



William Gropper

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Neutrality Violations

MOST NEW MASSES readers won't remember it, but on March 1, 1915, Prime Minister Asquith told the British Parliament:

We are not going to allow our efforts to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties . . . under existing conditions, there is no form of economic pressure to which we do not consider ourselves entitled to resort.

That was the answer to Bryan's effort to maintain America's position as a neutral, efforts which Walter Hines Page sabotaged as though he were on the Bank of England's payroll. The difference between 1915 and 1940 seems to lie in the comparative feebleness of Cordell Hull's notes to England; whether Kennedy works for England or the USA hardly matters. Two weeks ago, the United States corralled Latin American nations to protest violations of the safety belt; nothing yet has been heard from London. Last week Cordell Hull whispered another protest, this time on the repeated British seizures of American mail en route to Germany and neutral nations. The Eleventh Hague Convention specifically states: "The postal correspondence of neutrals or belligerents, whatever its official character may be, found on the high seas on board a neutral or enemy ship, is inviolable." Yet the Allies who prate about the restoration of law and order in Central Europe violate international law when it suits their purpose. Quite appropriately, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* for January 4 commented editorially: "Imagine for a moment what the feeling would be in this country if German submarines made a practice of stopping and boarding neutral ships, and censoring or throwing out American mail. Yet parallel action by the British has brought only mild protest."

Even more alarming is the State Department's revelation of its note of December 14 in which it is disclosed that the American steamer *Mormacsun*, one of four sold to Brazil, was stopped on its way to Bergen, Norway, and hauled into Kirkwall, England. Our Neutrality Act delineated a war zone in which American citizens must not travel. Now the British are compelling American seamen to do what the law of their country forbids.

But the fact that the *Mormacsun* had been

sold without public knowledge to Brazil dramatizes a deeper hypocrisy. For the State Department is winking at the nullification of the spirit and letter of the Neutrality Act by our own shipping concerns even while it doth protest softly against equal nullification by London. It was further revealed this week that four American Hawaiian Line freighters and two more belonging to the Lykes Line were sold to England itself; more companies are doing the same.

Already committed to the fortunes of the Allies, Washington is deliberately permitting the nullification of laws which were touted as measures to keep us out of the war.

The Belisha Beacon

LIKE the traffic signals he popularized in London, Leslie Hore-Belisha's ouster from the Secretariat of State for War in Chamberlain's Cabinet signifies another step in switching the imperialistic war machine from the Western Front to the Northern Front. It was to be expected, of course, that Gen. Sir Edmund Ironside, that veteran of British intervention in Russia twenty years ago, would strive for one more go at the Bolsheviks who ingloriously rubbed his nose in the snow of Archangel when they polished off his pal Kolchak and sent Herbie Hoover packing. The sun of Gibraltar has not softened Sir Edmund's memory of defeat and his present position as chief of staff in blighty enabled him to wangle his last chance.

But Leslie Hore-Belisha, like Gladstone's "Jew-boy" Disraeli, stood in the way. Like

that older duke of York, "the Soldier's Friend," Belisha had built up a great following in the army through his "democratization" program of firing those Boer War veterans who were responsible for Passchendaele lest another Haig or Kitchener try out their fondness for shelling the Westwall with shrapnel. In this he was seconded by such military mentors as Liddell Hart and J. F. C. Fuller. They were "Western Front" men and, curiously enough, most of the English people thought that this was a war against Hitler. Hence their outcry when Belisha's removal came suddenly and the prophecy of NEW MASSES is come to pass. Maybe it won't be so easy to stampede the English people from Flanders mud to Scandinavian snows. The campaign to do and die for dear old Pilsudski's Poland didn't pan out too well.

The tipoff on the whole business is the naming of the Rt. Hon. Oliver Stanley to Hore-Belisha's post. Stanley is an old Etonian, a younger son of the Earl of Derby, and a son-in-law of the marquess of Londonderry, that interlocutor of the Cliveden minstrel show. He is president of the Board of Trade (the business men's association which has been running the British empire for the last two hundred years), filling Runciman's well licked boots. Oliver Stanley was entrusted with the big payoff money that was being sent to bribe Hitler out of the war just before the Nazi invasion of Poland. But he failed in that job as he has failed on every job assigned to him in his public career.

If the imperialist Tories of Britain don't want another Passchendaele with snow instead of nice comfortable mud they had better pay more attention to their strategy. Almost a century ago they were advised by Jomini (Clausewitz's rival) before the Crimean campaign: "The Russian army is a wall which, however far it may retreat, you will always find in front of you. You will be beaten." Lenin knew that.

New Masses Takes a Bow

FOR the past month, NEW MASSES has presented analyses of the campaign in Finland. Our sources were those available to any newspaper reader in the United States. We have placed our confidence in the unvarnished reports of the Red Army in drawing our conclusions. It is interesting to note that the *U. S. Army and Navy Journal* arrives at strikingly similar conclusions as NEW MASSES. Here is an excerpt from that publication's December 30 issue, page 388:

Without detracting any from the stubborn defense being put up by the Finns in defense of their territory it must be pointed out that the problem of Russia in taking that territory is vastly different from that of the Germans in their Polish campaign. Poland was taken under the most favorable of weather and over terrain similar to our Midwest plains. Russia, on the other hand, has not even been fortunate in the type of cold weather brought by this season, for the snow, instead of being the normal dry snow, has been wet and heavy, while the ice and marshes have been mushy instead of hard frozen

The Box Score

THE following tabulation of casualties in the Finnish affair, as of January 8, is taken from the *New York Times* alone. Care has been taken to avoid duplication, but certain statistics are approximate, based on calculations of the size of Red Army "divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies," frequently surrounded and annihilated by the correspondents. No reckoning of casualties of the "several hundred" or "fearful" variety has been made.

	Finnish Losses	Soviet Losses
Men killed	269	55,537 ¹
Prisoners	0	3,500
Tanks	0	425
Armored Trains	0	1
Destroyers	0	2
Submarines	0	Several ²
Airplanes	4	251
Crows	2	0
Cellulose Factories	1	0

¹ Including seventy killed by a Finnish skier, and seventy-seven by a Finnish sharpshooter.

² Observed along a Russian railroad track (they were being shipped to the Arctic Ocean by rail!) after a Finnish bombing.