

# A Cable from London

Richard Goodman wires in the English angles on the collapse of Poland's leaders. Chamberlain and Daladier at their double-crossroads.

London, Sept. 18 (By Cable).

**T**HE belief that with the utter collapse of the Polish state and the Polish military machine the Soviet Red Army would take action to prevent the Nazis from completely overrunning Poland has been current here for nearly a week. Consequently what causes surprise is less that the Soviet Union has acted, but the speed and decision with which it launched its terrific anti-Nazi counterblow.

It is true that the majority of informed observers here and in Paris did not anticipate that the breakup of the Polish state and the Polish army would take place quite so rapidly. But it was known as long ago as last Thursday that not only were various units of the Polish army out of touch with one another, but that to all intents and purposes they were also out of touch with the General Staff, which in turn maintained but sporadic contact with the remnants of the government. Then on Friday came the news that many of the higher Polish officers were abandoning their posts and hurrying toward the Rumanian frontier. In many cases, therefore, Polish units fighting isolated actions were left unofficered. Singly and in groups, Polish planes began to seek refuge in Rumania and across the Soviet border.

Late Friday night, therefore, the perspective was opening of complete and rapid Nazi occupation of all Poland and the imminent transfer of at least fifty Nazi divisions to the Western Front.

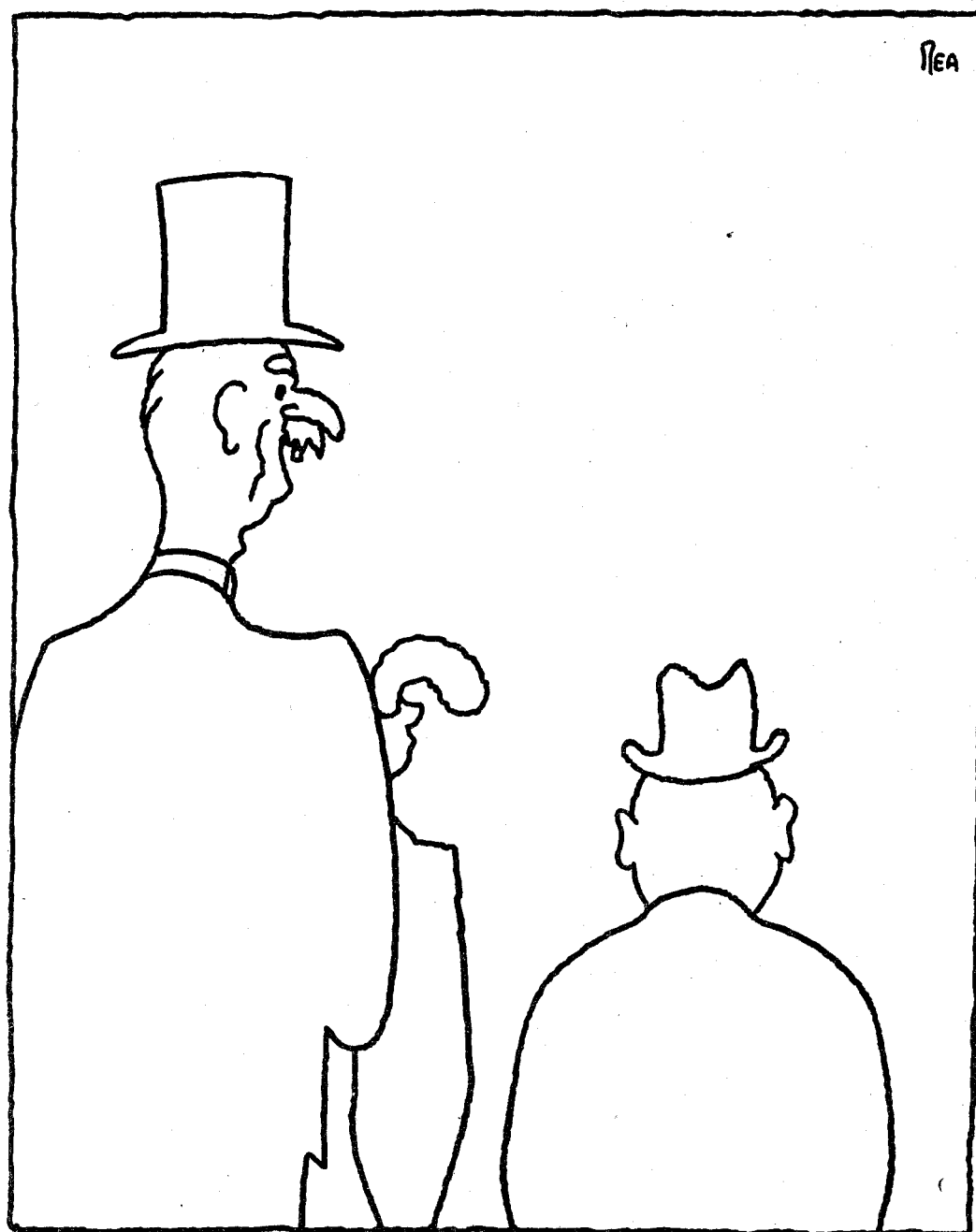
The effects of the refusal of the reactionary fascist ruling clique in Poland to accept Red Army assistance and the failure of Britain and France to conclude a watertight defensive agreement with the USSR (which would have prevented war and Polish disintegration) were becoming obvious with a vengeance. In this situation the Soviet Union decided to act. From the very moment the former Warsaw government rejected the Soviet offer of help, the probability of Polish collapse and drastic Soviet action along the lines now taking place had, it is now known, been considered in Moscow. That explains the precautionary mobilization earlier this month in the western USSR.

