

# The People's War against Hitler Fascism

## *Task of the Communists*

(Document sent by the leaders of the Communist Party of India, who were then in Jail, in 1941, covering their views on what would be the attitude and policy of the Communist Party of India towards World War II after Nazi Germany attacked USSR on 22nd June, 1941. This document is known as "JAIL DOCUMENT" —Vol-iv-18)

### **1. Fight for Proletarian Internationalism**

1. With the Nazi attack on the Soviet, the proletariat and its parties are called upon to define their attitude towards the present war on the basis of the fundamental principles of revolutionary internationalism and take immediate and decisive practical steps. The question has become all the more urgent in colonies like India, where the proletariat, along with the people finds itself enslaved to a foreign imperialism involved in this war, and where consequently any change in its attitude towards it appears contrary to its national interests, as a slackening of its work for national liberation and assumes the colour of compromise and even "co-operation" with its national oppressor.

2. To concretely apply the principles of revolutionary Marxism to the war in its present phase, it is necessary to study and understand the developments that led to it. It is essential to study the genesis of the war in its first phase, and make a searching analysis of the class forces behind it in both the phases. For, as on every other question, the proletariat and its parties decide their attitude towards the war also only on the basis of class position and nothing else.

### **Genesis of The Second World War**

*Conspiracy Against The Soviet* : 3. The second imperialist war, like the first one epitomised the intense imperialist rivalries to dominate and exploit the world. Yet it arose under circumstances far different from the first one, it arose under an entirely new class situation. Its most arresting, most signal feature was there, it inevitably arose out of the failure of the plans of imperialist encirclement of the only proletarian state, of imperialist intervention which was to be led by Germany and later on by Japan, supported by Anglo-American Imperialism. It arose out of the disruption of the attempted counter-revolutionary front of the world bourgeoisie against the USSR, against the world proletariat, to solve their rivalries at the expense of the proletarian state. It was not merely a question of redistributing the world or subjugation of nations. *IT WAS ONE OF DESTROYING SOCIALISM AND REDISTRIBUTING THE SOCIALIST WORLD AMONG THE POWERS.* To forget this cardinal feature of the genesis of the war is to miss the class position of the contending classes and misread subsequent developments.

*From Intervention to Imperialist War* : 4. The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was the proletarian counter-thrust against this conspiracy of encirclement of intervention, which very nearly succeeded. It was the wedge driven by the proletarian state, by its proletariat, in the ranks of the counter-revolution. Defeated by this stroke in their nefarious conspiracy, the bourgeoisie tumbled into the most ferocious and brutal war among themselves. *From intervention to imperialist war such has been progress of events and developments leading to the second war. From attempts to build a counter-revolutionary front to its disruption and the most fierce tearing at it with their own hands, with mighty weapons— such as the genesis of the second war.*

### **Joint Front Against Fascism**

*How Soviet Sought to Prevent it* : 5. The background of this master-stroke of proletarian strategy was the ceaseless struggle of the two contending classes waged over a number of years in the international arena. The rise of Nazi Germany with its aggressive imperialist ambitions, with its declared anti-Bolshevism, was the signal for the proletariat, led by the Proletarian State to sound the warning to the working men and peoples of all countries against the impending disaster of an attack against the Soviet.

Financed by the most reactionary elements in Britain, encouraged by them to expand eastwards, Nazi Germany was rapidly becoming the spearhead of the bourgeois counter-revolution against the USSR. The proletariat led by the Soviet struck fiercely at this new menace. As yet there was no unanimity between different imperialisms. Sections of French imperialists and the French people as a whole looked askance at the policy on strengthening Germany, especially since the former realised that this could be done only by endangering their imperial and national interests of the continent. The French people themselves were mightily afraid of a strong Germany lest it should threaten their own freedom. A number of smaller nations and their bourgeoisie were equally opposed to a militarised Germany. They realised that their liberty and independence would be the first casualties in a German expansion. Before Germany could launch an attack on the Soviet, the Greater Reich with its protectorates had to come into being. The proletariat struck back vigorously, attempting to rally the people, the smaller nations, and even sections of the bourgeoisie whose immediate interests ran counter to the ultimate interests of world capitalism, the destruction of the USSR which was immediately sponsored by the most reactionary elements of British imperialism. The proletarian state appealed to the peoples of the world to form a common front against fascism at home and abroad. The Communist international unfolded a programme of popular front nationally, which was aimed at isolating the most reactionary sections who were supporting fascism internationally and those who were organising it at home.

