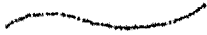


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THE CASE
OF
HOLLAND, BELGIUM
AND
FRANCE



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THE CASE OF HOLLAND, BELGIUM
AND
FRANCE

I. THE CRUCIAL QUESTION

WITH the incredibly swift occupation of France by the Nazi forces, another act of the current historical drama was brought to a close. Along with this climax, there appears, as usual, a host of "explanations" of these epoch-making events. Generally speaking, the "explanations" for what seems to be the total collapse of the "Allied" continental forces run along two lines:- (1) The seeming collapse was caused by treachery in high places, the treachery being given differing characterizations by the various "explainers." (2) The apparent smashing of the "Allied" armies on the continent was due to lack of preparation by the "Allied" governments, to inferior military ability, to superior equipment of the Nazis, to the seven years of "totalitarian" economy in Germany under Hitler, to the inadequacies of "democratic" rule, and similar factors. Some "explanations" tend to combine elements of these two general lines.

It should be carefully noted that at the bottom of the second "explanation" there is the notion that the "Allies" actually fought to the best of their ability and sincerely tried to defeat the Nazis, but that because of the alleged superior military power of the latter, the "Allies" simply failed in their efforts.

In examining these two "explanations" if it can be proved that the "Allies" did not actually try to defeat the Nazis, then the second "explanation" is utterly untenable. If the "Allies" did not make an honest effort to defeat the Nazis, then no one can prove that they were not able to defeat them. In that case, there is no way of telling whether the "Allies" were actually inferior militarily to the Nazis. If the "Allies" deliberately opened the path for the Nazis, then all talk about the latter's victories being due to superior military power is just so much deception

which conceals the treachery of the "Allies." In such an instance, only the factor of some kind of treachery and sabotage by the "Allied" leaders looms as a truthful explanation.

It is therefore essential to establish whether or not the "Allies" actually tried to defeat the Nazis and went down fighting before a militarily superior foe.

What was the real character of the "Allied" military activities in the last phases of the European events? This is the crux of any explanation of the amazing advance of Hitler's armies into France.

Before we can go directly into a discussion of the Nazi occupation of France, it is necessary to investigate the preliminary stages of this occupation, namely, Hitler's seizure of Holland and Belgium. Some general background factors must be reviewed for the discussion of these preliminary stages.

II. SOME BASIC FACTS
AS THE BACKGROUND

In 1914, beyond all dispute, the German invasion of Belgium came as a complete surprise to the French, as well as to the Belgian and British military staffs. To an important extent they labored under the illusion that the treaty to which imperialist Germany was a signatory would safeguard Belgian neutrality. Unexpected, unprepared for, the invasion of Belgium burst like a thunder-bolt, shattering all the plans of the French. Their strategy required quick recasting. While the Belgian armed forces, startled and staggering, slowed the march of the German army for a short time, the French generals recovered from their astonishment, desperately organized the "taxicab" army and turned the Germans away from Paris.

In the past two decades the mil-

itary schools in every important country made analyses of the German and French strategy in the invasion of Belgium and France in 1914. The French and the Belgian officers, in particular, made a detailed study of that invasion. Ideas were long in readiness preceding Hitler's invasion of May 10, 1940. Knowledge was being accumulated also from concrete tests in the field. With the specific view to evolving a thorough, scientific plan of preventing the repetition of August 1914, the French army leaders conducted military maneuvers precisely in the region which lay in the line of the German march upon Paris in 1914.

"A military authority told me this morning: 'We have been studying this particular phase of the situation for the past 20 years and the German attack on this part of our frontier has constantly formed the basis of our military maneuvers.'" (Paul Shal, New York Post, May 14, 1940.)

Because in 1914 the Belgian bourgeoisie were caught militarily unprepared, they took extra precautions in the last two decades and covered the Belgian-German frontier with a network of modern defenses. The Belgian army was considerably mechanized and well-equipped. It became one of the best armies in the world. A short time after Hitler's rise to power, when he embarked upon rearming Germany, the Belgian government, alarmed, strengthened its border defenses. And following the declaration of war in September 1939 the Belgian rulers spent intensive months in putting the finishing touches upon the war defenses.

Although to a lesser degree, Holland too was well armed and in a state of readiness to repel invasion. Thus, in all vital aspects everything was in order. It was a matter of common observation both among the Allied and neutral military leaders that the defenses of Holland and Belgium were strong. Reviewing the changing technique of war these observers concluded that the development in defense outstripped that of offense. In a dispatch dated May 10, and subheaded "Military Leaders Emphasize Strength

of the Defenses of Netherlands and Belgium," Harold Denny in the New York Times reported from London: "Military opinion among the Allies and neutral observers here tends to the belief that developments in defense since the last war have outstripped developments in offense." While in 1914 the element of surprise was outstanding, in May 1940 it was entirely absent. The concentration of Nazi forces on the Netherland and Belgian frontiers could hardly be a secret to the French and Belgian commanding staffs, who naturally got information of German moves. The only possible surprise that Hitler might have sprung upon Belgium and Holland would have been the blitzkrieg tactics — if he had used it against them in September 1939. It so happened that Hitler disclosed this tactic in his attack on Poland so that the Belgian, Dutch and French staffs had eight months to study the blitzkrieg tactic and adopt suitable measures of defense — if resistance to the Nazis were seriously weighed by the British and French imperialists.

III. HITLER'S INVASION OF THE LOWLANDS NO SURPRISE

On May 10 the Nazi forces struck at Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium. Certain high circles in England, France and the United States were not at all surprised. "The invasion had been anticipated for weeks," said a U.P. dispatch from London on the day Hitler started his offensive against the Lowlands (The New York Post, May 10, 1940). Rene Plevin, French member of the Allied Purchasing Board was interviewed in Washington —

"Asked whether in view of the 'new situation' in Europe, he had sought to expedite plane deliveries, he replied that 'the new situation was no surprise to us.'" (New York Times, May 14, 1940)

Even the exact date set for the coming invasion of Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium was not a secret known only to Hitler and his generals. Remarkably enough, John Cudahy, American Ambassador to Belgium, informed Roosevelt's secretary, General Watson, of

the Nazi invasion of the Lowlands several hours before the invasion actually took place!

"CUDAHY TIPPED OFF U.S.

"Washington, May 10 (AP).— John Cudahy, American Ambassador at Brussels, 'broke the news' about Germany's invasion of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg several hours before it happened. Brig. Gen. Watson, secretary to President Roosevelt, told reporters Cudahy telephoned him at his home between 8:30 and 9 o'clock (EST) last night, after he had failed to get the President; who was at dinner. 'Cudahy hit it exactly,' Watson said. 'The remarkable thing about it is that he said "It's going to be Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg."' (N.Y. Post, May 10, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

As a matter of fact the precise day, May 10, was known for over a week and was whispered around the French capital. It would have been known to the masses of America too had the French censors not prevented this fact from becoming common knowledge. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, Paris correspondent of the New York Post and Chicago Daily News actually made an attempt to radio this information to the United States prior to the invasion:

"...Even the date — May 10 — has been whispered around Paris for the last 10 days and only the censor prevented your correspondent from mentioning it." (N.Y. Post, May 10, 1940)

The leaders of France and England made every effort to have it believed that they had a detailed plan worked out in advance for the defense of the Lowlands.

