

The Front in the West

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THE PEOPLE of this country are facing at this moment the greatest crisis in their history. The gravity of the issues must be plainly stated so that none will fail to realise their meaning and all will act with resolution and determination. German Fascism, aiming at nothing less than the domination of the entire world, has turned the entire might of its armed forces to the East in a bloody and desperate attempt to strike down the Soviet Union. Never before in history was there such a vile and treacherous attack. Never before in history was there such a monstrous attempt to pillage and destroy, and to bring the people of many lands under the heel of a gang, whom Stalin has fittingly described as "monsters and cannibals."

The strategical plan of the German Fascists, drunk with power and mad with the lust of conquest, is to cripple the forces of the Soviet Union and then to hurl the full fury of their Panzer divisions and Luftwaffe against the people of Britain and America. And in this period of history, such plans are not slowly unfolded over months and years but are dependent on the success of lightning, treacherous blows, which must bring their final result in days and weeks.

France was conquered in the short space of thirty-one days. It was rotted from within before it was conquered from without. Hitler prepared for the invasion of Britain, but he feared to move because of the might of the Soviet Union, and his fear that the people of Britain would finally succeed in finding their way to unity with the people of that great country. The Soviet Union could not be cowed by threats or appeased by promises of a share in the spoils. German Fascism, fearful of the unity of the British and Soviet people, decided to strike at the Soviet Union in the hope that a victory achieved by treachery would then free its hands for the enslavement of Britain.

These are the grim realities which every man and woman in Britain must understand. They show that there is no such thing as a Soviet fight on the one hand and a British fight on the other. There is only one fight, that of the people of both countries for their

independence and against enslavement and national degradation. In the historic words of Stalin:

"Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggles of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. It will be a united front of the peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement and the threat of enslavement by Hitler's Fascist armies."

The realisation of this has already brought about a transformation of the situation in Britain and in other parts of the world. The Government was quick to recognise that the future of this country depends entirely upon the extent to which we fight shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union. The old issues which had divided the people, and which had created distrust between the people and the Government disappeared almost overnight. The Anglo-Soviet Alliance, which progressive opinion had advocated for years on end, was rapidly concluded. There arose a new hope, a belief in victory over Fascism. The people felt that these days of danger were also days of glorious opportunity. Alliance with the Soviet Union brought new confidence not only to the people of Britain, but also to the enslaved peoples of the Continent.

It is with a full understanding of the meaning of these new days that we address grave words to the working people of Britain and not in any spirit of carping criticism.

We are not doing enough. We have made only the first beginnings with those things that are vitally necessary if victory is to be won. The Government must be fully supported in the carrying out of the alliance with the Soviet Union for victory over Hitlerite Germany. But support means much more than passive acceptance. It means the democratic activity of the people to ensure that the decisions of the Government are really carried into effect and that the alliance is made a reality.

The first and immediate test of the alliance is in the military sphere. In the present situation this means the creation of a second front against German Fascism, the striking of hammer blows in the West commensurate with the

colossal fight now being waged by the Red Army in the East. The entire world stands in admiration before the glorious heroism of the Red Army and the Soviet peoples. Never before have the Panzer divisions encountered such a resistance. The legend of the invincibility of the German Army has been destroyed. Entirely new fighting methods have been developed by the Soviet armies, who are waging a deathless struggle in defence of their Fatherland and the new life created during these twenty-four years in place of the foul and rotten system of Tsardom. There are no "incredible mistakes" committed before Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev as there were in France one year ago. There are no hordes of leaderless and hopeless refugees. The people are united with the army. The people, as well as the soldiers, are fighting the invaders. The tactics of the "scorched earth" are depriving the Fascists of the advantages usually gained by an advancing army.

But we must be realists. The Soviet people are in need of all the help that Britain can give. Admiration and moral support is not enough. It must be translated into military action. The creation of the second front against Fascism is the burning question of the hour. And the quicker we act, the quicker their victory and ours. The longer we delay, the more difficult their situation and ours. No greater help could be given to Fascism to-day than a policy of sitting back and waiting on the part of Britain. We are not the spectators of a mighty scene, but the front rank fighters in freedom's greatest battle.

And if this second front in the West is the need of the hour, and no one dare deny that it is, then it is also clear that the weapons for this front must be provided with the utmost urgency and speed. The stirring call to action made by the People's Convention declares that just as there can be no quiet on the Western front, so can there be no quiet on the factory front. There must be a vast increase in the supply of tanks, aeroplanes and guns for victory. All obstacles to production must be overcome.

Parliamentary debates have revealed to the public at large the shocking state of our war industries, facts long known to the industrial workers, who have made many efforts to end the mismanagement and inefficiency which is the principal cause of this extremely dangerous state of affairs. The Government is engaged

in a number of administrative measures for the purpose of bringing about improvements. But this is only one side of the problem, which will not be solved unless the initiative and enthusiasm of the workers is given full scope. The men and women, upon whose skill and ability the success of production depends, are keen to bring about the sweeping changes that are so urgently required, as witness the resolutions passed by shop stewards and factory committees. One striking example of this desire is the conference of forty war factories called by stewards of Fairey's Manchester factory, where the whole problem of production was thrashed out in a vigorous and practical manner.