*Aggressors and Non-Aggressors* : 6. For the first time, the proletariat and its parties made distinctions between imperialist nations, distinguishing aggressor nations from non-aggressor ones, distinctions which were so thoroughly denounced by Lenin himself during the last war, distinctions which became invalid, opportunist, the moment the second world war broke out. As part of this same programme of the widest possible front, the parties of the proletariat in imperialist countries, agitated for the extension of democratic rights and civil liberties in the colonies, liberal concession, etc., and nothing more. Not that the slogan of right to national independence was given up. **BUT THE IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME DID NOT INCLUDE IT. THE PRE-CONDITIONS OF A POPULAR FRONT AT HOME WERE NOT BASED ON THE RIGHT OF THE COLONIES TO REVOLT.** It could not be done just because the widest possible front against interventionist reactionaries, a front which extended to sections of imperialist bourgeoisie themselves, had to be built. The Party must first remember this point. The colonial masses were expected to participate on two fronts, without national revolution having been first achieved. The proletarian state, followed by proletarian parties, repeatedly appealed and agitated for collective security and peace based on it. After years of isolation, the proletarian state entered the arena of international politics as a state and sought the co-operation of certain bourgeois-imperialist states to curb Nazi Germany, the spearhead of inter-ventionist attack. Collective security means just such cooperation between the proletarian and bourgeois states. It was to ensure international peace by curbing Nazism in time. Failing that it was to be a common front of people, colonial masses included, and their governments in an anti-Nazi war.

*Why the Distinction* : This recapitulation of recent history is necessary, for it seems that the class forces who believed it have been forgotten. People seem to remember it only as a struggle for “peace” and “democracy”. How came it then that the International, the proletarian state, began to distinguish between the aggressors and non-aggressors? Was not Britain as much an aggressor as Germany herself? In fact was not Britain a confirmed aggressor, while Nazi Germany only a potential one at the time when distinctions were drawn? How could the proletariat and its parties demand popular front governments which were bourgeois governments, which agreed only to keep democracy intact, and that too, at home and not in the colonies? Since when did we become so enamoured of bourgeois democracy as to draw such important and even fundamental distinctions between it and the other kind of bourgeois dictatorships—fascism, as to extend support to the former in a war against the latter? Was it opportunism of a state—the Soviet—of a nation, of a power which found itself cornered by other power.

*Attitude to The Soviet The Touch Stones* : 7. It was nothing of the sort if you take into consideration the class positions of the two classes. To the proletariat, and this must be grasped in all its implications, the Soviet is not merely a state or a power, an ally or a friendly country. It is the bastion of Socialism the proletarian fortress from which international proletariat hurls its challenge to the capitalist world. It is the consolidation of the November Revolution, the biggest and the only breach in the steel wall of capitalism. The fate of the proletariat of the enslaved nations, depends on keeping the breach open and then widening it. That is why the defence of the only proletarian state, the only fatherland of the proletariat, is the fundamental task of all proletariats.

### **Strategy of Isolating the Main Enemy**

***Defence of The Soviet Union :*** 8. The proletariat attaches such fundamental importance to the defence of the USSR that it decides its immediate attitude towards parties, classes governments *AND STATES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOVIET*. Temporarily, it allies itself with all those sections and welcomes all such government as ally themselves with the Soviet, genuinely and sincerely. It was because of this new factor in the situation, as contrasted with the first world war, that the distinction between democracy and fascism, between aggressor and non-aggressor imperialist states could be made. Democracy could be *DISTINGUISHED FROM FASCISM ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE ONLY IN SO FAR AS IT WAS CAPABLE OF ACTING IN DEFENCE OF THE USSR*. The moment it ceased to do that, the distinction lost all meaning. The non-aggressor nations could be distinguished from the aggressors only in so far as the aggression of the new aggressors was a preparation for an assault on the Soviet. *REALLY, IT WAS DISTINCTION BETWEEN AGGRESSORS OR NON-AGGRESSORS OF THE PROLETARIAN STATE*. The former could again be distinguished in so far they were not only not directly interested in the assault, but could be expected to join hands with the Soviet against the aggressors, out of selfish motives of defending their empires, of preserving their past gains. Beyond this the distinction ceased to exist, as they did when the Nazi attack fell upon Anglo-French imperialism. Had the Nazi aggression not been a potential danger to the Soviet had it taken the form of expansion at the expense of some other imperialism, it would have been frankly an imperialist quarrel and neither the Soviet nor the proletariat would have made the distinction that were made for the reorientation of the entire proletarian strategy and tactics. Yet these distinctions were fundamental for the proletariat in the given situation. They were fundamental to defeat the aggressors of the Soviet, to rally the peoples to overthrow the common danger, protect the proletarian State against encirclement.

