presented much difficulty and no little concern to some people who had hitherto recognised the Soviet Union's splendid work for peace. This was in great measure due to the successful hiding of the facts from the people of this country and to the record number of false statements issued by the national press. It was also, in part, due to the fact that even then, many people held unrealistic ideas about the aims of Fascist aggression and totalitarian war. This was clearly brought out by Mr. Geoffrey Cox, *Daily Express* correspondent in Finland in 1939, in a letter he wrote to the *New Statesman* on March 21, 1942, in which he said :—

"The Russo-Finnish war in 1939-40 is old history now, but there is always the danger that the feelings it aroused may be dragged out of the cupboard to disturb relations between Britain and Russia, particularly after the present war. I think, therefore, that those of us who saw the 1939 campaign at first-hand should re-examine in the light of present events the view we expressed on it.

"My view which I expressed in *The Red Army Moves*, was that the Russians were right in their aims but wrong morally and technically in their methods. They should not have resorted to war, I believed, if they could have got by the threat of war, as appeared possible at that time, Hango and a substantial part of the Karelian Isthmus.

"I see now that that view is unrealistic. I have changed my opinion not because the Russians are now fighting alongside us, but because my own ideas of the realities of war have been modified considerably by a year of experience as a soldier in Crete and Libya.

" I can see now that the primary thing in war is not to hold this position or that, but to destroy the enemy's forces. The Russians realised this and set out not just to get the Mannerheim Line, but to smash the Finnish Army. For that Army, though small, was highly efficient, and the pro-Nazi character of its General Staff meant that it would always be brought in on Hitler's side in any war with Russia. Ruthlessly, but rightly, the Russians determined to break that army while they had the chance to tackle it in their own time."

Finland had long been prepared as a base for attack on the Soviet Union. The Fascist leaders of Finland had been encouraged in their propaganda that Finland's borders should reach to the Urals. As Finns later admitted, petty aggressions of Soviet territory had been made and Soviet frontier guards had been killed. The Soviet Government, recognising that sinister influences were behind these actions and that the guns of the Mannerheim Line could be fired on Leningrad, made every effort to effect a reasonable settlement with the Finnish Government. The latter rejected the Soviet proposals and betrayed its implacable hostility to the Soviet Union.

In view of all the circumstances, and carrying out its obligation to protect its people, the Soviet Government had no alternative but to remove the threat implicit in the Mannerheim Line. Its generous treatment of Finland in 1940 and again in 1945 shows that its motives were not aggressive.

SELF-DETERMINATION.

LENIN and Stalin both signed the Soviet Decree of November 15, 1917, granting to the formerly subject peoples of the Czarist "prison-house of nations" the right of self-determination "up to separation and the establishment of an independent State." Article 17 of the present Constitution of the U.S.S.R. still upholds this principle and states :—"To every Union Republic is reserved the right freely to secede from the U.S.S.R."

On December 6, 1917, the Finnish House of Representatives declared the country an independent republic and applied to the Soviet Government for recognition of this fact. On December 31 the Soviet Government gave its approval of Finnish independence and five days later openly announced its recognition of Finland. This Finnish Government, collaborating with the Germans in their attacks on the Baltic States, so roused the hostility of the Finnish people that they replaced it by a Peoples' Government. Baron Mannerheim, with the help of 30,000 German troops, seized power and wreaked terrible vengeance on the popular forces. Finland ceased to be a truly independent state

and remained until recently a centre of international intrigue, now with Germany, now with Britain and France, consistently against the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government also recognised the independence of Poland while the Western Allies in 1918, still hoping to restore Czarism, refused similar recognition.

The Soviet Union is the one multi-national state in the world which recognises the right of every country to self-determination, and bases its unity on granting to its constituent parts complete cultural and political autonomy. The reward of this policy is to be seen in the unshakeable political unity of diverse Soviet nationalities which stirred the admiration of the world during the late war.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

THE policy of self-determination was applied with equal consistency in Soviet Russia's external relations. For example, it concluded with Persia a treaty by which the Soviet Government gave up without compensation all Persian debts, properties and concessions held by the Tsarist Government. It returned to Persia the right to maintain a navy in the Caspian Sea.

Similar treaties were signed with Turkey, China and Afghanistan. History does not furnish a parallel instance of a large State so proving the sincerity of its desire to see independent, flourishing States on its frontiers.

It was this same policy that guided its efforts some twenty-five years later at the San Francisco Conference to have self-determination accepted as the aim for countries placed under trusteeship. The Soviet Union is convinced that the right to self-determination with economic, political and cultural autonomy, is the prerequisite to the elimination of illiteracy, the raising of the standard of living and the development of administrative ability among colonial peoples. In its own experience the Soviet Union finds complete justification for this point of view. There are Eastern Republics in the Soviet Union which 25 years ago were quite as backward as India is to-day but which at this moment can compare economically and culturally with many of the mature European States.

Soviet national policy and its results make nonsense of the malevolent charges of imperialism which are so current in certain circles at the present time.

This charge of imperialism against the Soviet Union is not something new. It was raised as long ago as 1920 in the *Manchester Guardian* against the Soviet Union's policy towards the then

independent Republic of Georgia. The Menshevik Republic of Georgia was being used by the Allies as an advanced base against the Soviet Union, much against the will of the Georgian people. The people revolted, the Red Army came to their aid, and the Georgian Soviet Republic was established.

"Red imperialism" was the cry raised against Lenin in this connection in 1920, as against Stalin, over Finland, in 1939.

Again, in 1936, the *Guardian* charged the Soviet Union with following a subtle imperialist policy towards Outer Mongolia. In fact, the Soviet Union's relations with Outer Mongolia were quite contrary to imperialist policy and practice. Far from annexing or effecting external domination of Outer Mongolia, far from establishing the external exploitation of its people and its resources, the Soviet Union established friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the government of that country. Outer Mongolia has retained her National independence, her economy has expanded by leaps and bounds, her people have fully benefited from Soviet advances in the fields of science and culture. Indeed, much the greater advantage has gone to the Mongolian people. This is not imperialism.