"The German move had been threatened so long that there was little surprise. Defense plans had been perfected since the first alarm in mid-January." (N.Y. Times, May 11, 1940.)

"This is France's battle. She has been waiting for it for eight months. Her army leaders have pre-

pared for it in every detail." (Ibid.)

We observe, therefore, that the "Allied" camp had the advantage of twenty years of study of the problem of an invasion of the Lowlands, and particularly of Belgium; that military preparations had progressed immensely over these two decades; that, to make the picture complete, even the exact day of Hitler's invasion was known considerably in advance in the "Allied" countries. The question arises: What preparations did Reynaud, Churchill and the other "Allied" leaders make in the immediate situation to meet this move by the Nazis? Were these preparations such as to indicate that the "Allied" command seriously intended to repel Hitler's invasion of the Lowlands? Let us examine the objective record to answer these questions. In fine, let us get at the real plan of the imperialists.

IV. THE REAL PLAN OF THE "ALLIED" IMPERIALISTS

a) Holland is Given to Hitler

In connection with the unfolding of the real plan of the "Allied" imperialists, a remarkable order issued by the French War Ministry virtually on the eve of the anticipated invasion of the Lowlands is worthy of special note. Precisely at the time when, according to Edgar Ansel Mowrer, the date set for the invasion was "whispered around Paris," the French War Ministry announced that the soldiers of two classes, 1912 and 1913, would be demobilized. The date set for their release from the army was May 11, that is, immediately upon Hitler's invasion of Belgium! The United Press War expert wrote:

"For some time before the German thrust through the Low Countries — there was common belief that Hitler was planning this move. Yet on May 4 the French War Ministry announced that the two war classes of 1912 and 1913 were to be released from military service on May 11, the day after the blitzkrieg began. The Allies actually were reducing their

active field strength at the time Hitler was making his final plans for his great offensive." (World Telegram, June 14, 1940.)

It must be borne in mind that the military censorship expunges everything from the dispatches of the correspondents, some of whom, in their garrulity, are apt to spill much information, as for example in the case of the attempt to report the date of Hitler's impending invasion of the Lowlands. All that one gets is the few slips the correspondents and the censors make, which must be found among the endless and tangled communiqués.

As in the case of Poland and that of Norway, so in the case of Holland and Belgium, the British government promised all the help it could give.

"It is confirmed in official quarters in London that appeals for assistance have been received from the Belgian and Dutch governments and these governments have been told that His Majesty's government will, of course, render all the help they can." (New York Post, May 10, 1940.)

The Dutch and the Belgian forces, a million strong, concentrated behind excellent defenses, awaited the French and the British. Accordingly, no sooner had the Nazis attacked the Lowlands than the French and the British forces, reports stated, rushed in, presumably to meet and push the invaders back —

"Two hours after the Germans invaded the Low Countries, French and British forces were crossing the border to help the Netherlands and Belgian armies withstand the shock of at least twenty-nine German divisions. Contact was made without delay, and by nightfall the battle had been engaged at many points." (New York Times, May 11, 1940.)

The invading Nazi army was confronted with every obstacle that the Dutch and the Belgian armies could muster. Conversely, the French and

British forces had at their disposal, no doubt, every available facility to reach the front. But presently, in the face of a favorable setting, something utterly astonishing happened. Incredibly enough, the German army moved into the Lowlands faster than the British and French! Many people in great anxiety and perturbation, glibly swallowing the assurances appearing in the "democratic" capitalist newspapers, awaited the first check of Hitler's advance through Europe. Their hopes were soon dissipated in bewilderment and bitterness.

It may be recalled that in the case of Hitler's occupation of Norway, the Nazis performed some "miraculous" feats under the noses of the British navy. During the invasion of Norway, it was reported —

"Hitler has succeeded in the almost unimaginable feat of snatching a neutral nation, with a vital Atlantic coastline, virtually under the muzzles of the British naval guns." (New York Times, Editorial, May 3, 1940. Our emphasis)

In the case of Hitler's occupation of Holland this story of unbelievable feats was repeated. While the Nazi troops attacked the Dutch army, a fleet of German transports landed soldiers on the Dutch coast and in a few hours the whole coast was occupied — under the very noses of the mighty British navy.

"German forces were landed along the Dutch coast at dawn from a fleet of transports under guard of Nazi warships and the whole Dutch coast was occupied by noon, it is claimed here — under the very noses of the British." (New York Post, May 10, 1940.)

The directing elements in the Dutch campaign were the British. How powerful was the British army sent by Churchill to help the 400,000 Dutch soldiers stave off the Nazi invaders? If it were really meant to be of aid to the Dutch, if a counter-attack were actually contemplated, then the British army logically should have been of

considerable size. The early reports spoke of an imposing British force sweeping into Holland. A U.P. dispatch said the British armed strength flung into the Lowlands was enormous.

"The British threw enormous armed strength against the Germans in the invaded lowlands of Holland and Belgium where, in the words of British officials, Hitler is 'staking almost everything' in an attempt to win a quick, knock-out victory." (Daily News, U.P. dispatch signed Wallas Carroll, May 14, 1940, p. 2. Our emphasis.)

Soon, however, the story about the "enormous armed strength" the British sent to Holland proved to be of questionable veracity. Some revealing light was thrown upon this matter following the surrender of the Netherland Army. It became known that the Dutch were embittered against the British Command because, despite emphatic promises of aid, hardly any aid to speak of had been sent to Holland.

"These people were especially bitter about the flight of Queen Wilhelmina to Britain, where she was reported to have taken about \$1000,000. They were bitter also about the 'failure' of the British to fulfill promises to aid them, Germans asserted that only about 700 British troops landed in Holland and that these included about 300 engineers who helped the Dutch blow up oil stores and destroy bridges. Neutrals agreed with these statements." (N.Y. Post, May 23, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

G. Brooks Peters, correspondent of the New York Times, corroborated the story of extreme resentment among the Dutch people towards the British because of the reported mimic, rather than real, assistance Churchill rendered to Holland.

"Throughout the Netherland Army — which is not treated as prisoners of war, soldiers staying in barracks and officers retaining their arms — there is great bitterness at the inadequacy of British aid. Throughout the entire

campaign, it is declared, only 700 British soldiers were on Netherland soil and eighty of them were sappers who blew up the huge oil tanks at Rotterdam. Only three British planes were sighted over the Netherlands throughout the fighting, it is stated."

Later Peters repeated the statement regarding the bitterness of the Dutch who complained that the British failed to send even planes, let alone an army:

"This feeling of bitterness is said also to extend to the British. The British, it is asserted, might at least have sent some airplanes if they did not have time to send troops." (N.Y. Times, May 26, 1940)

Confirmation of the statement that the size of the British as well as of the French forces dispatched into Holland and Belgium was small came yet from another source:

"Washington, D.C. — The best military information available here indicates that six French field armies and the British Expeditionary Force are awaiting the Nazi attack from behind their fortifications along the French frontier — and that they have risked only comparatively small forces to fight delaying actions in Belgium and Holland." (Daily News, May 16, 1940. Our emphasis.)