***The Defence of Peace and Democracy :*** They took account of the innumerable contradictions among the bourgeoisie and the imperialism. Peace, Democracy, etc were slogans with which the proletariat was defending its most sacred trust, the USSR, defending itself against the conspiracy of the most reactionary sections of the world bourgeoisie, to take a stride forward later on. They had not developed a sudden faith in bourgeois democracy, discovering new absolute values in it with the rise of fascism. Nor were democracy, peace, independence of smaller nations mere devices to cheat the people into supporting the USSR. They were genuinely meant, because *ON THEM DEPENDED THE ABILITY OF THE PROLETARIAT TO DEFEND THE GAINS OF THE NOVEMBER REVOLUTION AND TO MOVE FORWARD. IT WAS FRANKLY A QUESTION OF CLASS MOVING AGAINST CLASS, THE USSR, BY POINTING THE COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET AND OTHER PEOPLES AND NATIONS, IN CURBING FASCISM AND MAINTAINING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY—THE COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY INTER-VENTIONISTS PREPARING TO SELL DEMOCRACY AT EVERY STEP, THE INDEPENDENCE OF NATIONS AND PEACE, TO PREPARE FOR THE GRAND ASSAULT*. Only in the light of this class situation, only in the light of this tug-of-war between classes can the past be understood correctly and the subsequent developments mastered. The fulcrum of the proletarian policies has been and will be the defence of the proletarian state. Distinctions between bourgeois states, between two types of bourgeois dictatorship—the fascist and democratic—become valid only in the context of then attitude towards the proletarian state otherwise democracy is bourgeois democracy and nations and states are either bourgeois or proletarian.

***End on the Main Enemy of Mankind - Fascism :*** 9. In short, the proletarian strategy at this period was the Isolation of the main enemy of the international proletariat. The main enemy of the proletariat is that section or sections of the bourgeoisie which take a lead in organising a direct assault on the Soviet. When the national enemy differs from the main international enemy, as found above, the proletariat concentrates its fire on the latter and its accomplices, attempting to compel its national enemy to do likewise. The proletariat does this just because it recognises no national barriers, no nation, no fatherland except the Soviet Proletariat unity and proletarian internationalism subordinate national considerations to international ones. They determine the pace, the extent and intensity of their warfare against their own bourgeoisie by the pace, the extent, etc. of the international struggle. The proletarians measure their national advance by the general international advance of their class. For them their own bourgeoisie or governments are only a part of the world bourgeoisie just as they themselves are only a part of the international army. Where this international army is to deliver its death-blow at any given time, where the fire is to be concentrated, is determined by the class situation in the world as a whole; whether the proletariat scattered in different countries is to deliver its smashing blows simultaneously against the bourgeoisie in all countries or whether it is to concentrate its fire internationally on one section rather than on another is a question of the concrete situation in which the proletariat finds itself, on the correlation of *CLASS FORCES* in the world.

**True Meaning of Inter-nationalism :** This is the full meaning of internationalism, of international unity. The proletariat singles out its main enemy, if that is possible, isolates it completely and defeats it. For this purpose it enters into alliance with sections and states of the bourgeoisie, who are driven towards it by their own contradictions. By these tactics the proletariat unites its own ranks and divides those of its opponents. The singling out of the main enemy, his isolation, is the Leninist strategy adumbrated by him on several occasions (see Stalin's "LENINISM", 'Conditions of the successful revolution, description of the two phases'). *FAILURE TO SINGLE OUT THE MAIN ENEMY ON THE INTER-NATIONAL FRONT, FAILURE TO RECOGNISE THE MAIN ENEMY IN THE ENEMY OF THE SOVIET UNION, FAILURE TO DECIDE OUR IMMEDIATE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NATIONAL OPPRESSOR IN THE INTER-NATIONAL SETTING IN TERMS OF HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USSR—IS TO JOIN THE MOST REACTIONARY SECTIONS FOR AN ASSAULT AGAINST THE SOVIET, TO ENCOURAGE A COMMON FRONT AGAINST HER, TO BE GUILTY OF BOURGEOIS-NATIONALISM, IS TO BETRAY THE PEOPLE INTO THE HANDS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY GANGS.*

**Anti-Fascist Front and Liberation of Colonial Peoples :** 10. Throughout the years preceding the outbreak of the Second Imperialist War, the proletariat then was following the strategy of isolating the main enemy. As a class, it waged a world-wide struggle against the counter-revolutionary vanguard of the bourgeoisie. It was enamoured neither of bourgeois-democracy nor of this or that bourgeois state. It supported one or the other only in so far as it helped it to defend socialism, the proletarian state—the only guarantee of its final liberation. Not for a moment had it laid down its weapons of class struggle. On the other hand, with sharpened and finer weapons, it was leading its grand counter-assault, whether it had first driven foreign imperialism out of its country or not. If that assault had materialised, it would have had to join even if it had not been nationally liberated. Thereby it would have hastened its own liberation both as a nation and as a class, for the assault would have weakened the world imperialist system and made the world safer for proletarian socialism. There could be no exceptions in proletarian ranks. The immediate enemy of the Soviet was their main enemy. These are fundamental points to understand the subsequent discussions.

#### **Situation on the Outbreak of the War**

**Reaction Scores :** 11. The grand assault planned by the proletariat did not materialize. In spite of temporary successes—popular fronts, etc. — the proletariat in capitalist and colonial countries failed to unite the ranks of the people and isolate the most reactionary elements. More and more, these elements in Britain led by the Cliveden Set encouraged Hitler in his aggression, furiously hoping for the final result one by one they tore down treaty guarantees, the Franco-Soviet Pact, and continually egged on Hitler with incendiary incitement. Step by step, the proletarian state was isolated and stood alone among the states of the world. The situation before the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was the most serious since the days of intervention. It was a question of touch and go, and the interventionist war would have started. Standing alone in this menacing situation, the Soviet saved the world proletariat by its counter-stroke of the pact. Only Hitler's fear of the armed might of the Soviet, his suspicions of other imperialist powers and the necessity of cheap victory made him abandon the path chosen by him and cleared by Chamberlain.