The propagandists who invent moral sanctions for each imperialist adventure and intrigue of their own governments, hide the real facts of the Soviet Union's external relations and present a picture of motives which are their own imaginative creations.

No imperialism could come into being by granting, at the very outset, to formerly subject peoples the right "freely to secede"; no imperialism could maintain its imperialist character beyond the first meeting of a parliament constituted as is the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.; no imperialism could exist for a single day if based, as the Socialist State is based, on an economic system which has abolished "the exploitation of man by man."

CO-OPERATION.

TO-DAY, as always, the Soviet Union works for co-operation among the nations. Particularly has it always striven for co-operation with those countries interested in working for a common aim shared by the Soviet Union. Isolationism is anathema to the Soviet Union; its whole record proves this. In spite of all rebuffs it never turned its back on the rest of the world to confine itself to purely internal affairs. It will never depart from this policy of co-operation, but to-day it expects to be treated as an equal partner.

The world has recorded in words its debt to the Soviet Union for its magnificent military collaboration in the defeat of the Axis Powers. The Soviet Union is behind no one in its enthusiasm for the success of the United Nations Organisation, and is the most consistent exponent of Three-Power Unity of Britain, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. as the basis for that success. It is to its credit and in accordance with the spirit of the Potsdam Agreement that it is sternly opposed to any of the benefits of that co-operation being shared with the remaining Fascist states.

NO SECRET DIPLOMACY.

IN 1918, the Soviet Union, renouncing secret diplomacy, published the secret treaties made by the Tsarist Government with other Powers. Since that date the Soviet Government has strictly followed a policy of open diplomacy, making public to the world all *formal* agreements and treaties arrived at between it and other Powers. This policy, consistently pursued, has had considerable influence on world diplomacy as a whole. There are, however, sinister influences that seek to oblige the Soviet Union to make known the terms of *proposed* agreements between it and other countries. The Soviet Government correctly ignores this interested demand of vested interests but that does not prevent these same influences from using this to create unwarranted suspicion in the minds of the unwary and the credulous. This ignoble device is favoured by some Diplomatic Correspondents, and all friends of understanding among the nations should learn to recognise it for what it is.

STALIN ON FOREIGN POLICY.

WE have examined the basic principles of Soviet foreign policy and briefly reviewed how consistent the Soviet Union has been in honouring them in deeds. The basic principles of 1917 remain the basic principles of to-day. With important changes in international circumstances, the details of application and the direction of emphasis may vary, but always the principles have remained. Moreover, the Soviet Union has always stated its policy clearly and unambiguously.

On every issue of international importance the Soviet Union has taken pains to make its attitude clear and widely known. Leading Statesmen of the Union, Stalin, Molotov, Litvinov, Zhdanov and others, have made speeches analysing the situation and giving the Soviet point of view. These statements were given the widest publicity, were printed and usually broadcast.

In the more important countries of the world, verbatim translations appeared in cheap pamphlet form easily available to all who were interested in understanding Soviet foreign policy.

One excerpt from Stalin's historic speech of March 10, 1939, will serve to show how frankly Soviet Statesmen declared their position. Concluding that part of his speech which dealt with international affairs and in which he analysed the danger and hypocrisy of both the Fascist and the "appeasement" policies, he stated :—

"The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit : 1. We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position ; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country.

2. "We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R. That is our position, and we shall adhere to this position so long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and so long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the Soviet State.

3. "We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.

4. "We are not afraid of the threats of aggressors, and are ready to deal two blows for every blow delivered by instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet borders. Such is the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union."

For clarity of policy and expression this speech is unique among those of statesmen of our time. It is not without its warning for us to-day that the foreign press which received these speeches gave them very little space and often ignored them completely while giving verbatim reports of the long-winded blusterings of Hitler.

The "Mystery of the Kremlin," like "Russia's Iron Curtain," is a myth of anti-Soviet malignity concocted by the very people who deliberately boycott official Soviet declarations.

CRIMEA, POTSDAM AND U.N.O.

ON behalf of their countries the leading statesmen of Britain, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., signed the agreements concluded at Crimea and Potsdam. The three countries are pledged to the terms of these agreements, and to the degree in which they honour their pledges by carrying out the terms will history judge them.

They were signed when the grim realities of war and Fascism brought to these conferences a sense of responsibility and realism that was necessary for the future security of the world. Hence these Agreements are inspired by the determination to eliminate Fascism in all its forms, to restore to all peoples in Europe the possibility of genuine democratic development and government and to build an organisation realistically designed to secure the peace.

All who wish to understand post-war developments must obtain the texts of these Agreements and study them clause by clause.

EASTERN EUROPE.

AT the Crimea Conference, Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. solemnly declared their belief that "the establishment of order in Europe and the re-building 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."

These principles are to be applied to the liberated countries and to the ex-satellites of Eastern Europe. The declaration makes it clear that Fascism and Nazism *have a definite economic basis*, and that in the re-building of these countries economic life must be so transformed that Fascism and Nazism will be utterly destroyed. The declaration is clear. Nor is there any doubt as to the way in which order is to be restored—in such a way that Fascism and Nazism cannot rise again.

Has the Soviet Union been loyal to this agreement? In Eastern Europe the people have been encouraged to punish war criminals and collaborators. The industries which belonged to the collaborators have been confiscated. The estates of the great landlords, fascists almost to a man, have been broken up and distributed to the landless peasants. For the first time in history all adult men and women have the vote. Order is restored and economic life re-built in such a way that Fascism is dying and can never revive.

But Fascism is reviving in Italy and Greece, where order is so restored that the landlords keep their estates, the industrialists their factories and the Fascists their posts in the police.

"In Trieste, occupied by a large British and American army, Fascists raised their arms in the fascist salute under the very noses of the British-trained police. In the evenings and on May Day groups of Fascist hooligans were roaming the streets and squares of Trieste attacking the helpless Slovene women and

girls and lonely Italian Left-wingers. Murderous beatings took place repeatedly in front of Albergo Centrale, the British Officers' hotel, in which I happened to stay."