Signs show that the startling lack of British aid and the defeat of Holland were no accidents.

It is noteworthy that the British high circles knew that serious defeats would come in Holland and were preparing the mind of the British masses to be ready to accept defeats. Four days after the German invasion began, on the day the Dutch army was ordered to cease resistance, a cable from London revealed —

"News of the virtual capitulation of the Netherlands to the German jackboot brought home to the British public today something for which the government has been pre-

paring them since last week -- serious reverses in the Low Countries." (N.Y. Times, May 14, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

Having measured the issue, General Winkelman, Commander of the Dutch Army, ordered surrender on the fourth day of battle. Holland was being swiftly occupied by the Nazis from the sea and from across the German border. In Winkelman's proclamation of surrender one reads an extremely significant remark clearly implying that no assistance was rendered to Holland by Churchill and Reynaud. Said Winkelman:

"We were left to ourselves, and so I had to make a grave decision which was a very difficult one for me -- lay down our arms." (N.Y. Times, May 15, 1940. Our emphasis.)

It is hardly possible to misinterpret these fairly plain words -- "We were left to ourselves." These words speak volumes about the real nature of the plan of the British and French military staffs. In the wake of collapse of Dutch resistance, neither Churchill nor Reynaud, nor any other Allied statesmen ever explained what Winkelman's statement meant. Indeed, Churchill and Reynaud carefully avoided any reference to the reports that virtually none of the "promised" British troops or planes had been sent to the Dutch.

From the following dispatches it is evident that before Winkelman gave up, he had tried to the last moment to secure aid but obviously was flatly turned down and was actually advised by the "Allies" to stop fighting against the Nazis:

"The decision of the Netherlands to capitulate, it became known officially here today, was taken after consultation with the Allies. In the opinion of experts, the situation has been so compromised that it was considered useless to waste Allied strength in an effort to reestablish resistance. To prevent the wasting of lives the Netherlands were advised to lay down

their arms and the Allied reinforcements withdrew into Belgium." (New York Times, May 16, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

Thus reality indicates that Holland was not only not defended, but was actually handed over to the Nazis by the heads of the "Allied" governments, Churchill and Reynaud.

b) Some "Peculiar" Strategy In Belgium

Holland in a certain sense represents a separate phase in the entire picture. It collapsed in four days leaving the major operations to be centered in Belgium and northern France.

There can be discerned three basic aspects in these operations; first, the Nazi advance through Belgium; second, the passage of the Nazis through Sedan to the Channel ports; and third, the occupation of Northern France. It is necessary to investigate the strategy pursued by the Allied High Command in the circumstances attending these aspects of the situation.

Those who recall the details of the Nazi invasion of Poland will have in mind a certain "peculiar" feature of the "strategy" suggested to the Polish High Command by the Franco-British General Staffs. The latter "advised" the Poles to abandon their frontier defenses and retreat to the virtually unfortified interior. At that time it was reported: "The army, on advice of the British and French General Staffs, retreated, and in good order." (N.Y. Times, Sept. 10, 1939.) With the front line defenses of the Poles abandoned, naturally the Nazi forces advanced into Poland post-haste.

In Belgium this "strategy" was repeated with certain variations. In the case of Poland, the Franco-British commanders had sent no troops to the fighting zone. But in the case of Belgium, small "Allied" forces were dispatched speedily to the front, ostensibly in reply to the call for aid. The actual function of these forces

sent into Belgium was not to fight, however, but to start immediately a deliberate retreat into which the Belgian forces were to be drawn.

The retreat in the Lowlands was along the entire range of the Nazi operations. In Belgium, the "Allied" armies rolled towards the Channel ports and the French frontier. G. H. Archambault indicated that the Allied High Command had set a line where the battle would be fought. Until that line was reached, the retirement would continue.

"The line the Allied High Command has set as the limit of its retirement has not yet been reached. Then, and then only, will the issue be joined between the two armies." (New York Times, May 14, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

Thus, obviously, the first portion of the "Allied" plan was neither an onslaught upon the Nazis, nor an attempt to hold the front line defenses but a deliberate retreat toward the Meuse River.

It appears that the positions the British and the French generals declared as best were not the highly fortified defense area near the Belgian-German frontier but the virtually unfortified Meuse river! Such seemed to be the essence of the strategy of the "Allied" generals who, naturally, had surveyed the theater of operations.

"Stress should be laid on the conditions in which the force of circumstances has compelled the Allies to engage in battle. They had prepared for defensive action behind their lines and even after answering the Belgian and Netherlands calls for aid their strategy perforce remained defensive. Therefore they had to wait for the German onslaught on the positions they considered best — in this case the River Meuse." (New York Times, May 16, 1940. Our emphasis.)

The commanders of the British and French forces managed the campaign in Belgium in the identical manner in

which they had managed it in Holland. In Holland, with the retreat of the British and Dutch in progress, virtually nothing was done to impede the advance of the Nazis, and much was left undone, thus facilitating their onward march. Reports told of "an excellent job of blowing up bridges — excepting at vital spots such as Moerdijk and Rotterdam" (New York Times, May 26, 1940. Our emphasis). In Belgium on the Meuse, the line at which the deliberate retreat was to terminate, another strange "oversight" took place. Here, also, bridges, the destruction of which would have considerably delayed the Nazis' progress, for some reason were not blown up. The task to destroy them was evidently undertaken by the British. The repetition of the "oversight" enabled the Nazis to rush their motorized units over these important connecting passageways and slash out at retreating Belgian troops:

"The Germans were able to cross the River Meuse on two bridges that should have been demolished but were not. British bombing planes took terrible chances in diving low to bomb these bridges in an attempt to destroy them before the Germans got over but were unsuccessful. The Germans poured in by these avenues and then mushroomed out, catching the Belgian elements flankwise and forcing them hastily to withdraw." (Harold Denny, New York Times, May 14, 1940. Our emphasis.)

It would seem — or rather it was hinted by Reynaud — that the plan of the "Allied" generals — the detailed plan based upon a twenty-years' study and perfected in the last few months — was all wrong. The Meuse, the Allied High Command "discovered," was not much of an obstacle after all. Reynaud explained that in consequence of the previously held notion about the Meuse being a strong line of defense, hardly anything that could be regarded as a powerful force had been concentrated there to stop the Nazis. Here is the essential part of Reynaud's "explanation" to the gaping world:

"The Meuse, which is in appearance a difficult river had been

mistakenly considered as a serious obstacle to the enemy.

"For that reason the French divisions which had been charged with its defense were not numerous and were spread out along a great length of river bank.

"Moreover, the troops of the Army of Corap (French forces stationed along the Meuse under General Andre Corap) which were in position there were less solidly officered and less well trained, the best troops having been sent on the wing which advanced into Belgium.

"While it is true that the Meuse is a river which appears difficult, it is precisely because it is sinuous, enclosed and wooded that it is difficult to defend. Flanking fire by machine guns is impossible there. On the other hand infiltration by manoueuering troops is easy.