**Soviet Isolated :** 12. The Second World War arose as a result of the disruption of the counter-revolutionary front. This cardinal fact we must never forget. But if the front was broken, the isolation of the Soviet from the proletarians, from the peoples of the world, was never so complete. Finland and the Baltic States offered still more opportunities to poison the bewildered popular mind. Roosevelt pontifically named the USSR as the aggressor and Social Democracy in Britain joined the chorus. Never was the isolation of the Soviet so complete as in these dark days. Capitalist encirclement had failed, but it appeared for a time as if a people's encirclement had replaced it.

**The Second Imperialist War Breakout :** 13. Arising under these circumstances out of the failure of the counter-revolutionary designs, the war could only be characterised as imperialist. Its basic motives on both sides were imperialist retention or acquisition of territories for exploitation. Had the proletarian counter-stroke of isolating Nazism succeeded, the result would have been different with a different class alignment i.e. different type of war.

14. Hence overnight, all previous distinctions which were fundamental to the proletariat in a given class situation became opportunist. Many a Communist Party blundered into this opportunism by retaining the slogan of war on two fronts. They still appeared to draw distinctions between democracy and fascism when "democracy" was at war out of imperialist motives when "democracy" had declined to play even temporarily a progressive role by refusing alliance with the Soviet. Let it be remembered that

alliance with the Soviet is contrary to the final and ultimate interests of imperialism, though it may appear to help immediately this or that imperialism. That is why it was not a war between democracy and fascism, but an imperialist war, which came into being because a democratic anti-fascist front was rejected. The war on two fronts virtually amounted to a demand for a national government to prosecute an imperialist war. The proletariat could never do that.

**Britain the Main Enemy : 15.** But this was not all. British imperialism—its ruling circles had been the main force behind Hitler. They declared war when Hitler refused to do their bidding. Any help to British imperialist war, any slackening of opposition to it, therefore amounted to pressure on Hitler to attack the USSR. It meant incitement to aggression against the USSR. Britain was now the main enemy who had broken the alliance and the people's fronts to make the world safe against Socialism. The world proletariat was to concentrate its fire on Chamberlain and his gang; they were not to be misled by comparisons between fascism and democracy. If Hitler had broken down treaties, it was because Chamberlain had abetted him. If Hitler was fighting for still worse aims, it was because his counter-revolutionary aims had not been realised. Nazi Germany, however, did not become an ally. It remained potentially a next dangerous enemy. Hence the war as a whole was an imperialist one. In this situation, the singling out the enemy could be done not simply by denouncing the war as an imperialist one but by special denunciation of Chamberlain also who had made it possible by rejecting a pact with the Soviet.

16. The situation then at the outbreak of the second war was as follows :

1. The most reactionary bourgeois elements had succeeded in breaking up the developing democratic front against Nazism;
2. At the same time, their plans of hurling Nazism at the head of the USSR had failed, were smashed. Their dreams of completely exhausting both the Soviet and Nazi powers and for the partition of the USSR had been smashed.
3. The dangers of a negotiated peace with an attack on Soviet as the basis had not yet ended. With the Chamberlain gang in power the danger was there. Yet it was increasingly becoming more and more difficult to attain the old objective of a counter-revolutionary front;
4. The isolation of the Soviet from the working masses and peoples of other countries was not only far more complete than ever before, but had developed into a hostility under stress of imperialist propaganda;
5. If the resurrection of the old counter-revolutionary front had been rendered more difficult; the danger of a single handed Nazi attack had not vanished. The Soviet had diverted the blow, not smashed it. The danger had only temporarily retarded. Everything depends on the development of the war.

#### **The Collapse in Europe**

**Fall of France : 17.** The Progress of the war staggered the imagination of the world. But these staggering developments themselves led to a new alignment of forces between nations and classes. Hitler marched from success to success. He finished Denmark and Norway, inflicting a severe defeat on British imperialism and winning strategic points for his attack. But he received his most staggering success when he routed the combined French, Belgian and British forces, forcing the former to sign a truce with them. British imperialism was within one inch of defeat. Never was it so seriously and directly menaced as after the collapse of France. Hitler could no longer be treated with the same old indulgence. Instead of turning eastwards, he has turned westwards. He had smashed the most powerful ally of British imperialism. That ally showed unmistakable signs of turning into an enemy. Hitler has surrounded the British Isles, menaced its communications with the Empire and was angling for the French navy and the French colonial possessions to seal the doom of the Empire. His industrial resources and power had become bigger than the power of the British Empire with the accessions of French resources kept intact for him by the French bourgeoisie. Not a single military power was left on the continent except the hated USSR with whom the British imperialists had now to seek rapprochement to save themselves. What the popular forces could not achieve in the past seemed now realisable with the fire threat to British existence. Yes, British imperialism had to abandon its dreams of solving imperialist contradictions at the expense of the USSR and seek rapprochement with her.

