

# WHY THIS IS OUR WAR: II

*Why everybody's destiny hangs on a defeat for Hitler. World politics are inextricably bound together. What Lindbergh and Hoover really mean. "Ersatz" independence. An editorial.*

THE first fact which must be grasped fully, if Americans are to act effectively in the coming weeks, is that we face a world crisis. If ever it were necessary to see the world as a whole—as a unit—now is the time. Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union transforms what was a war with reactionary aims on both sides into a world war, in which the people of Europe fight for everything that is progressive, everything that is modern, decent, humane. It is not a war in which Germans are fighting Russians; it is not just a war in which fascists are fighting Communists; it is not just a struggle between the two major powers of the Eurasian continent: to believe this is to miss the crucial fact that *this has now become a war to determine how all of us are going to live the rest of our lives, how the entire human race is going to live for generations after us.* It is, therefore, a war which involves the future of the United States, of the American people. We live in a land discovered by Columbus. And Columbus sailed westward to prove the earth was round. We of all people should see world politics as they are: inextricably bound together with everybody's destiny hanging on a smashing defeat for Hitler.

A Hitler victory would establish the Nazi empire across the entire expanse of Eurasia; such a victory would automatically mean the betrayal and defeat of the British people; automatically the poorly industrialized millions of China and India and Africa would be at the mercy of Hitler and his allies. Automatically, therefore, such an outcome would spell the moral, political, economic, and strategic isolation of our own country. We are not isolated from the rest of the world today. But on the morrow of a Hitler victory we certainly would be.

The simplest way to realize this truth is to consider what Charles Lindbergh told his audience at San Francisco last week. Lindbergh thinks hard, and he draws hard conclusions from his own position. He bluntly opposed support of the Soviet Union, and held forth the alternative, not just of a non-aggression pact, but an alliance with Hitler. "I would a hundred times rather see my country ally herself . . . even with Germany, with all her faults," he said. This is a clear and simple line, not just of cooperation with fascism, but of *subservience* to fascism. To offer Hitler such an alliance in advance is to admit that in a fascist world order, the United States would play a secondary, subsidiary, subservient role. Consider also Herbert Hoover's speech last week. He not only endorsed Lindbergh's advice in foreign policy, but he drew rigorous, inescapable conclusions in domestic affairs. Withdrawing from

the world market, the United States must begin to think in terms of autarchy, of making itself "ninety-seven percent self-contained," he said. And with this goes Hoover's repeated emphasis on intensified scientific research to prepare for an "ersatz" economy, an "ersatz" independence.

Such an America could only be a fascist America, which means a fearful assault on the labor movement, on education, on the standards of the middle classes, on the democracy that is still left to us. It would be a super-militarized America, with a malignant growth of anti-Semitism, the flaming up of the lynch spirit against the Negro people, the persecution of everything that is advanced and progressive.

Of course, for the longtime friends of the Soviet Union, this may appear to be obvious. Those who have looked to the USSR since its inception as the outpost of a new civilization, those who have read the Dean of Canterbury's book, need not be convinced that on the existence of the Soviet Union hangs the future progress of all mankind. But the argument today must be made for those who are not partisans of socialism, for those millions of progressive folk who still fail to see the interconnection between their own security and the present war. Take, for example, the people who argued for aid to Britain these last fifteen months. We disagreed, and insisted that the security of our own country did not depend on Britain, so long as the Soviet Union remained out of the war, so long as the cooperation of two neutral powers, the USA and the USSR, gave a practical alternative to involvement in the war. But if it were true, as our opponents argued, that the defeat of Britain would open up Hitler's advance into the western hemisphere; if it

were true that the collapse of the British Navy would make our own shores vulnerable, if it were true that the loss of Suez would open Asia and Africa to the Nazi armies, how much more true all this would be if Hitler succeeded in establishing himself across the top of the planet.