"To that should be added that over half of the infantry divisions of the Corap Army had not yet reached the Meuse although it had the shortest movement to make being nearest the pivot. That is not all. Through unbelievable faults which will be punished, bridges over the Meuse were not destroyed,

"Across these bridges the Panzer divisions passed to the attack proceeded by fighting planes which attacked our scattered, badly organized, badly trained divisions. You understand now the disaster — the total disorganization of the Corap Army." (N.Y. Times, May 22, 1940.)

One would imagine that the Meuse only very recently began to flow through France and Belgium, and that therefore the French generals were not given sufficient time to determine whether or not it would be a serious obstacle to the invading armies!

The advance of the Nazis through Belgium developed surprisingly fast and astoundingly unhindered.

"In the march across Belgium

German infantry regiments had to cover as much as forty miles a day and they have done it without a hitch." (New York Times, May 18, 1940. Our emphasis.)

One had a feeling that the Nazis were making haste according to schedule, as if they were in a Marathon race and not in a hostile country defended by a powerful adversary. Such, at least, is the testimony of some refugees:

"A party of refugees who tried to escape to the South but were turned back by the Germans, said: 'The Germans came through as if they were on a parade. They were travelling fast, as if they were bent on reaching their destination within a fixed time limit.'" (N. Y. Times, May 22, 1940. Our emphasis.)

c) "Lost, Strayed or Stolen" —
The French Artillery and Tanks

The general impression has been created that the German war machine is superior to those of the "Allies." Amid the tempest of reportage, through the sieve of strict censorship, the correspondents let slip bits of information to the opposite effect. Recalling Hitler's campaign in Poland, Archambault in a wire to the New York Times, May 16, stated concerning the situation in Belgium: "But this time the assailant met machines of war equal to his own."

The burning question naturally presents itself; Why weren't the powerful British and French war machines brought into action against the Nazi motorized columns, since "...the Allies are well provided with anti-tank defense" (Archambault, N.Y. Times, May 17, 1940). French artillery was regarded as superior to the German. Holland lay prostrate, a large section of Belgium was overrun by the Nazis, yet Archambault reported that "There was relatively little artillery fire" (N.Y. Times, May 16, 1940). As the Nazis were advancing with seven-league boots, the report arrived from Paris that a "new move" was being made by

the French Army to stop the Nazis --

"Thousands of French 75s were rushed into the Meuse salient today to infiltrate into German mechanized columns and, firing at point-blank range, stop the 30-ton and 70-ton steel monsters which had driven to within 90 miles of Paris. It was a new move to smash the German offensive." (World Telegram, May 18, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

The French 75 is a powerful gun inherited from the World War and much improved since then. Naive people, who sincerely imagined that the "Allies" are fighting Hitler's moves, hopefully awaited positive results now. The French army, they were told, had thousands of 75s, and these rapid-firing guns were hurling powerful shells. It seemed sufficiently convincing that the Nazis would now meet with the fiercest resistance. The stemming of the Nazis' advance, the impression was made, was certain. But three days later, George Axelson, the New York Times correspondent in Berlin pointed out that French artillery, virtually the most efficient in the world, was reported to be strangely absent from the path of the invading Nazis:

"In this connection, it is asked here: What has happened to the French artillery? It is a matter of record that the French have the most efficient artillery, from light field pieces including the famous 75s up to railway and other heavy long-range guns.

"None of these, any more than French supertanks reputedly weighing in the neighborhood of fifty tons, have figured in reports of the fighting available here." (N.Y. Times, May 22, 1940.)

The French army was recognized as one of the most highly mechanized in the world. Especially noted for the quality and quantity of its tank production, France has been an outstanding supplier of tanks for the armies of many countries. Though possessed of enormous tank forces, the activities of the French armies were remarkable for the small part played by these highly effective machines in the

"Allied" operations. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, writing from Lisbon via London under conditions less hampered by censorship than those he faced in France, reported after the surrender of the French government: "Tank for tank, the French products were better than the German, but there is no evidence that they were ever used en masse as the Germans so successfully employed them." (N.Y. Post, July 5, 1940.)

d) The "Mysterious" Ways of the "Allied" Air Force

It is a well established fact that the British and French imperialists had thousands of war planes. Even if one should concede for the moment that the German air force was numerically superior to that of the "Allies," this would still not account for the remarkable lack of air activity on the part of the latter. Although headlines were splashed over front pages of the newspapers that the British planes bombed the Nazi advancing columns in Holland, Belgium and Northern France, American correspondents with the Nazi armies in the field reported something altogether different. For instance, Louis P. Lochner of the Associated Press cabled to the New York Post, May 25 --

"Our six days in the operations zone left great questions.

"Why, throughout this time, did we never see an Allied plane during the daytime?

"Why were single bombers that we heard but never saw in the early hours of Friday and on air raid on Aachen last Wednesday morning the only evidences to us of the existence of the Allied airplane fleet?

"During my stay on the front, I traveled about 1,200 miles and went up and down more than 100 main roads. All were jammed.

"Imagine the confusion among horses alone, not to speak of men, which one bomber attack on such a street would have caused!

"We kept straining our eyes in vain for Allied planes.

"Not Even Bridges Bombed"

"Staff officers told us that German scouting planes located

every enemy contingent. These scouts knew who was in each approaching column.

"They also knew where bridges which had to be crossed were without trees offering shelter or where else they were especially vulnerable.

"With this knowledge the German air force appeared supreme, so that attack on the massed roads by the Allies seemed inadvisable. But we wondered why at least no effort was made to drop bombs on strategic bridges or military highways.

"Not only I as a disinterested bystander was puzzled, but German officers implied they could not understand it.

"General George von Kuchlen, commander-in-chief of the German Army in the Antwerp sector, and General Walther von Reichenau, commanding the army pushing toward the French ports opposite England, were amazed at the absence of air activity."

Pierre J. Juss of the International News Service too reported the absence of the "Allied" air force. Charles S. Foltz Jr., of the Associated Press, interviewed an eyewitness who arrived in Berne:

"This witness (pro-Ally) added that 'we neither saw nor heard a single Allied bomber over the main highway just behind the front either day or night.'" (N.Y. Post, May 31, 1940.)

A Belgian staff officer declared that "British planes were busy elsewhere" while the Belgian troops were pounded by the Nazi planes (N.Y. Times, June 4, 1940.) For some "mysterious" reason, which neither Chamberlain, nor Churchill, nor Reynaud troubled to explain, support from the air was withheld not only from the Dutch and the Belgians, but even from the British soldiers. The British soldiers were told, of course, that the air force was doing work elsewhere "bombing far behind the German lines." The British soldiers were embittered, failing to grasp the reason for what seemed to them negligence.

"Soldiers Are Bitter

"It is not only that the officers are dissatisfied with the record of Mr. Chamberlain. Most members of Parliament have been talking to members of the B. E. F. in their constituencies in the last few days and have been listening to general complaints by these men that they did not get any support in Flanders from the air and did not have enough armored units to meet the German advances. The soldiers acknowledge that British planes did excellent work in bombing far behind the German lines, but they seem to believe that the only defense against Nazi aerial artillery is to have British fighter planes operating right along with the army." (James B. Beston, N.Y. Times, June 6, 1940.)