The issue was simple: Were the Byelo Russians and Ukrainians in Poland to be Nazified and used as a source of intrigue against Soviet Byelo Russia and the Soviet Ukraine? Or were they to be reunited with the majority of their own people and freed forever of capitalists and landlords who had not only proved themselves incapable of defending them but had repeatedly in the past (in collaboration with the Nazis) tried to use the bourgeois nationalist elements among them against their fellow countrymen across the frontier? The Soviet government, whose

supreme duty is to defend the socialist people of the USSR from capitalist encirclement and to defend the socialist base from every intrigue of counter-revolutionary forces, acted in the only way possible,—by ordering the workers and peasants of the Red Army to march.

As I write, the advance, headed by monster tanks, is proceeding with amazing rapidity and clockwork precision. At 2:15 this morning the Moscow and Berlin radios announced that the Red Army was marching along the whole six-hundred-mile-long frontier from Latvia to Rumania and had occupied a dozen of the Byelo Russian and Ukrainian towns. Already, it appears, there is anxiety in Berlin.

This anxiety is expressed in one of those significant little ways: by suppression in a Nazi broadcast of the sentence in the first Soviet communique which reads: "The Polish population are everywhere greeting the Red Army with jubilation." By the time this dispatch is published that will be old news. Let us therefore attempt to give a preliminary estimate of the importance of this development. First, it is necessary to recall what Stalin said in his letter to Ivanov about the final victory of socialism in the USSR and capitalist encirclement. Had Stalin's analysis of the international situation, as set forth in that letter, been taken as seriously as it was meant to be, there would have been far less stupid



Gardner Rea

"Well, Edouard, where do we go from here?"

"mystification" and speculation about Soviet policy.

Ever since the coming to power of Hitlerism in Germany, and especially in recent years, the fundamental policy of the most powerful and most reactionary capitalist groupings in western Europe has been to use Nazi Germany as storm troops in an organized counter-revolutionary effort against the world base of socialism. Nazi Germany in Europe and military-fascist Japan in Asia have been encouraged to encircle the USSR. Hence the anti-Comintern pact on the one hand and the policy of non-intervention and appeasement on the other.

With the development of this policy it became more and more clear that whereas the role of the fascist powers was to do the actual encirclement and—had it come to this—intervention, the government of the oldest and most strongly based capitalist power was the active organizer of this encirclement. The last chance to abandon that policy came during the negotiations for a tripartite defensive pact this year. As is now well known, that chance was refused. The main task of socialist diplomacy was, therefore, to smash these encirclement plans. When, then, the Nazis went back on all their declarations and begged the USSR for a non-aggression pact, a unique opportunity was presented to the Soviet government. By its action the Soviet government not only lessened the danger of a Nazi attack on its territory, but split the fascist anti-Comintern bloc which threatened other states as well.