If it were true, as President Roosevelt argued on May 27, that American businessmen could not sell their goods in Latin America against an Anglo-German coalition, if it were true that the basis of America's security lay in the freedom of the seas, how much more true this would be if Hitler could operate from Murmansk into the North Atlantic, from the Soviet sea routes across the North Pole, from the Caspian Sea through the Persian Gulf into the Indian Ocean, from Vladivostok across the waters that wash the coast of Alaska. In short, if all those who made aid-to-Britain the cornerstone of their policy are to be consistent, the battle along the Soviet borders is their battle also.

ON THE OTHER HAND some NEW MASSES readers are worried by the fact that we now favor full-scale aid to Britain. They are suspicious of Churchill's intentions, and even when they observe that Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, rejects in advance Germany's offer of peace, they are nevertheless worried that such a peace offensive may be proceeding despite Eden's assurances. They are worried when General Wavell speaks of a forthcoming British invasion of the continent, fearing its reactionary possibilities against the interests of the peoples of western Europe. It would be heedless to dismiss such concern; in fact, R. Palme Dutt in his cable last week specifically warns against those "reactionary, pro-fascist, anti-Soviet forces" . . . who "seek in every way to limit collaboration with the Soviet Union, to leave the Soviet Union to fight alone . . . while they prepare the way, if a turn in the situation develops, for an agreement with Hitler on the basis of a common fight against the Soviet Union."

But what must be grasped fully is the transformation which is now proceeding in the nature of Britain's war. When Churchill hastily advanced his outstretched hand to the USSR, he was in effect yielding to the powerful pressure for friendship with the Soviet people which the People's Convention has championed. Irrespective of his calculations, such as they may be, it is obviously in the interests of the Soviet Union to go as far as possible to cooperate with Britain and the United States, as Stalin indicated in welcoming Churchill's "historic utterance."

Every blow that Britain strikes on the western front strengthens the fighting forces



Alexey Kravchenko

of the Soviet Union on the eastern front; if Hitler risked a war in the East in the hope that a "phony war" would develop in the West, it is obviously in the Soviet and the British interest to merge the war, to confront Hitler with a war on two fronts, exactly the kind of war which his generals hoped to avoid, exactly the kind of war which will most quickly undermine Hitler's base among the German people. But really the whole thing goes much deeper. The closer the cooperation between Britain and the Soviet Union today, the faster the defeat of Hitler—and with that defeat would come a crushing blow to those sections of British imperialism which were responsible for building Hitler up and giving him half of Europe. The closer the cooperation between Britain and the Soviet Union, the more difficult it becomes for reactionary groupings of American imperialism to determine the course of British policy. The closer the cooperation between the British and the Soviet peoples, the more difficult it will be for the Munichers to carry out a reactionary policy in western Europe.

The British people have now found a powerful ally on the continent. They now see an end to the terrible night bombardments of last fall; an alliance with the USSR offers for the first time since Munich the only real hope of defeating the menace of invasion. If the British people are rallying with such enthusiasm to their new ally, if, as Claude Cockburn reported in last week's *NEW MASSES*, the British trade unions wish to send delegations to Moscow and receive delegations from the Soviet workers, then powerful changes are taking place within Britain. The interest of the British people is therefore our interest. Those millions of Americans who followed the heroic defense of Britain with such admiration and enthusiasm must necessarily follow them in the transformed situation of today.

THE COOPERATION of Britain and the Soviet Union has an even greater impact among the peoples of Europe, the peoples who are now awaiting the day when the power of the Nazi armies is crushed. One has only to recall the demonstrations in the streets of Belgrade on March 27, when the Yugoslav regime which wished to cooperate with Hitler was overthrown. Let us remember that the masses of Belgrade carried banners in their demonstrations hailing *both Britain and the Soviet Union*. And there were cheers on their lips for three countries: Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Instinctively, therefore, the broad masses of Europe realize that their salvation will come only through the cooperation of these three nations. It was with deep insight into the true state of mind of all the peoples of Europe that the Soviet government took such a strong stand of friendship for Yugoslavia, even though the Cabinet that was formed on March 27 was composed of pro-British as well as pro-Soviet elements.