So writes the *Observer* Correspondent (5/5/46) of the law and order which Britain and America have brought to Trieste.

The Italian and Greek reactionaries appear to enjoy the full support of Britain and America. The more progressive regimes of Eastern and Central Europe, including those of our allies, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, are viewed with suspicion or open hostility. Britain recognises and supports a Greek Fascist King, ex-protector of Dictator Metaxas. The Greek Government has rigged an election and a plebiscite, destroyed the Trade Unions set up under British T.U.C. supervision. It is now proposing to create, with British weapons, a private army of royalist peasants. How long can such a regime be protected by a British Army?

The crime of Eastern Europe is to have chosen governments determined to free it from the stranglehold of foreign private enterprise which, by controlling the economic life of these countries deprived them of any real independence. As Count M. Karolyi stated on May 7 this year, on the eve of his return to Hungary, "Even in the past the independence of small countries was often more apparent than real."

Because these countries are now friendly to the U.S.S.R. their governments are styled "Soviet Puppets." Apparently only Soviet puppets can be friendly to the Soviet Union. The ineptness of this propaganda is apparent when we notice that perhaps the most pro-Soviet of all these governments is that of Benes of Czechoslovakia. Benes sees in close co-operation with Russia a military guarantee of security, for Russia alone was ready to stand by Czechoslovakia against Hitler. He also sees in increased economic relations a guarantee of a better standard of living for his people. As this economic co-operation will not exclude similar relations with the West, Benes foresees a greater independence for his country than it would enjoy if its trade were restricted as before 1939, too exclusively to the West and South of Europe.

Czechoslovakia has signed trade agreements with France and Britain. Poland has agreements with Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The other countries of Eastern Europe are only too eager to have relations with U.S.A. and Britain, both of which show a marked preference for Franco's Spain. Russia and Eastern Europe are not seeking isolation; but there are people in Britain and America who seek to isolate them. The protests against Russia's commercial agreements with Rumania and Hungary would sound more genuine if the British and United

States governments announced that they had attempted to conclude similar agreements but had failed. It is unfortunately the Eastern European countries which have to protest that Anglo-American trade flows increasingly to Spain, and not to them.

One of the greatest achievements of Russia in Eastern Europe is her success in mitigating the age-old racial and religious feuds. This victory is seen at its best in Yugoslavia, now a federal state in which Socialists, Liberals, Communists and Catholics, Croats, Serbs and Slovenes have sunk their quarrels and vie with each other in building a new Yugoslavia of which all can be proud. The few who profited from the internecine quarrels still protest at this suppression of liberty, and they have the support of many British and American diplomats, enemies—not only of the people of Europe—but of the peoples of Britain and America whom they are supposed to represent.

Macedonia, split among Yugoslavs, Bulgars and Greeks, has long been a sore in Eastern Europe. The federal idea is healing this sore in Yugoslavia. The Bulgars seek the same cure for their minority. But the Greek Monarchists seek no federal solution—they seek further annexations of Albanian and Bulgarian territory.

The Soviet Union encourages in Eastern Europe those who are destroying Fascism. It observes the spirit and the letter of its agreements with Britain and the U.S.A. There is nothing unilateral in its policy—except that it is doing alone what Britain and the U.S.A. also pledged themselves to do—extirpate Fascism.

In no sense is the Soviet policy expansionist. It has taken back some of what was seized from it by force when it was weak after the Revolution. These seizures, by Poland and the other border states, took place with the aid of the Western Powers in flagrant violation of international law. Those very people who approved or condoned the violation of Soviet Territory are those who to-day shout "annexation," "expansion," "imperialism," when Russia takes back her own. Is it expansion, annexation or imperialism when France takes back Alsace-Lorraine? Russia has no territorial designs on her border states. Her friends in these states have much more national pride and are less willing to be dominated by foreigners than are those who, unable to win the support of their fellow countrymen, look to Britain and America to restore them to power.

Is Eastern Europe a Russian sphere of influence? No one has stated what exactly constitutes a Russian sphere of influence, but it seems to be an area in which Russia is able to make agreements advantageous to Russia and to the area in question.

Russia, by providing wool, cotton, iron and copper ores, is helping to develop the industries of Poland and Hungary. This helps both sides—Russia and the Hungarians and Poles. There is nothing to prevent Britain and America from making similar agreements—nothing that is, but their own determination to do nothing which will help popular governments.

Soviet influence in Eastern Europe is in no way exclusive. Still less is Eastern Europe a Soviet Bloc. A Bloc is a closed group. Western Bloc advocates clearly exclude the Soviet Union from their association. Blocs to-day, as always, are exclusive and hostile. They exist by restrictive trade agreements of the kind which characterised the Dollar Bloc, the Sterling Bloc and the German Barter Bloc, between the two wars. This system is utterly condemned by the Charter of the United Nations for it would lead, as it did in the past, to a freezing of trade and to unemployment, and ultimately to war. The agreements between the Eastern European States and between them and Russia, form no such exclusive system—political or economic. They are all eager to make treaties and economic agreements with Britain and America.

The countries of Eastern Europe are abiding loyally by the principles of U.N.O., but they are not receiving much encouragement from the West. It is the duty of Britain and America to co-operate with the Soviet Union in making Eastern Europe a bulwark against any revival of Fascism. Only such a policy is in the interests of the British and American peoples.

GERMANY.

RUSSIAN policy in Germany is based on Stalin's statement that:

"It would be ludicrous to identify Hitler's clique with the German people, with the German state. The experience of history shows that Hitlers come and go but the German people and the German state remain."

Soviet military government in Germany aims at the destruction of Fascism—not of the German people. That is the principle contained in the Allied Agreements of Yalta and Potsdam—

"It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world. We are determined to *disarm and disband all German Armed Forces*. . . . It is not our purpose to destroy the people of Germany."