**Encirclement of the USSR : 18.** The Soviet could not be expected to entertain proposals for helping one imperialism against another in an imperialist war. But it was no longer a question of pure imperialist rivalries. Finding herself safe on the western side, Nazi Germany turned towards the east, the Balkans, creating a ring of subsidiary States round the Soviet. The Soviet in the early days of the war had anticipated the Nazis in Finland and the Baltic States. But the ring continued Rumania was taken. Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were subjugated. The defeat of the British forces in Greece and Crete effectively sealed the USSR. By driving the British from the continent, Hitler was making one front safe and avoiding

a two-front war. The Soviet was to be struck in isolation, all the military power had to be concentrated against her Hitler's expansionist aims were again directly threatening the USSR. Again, therefore, the question of the safety of the proletarian state was being raised and raised in the context of the sharpest imperialist conflict—imperialism divided and at war with each other. Nazism no longer remained one of the imperialist powers threatening the possessions of another. It was rapidly hastening to destroy the proletarian state to satisfy its expansionist aims. Having struck at its rival on the western front, it now sought to clear the road for its final ambition by defeating and destroying the USSR. It was because of this that the Soviet could entertain proposals for a rapprochement. British imperialism was no longer the gatherer of world reaction. Its aim, for the sake of its own safety, could no longer be the immediate destruction of the USSR. On the other hand, its interests demanded the destruction of Nazism at a time when the latter was organising for an attack against the USSR.

19. Consciousness of this swinging danger was seen in the statements of Soviet statesmen and activities of the Soviet. As far back as November 7, 1940, on the Anniversary of the November Revolution, Kalinin declared: "We are not disinterested spectators of the European war. We are vitally interested in its outcome," a broad hint that the Soviet did not look with favour on Nazi successes. Statements that the Soviet was prepared to accept the challenge of any enemy also began to appear. The guarantees to Yugoslavia who had an understanding with Britain showed how keenly the danger was felt by the USSR. Finally the assurance to Turkey that if she were forced into a war and defended her independence, she would rely upon the neutrality and the understanding of the Soviet, demonstrated how the Soviet foreign policy was shifting and seeing in Hitler the main enemy.

### **Turning Point, New Alignment of Forces**

*On the Eve of the Nazi Attack on the Soviet Union* : 20. The situation then on the eve of the Nazi attack against the USSR was as follows :

1. The USSR encircled by the Nazi power which had become a strong continental force with the entire European resources and the major part of the European manpower at her disposal.
2. Just because of these developments, it had become such a serious menace to British imperialism that its destruction had become necessary in its own interests.
3. A growing rapprochement ripening into an alliance had developed. Hitler tried to play the old game by offering the bait of an attack against the USSR. He sent Hess. What the proposals exactly were is not known. But that they were rejected, is obvious. One reason was that the old Chamberlain gang was not in power. The anti-German Churchill perhaps took a firm stand. Another reason was that Hitler was obviously asking for world supremacy. He obviously demanded a more or less complete hegemony on the continent, with the entire Europe at his feet. British imperialism could no longer allow him to expand even at the expenses of the USSR.

21. Those who thought that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact had made Russia permanently safe against a Nazi attack seem to think that the attack coming as it did immediately after the Hess proposals was a fructification of the Chamberlain policy. They argued that a Nazi attack could only come with the consent of Britain—willing or unwilling. They thought that Britain was playing the old game of an exhausting war, allowing both the Soviet and Germany to weaken themselves by it.

They forget both the concrete facts, developments in Britain and also general situation. They forget the situation on the eve of the Nazi attack, the tremendous changes in the powers of the two fighting imperialisms. For them, British imperialism must follow a fixed policy, irrespective of changes in the situation, irrespective of how it affects its own interest. It must be guided by an idealistic hatred of the Soviet and must be willing to sacrifice itself in the holy cause of the world bourgeoisie, surrender its world position and play the second fiddle to Hitler, for them no rifts exist in the ranks of the imperialist bourgeoisie, no cross currents, so that every section, every interest must pursue the policy of Chamberlain. For them only imperialist unity exists and not imperialist contradictions and that too, in the thick of the most brutal war.

22. The general situation has been already emphasised. Suffice it to say that the Chamberlain plan was based upon protecting British imperialism. It sought to protect the immediate interests of Britain, protect them in such a way that the ultimate interests of world imperialism could be served thereby. This could be done only in so far as there was identity between the immediate and ultimate interests. The immediate interests not only demanded a diversion of the blow against the British Empire but it also demanded it in such a way as to weaken the powerful rival and adversary of British imperialism. Only a weakened Hitler, weakened to such an extent that for years he dared not challenge British imperialism, was to have a victory against the USSR and not only weakened but at the mercy of British imperialism.