It must be remembered that the "excellent work" which the soldiers "acknowledged" the British planes did "in bombing far behind the German lines" was something these soldiers at the front knew only by report. They could not and did not themselves observe this reported "excellent work" which took place far from the scene of their own operations. What these soldiers did actually observe and knew for a fact was that the British Air Force was notoriously absent from the scene of activities at the front.

Incidentally, it was precisely from the air that the German tanks were most exposed to the danger of destruction.

"On the Polish plains they succeeded because the Poles lacked weapons to halt them. In this campaign things are different. Panzer-divisionen may make deep raids, but they offer good targets for airplanes — it is claimed here that most German Types of tanks are vulnerable FROM THE AIR by reason of light armor in the superstructure — and the Allies are well provided with anti-tank defense." (G. H. Archambault, N.Y. Times, May 17, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

But the "Allied" air force was "busy elsewhere."

The New York Times took cogniz-

ance of the reports that the powerful "Allied" air force was conspicuous by its virtually total absence.

While not contradicting the reports, it editorially reassured its readers that "conceivably" the French Military Command was gathering artillery and planes for the counter-attack.

"Reports from the German side express wonder at the absence of Allied artillery and warplanes; conceivably General Weygand is amassing reserve weapons and men for the counter-attack which seems inevitable if the German tide is to be halted and France saved." (N.Y. Times, May 23, 1940. Our emphasis.)

The counter-attack never came.

One last word in connection with the facts about the inactivity of the "Allied" air force. Those who have been gullibly swallowing the apologies of the "Allied" imperialists will have to face the uncomfortable fact that the "Allied" spokesmen have been claiming actual superiority, both qualitative and quantitative, for their air forces. For example, about two months before the invasion of the Lowlands, Sir Kingsley Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, made the following statement regarding the numerical superiority of the "Allied" air force:

"Members are recalling, for example, the following statement that Sir Kingsley Wood made last March 7: 'I, therefore, take the view with some confidence that even on a numerical basis the output of aircraft accruing to us and France today is in excess of that of Germany.'" (James B. Beston, N.Y. Times, June 6, 1940.)

Other British leading spokesmen made declarations in a quite similar vein: "Man for man and ship for ship, the British declare, the R.A.F. is proving its superiority on the Western Front." (N.Y. Times, May 23, 1940. Our emphasis.) The primary fact is not whether the "Allied" air force was superior or inferior. The point is that whatever its calibre, it was not used.

e) The "Miraculous" Corridor to the Channel Ports

The most remarkable feature in the entire situation is the "seizure" of the Channel Ports by the Nazis. The Nazis were given an opening at Sedan. They commenced their spectacular sweep towards the Channel Ports, separating Belgium from France. It is interesting to observe that the plan of forcing the so-called hinge at Sedan was not a surprise to the Allied High Command. Louis P. Lochner, Associated Press Staff Correspondent made the following positive assertion -

"France ought not to have been surprised. A source which I considered gilt-edged told me that the French intelligence had advance word of the plan for forcing a gap at Sedan." (World Telegram, May 31, 1940.)

But the Allied High Command obviously "ignored" this advance word. The hinge was an obvious place for the Germans to push through, according to Harold Denny. Yet the French High Command stationed the poorest troops there.

"Worse still, although it was the obvious point for the Germans to try to smash, France's poorest troops and not enough even of them manned that hinge and gave way like paper before the German thrust." (New York Times, June 18, 1940.)

The Nazis pushed forward along a narrow corridor between the Belgian, British and French troops in Flanders in the north and the main French forces in the south.

"Henri Bidou, military expert of l'Intransigeant, said that the interlocking fronts present 'a situation without analogy in the history of war.'

"The enemy spearheads are deeply embedded on the Somme between the intact Allied armies in the north and in Belgium and in the south along the River Aisne," he said.

"The English are holding a line

near the Scarpe River on the German right flank. The French are holding the southern Laon-Rethel line on the German left flank. There is a distance of only thirty-five miles between the English and the French forces.

"No army in the past would have dared in these conditions to risk what the German army is now risking." (N.Y. Times, May 23, 1940. Our emphasis.)

The general impression created by the noisy headlines and blatant commentators was that Hitler poured into the breach immense armies totaling millions of troops riding the mightiest war engine of all times. Careful checking up reveals that the very opposite was the case. It was not armies but light motorized columns that dashed into northern France. G. H. Archambault wirelessly from Paris:

"There is another question: What German forces are engaged? It is insisted here tonight that the point of wedge consists of light mechanized columns representing strong advanced guards, certainly not armies in the military sense. The minimum strength of an army is 60,000 men.

"Possibly, it is said here, the units that occupied Amiens did not exceed some three or four thousand. It is known that the Germans have withdrawn some divisions from the Swiss border and sent them west, but they do not exceed three or four in number. The main enemy reserve remains concentrated in areas to the north of Switzerland — between twenty and thirty divisions in all." (New York Times, May 22, 1940. Our emphasis - L.L.)

A truly unbelievable spectacle! A million "Allied" troops to the north of them, over two millions to the south of them, the Nazis light motorized units, not followed by heavier forces, were dashing, like so many "motorcycle cops," to the sea.

"First, the German push toward the coast by light units — mostly motorcyclists and armored automobiles mounting nothing more than

machine guns — does not seem to have been followed by heavier columns." (G. H. Archambault, N. Y. Times, May 23, 1940.)

A new epoch of "warfare" was opened by the British, French and German generals! The Allied armies of three to four million men (Churchill, N. Y. Times, May 20, 1940) possessing a powerful air force, thousands of 75s and well-equipped anti-tank defenses looked on while the thin columns of Nazis filtered towards the Channel ports!

"Only a thin line of German armored columns extended between the Northern and Central Allied forces through the hole broken between Flanders and the Somme.

"The French military spokesman acknowledged, however, that through this hole additional German units had filtered today in the direction of the sea." (N.Y. Times, May 24, 1940.)

Few things could be more fantastic than the sight of about 60,000 Nazi "motorcycle cops," without a real obstacle in their way, chasing an iron-clad "Allied" army a million strong, and with bewildering rapidity driving it towards the sea. Yet a U.P. dispatch from Paris stated:

"Advices here indicated that only 50,000 to 60,000 Germans were involved in the race against a retreat of nearly 1,000,000 Allied troops." (N.Y. Times, May 22, 1940)

In these words is revealed the entire artificiality of this "war" among the imperialists! That the figure of 60,000 Nazi troops running the most extra-ordinary "gantlet" in history is close to fact can be gleaned from an incautious statement by a French military spokesman. In their eastward thrust the Nazis aimed to trap a million troops in Flanders. Had the "Allies" commenced a drive to close the gap, they could have trapped only about 30,000; — so few Nazi troops were involved in this operation in the "Corridor":

"If the gap is closed, French

military spokesmen said, between 20,000 and 30,000 Nazi troops and 1,000 tanks and other armored units will be caught in a trap along the Channel, where Chancellor Hitler is gambling to obtain a foothold for his threatened blitzkrieg against the British Isles." (N.Y. Times, May 25, 1940. Our emphasis.)