In the Potsdam Agreement the Allies undertook to encourage "all *democratic parties*."

In the carrying out of these principles Russia is well ahead of her allies. Democratic parties and trade unions were encouraged first in Eastern Germany. Kingsley Martin in the *New Statesman* (20/4/46) says: "The British have been wonderfully slow in starting Trade Unions." These are now functioning, however.

Gordon Schaffer deploras the tolerance shown in the West to Nazis, e.g. the leading Fascist Hugenberg.

"Delegates of the British T.U.C. just back from Germany have reported on the alarm and indignation caused by the continued employment of known Nazis in the British Zone. The T.U.C. General Council intends to ask the government what they propose to do about it." (*Reynolds News* 30/12/45.)

Speaking in the Commons on 10th May, 1946, Miss Jenny Lee gave a most disturbing account of Nazi domination in Hanover. Scores of key positions were still manned by Nazi personnel. Among the leading Nazis still in office were "the Chief of Police—the Chief of the Liaison Staff of the Military Government—the Chief of the Personnel Dept. and his assistants in charge of new appointments—the Chief of the Criminal Police and of the Criminal Police School—and the Chief of the Police Administration." As Miss Lee asks "Is this really necessary?"

On the other hand, it is universally admitted that the Russians have been thorough in destroying the Nazis and their military allies. The Wehrmacht does not exist in Eastern Germany. In fact this thorough de-nazification was strongly attacked in our press. The Russians were alleged "in their anti-fascist madness" to be turning their zone into a large and badly-run concentration camp. When British correspondents visited Eastern Germany they were unable to confirm these wild lies.

"In the Russian Zone German culture has unexpected life and liberty I have seen books from which newly trained teachers learn history in Russian-occupied Saxony. The list included historians of the Marxian School (Russian and German) and progressive Catholics, as well as British liberal writers (Trevelyan's History of England, and H. G. Wells' History of the World). . . . It is really a comforting experience to see with what broadmindedness, tolerance and genuine respect for spiritual values the Soviet Military Government is treating these aspects of German life. . . . Everywhere one felt the rhythm of intense economic activity. Some places are working three shifts. There is no unemployment and new hands are needed everywhere." (*Peregrine—Observer* 3/3/46.)

The *Manchester Guardian* stresses the vigour with which the Russians are transforming their zone.

"While discussions about methods of school reform are still proceeding in the British Zone the Russians have already printed some four million text books and drawn up a complete plan for the teaching of history in schools. . . . In every respect the Russians are ahead of their allies. In the Russian Zone prices are stable, while they soar in the West. The land reform has been carried through in the East, but no such plans have yet been laid in the West." (*Manchester Guardian* 13/3/46.)

Without the landlords and the industrialists, both nationalist and imperialist in their outlook, there could have been no Nazi State. In Eastern Germany the large landlords no longer exist. Their estates have been divided among the peasants. The property of all industrialists who supported Hitler has been confiscated. The two classes who menaced the world have been destroyed, the associations of employers which did so much to destroy democracy are forbidden, and Trade Unions and Farmers' Co-operatives are vigorously encouraged. In the West, elimination of Nazi landlords and industrialists has not taken place. A few only of the publicly known criminals have been arrested.

"The relations between Germans who have positions of responsibility and the Russian authorities are friendly and informal, much more so than in the British Zone. . . . They are known and proved anti-nazis, so that it is easy for Russian officers to treat them as allies rather than as beaten enemies. . . . This process of de-nazification has, at least as far as it is possible to see in Mark Brandenburg, been a great success, and the German officials are of a high quality, thus to some extent refuting the views of those who claim in the Western Zones of Germany that complete de-nazification is impossible because of the shortage of suitable people." (*Manchester Guardian* 5/2/46.)

The Russians realise that however they encourage the anti-nazi forces there is still no certainty that the German Governments of the future will be better than those of the past. They insist that the steel production of the Ruhr, enormously increased for the purposes of war, should be reduced to a peace time level and that all war industry should be destroyed. It is foolish to contend that the steel can be used to re-build Europe—it has twice devastated it in one generation. The people of Europe can have no sense of security in the reconstruction of their ruined countries unless the war potential of Germany is destroyed. The surplus industrial plant of Western Germany is eagerly awaited by our allies in Western and Eastern Europe. They will use it to re-build their countries if only they are given the opportunity.

Without the unification of the Communist and Socialist Parties there is no effective check to reaction. In Western Germany no encouragement is given to this unity. Labour leaders like Laski, who have assured us for years that only working-class disunity made Fascism possible, now regard the intensification of that disunity as their main task. One of the major charges against the Russians is that they are furthering unity. But surely they are in duty bound to do that! They have pledged themselves to extirpate Fascism, to further all movements that work for its destruction. The most powerful instrument for the destruction of Fascism is a united working class. Why then are workers in the British Zone forbidden to join the new United Socialist Party? It is difficult to believe that the Communists Jurr and Kamermeier, condemned by the American Government to five years imprisonment on a purely technical charge, would have been arrested if they had not been leading advocates of unity.

The British Government in opposing the new Party has no positive policy. There is intimidation of those who seek unity, encouragement of those who oppose it, but no help or encouragement for socialism in Western Germany. It is futile to keep repeating that the Russians have forced Social Democrats and Communists to combine. All reports from Eastern Germany are to the effect that the desire for unity is widespread.

"The Unity Party does things that do not seem democratic, but it expresses also a genuine democratic force which has turned to the Party because it provides the most active inspiration that there is in Germany to-day." (*Manchester Guardian* 2/5/46.)

This Party cannot function in the British Zone which however does tolerate the extreme right "Constructionists" who favour a monarchy.

No valid criticisms can be brought against the Russians on the grounds that in their zone no plebiscite of Social Democrats took place. The plebiscite has never been used by Social Democrats who—like all working class parties—settle policy by delegate conferences. These conferences everywhere voted for unity. In Western Berlin, the plebiscite gave a majority against immediate fusion with the Communists in the Unity Party. The majority was not against unity in itself. Sixty-two per cent. of the Social Democrats voted in this plebiscite for close co-operation with the Communists.