This action is an example to all parts of the country.

But there are many employers who do not welcome such steps, who do not understand the new times and the necessity of placing patriotism before profits. They have to be made to understand that there is no better guarantee of results in industry than the extension of trade union rights and the maintenance and improvement of living standards. The workers must be free to speak, write and act for the anti-Fascist cause, without fear of victimisation or prosecution. Above all, it is necessary to face and solve the problem of food supplies and to see that there is an equitable distribution of the available resources.

In these vital days when the fate of all peoples is being decided, the workers of Britain will not hesitate to make sacrifices for the common cause just as their Soviet allies are doing. But there is nothing more calculated to sap the morale of the workers than the spectacle of muddele and confusion in food supplies, and the marked advantages that idle, well-to-do individuals enjoy over the producers at the bench and in the pit. More food can be produced in this country, distribution can be organised for more efficiently and equitably, profiteering and speculation can be wiped out. The profiteers are Hitler's Panzer division in Britain. They must be treated as such. This is the way to build up the anti-Fascist unity of the people, and to create a national front, capable of withstanding all the blows of the enemy. This front must be sustained by a vigorous propaganda and political activity as well as by the satisfaction of the material needs of the people. For two years the Ministry of

Information has been a laughing stock. In four weeks the Soviet Information Board won universal admiration. Why? Because the Soviet propagandists set out to win the support and sympathy of the German people. Never once during these two years did we bring a German prisoner to the microphone. The Ministry of Information preferred to threaten the German people with the ravings of a Vansittart, a racial incitement that drove the Germans into the arms of Hitler and was nothing more or less than a gift for Goebbels.

Whilst working for changes in the method and approach of the Ministry of Information, the people must develop their own propaganda and not leave it to the officials on high. To the extent that the anti-Fascist movement develops in this country, publishes a broad, popular literature and organises a great network of public meetings it will be possible to stimulate the fighting spirit of the people and to create a will to victory that will be felt far outside the boundaries of this country. All democratic organisations should be drawn into this activity and broad platforms arranged, followed by the establishment of representative united front committees able to organise and lead the mass movement and to strengthen the Government in its fight for the overthrow of Hitlerite Germany.

We must never forget that we have many allies within Germany itself. The manifesto of the German Communist Party (of 24th June) declares:

"Our enemy is in our own country. The Fascist slaveholders, the big capitalists—these are our enemies. The victory of the Red army and of the oppressed peoples fighting for their national freedom will also be the victory of the German people. In our hands—in the hands of the creative German people—now lies the fate of our country. Our people's honour is outraged by the domination of bloody Fascism. We shall be strong if we close our ranks. We have friends and allies in all lands enslaved by Germany, who again wish to secure their freedom. Working people! Come out against the criminal war.

From France there comes a stirring call to all French people to unite with Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States in the fight to regain national independence. The Communist Party of France calls the people to action:

"Our workers, our miners, will not confine themselves to demonstrations, slogans and partial stoppages of production. They

know that everything must be done to bring the Hitler war machine to a halt. And they will do it. . . . Our efforts are pledged to unite our people for a fierce struggle against the foreign invaders and Vichy traitors. . . . In concerted struggle, fighting side by side with all free men and nations, in solidarity with the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States, French people will regain their national independence. Fascism will be wiped off the face of the earth and the French people will again acquire the liberty they won on 14th July, 1789."

These are the messages that pour in from all parts of the world, from China, Australia and America as well as from Germany and France. They express the conquering spirit of the working people, who are gaining confidence in their own strength and whose heads are bloody, but unbowed.

In his remarkable article entitled "The Myth of German Invincibility," the Red Army General, M. Khozin, proves conclusively that the German victories of 1939 and 1940, "were won not so much by their own forces as by base treachery in the countries against which they fought." This analysis is of vital importance because it is both an exposure of the terrible menace that the Fifth Column represents and a proof that the living forces of the people are sound and vital, and that the people will be able to turn the tables completely when properly organised and led.

We in Britain are still on our feet. We have endured much during these last two years, but our sufferings have been small compared with the outrages imposed on the enslaved peoples of Europe. Fortunately, there is still time for us to learn from what they have undergone. We must be on our guard against our own Fifth Column, all of whom have not yet been sent off to the Isle of Man. We must overcome weakness and apathy in our own ranks.

It would be true to say that many people in Britain do not yet understand the dangers that threaten and can overcome them. There is still a strong tendency to go on as if nothing has changed, as if everything can be left to the Red Army. There are some political leaders, who think that these times are merely a further opportunity of paying off old political scores. Their narrow, party attitude still predominates because they do not understand that unity is our only salvation.

Let us root out the chief danger in

our own ranks, namely, apathy and failure to understand the mighty tasks imposed by history upon each and every one of us. Let us direct our blows against the chief enemy, namely, those British Quislings who will seek to betray the people to Fascism, and even now are working secretly in our midst. There

is not a moment to lose. Fascism strikes its blows unceasingly. Japan has already grabbed new territory. The blow may fall on Turkey at any moment. Britain must strike harder and quicker than Fascism. Above all, the front in the West must be established without a moment's delay.