### **Sharpening of Imperialist Contradiction**

**Why Britain Turned to The Soviet :** As has been pointed above, after the colossal rise in Hitler's power in the eighteen months following the war, after his fantastic military victories, all these conditions had disappeared. Any more victories to him, even at the expense of the USSR would have meant still further rise in his power and resources. It would make Hitler virtually the master of the European continent. The British imperialist circles who had always pooh-poohed the military might of the Soviet, were actually afraid that the Soviet Union with her vast industrial and agricultural resources might fall cheaply into the hands of Hitler. That, they knew, would seal their doom as a first rate world power. There was no safety for British imperialism in the event of such a development. The pursuances of the old policy would have meant sacrificing the immediate interests of Britain, surrendering its position as a world power to Nazi Germany. British imperialism, could not be so altruistic even for the sake of the world bourgeoisie. No bourgeoisie of any country sacrifices its national and imperialist interests to another for the sake of world imperialism in general. To the bourgeoisie, capitalism and imperialism are always present in the concrete form. Their national barriers are vital conditions of their existence. They will agree to sacrifice part of their interests, accept a subordinate position to their rivals only when they are immediately threatened by the proletariat of their own country, when the danger of revolution is imminent at home, when their very existence is threatened. Not otherwise.

**Fear of Hitler's Might :** Those who talk about an exhausting war forget all this, the history of the war, the basic fact that the war developments had sharpened hundred fold the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. They forget that an imperialist war is nothing but the sharpest flaring up of the imperialist rivalries, which could only be solved by vanquishing the one or the other. Not to take imperialist contradictions into consideration in the midst of an imperialist war is to reject Marxism, to transform it into a dead formula, attribute the same unity to the capitalist class as is found only in the proletariat. Those who take this stand might argue that no doubt British imperialism could not enter into a conspiracy with Nazi Germany, because of the imperialist contradictions, but nonetheless it might decide to play the role of an onlooker hoping to strike at Hitler after he has been exhausted by the USSR, thus weakening both, that while it is not in conspiracy with Nazi Germany, it is still following the game of deliberately weakening both. This argument not only underestimates the depth of the imperialist contradictions but also Britain's understanding and fear of Hitler's mechanised warfare.

**Britain can no Longer "Sit Back and Watch" :** In the first place, Britain was not in a position to take risks. It knew that if Russia was beaten quickly, even if her industrial resources were captured by Hitler cheaply, that would practically seal the doom of the British Empire. With their first experience of mechanised warfare in France, the British were so panic-stricken with the lightning victories of Hitler that they dared not think of the luxury of being merely onlookers. They did not expect such a quick collapse of France and since then they could not be sure of anything. Not possessing flattering opinion of the Soviet military powers, the British were mightily afraid of a quick Soviet defeat—they thought she might not stand in the field till winter—and still more afraid of a peace between the vanquished Soviet and Nazi Germany, with the latter in possession of the industrial resources (a fantastic conception no doubt, but a genuine fear on the part of British imperialism) and able to turn against England with full force.

No, it had become impossible for Britain to play the game of an exhausting war without sacrificing her interest. It was equally impossible for her to play the role of a disinterested onlooker. She had become a partisan. If there were doubts about her role, the USSR had sufficient elbow-room and would not have objected to Hitler's passage across Turkey.

### **Shift in the Ruling Circles of Britain**

23. To turn to developments in Britain itself, it must be remembered that there was no unanimity in British bourgeois circles regarding Chamberlain's policy. What is the position of the Cliveden Set today? Does it continue to rule as before? The Cliveden Set and its leading light Chamberlain fell on evil days soon after the start of the war. A very influential section of the British Press and public opinion began to fear that the war was not conducted vigorously, it was a fear born of the appeasement policy of Chamberlain. The Norway fiasco put an end to Chamberlain and anti-German Churchill headed the new government (in a document on war coming from abroad, not exactly a document but oral report of it, we were told that the anti-German trend of Churchill might play a part and become important). He was the one man in the Conservative circles of Britain who refused to join the Soviet baiting campaign and the Cliveden Set. He was the only statesman in Britain who explained the Soviet absorption of the Baltic States as an anti-German move, refused to cover its real character in the interest of Soviet baiting.