When sixty-two per cent. of the Social Democrats in the British Zone—in spite of the anti-communist propaganda to which they are subjected—vote for co-operation with their

communist comrades, it does not seem a proper democratic action on the part of the British Military Authority to appoint as Social Democratic leader Dr. Schumacher, who is violently anti-communist. He may represent British Military Government but, on the evidence of the vote, he does not represent the Social Democrats of Berlin. Whatever disputes there may be as to how unity is to be achieved, there can be no excuse for preaching disunity.

It is suggested that Russia is the enemy of a unified Germany. This is far from being the case. The Russians do not, any more than the British and the Americans, wish to deprive the German people of a national life. But they insist that the pre-requisite of any unification of Germany is the destruction of Nazism in all areas. By the strict observance of the agreements they made with their allies they have established in their zone an administration which is the admiration of impartial British observers; its very success has aroused the enemies of Russia to fury. The Russians naturally do not wish their area to be reduced to the pitiful condition of Western Germany, where Nazis and near-Nazi industrialists and landlords dominate.

A united Germany which has not been thoroughly de-nazified, in which the great trusts and the great estates have not been broken up, can only end like the Weimar Republic—as a new Fascist State.

This prospect does not seem to deter the United States Government which is now considering the grant of a loan to the same German industrialists and business men who financed Hitler. The loan will be granted, it appears, by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which has never previously given help to foreigners.

“The prospect of a loan held out to Germany forms a striking contrast with the adamant American refusal to consider any credit to Russia and with the cessation of U.N.R.R.A. activity in the Ukraine and White Russia.” (*Observer* 13/10/46.)

German Socialists are not so enthusiastic, however, at seeing American capitalists in alliance with their own. They have noted that the fusion of the British and American zones has led to reactionary Christian Democrats taking over important positions, and they are threatening to withdraw their co-operation from the occupying authorities as they do not wish to connive at the restoration of capitalism in Germany.

The Russians, however, as Stalin made plain in his answers to the President of the United Press of America (28th October, 1946), still favour the political and economic unification of

Germany, under allied control. They also favour an increase in the permitted level of industry in order that Germany may become self-supporting. It remains to be seen if the United States Government, now set on re-building capitalism in the West, will be as eager for unity as it has previously claimed.

MIDDLE EAST AND MEDITERRANEAN.

IN the War of Intervention after the Revolution, Russia was invaded through Persia by British troops who occupied the oil area of Baku. This they did with the hearty approval of the Persian landlords. It was through the Dardanelles that Britain and France attacked in the Crimean War, defending the crumbling empire of Turkey. In the War of 1914-18, Turkey again controlled the Dardanelles—and all Allied efforts to force the Straits failed. In the Second World War Turkey closed the Straits to Russian but not to German warships.

Is it surprising that after four wars, in each of which Russia suffered because she had no control over the strategic areas on her borders, Russia to-day is showing a keen interest in the Middle East? This strategic question is complicated by the presence of rich oil deposits; 94 per cent. of known oil resources in the Middle East belong to American and Anglo-Dutch companies. This does not satisfy them; they want more. After 1918 "disputes over oil stained the conference tables darkly with mistrust and produced the weary misbelief in the avowed purposes of governments and led many to conclude that the desire for oil, and not for peace and justice, dictated policy." (*H. Ickes, 1944*).

Mr. Ickes has resigned from the Truman Government because of oil intrigues.

The same disputes are casting a shadow over the United Nations to-day. The oil companies want the oil of North Persia which would give them a monopoly of all oil outside the Soviet Union. American and Anglo-Dutch already control 80 per cent. of the world supply. However, the Soviet-Persian Treaty of 1921, by which Russia voluntarily gave up all property and other rights in Persia and cancelled all debts owing by the Persian Government, stipulates that no foreign national or government may be granted a concession in North Persia. In spite of this Treaty, the Persian Government did grant concessions to oil companies in 1921, 1937 and 1939. On each occasion the Soviet Government insisted on the observance of the Treaty and the concession was withdrawn.

In order to complete her new plans for post-war reconstruction, Russia will require even more oil than she did before the war. However, during the war, many of her oil fields suffered heavy damage: to compensate for this Russia proposed, in 1944, that the Persian Government should grant her a concession. The terms offered were far more generous than had ever been proposed by any oil firm. Russia undertook to provide housing, water supplies, roads and medical services, and to train Persians as oil engineers. The importance of these social services is easily realised when Michael Foot informs us in the *Daily Herald* of 23/4/46 that "down the main street of Teheran flows a gutter where beggars wash their feet and the dust and filth of the city accumulates. It is the only water supply of the Capital."

The Russian proposal did not find favour with the Anglo-American Oil magnates. They appear to have warned the Persian Government of the political danger involved in the creation of a prosperous and educated North Persia. The Russian proposal was rejected. This is a clear example of political discrimination against the Soviet Union, a conspiracy in which we find the British and American Governments apparently acting as the allies of the oil companies and the absentee landlords of Teheran.

It was decided to use U.N.O. against Russia. The Persian Government complained that the Soviet authorities were interfering in North Persia. It alleged that they had refused passage to Persian troops sent to suppress the Azerbaijanian national movement, which was demanding the right to use its own language and to regulate its local affairs. The Soviet Government declared that the accusation of interference was without foundation. They had not interfered, in spite of Right-Wing anti-Soviet activity. (That they did not imprison their enemies, with whose plots they were well acquainted, is clear. These enemies revolted against the Persian Government as soon as the Russian troops started to leave. They must therefore have been at liberty).

The Russians however admitted frankly that they had stopped troops. These troops would merely have caused a civil war. The Russians were in North Persia to preserve peace. They were not there to suppress the legitimate demands of a minority.