Approach the same question from still another point of view: in the last year or more a serious discussion has developed among many

honest and intelligent Americans on the nature of a permanent peace. A widespread debate, a real searching of minds developed on some way out of the recurrent disasters of wars and aggression. The great dilemma of all these schemes was that they totally ignored the role and influence of the Soviet Union in world affairs; they projected solutions for the crisis of Europe without recognizing that the Soviet state was really the largest in Europe holding forth powerful attractions for millions of peoples in the rest of the continent. By the cooperation of the British, Soviet, and American peoples that dilemma is resolved. For irrespective of what particular politicians may do, or try to do, it becomes clear that there cannot be a permanent and lasting peace after Hitler is defeated, without the cooperation of the British, Soviet, and American peoples. All of Europe knows that today. So must we.

And for those who have feared, as *NEW MASSES* feared, that a peace dictated by imperialist Britain could only be a reactionary peace, another Versailles, with men like Sir Robert Vansittart or Alfred Duff Cooper advocating another "Westphalia," that is, the splitting up of the German nation, it should now be clear that the influence of the Soviet Union will make impossible the realization of such reactionary aims. How obvious, therefore, that aid to Britain today means something quite different from what it meant three weeks ago! How obvious, therefore, that it is the obligation of all people—irrespective of past difference of opinion or future differences of opinion—to support the common struggle of the Soviet and British peoples.

HOW FAR shall America go? It seems to us that it would be fatal to separate aid to Britain from aid to the Soviet Union. That is the line of those forces in American political life who are still pursuing their anti-Soviet aims. That is the line of the *New York Times*, which fears that American imperialism may lose, to a certain extent, its control over British policy. But the common sense of the nation demands that the war be seen as *one war*, that aid be given to *both fronts*. It would only be playing into the hands of the appeasers, of Lindbergh and Hoover, to separate the question of aid to Britain from the question of aid to the Soviet Union. It would only be insulting the British people, who await with impatience the practical results of American friendship.

There are a dozen ways of getting our materials to the Soviet front: there are ports in the Soviet Arctic; there is a railroad which runs from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, a road which is only the distance from Buffalo to Detroit, and far out of reach of Nazi bombers. There are the Soviet Far Eastern ports of Vladivostok and Nicolaevsk, capable of accepting American supplies. If we are sending goods to China over the Burma Road, if our oil tankers are traveling to the Persian Gulf every day, if our ships are entering the Red Sea, and our supplies are reaching Syria, then obviously it is possible

to get our supplies to the Soviet Union. Everything we send them now eases the problem of America's defense tomorrow. For it is obvious that once the Nazi armies are crushed, then the immediate purpose of our defense program, from the point of view of the American people, has been achieved. If Britain and the Soviet Union win, which they can and will with our help, then the menace of fascist aggression to this hemisphere will be reduced, and may even disappear.

Nor is it the task of American progressives to limit the character of our country's help in this war. That is what the pro-fascists, all the Quislings are trying to do. It is not our task to prescribe in advance the precise limits of American policy in this situation. It is our job to force our own government to implement the President's pledge of assistance to the USSR. No understandable confidence in the strength of the Red Army ought to check for one moment the persistent demand that the United States give the Soviet Union everything that it needs to deliver the hammer blows against fascism.

*NEW MASSES* has made mistakes in the past, and it does not conceal them from its readers. We were right in assessing the anti-Soviet character of the Hess mission; we were a thousand times right in demanding a change in American policy toward the Soviet Union; in our letter to the British People's Convention last January we saw clearly the great transformations that Anglo-Soviet cooperation would make possible. But our major mistake was our failure to realize that in the era of the existence of socialism the imperialist war could not take the long, drawn out course it took twenty-five years ago. Although we discussed in our pages many times the growing dangers to the Soviet Union arising from Hitler's inability to win the war quickly, we failed to realize in the weeks immediately preceding the attack how near it was. And finally, in our initial reactions, we did not sufficiently emphasize how profound a change was taking place in world affairs. We did not fully stress what Stalin observed in his fighting speech last week, that the Soviet struggle "will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for their democratic liberties."