**Cross-Currents in Britain :** Though Churchill was at the head, the Cliveden Set was still powerful inside the Government. Halifax still continued to be the Foreign Secretary. But the most influential sections of

the Press seem to have been thoroughly fed up with the Cliveden gang. The Press utilised every occasion to criticise the members and followers of the gang. For instance, when Halifax once referred to religion and God in his war speech the Press criticised him for being an impractical visionary and demanded practical and vigorous men. Under one excuse or another, the Press warfare continued, Churchill reshuffled his government on quite a number of occasions. Anderson and others were gone; the notorious Samuel Hoare was sent to Spain and finally Eden who was sacrificed to his policy of appeasement replaced Halifax, who was banished to the USA. Halifax is still a member of the war Cabinet, but Churchill seems to have got rid of him once and for all. Anybody who neglects the significance of these changes, especially in the context of the situation after the collapse of France, fails to take into consideration the important cross-currents in Britain, and the loss of position of the Cliveden Set, fails to note the most signal fact that the Cliveden Set was no longer in control of the government and that it (the government) was headed by a man opposed to the policy of the gang. It was after the installation of the Churchill government that serious attempts were made for a rapprochement with the USSR and after a time they were entertained. Britain agreed to guarantee the Soviet frontiers (Butler in the Commons)—articles were written, (King-Hall) saying that Britain was not interested in raising the question of the Baltic States. Soon after, from the Soviet side came the guarantee to Yugoslavia and the assurance to Turkey which barred Hitler's way into Syria.

**Churchill is The Appeasers** : If there was any doubt as regard where Britain stood in relation to the Soviet, Churchill resolved them on the out break of hostilities. On the day Hitler attacked Russia the British press declared Soviet Union to be a co-belligerent but not an ally. Churchill next day hit at all those who declared Russia to be a co-belligerent. He declared her to be an ally to whom every help was to be rendered. The "co-belligerent" slogan would have exactly suited the purpose of the Cliveden Set policy. It would have been stupid for Churchill to describe the Soviet as an ally and hit at others; he was hitting at the friends of Chamberlain not so much at the Press which was not aware of diplomatic developments, had he not meant his words. Considering the state of the British public opinion now the insistent demand for opening a new front it would have been suicidal to raise such hopes and make such commitments if they were not to be met. It was the head of the British Government again who overcame USA's hesitation to help the Soviet. The isolationists were raising a howl but Roosevelt was brought round, made to reply the isolationist propaganda—religious persecution in Russia, etc.—and finally the attempts to exclude Russia from the benefit of Lend and Lease Act were frustrated. Hesitations of America actually delayed the meeting of the Moscow conference; but in the end the Conference met and Stalin described the help of the powers as bountiful.

**People's Pressure Needed to Overcome Churchill's Vacillations** : Of course, Britain has yet failed to relieve the pressure on Russia by opening a new front on the continent, though it was openly advocated by no less a person than Mr. Litvinoff. The persistent demand in the British Press, even the Press nearest to the Government, to do something effective, the general dissatisfaction with the failure to relieve the pressure on Russia, and the strong advocacy in certain sections of the Press that a new front should be opened, warrant the conclusion that this failure is not a deliberate policy, but perhaps due to hesitation, or what is still more possible due to internal difficulties—both of which could only be removed by popular pressure. The possible explanation is that the failure might be either due to the hesitations of the conservative military General staff of the British Army or to the opposition to some influential Cliveden Set followers who still command a considerable following in the Conservative Party. In either case, only popular pressure strengthening Churchill's hands or overcoming his own hesitation will have to decide the matter. To conclude the relations established between the Soviet and Britain are those of common allies. British imperialism is not in a position to play the game of an exhausting war. It must support and actively co-operate with the USSR in destroying Nazism, for the latter has become an immediate menace to its own safety. It is the sharpened contradictions between Britain and Nazi-imperialism that now enable the former to consider the Soviet as an ally—an anti-Nazi ally. With the Anglo-Soviet alliance, the relations between the proletarian state and capitalist states undergo drastic changes. The capitalist encirclement is not only broken but two of the Biggest imperialisms range themselves on the side of the Soviet—one as an ally and another as a friendly power against a third—Nazi.

#### **Concentrate Fire on Nazism— The Main Enemy**

**Soviet Defeat would be Diaster for World Proletariat** : 24. By its murderous attack on the only proletarian state Nazism converts itself again into the main enemy of the international proletariat—colonial proletariat not excepted. This is the A.B.C. of internationalism and the sooner the proletariat in India understands this the less it will betray itself and the world proletariat. Nazism has attacked the fortress of Socialism,



the consolidated gains of the November Revolution and thereby the entire international proletariat. Nazism seeks to destroy the only free people in the world, enslave the Soviet proletariat and thereby create conditions of perpetual enslavement for all proletarians and peoples. Nazism destroys the wealth of the Soviet Union, its big socialist industry, its proud engineering works and hopes to leave such wreckage behind, even if it is defeated as to create conditions for a counter-revolution. The freedom of proletarians—the freedom of peoples struggling for liberty, the fate of nations are to day decided on the soil of the Soviet where the bloody war rages with unabated fury. It does not require much Marxism to understand that if the Soviet is defeated, if the armed proletariat with all its vast resources is defeated, the international working class will remain enslaved for years, the post-war revolutionary rising crushed—both proletarian and colonial, crushed with the utmost ease, and the world will be made a safe place only for the most barbarous type of imperialism. Even the result of a severe battering for the USSR will mean a disaster for the world proletariat. It will immeasurably weaken the incubating revolutionary forces waiting to be unleashed. The only guarantee of future revolutions, of colonial liberation, the only way to safeguard the cycle of revolutions, the post-war revolutionary upheavals, is a successful defence of the Soviet, the biggest armed revolution. No liberation movement is possible on the ruins of the November Revolution. The defeat of the USSR and its consequent absorption by the Nazis might weaken this or that imperialism but will immeasurably strengthen the world imperialist system. Its defence, its victory, on the other hand, not only means the defeat of Nazism but an immeasurable weakening of world imperialism, a weakening which will be immediately seen in the post-war revolutionary movements. Only the armed might of the proletariat—if it is saved from destruction, from battering—will guarantee these, guarantee the future of Socialism. Nazism has called all this into question.