The Security Council referred the matter back for settlement by Persia and Russia, on the ground that negotiations between them had not broken down and should therefore continue. When the Security Council next met, no agreement had been reached, though negotiations were still going on. The Russians asked for a postponement to conclude an agreement that was well under way.

Britain and America objected. The Soviet Representative pointed out that to continue discussion was a violation of the United Nations Charter, according to which the Security Council discusses problems only when direct negotiations have broken down. He therefore declined to take part in further discussion. This was the only correct procedure as negotiations were undoubtedly continuing and the Iranian Representative had been disowned by his Prime Minister.

Later the Prime Minister made the mysterious statement that the representative had full authority, which he would retain until further notice. Later again Prince Firouz, the Premier's Secretary, explained that the statements of the Representative were not always accurate, owing to his liability to patriotic emotion. In all this confusion the Persian Representative appeared to enjoy the confidence of Messrs. Byrnes and Cadogan to a much greater extent than that of his own government.

On April 4, 1946, an agreement was reached by the Russian and Persian Governments. Russian troops were to be out of Persia by May 6; subject to the approval of the Persian Parliament a joint Soviet-Persian Oil Company was to be established on terms that put capitalist nations to shame—terms similar to those offered as far back as 1944. Persia undertook to consult with Azerbaijan about necessary reforms.

As the matter was now amicably settled and no complaint was raised against the terms of the agreement, either by Persia, Britain or America, the constitutional action was to remove the question from the Agenda. This was suggested by Mr. Gromyko. Mr. Trygve Lie, the Secretary General of U.N.O., realising the gravity of the issue, sent a Memorandum to the Security Council indicating that in his opinion the Russian point of view was in strict accordance with the Charter. Persia too asked that the matter be withdrawn. But a "Legal" committee decided by a majority that the matter should not be dropped. This, however, does not make illegality legal. The "experts" representing their governments, decided as their governments wished. It would appear that the purpose of the British and American Governments was less to help towards a fair settlement than to use U.N.O. as a means of blocking the legitimate activities of the Soviet Union.

It is very likely that the Soviet Union kept its troops in Persia beyond the agreed date for an excellent reason. They knew that, hoping for British and American support, the Right

Wing were planning to revolt against the Central Government if it should show any reasonableness to Russia or to the people of Azerbaijan. Early in 1945 *Pravda* wrote :

"As reported in a Teheran newspaper the formation of a 'Blue Army' was discussed at a conference of the leaders of the Union of Southern Tribes in February this year (1945). The organisers of this army intend to seize power and establish their dictatorship as soon as the Allied troops have left Iran."

It is understandable that the Red Army was not withdrawn before it was clear that Ghavam Sultaneh would be able to put down any reactionary putsch attempted by the former supporters of Reza Shah. That Soviet fears were well founded was shown by events. No sooner had the Red Army started to withdraw than an insurrection did break out and before it was suppressed *Reuter* reports that "an anonymous Right-Wing spokesman in Teheran is quoted as saying that a coup had been planned in detail from the Capital and the leaders were only awaiting orders to move." (*Manchester Guardian* 9/4/46).

In these circumstances of imminent disorder the Soviet Government is permitted by the Treaty of 1921 to maintain troops in Persia. Its action therefore is not only understandable but is in strict accordance with international law.

Russia is accused of threatening international peace when she concludes with Persia an agreement which is a model of fairness, and persuades the Persian Government to mitigate its oppression of a minority. The British Government is not called to account for helping to power in Greece a Monarchist-Fascist Government, for restoring the Dutch Imperialists in Indonesia: And there is no criticism of American failure to withdraw from war time bases. British policy in Greece and Indonesia has caused the deaths of thousands. Russian policy has not resulted in a single death.

Great play is made with the fact that Russian troops were in Persia when the agreement was reached. Transjordan was occupied by British troops when a treaty was signed which permits the British troops to stay. Negotiations are proceeding in Egypt in which there is a British Army. It was only after strong reinforcements of British and Dutch troops had reached Indonesia that serious negotiations with the Indonesian leaders began. Mr. Bevin clearly denies to Mr. Molotov the right which he himself assumes in what are, unfortunately, doubtful causes.

Moreover, the Soviet Union was excluded from the Palestine Commission, although the U.S.S.R. is the only state which has solved the Jewish problem. Our Government asks that Britain

should have under U.N.O. the trusteeship of an Italian colony, but denies any similar right to the Soviet Union. Yet the Soviet Union has in her own Asiatic territory done more for backward peoples in twenty-five years than any imperialist country has in centuries done for its colonies.

Britain has bases in Egypt, Cyprus, Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq. She will probably have them in fact if not in law in Greece and the Dodecanese. Yet when Russia asks for one base in the Dardanelles—the absence of which has been costly to her in several wars—our Foreign Secretary accuses her of aggression. It would appear that to Mr. Bevin a Russian request for one base in the Eastern Mediterranean is a threat to the peace, but that the British possession of half a dozen bases is evidence only of a desire for security.

Russia, for reasons already explained, asks Turkey for a base in the Dardanelles. If there are also Soviet citizens, particularly Soviet Armenians, who look for the return of Kars, Artvin and Ardahan, it is not surprising! They seek the "last un-reclaimed portion of Russian Territory which the Soviet Union lost during the period when she was not sufficiently strong. These territories are historically Armenian, but were forcibly acquired by Turkey in 1920. If at present the population of these territories is not predominantly Armenian, it is because during the First World War the Turks massacred all Armenians. This circumstance does not strengthen Turkey's title to the disputed territory," writes Stevens in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

"The Turks massacred nearly three-quarters of a million Armenians," say Grant and Temperley in their standard History of Europe :

"This attempt to exterminate a whole nation is a crime absolutely unparalleled in history. . . . The cruelty displayed both in the design and in the execution is so inconceivable as almost to defeat criticism. . . . The Bolsheviks deserve real credit in history for helping Armenia, so also do the French, but not,—alas—the British. The British Government refused to contribute to the Armenian Refugee Loan." (*Grant and Temperley*).