But the major mistake that could be made in the coming weeks is to dally with intriguing formulae, with elaborate debates, to substitute words for actions, to avoid the living realities. Time is a luxury. The time is now for all men and women of good will to step into the front lines of the battle in our own country. The time is now to form a powerful front of *all those who want to see fascism defeated against all those who wish to temporize, conciliate or cooperate with fascism*. Everything that is good and wholesome in America demands an immediate crystallization of aid to the British and Soviet peoples. On their struggle depends the future of everything that is good and wholesome in America, everything worth living for. On their fight depends our future.





Michaels

# TWO WEEKS OF THE GREATEST BATTLE IN HISTORY

Colonel T. examines the fronts from Murmansk to the Black Sea. Stopping the panzerdivisionen. Soviet versus Nazi strategy. The battles behind the tanks.

THE second week of the Soviet-German war has brought out a number of noteworthy developments—tactical, operative, strategic, and political.

*On the Finnish front.* The German and Finnish troops after launching a general offensive on Sunday, June 29, were seemingly not able to carry it through and were repulsed along the whole line. Next day they concentrated their efforts in three directions: on the eastern side of the Karelian Isthmus, in the Salla sector (Finland's "waist"), and in the direction of Murmansk. A couple of days later all attacks seem to have petered out, except on the extreme northern wing of the front where about two German divisions, probably those that crossed over from Norway by the grace of Sweden, continued to exert pressure in the direction of the Soviet bases on the two little peninsulas of Sredni and Rybachi (which cover the entrance to Peetsamo Fjord and were acquired by the USSR in 1940). Nothing has been heard of this operation since July 1. The Karelian "offensive" bogged down after the defeat of two Finnish battalions. However, more will doubtless be heard from this front should the Germans succeed in approaching Leningrad from either West or South.