Yet, the two immense "...well-trained, well-equipped armies numbering three or four million men..." (Churchill, New York Times, May 20, 1940) were not directed to attempt to cut the extremely narrow corridor and catch the relative handful of Nazi motorized troops.

Contrasted with the unbroken series of retreats, for which the Allied High Command showed great energy and capacity, the operations of the Nazi "motorcycle cops" presented phenomenal successes. Thrusting themselves "lightmindedly" into the very jaws of the "Allied" war machine they quickly reached the coast and swerving north proceeded to close the trap.

"From a spearhead the German mechanized advance, constantly reinforced, spread out again. Splitting into innumerable groups -- one met on a country road in the region of Abbeville consisted of only three or four automobiles mounting a machine gun -- the Germans swept on to the Channel coast, crossed the Somme to establish a number of bridgeheads which now have been reduced, and then swerving north made for Boulogne and Calais, seriously menacing the Allied flank." (N.Y. Times, May 31, 1940. Our emphasis.)

The readers of the capitalist papers awaited the much-promised great counter-attack --

"To the north of the victorious German column is an Allied army of perhaps 1,000,000 men. South of it is virtually the full might of France. Obviously an Allied counter-attack of major proportions should not be long delayed." (N.Y. Post, May 21, 1940.)

"There was no sign of an Allied counter-attack. It had been expected momentarily after the bringing up of fresh masses of troops, tanks and artillery on the German flanks." (N.Y. Times, May 22, 1940.)

"This gives the British public for the first time a real understanding that the army is in danger. It has brought to the surface disappointment and concern that the French have not yet launched a powerful counter-attack from the south, on which hopes have been pinned to cut off the German salient near the base. Thus far both French and British forces have only nibbled at the sides of the salient. Surely, it is thought here, a great counter-attack must come very soon." (N.Y. Times, May 24, 1940.)

But for some "mysterious" reason, known only to the initiated prominent people in the imperialist circles, the promise of an "Allied" counter-attack remained what it was -- a promise. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, in the report already cited above in connection with the "peculiar" lack of mass attacks by the French tanks, remarked: "...it is still uncertain why Weygand never ordered the northern French armies to cut their way through the German corridor across northern France at any price." No doubt, some day this "uncertainty" will be fully cleared up. Meanwhile this is in no way uncertain: Belgium was doomed by its "Allied" "saviors" to the same fate they had meted out to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg and Holland.

f) Hitler "Snatches" Belgium

Attention must be drawn to the skilled manner in which the bourgeois correspondents created a false impression about the process of the Nazi occupation of Belgium. While the British, with all possible haste, were withdrawing to the coast, offering, from all indications, not even a feeble attempt to repel the invasion, the reports stated that they were holding on

to a sector of Belgium. In the same breath, however, the admission was made that this sector was diminishing, — in fine, that the British were actually retiring, not holding on:

"British forces are still grimly holding on to a gradually diminishing section of Belgium. Last night they withdrew still further west of Brussels as part of a general wheelback of the right of the British line and the French on the British right." (Harold Denny, N.Y. Times, May 22, 1940. Our emphasis.)

Reports suggested that the British retirement was not a haphazard, disorganized and blind affair.

"The British retirement was said to have been carried out in perfect accordance with plan." (Harold Denny, N. Y. Times, May 22, 1940.)

In this systematic retirement, Belgian forces naturally followed the British and French "strategy." Contrary to the general impression, caused by the dramatic, hair-raising tales of bloody battles, the British troops were not at all pressed by the Germans. The "contest" was carried out in the most uncustomary manner. The British, French and Belgian forces withdrew from town after town, not even attempting to hold some of the greatest fortresses of Europe, such as Antwerp. And the Nazis found themselves in the particularly fortunate situation of simply having to march in after the "Allies" had departed.

G. H. Archambault wirelesse d
from Paris:

"Reverting to the withdrawal of Belgian and British forces on the northernmost part of the front, it is declared here that they were not pressed during the operation, and that German claims of "taking certain localities" are not justified; in reality the Allies marched out after which the Germans marched in. This withdrawal occurred on Belgian soil. Its strategic significance may be revealed in the near future." (N.Y. Times, May 25, 1940. Our emphasis.)

That was how the "Allies" were "harassed," as the story went, almost beyond endurance!

This game was not without its grimly humorous incidents. For instance, there was an obvious mix up of signals in the case of Boulogne. The British marched out and imagined that the Germans, as in the case of other towns, marched right in. Actually, however, the Nazis had not yet caught up with the British. This resulted in the British prematurely reporting the occupation of Boulogne by the Nazis — i.e., the British announced the Nazi capture of Boulogne at the time when even the Nazis themselves made no such claim: —

"BRITISH ADMIT BOULOGNE'S FALL
"Boulogne, France's strategic sea-port twenty minutes by air from London, has fallen to the German spearhead on the English Channel coast, persons in authority here acknowledge today.

"The Germans took possession of Boulogne last night," they said.

"At the time of this admission the Germans had not even claimed Boulogne..." (New York Sun, May 24, 1940.)

Another dispatch from London went even a step further. It spoke of a day of fierce fighting in the streets of Boulogne:

"The French Channel port of Boulogne, one of the chief bases of the British Expeditionary Force, fell to the Germans last night after a day of fierce fighting in its narrow, cobbled streets." (N.Y. Tribune, May 25, 1940.)

But the next day "A French War Ministry spokesman said French troops were holding Boulogne, although the British said the city had fallen to the Germans" (Daily News, May 25, 1940). The news was disentangled somewhat a few days later. Notwithstanding the previous reports that the Germans had already occupied Boulogne "after fierce fighting in its narrow, cobbled streets," the British were "brought back" by the reporters and were made to leave Boulogne on des-

troyers, while "small parties of Germans already were coming down the streets in the outskirts of town" (New York Times, May 29, 1940).

On the 28th of May, less than three weeks from the day Hitler had begun the invasion of the Lowlands, King Leopold ordered the half million Belgian troops to lay down their arms. During the World War the Belgian ruling class desperately clinging to a tiny corner of Belgian territory and with the final defeat of the Allies at times seeming certain, held out for over 4 years. Yet, now, when "one comfort to the Allies is that the British and French armies virtually are intact and are well equipped for defensive warfare dictated by the German tactics" (Harold Denny, New York Times, May 19), when "France still has tremendous and untouched reserves" (Sir Philip Gibbs, N.Y. Times, May 29), in such materially favorable circumstances the Belgian surrender came indeed as a thunderbolt out of the blue. But an investigation renders comprehensible the enigma of the Belgian capitulation, despite the guarded language of the reporters and the strictest censorship.

One of the basic features of the imperialist game was incidentally revealed by the complaint of the Belgian King that the "Allies" did not render him sufficient help. This complaint was made directly to the High Command of the "Allied" forces.