We feel it is unnecessary to add anything to the comments of these distinguished historians. The inglorious history of British support for Turkish reaction should be kept in mind when Mr. Bevin next rides forth as the champion of Turkish freedom to form a Turko-Greek bloc against the Soviet Union.

IS RUSSIA DIFFICULT.

RUSSIA is said to be "difficult." On all questions on which America and Britain cannot see eye to eye with the Soviet Government, the absence of agreement is attributed to Russian "difficulty," oversensitiveness, failure to understand the manners of the West. Such nonsense is not without effect. It distracts attention from the real problem—why disagreement?

Take the Veto. The other powers want the veto as well as Russia. Mr. Byrnes said he would use it if the Atomic Commission wished to take action of which his government disapproved. Our newspapers suggested that the British representative would use it if there was no compromise on Spain. Yet all the time it is suggested that only Russia wants it. Now, what is this veto. There is no mention of the word in the Charter of the United Nations. But it is laid down that no action can be taken unless the Big Five approve. What is this but Big Five unity, and still more, Big Three unity? The Big Three agreed that only their unity, in spite of all differences, defeated Hitler. They affirmed that only this unity after victory could maintain the peace. But where is this unity if America and Britain team up against the Soviet Union?

There can be no peace in the world if any two of the great powers work against the third. That way lies disaster. France and Britain lined up against Russia before 1939. Hitler triumphed. If Britain and America will not recognise the legitimate claims of Russia, but try to combat them by a block vote, then the world will split in two. It was to make divisions between the Big Three impossible that the principle of unity or unanimity was evolved. Proceedings at the first two meetings of the Security Council show that the principle was correct. Without the principle of unanimity, which enforces reasonable compromise, we might drift rapidly to war. The so-called veto—the principle of unanimity—is Big Three unity, the spirit of compromise and co-operation in the building of the peace.

Russia is "difficult" over Spain. Why? Because Franco was put in power by Hitler and Mussolini; because Spanish troops, the Blue Division, fought against the Allies on the Russian front; because Franco gave Hitler all help that he could and expressed constant admiration for him; because Spain is still a centre of Fascism, where Hitler's and Mussolini's accomplices plot their return to power. Surely this is a case for action. Surely the British Government is being difficult and obstructionist in opposing action against the common enemy.

The British Government is much more vigorous in opposing the admission of Albania. What is Albania's crime? That her Premier is a Communist, the Leader of the Albanian Resistance. The Government has not that quota of collaborators that guarantees the respectability of the Greek administration. Yet Albania was the first European victim of open Fascist aggression.

There is another "difficulty." Korea. The Russians have moved one of their iron curtains to the land of Morning Calm. They occupy the North, the Americans the South. The Russians are very difficult. According to O. M. Green in the *Observer* 21/4/46:

"They instantly clapped all Japanese officials and Korean collaborators into gaol and co-operated vigorously with the Peoples' Committees, an integral part of the Peoples' Republic" (i.e. the coalition of popular parties).

The Americans on the contrary retained "the hated Japanese administration temporarily in power Their apparent sympathy with the (right wing) Provisional Government is not popular. . . . The Provisional Government is steadily losing ground to the Peoples Republic in the rural districts which form most of Korea."

The Russians clearly are up to their old game of destroying Fascism and supporting popular movements. It is not surprising that certain interests are annoyed.

Less publicity was given to Russian "difficulty" over what are fundamental human rights. Russia maintained that the right to work is one such right. Unfortunately capitalist countries do not guarantee this right, so it was not included in the Charter. Neither was the right to education, which also appeared essential to Russian delegates. There are too many colonies in which no education is provided for such a right to be included in the Charter. As we noted, little publicity was given to this matter. It would have been very difficult to put Russia in the dock on this issue!

We have stressed the repeated efforts to discredit Soviet policy. This sometimes goes to most extraordinary lengths. From the press recently one would have gathered that Russia was failing to withdraw from Manchuria. In actual fact China has *twice* asked the Russians to stay on, as Chinese troops could only be brought in gradually. In spite of this, Right-Wing anti-Russian demonstrations in China were given great publicity in the world press, without any effort being made to explain the situation. The Chinese Government itself does not seem to have done much to discourage the demonstrations. Yet when the Soviet troops begin to move out for the last date agreed, anti-

Soviet propagandists state they are leaving early to let the Communists in. The life of a Russian is hard. He is sure to offend, try as he may to please.

We were also told, on no evidence at all, that Russia is looting Manchuria. We have been told in the past that she had looted Austria and Hungary. We now know that she looted neither. Indeed—that the loot carried off from Hungary by the Germans is in territory occupied by the Americans—who refuse to return it.

Perhaps the most serious of all the libels on Russia was one broadcast to the world by the British Foreign Office and the American State Department during the Persian affair. This alleged, on "reliable information," that Russia was moving heavily armed divisions into Persia. It was a fantastic invention—for Russia was preparing to move out. When the reports were shown to be groundless, the London correspondent of the *Chicago Sun* wrote:

"The reports that the Red Army thus moved were based mainly on an American source, and the United States Consul in Tabriz, Robert Rossow, is believed to have let his imagination run wild. The British consulate in Tabriz also indulged in some fancy reporting, having observed that three covered trailers were seen south of Tabriz and that the covers presumably concealed tanks. This seems typical of the irresponsible stories."

Thus are crises manufactured out of "reliable" reports.

The "rockets over Sweden" sensation died a sudden death when the Swedish military authorities reported that the "rockets" were meteors, common in Northern Europe at that time of the year.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

THE Paris Conference met to discuss the Peace Treaties with Italy, Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Roumania, which had already been drafted by the Four Foreign Ministers. On a considerable number of issues the Foreign Ministers had reached agreement, and they undertook to support these agreed clauses at the Conference. It cannot be questioned that adherence to agreements is vital to the establishment and maintenance of international confidence. It is not desirable that agreements should be regarded as "scraps of paper." The Soviet Union, as even Churchill admitted, scrupulously observes all agreements, even if they are much to its disadvantage.