***Soviet Fight is the Fight of the World Proletariat*** : That is why Nazism is the main enemy of the international proletariat and the peoples of the world and the war against it is a people's war. The international proletariat has always regarded the Soviet people as the liberated proletariat, the Soviet State as the proletarian state. The Soviet peoples are fighting not for "national preservation" but for existence as a Socialist state. They are fighting for nothing less than the preservation of Bolshevism and beating off the same old counter-revolutionary attack which was launched in the first inter-ventionist war. If, at that time, anybody had said that the Russians were only fighting for national existence and hence it was not the concern of other proletarians, he would have been held guilty of promoting counter-revolutionary attack. If diplomatic exigencies entailed co-operation with classes who hate Socialism and prevent the Soviet leaders from appealing straight in class terms, there is no reason why the international proletariat should fail to see what the Soviet is fighting for. The fight of the Soviet people is the fight for Bolshevism, for the preservation of the November Revolution and—hence for the world. The international proletariat has never questioned this identity of interests. It is because of this identity of interests that the international proletariat has become a partisan in this war against the Nazis. It must wage this war from every quarter, leading the people coalescing with other classes and thus make it into a people's war against its immediate enemy—Nazis. It does not require much internationalism to understand that the fight of the Soviet is the fight of the international proletariat.

### **Win the People's War for All Peoples**

***It is People's War*** : Stalin himself speaking as the head of the state—described the war, as a people's war, not only for the Soviet peoples but also for the peoples of Europe and America. If it is a people's war for the peoples of the Soviet, Europe and America, it is one for us, Stalin did not describe it as a war in the interests of the governments but of the *PEOPLES*. At the same time, Stalin could not use the strict proletarian phraseology and frighten other classes. Lastly, what is meant by the people's war? Is it for the Soviet only? The people, strictly speaking, is a multi-class entity. You can talk of a people's war in China, but not in Russia, where classes have been abolished. The expression "people's war" has only one meaning, the alliance of the Soviet proletariat with the people's of different countries to beat down Fascism. It can be a people's war only in this context. Stalin's description of the war as people's war is a call for alliance with the Soviet proletariat. The Soviet people fight as proletariat and nothing else.

To agree theoretically on the same point, if it is not a people's war for all people's, what kind of war is it? Is it an imperialist war just because Britain is participating in it? The character of the war can only be judged by the main antagonism involved. Is that antagonism to-day imperialist rivalries, a redistribution of the world at the expense of this or that imperialist power? The issue is an attack on the proletarian state. The main antagonism is between the violent section of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as a whole. All other contradictions temporarily submerge, it is this main antagonism which dominates the situation to-day. The war is to decide whether the breach created by the November Revolution is to

remain open, whether a further proletarian advance is at all possible. If this temporarily helps one imperialism against another, it nonetheless weakens it against the international proletariat. British imperialism has to purchase its safety against Nazi imperialism by strengthening the world proletariat. Irrespective of the fact that certain imperialist powers are interested in fighting Nazism out of imperialist motives, the issue involved is the safety of the USSR, an issue for the millions and makes the war a people's war, notwithstanding British participation.

To conclude, the war against Nazism waged by the USSR with the help of British imperialism, is a people's war for all peoples. It is the war of the international working class to defend Socialism and safeguard the future revolutionary movements. Nazism is the main international enemy and has to be defeated with the help of whatever allies the proletariat can secure. The enemy is to be singled out and fire concentrated on him. By winning this war, by supporting and extending the war effort of their bourgeois governments in this war, the proletariat does not compromise with it, but co-operates with the USSR and defeats the immediate enemy of the working class.

25. The proletariat not only wants to win this war but win it quickly. It must thank its stars that the march of events have broken the encirclement, heave a sigh of relief that it has allies in powerful sections of the bourgeoisie itself, that conditions exist which will bring out a victorious Soviet without exhausting her too much, provided the proletariat in all countries know how to make their own governments prosecute a vigorous war. Those who shrink from this task, concentrating their attention on their own national enslavement, virtually demand the isolation of the USSR from all powers so that the proletariat and the oppressed nations may have the luxury of not co-operating with their own governments. Instead of jubilation that the world front is broken there seems to be moaning in their ranks which will put a Chamberlain or a Hoover to shame.