"The king decided to capitulate, it was said, after informing Allied leaders that his 500,000 troops were in desperate straits, subsisting on meager rations of hard biscuits for days and in many instances completely without ammunition. When General Maxime Weygand, the Allied generalissimo, visited Leopold at Bruges, Belgium, Saturday after a hazardous flight over the fighting lines, the King told him that the Belgian Army could not hold out any longer unless 'substantial new assistance' was received from the British and French." (N.Y. Times, May 29, 1940. Our emphasis.)

The precise reply of Weygand to the

Belgian King's request for "Substantial new assistance" was never disclosed. Its general negative character can be inferred from the subsequent events. Bearing in mind the "advice" the "Allies" had given to Holland, it was not surprising to read that instead of being offered sufficient military aid, King Leopold was being persuaded to follow Queen Wilhelmina to London whence to "carry on the war!"

"LAST BULLET GONE, BELGIAN KING SAID
Leopold Refused to Follow Dutch
Queen's Example and Flee

"The failure of an eleventh hour attempt to persuade King Leopold of the Belgians to flee to London and carry on the war as a refugee ruler was reported on reliable authority today. It was understood that when Gen. Maxime Weygand, Allied generalissimo, visited Leopold at Bruges on Saturday he was advised by the King that the Belgian army could not hold out longer without substantial new assistance from the Allies." (World Telegram, May 28, 1940)

Churchill-Reynaud's "assistance" to Belgium proved to be but a spook created by the people in high places in London and Paris and whisked away the moment Belgium attempted to test its reality.

Guido Enderis, N.Y. Times correspondent in Berlin, cited comments indicating that the Belgian Army bore the brunt of German pounding while the British were retreating to the sea and the French withheld aid:

"Further official comment stresses that since the fighting began on Belgian soil King Leopold's troops 'were always out in front, supplying convenient cannon-fodder.'

"Recalling the nocturnal retreat of British troops from Aandalsnes, Norway, says the Korrespondent the Belgian King had to reckon with a similar performance on the part of the Western Powers, as the British were already escaping toward Channel ports and the coast of Flanders, while the French gave no indication of willingness to dispatch necessary contingents to relieve the en-

circled armies in Flanders." (N. Y. Times, May 29, 1940)

Later reports confirmed the earlier ones that the Belgian Command pleaded with the British and French to give them food, to aid them with planes. All to no avail. The old yet ever new story was being repeated. While making a noisy pretense at aiding the "victims of aggression," the British and French imperialists relentlessly pursued an opposite course.

In carefully worded comments, not to offend the British authorities, a Belgian staff officer told an A.P. correspondent in London a grim story of a bitter attempt on the part of the Belgian army to repulse the Nazis. The Belgian soldiers, he said, fought the German tanks with bayonets:

"Daily we beseeched the hard-pressed B.E.F. for 600,000 bread or biscuit rations, for ammunition, for aircraft support. Some of the food reached us from England, but the British had no ammunition or aircraft to spare. We fought armored cars and tanks with bayonets. But we fought." (New York Times, June 4, 1940. Our emphasis.)

Is it true that Churchill and Reynaud had no munitions to spare for the Belgian Army? After the British had completed their planned withdrawal from Belgium they left war supplies enough to equip 40 Nazi divisions! Louis P. Lochner, Associated Press staff correspondent with the German Army, reported the following:

"NAZI WIN BOOTY FOR 40 DIVISIONS

"Stores of supplies left behind by the British Expeditionary Force in its withdrawal from Flanders, a German officer told me today, could equip 40 German divisions — forces equal to all those of Czechoslovakia before its dismemberment. The abandoned supplies indicated the British had kept excellent lookout for the bodily wants of their soldiers.

"Traveling some 200 miles along Germany's front in France and then toward the Channel ports and finally into the great Flanders trap

gave me a vast picture of the retreat of the B.E.F., France's army of the north and Belgium's defenders.

"In following the French retreat along Germany's present south front I was impressed by the fact that the French had abandoned cannons and munitions, as compared with the British leaving provisions. As a speedy car hurried me along in northern France, I saw cannon after cannon by the wayside." (Louis P. Lochner, World Telegram, June 5, 1940. Our emphasis.)

There were immense British and French stores of food, arms, ammunitions — for the Nazis, not for the Belgian Army which was left to starve, to fight the German tanks with bayonets, Richard C. Hattélet reported:

"The English had left samples of practically everything belonging to a modern army and they had not destroyed anything. I saw several trucks and motorcycles being driven off by the Germans." (World-Telegram, June 4, 1940. Our emphasis.)

From all appearances the Allied High Command acted very much like delivery boys. Their procedure seemed to be to occupy a position with immense supplies, order a retreat and leave the supplies behind for the Nazis to pick up.

We have seen that statements were made to show that King Leopold had informed the Allied High command of his decision to surrender. The Belgian Staff officers we have referred to previously also made a declaration to that effect:

"The Major declared that King Leopold had informed General Lord Gort, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force, of his intention shortly before surrendering." (New York Times, June 4, 1940.)

But Churchill and Reynaud, quite brazenly, denied this. Reynaud said:

"The Belgian Army capitulated without warning to their French and English comrades, thus opening the

Dunkerque road to the German divisions." (New York Times, June 5, 1940)

And Churchill, in the face of the widespread knowledge in London and Paris that "Allied" generalissimo, Maxime Weygand, received notice from King Leopold that unless substantial aid were forthcoming the Belgian army would be compelled to yield to the Nazis, boldly declared in Commons:

"Suddenly, without any prior consultation and with the least possible notice, without the advice of his ministers and on his own personal act, he sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command surrendering his army and exposing our flank and the means of retreat!" (New York Times, June 5, 1940)

Having grossly distorted the entire situation, the Franco-British imperialists led by Churchill and Reynaud, to cover up their betrayal of the Belgians, endeavored to make a scapegoat of the Belgian King, pretending that he was responsible for opening the path of the Nazis through Belgium.

The "strategy" of drawing the Dutch and Belgian armies back was put into operation the moment the "Allies" entered the Lowlands. A British soldier gave an eyewitness account of the British retreat in Belgium. According to this soldier, on the 11 of May the British continued their retreat:

"On May 11, the second day of the invasion of Belgium, we continued our retreat with remnants of a Belgian division which had seen heavy fighting the previous day." (New York Times, June 1, 1940)

It must be remembered that Hitler invaded Belgium on May 10th. It is not at all difficult to grasp what occurred. Like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Holland, so Belgium was turned over to the Nazis — a measure, no doubt, bound up with the vital plan of international imperialism.

That the collapse of the Belgian resistance came within eighteen days

of the start of the Nazi invasion is not surprising. In the light of the events, the amazing thing is that, unlike the Dutch, the Belgian army was able to carry on for such a long period the unequal contest against the Nazi invasion while being strangled from behind by the "friendly" embrace of its sabotaging "Allies," Churchill and Reynaud.

e) The Nazis Are Brought Into France

Throwing the door wide open for the Nazis to enter and occupy Belgium was tantamount to inviting them to march into France. Ordinarily, the problem of defeating the army which French imperialism built up in the last two decades would be a formidable one even for a combination of powers. In the present "war" what seems to be such a "defeat" was "accomplished" by the Nazis with incredible ease. In Poland the Nazis faced a much more difficult task, for there it required an effort to overcome the resistance at Warsaw and other towns. Even in Norway, on a relative scale, the Nazis were confronted with some difficulties caused by a portion of the Norwegian army. It was entirely different in the "battle of France." It can be said with justice that had the Nazis placed Marshal Goering at the head of the "Allied" armies he could not have done a better job of facilitating the progress of the German armies into France than the one performed by the Allied High Command. In every phase of the Nazi advance the Allied High Command "neglected" to make the slightest effort to offer any real obstacle. The Nazis speedily made their way through the Ardennes forest finding no obstruction to speak of. Had the roads there been mined the Nazi tanks would have been halted at least for a brief time.