At Paris they supported all clauses agreed on by the Four Foreign Ministers. The other Great Powers did not show the same scruple. Britain, France and the U.S.A. failed to support the agreed system of voting. Great Britain, after agreeing

to the preservation of the present Bulgarian-Greek frontier, gave a lead to her followers to oppose it, by herself abstaining from voting. France, Britain and the United States all went back on their agreement to set up a democratic regime for Trieste. They voted for a statute under which the Governor, appointed by the Security Council, will have the right to over-rule the people's representatives. This is surely a new type of democracy!

The case of Trieste illustrates perfectly the contrasting Soviet and Anglo-American attitudes. While the Russian Government, like many people in this country, believe that Trieste ought to belong to Yugoslavia, they are prepared to compromise and to accept the idea of a Free Territory—but they insist it must be free, not a modern version of a colony. The United States and Britain not only refuse to grant Trieste to Yugoslavia but use their block vote to prevent the new territory from enjoying real freedom. They mean to control it through the Governor appointed by the Security Council.

This disregard for freedom and self-determination was further seen in the campaign for control of the Danube. The Western Powers and America aim to continue that interference in the internal affairs of Danubian lands which they started in the nineteenth century. They wish to have a voice in the control of the Danube while violently opposing the international control of two such great world highways as Panama and Suez. The hypocrisy of this attitude is too evident to be stressed. The Soviet Union, true to its traditional policy, supported the Danubian States in their fight to control their own affairs, and throughout the Conference opposed every attempt to reintroduce that foreign capitalist domination that had been so vicious in its influence before 1939.

During the Conference there was much talk of a Soviet Bloc. The so-called Soviet Bloc consisted of the East European countries bound together by a common interest in opposing the will of a heterogeneous collection of nations ranging from Brazil to Ethiopia. The latter collection were held together only by their common dependence on Anglo-American capital. The "Soviet Group" had in common the vital interest of preserving their hard won independence.

After Paris, the Foreign Ministers met in New York, and from their meeting agreement—the U.S.S.R. making very considerable concessions—on the terms of the Peace Treaties with Italy, Finland and the Balkan countries. These will be signed in Paris in February.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF U.N.O.

BETWEEN October, 1946, and the end of the year, great progress was made in the General Assembly of UNO. Arising from a Soviet initiative on the question of disarmament agreement was reached in principle on the necessity to set up an international body to supervise and control the reduction of armaments—including the use of atomic energy. On the very last day of 1946 the Security Council was confronted with a proposal for the immediate setting up of a commission with instructions to produce a full disarmament plan within three months.

The year 1946 ended on a more hopeful note than it had started. But there are still dangerous forces at work in high places in both Britain and America seeking to hamper the achievement of that unity which is as indispensable in peace as in war.

CONCLUSION.

AN attempt is being made by some politicians to prevent any rational approach to relations with the Soviet Union. Appeals are made to blind emotion. We are told that Anglo-American Idealism and Christianity are threatened by the materialistic Slavic hordes—just as pure German Idealism was threatened until it found its Saviour in Adolf Hitler. The most blatant misrepresentations of Soviet policy are published, even when they are in glaring contradiction with the facts.

Again and again the Soviet Government is accused of isolationism. Yet it was Molotov who at the Paris Conference proposed regular meetings of the Big Four to discuss differences and reach compromises. Byrnes, supported by Bevin, refused, though Bevin and Byrnes regularly met alone, and with Bidault. The Soviet Union was isolated, but it was by the deliberate policy of its allies, who were determined to make compromise impossible. We all know the result—the Conference was reduced to impotent wrangling, until at last Bevin saw reason and agreed to Big Four meetings. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent wrote, a little late in the day perhaps, that the agreements eventually reached showed the absolute necessity of adhering to the principle of unity among the Great Powers—a principle ignored at the start of the Conference.

It is part of the stock-in-trade of Anti-Soviet writers and speakers to describe as Moscow puppets those who wish for sensible relations with the Soviet Union. It is a little difficult to see how an independent periodical like the *New Statesman* or the Co-operative *Reynolds News* can be so described.

An even greater difficulty arose over the now famous speech by the American Secretary of Commerce, Henry Wallace, in which he criticised the policy of his own and of the British Government towards the Soviet Union. His letter to President Truman, published a little later, set forth in detail and with moderation his view that the Byrnes-Bevin policy was wrong and dangerous. His criticisms are directed mainly against America—there is virtually no mention of Britain in the letter—but as the *New Statesman* leader points out, 28/9/46, the American Plan to refuse all settlements by compromise and to insist upon an "American Peace" in every part of the world can only be carried out in co-operation with the British Commonwealth. "The Pax Americana can only be dictated by an Anglo-American bloc. Hence the paradox of the support given by former isolationists to the British Alliance, and Mr. Wallace's attack upon it. Mr. Wallace desires Big Three Co-operation. Mr. Byrnes desires British assistance in defeating Russia—if possible without war." Mr. Wallace sees that if war were to come it would probably destroy civilisation—it would certainly destroy Europe, including the British Isles.

The interests of the people of America and Europe are clear. Whoever gains from international strife, they do not. The common people of every land are generous and they have a fund of common-sense. They must see to it that their rulers set themselves to the task of establishing healthy political and economic relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union needs the help of the less devastated industrial countries. In turn she can give them stable markets, guarantee them full employment for their industries, and in the not distant future, from her own great resources, help to raise from squalor and poverty the teeming millions of Asia. In friendly association with Russia we can go forward into a world free from the curse of war.

Wallace and Stalin have spoken clearly what is the thought of millions. There are no insoluble conflicts between the interests of Russia and those of other countries. The Russians are confident of this and in the Molotov Disarmament Proposal they have given the best proof that they have no aggressive designs. At the Assembly of the United Nations it is the Russians who, as so often in the past, have made the practical proposal: "If we want peace, let us disarm." By their answers will other nations be judged.

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