Turning its attention to the Far East, the Soviet government, after having given the Japanese another sound military thrashing on the Mongolian border, forced Tokyo to conclude a truce on Soviet terms. The plan to replace German-Japanese friendship by Anglo-Japanese friendship and use Japan as a storm-trooper against socialism in Asia was nicely nipped in the bud. Having so safeguarded its rear, Russia was more than ever free to deal with the counter-revolutionary threat to Soviet Ukraine and Byelo Russia.

Thus, within a few weeks, and acting with the directness and decision which characterizes proletarian diplomacy, the USSR has considerably weakened the capitalist encirclement and thereby strengthened its position as the world socialist base. The march of the Red Army is the logical outcome of this fundamental socialist policy, following the Polish collapse. That is the first point to be understood. The second point that must be understood is that the USSR, by its march into Poland, has definitely weakened Hitler's strategic position. Germany is now between two walls, one unassailable—in the East—and the other unshakable, if it wishes to be—the Anglo-French wall in the West. Deprived of the possibility of conquering all Poland and thereby directly threatening Rumania, the Nazis are forced to abandon their plan of consolidating an Eastern base and turning, strengthened by this consolidation, all their forces against the West.

It is true, of course, that one motive behind the present relatively mild official British reaction to the Soviet action is the hope that war may now develop between Germany and the USSR and that the latter will thereby pull British chestnuts out of the fire. That Hitler will do anything to bring the Red Army still nearer Berlin is, however, extremely doubtful. As the *Daily Telegraph* military correspondent, commenting on Russia's move, says: "That Hitler should have placed himself so much in Russia's power is an indication of how little Germany is ready to face a long struggle." Whatever happens, however, Germany will now have to maintain powerful forces in the East. This alone is assistance the British and French cannot fail to appreciate.

The opportunity, then, has been given the Western nations to finish with Nazism more rapidly than was conceived possible a week ago. Will they seize this opportunity, or will they adopt the position that in order to stop the advance of "Bolshevism across Europe," peace must be concluded as rapidly as possible? To judge from the conversations I have had today with working people, Britain understands the chance which the USSR has given her. This impression is confirmed by the tone of today's press, which—except, nat-

urally, for the *Daily Herald* (British Labor Party newspaper)—is remarkably moderate and even appreciative. Here are a few extracts:

Whatever the future may hold, two things are certain. The presence of the powerful Russian army on his eastern frontier will immobilize a large part of Herr Hitler's forces at a time when they are needed in the West; and Poland, brutally stricken to earth, will rise again.—*Daily Telegraph* editorial.

It will be necessary for Hitler to maintain considerable forces there as a "precautionary measure" and to ensure Russia does not advance further.—Guy Eden, *Daily Express* political correspondent.

In the Liberal and Labor press there are people scribbling furiously about Soviet "perfidy." Evidently they demand that the Soviet government should rest on frontiers imposed on it after the Polish-Soviet war of 1920, watch Nazi troops enter into the first provinces of the Soviet state and then proceed to organize ferocious pogroms against the Jewish population. The British people are for halting Nazism, not for permitting it to advance into western Byelo Russia or the western Ukraine. They are for an independent and democratic Poland, freed from all varieties of German and Polish fascism, but they will not risk their lives to restore Poland's right to rule over non-Polish minorities.—London *Daily Worker* editorial.

RICHARD GOODMAN.

## Dead Before the Final Ultimatum

Between the ultimatum and the waltz  
the house sky high and blood  
on the remaining walls  
Another ultimatum directly after tea  
bewilders the survivors, fools the dead

"We warn you, Sir, etc.

"In this grave hour, etc., etc.

"All I have believed in, cherished, has been wrecked, etc.

"God help us all."

all said

But what about the man whose bread  
was halfway to his mouth?  
the child almost past the unprotecting door?  
the stooped peasant straightening his back?  
What ultimatum will the dead proclaim?  
On what tomorrow rise in self defense?

"In this grave hour

"In his country's need

"Killed in line of duty

"Hero"

none of these apply

Not even patriotic theorems  
to lime the sour earth that deafens, blinds, and gags  
Honors wait only for the post-final-ultimatum corpses  
the planned, braided, general-ordered slaughter  
legal since the hour set by ministerial decree  
The diplomats have never known, will never claim  
these futile, unstrategic dead

The man, the child, the tired peasant die  
and burial is brief in a one edition tomb

ALEXANDER F. BERGMAN.