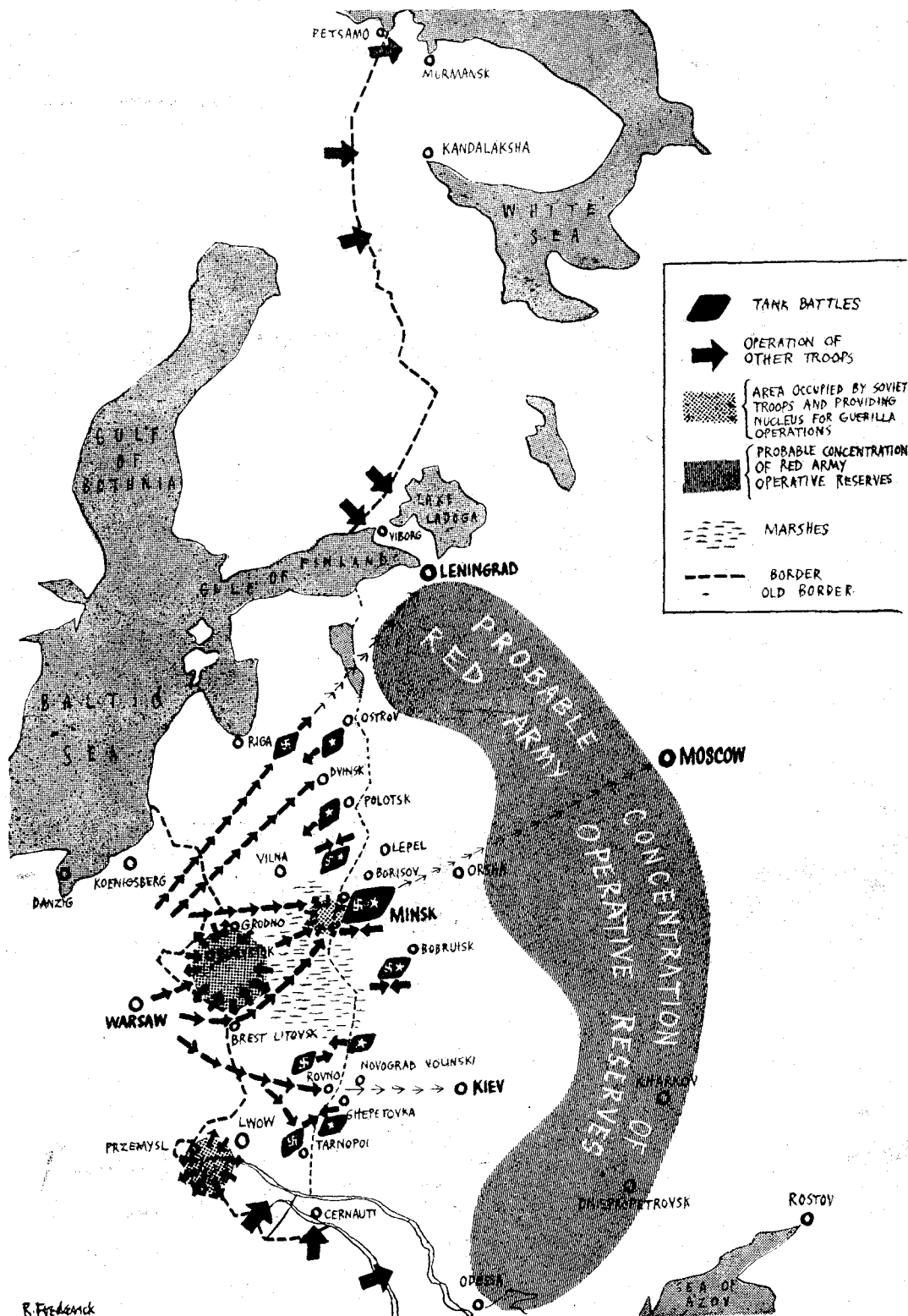
*On the Baltic front.* After the great battle of Shavli during the first week of the war, where hundreds of German tanks were destroyed, the Soviet forces began their withdrawal to the line of the Northern Dvina. On July 3 the Germans forced a crossing at Jacobstadt and Dvinsk and next day reached the eastern border of Latvia. The Red Army High Command launched a powerful tank and air counter-attack at dawn of July 5 and repulsed the German *panzerdivisionen* from the town of Ostrov and from Poltsk on the Dvina below Vitebsk.

*On the Central front.* On the line Warsaw-Moscow, a five-day battle of gigantic proportions has been raging on the banks of the Beresina, between Borisov and Bobruisk, with German spearheads pushing toward Orsha and Lepel. In this sector the battle is assuming a most unusual character which the "military experts" do not seem quite to understand. Three distinct battles are being waged in depth along the main axis of the "Moscow drive." Assuming that the German front is on the line Lepel-Bobruisk, the Soviet troops are fighting the German motorized infantry support west of Minsk, somewhere on the line Lida-Baranovichi, while another 150 miles west the Soviet army group which is "surrounded" in the Grodno-Bialystok area is creating havoc in the enemy rear, about 300 miles back of the German spearhead. The Germans admit these troops have been counter-attacking and that Nazi reserves had to be thrown into

the battle. Fighting thus is echeloned in depth along a 300-mile line, with three battles raging roughly 150 miles apart. Here is really a

new concept of defense in depth, with the "depth" stretching into the attacker's rear.

*On the Ukrainian front.* Nothing seems to



R. Fredenick

At press time Soviet communiqués reported strong Red Army counter-offensives. The invaders were pushed back along the Finnish front from Viborg to Petsamo. Other counter-actions occurred along the lines from Ostrov to Borisov beyond Minsk. Southward the Nazis were reported at the Dniester River fronting the Ukraine. Evidently the Nazi drive is disrupted; in some places halted. Their casualties are enormous; guerrillas are taking their toll, particularly in the areas around Bialystok and Przemyśl, where large Soviet forces were left behind for this work.