"Germans said they were surprised to find that not even mines had been laid in the Ardennes to hold up the invaders." (Louis P. Lochner, World Telegram, May 31, 1940)

From the Ardennes to Paris, to Verdun, to Metz, southward to Orleans,

westward to Havre, Cherbourg, Brest — the Nazis marched in the space of a few days.

Under the false pretext of shortage of munitions and mechanized equipment, the Northern army, which in actuality had enough to fit out forty divisions, was "wisely" discounted as a fighting entity by the Allied High Command:—

"Gen. Maxime Weygand supreme commander, had decided, it was believed here — and decided wisely— to leave the northern army to its doom.

"Trapped 30 miles from the sea, 604 miles from the main French army on the Somme; lacking adequate mechanized equipment, running short of ammunition, pressed in and nearly surrounded by German Armies of immeasurable superiority, the Allied Northern army seemed doomed." (London, U.P., World Telegram, May 30, 1940)

Then came the "miracle" of Dunkerque. If throughout Holland, Belgium and Northern France the Nazi progress was amazingly rapid, at Dunkerque, as the British were embarking their troops to England, the Nazi progress was suspiciously slow. And all the while, according to the headlines, the "conflict" was growing more furious.

To strengthen the false impression that the "Allied" northern army lacked sufficient war supplies, and thus to cover up the actual leaving of huge supplies to the Nazis, the communiques said that whatever supplies remained were destroyed —

"Allied forces entrenched in shell-battered Dunkerque have destroyed all war material that cannot be removed, a semi-official news agency reported today. 'When the Germans enter,' the report added, 'they will find nothing.'" (World Telegram, June 6, 1940)

But here too the correspondents entering Dunkerque reported that the Germans found enormous supplies including tanks, transport trucks, muni-

tion wagons, cannon, millions of rounds of munitions.

After the "miracle" of Dunkerque there occurred the "miracle" of the Somme.

The French Army stood on the Somme River, the most powerful position for a defending force in entire Europe:—

"Germany's start of a new offensive directed against Paris is confronted with the strongest part of the new Weygand defense line, marked by the Somme River. This natural water barrier gives an initial advantage to the Allies, entrenched along the south bank, and at some places holding bridgeheads on the north side. There is no stronger protective river shelter for a defending army in Europe. The Somme's snakelike course alone gives Gen. Weygand exceptional opportunities for flanking movements against German attempts to cross the stream." (World Telegram, June 5, 1940. Our emphasis)

But what did it matter to the "supernaturally" triumphant Nazis! With amazing ease they crossed the Somme River over vital bridges, which the French had left intact, and now rolled toward Paris — which very soon was handed over to Hitler on a platter.

But the astounding "miracle," on a par with the "miracle" of the "Corridor" to the Channel ports, was the Nazi occupation of Verdun. During the World War, for four long years the Kaiser's army hammered furiously at this invincible fortress. In 1916 a super-effort was made to capture it, and after the most savage fighting lasting several months, after the most fierce assaults costing hundreds of thousands of lives, the Kaiser's generals abandoned the effort, sufficiently convinced that Verdun was impregnable. That was in a real war between the French and the German imperialists. Since the World War the forts of Verdun have been modernized, making the great fortress a formidable and really insuperable obstacle to an invading army.

But now, in the so-called "second world war," a veritable "miracle" burst upon the flabbergasted world:

"Verdun, symbol of French resistance throughout the four years of the last war, was taken by Chancellor Hitler's armies in their stride. Converging from two sides they stopped before this mighty system of fortresses which was to bar the road to Paris and in twenty-four hours had attacked, occupied and left it behind them.

"Twenty-five years ago the armies of Imperial Germany bathed in blood the hillsides that the Third Reich soldiers vanquished so quickly three days ago." (N. Y. Times, June 18, 1940. Our emphasis)

Only political children, or people who allow themselves to be duped by the capitalist and opportunist press will accept such ridiculous "miracles" as manifesting a real war between the "Allied" and German imperialists. One must grasp fully the event which speaks for itself: "Forts that held off Germany in last war were conquered and passed in 24 hours." (Ibid.)

Although the story of inadequacy of French armaments was passed around to "explain" things, it must be remembered that after Dunkerque the French army was maintaining its superiority in artillery, a mighty weapon in modern warfare not only in offense but also in defense:

"Despite reported heavy losses of artillery left behind following the Dunkerque withdrawal of the northern Allied forces, the French still are said to maintain their superiority in this category." (World Telegram, June 7, 1940)

Certainly the air force could be effectively employed to aid in the defense of Verdun — if such defense entered into the plan of the imperialists. On the very day Verdun had been given to the Nazis, dispatches stated that the French air force was intact:

"The French radio said late tonight that the French Navy was 'in-

tact' and that the French Air Force was 'intact and powerful.'" (New York Times, June 19, 1940. A.P. from Bordeaux)

As to the British, they carried out in France the same maneuver which they had performed in Holland and Belgium. The Canadians, for example, marched in and turned around and marched right out again —

"Canada's active service force, after months of preparations and training, finally got to France last week, primed for front-line action, but it was disclosed today, had to turn around immediately and returned to England without having seen a German or fired a shot." (New York Times, June 19, 1940. Our emphasis.)

An unmistakable, familiar pattern! After these events, Mowrer in his July 5th report indicated some more unexplained "mysteries" in the "strategy" of the Allied High Command:

"When the Government left Paris, the French armies were still virtually intact. It has never been explained why the western forces were not withdrawn into Brittany where the port of Brest might have been defended for weeks, or why General Pretelat's great group of armies in Alsace-Lorraine, on the Maginot line and Rhine, were not recalled in time and ordered to force a passage at any cost."

We might make this remark more general and say that it has never been truthfully explained — by the bourgeoisie and the opportunists — why at every strategic point the path into France was left open for Hitler freely to take.

V. THE MARXIST EXPLANATION

The complete and true story of the so-called "Second World War," as it has occurred so far, is, of course, still a secret of the guiding lights of imperialism, the Chamberlains, Hitlers, Roosevelts, Daladiers, Churchills, Reynauds, Weygands and their

closest cohorts. Revolutionary workers have to break through the veil of secrecy and deception and establish for themselves an understanding of the "peculiar" course of this "Second World War."

Comparisons often reveal realities otherwise obscure. A most fruitful comparison is that between the course of events in the imperialist war of 1914-1918 and its aftermath and the so-called "Second World War." It is not so much a point-for-point comparison which is in order, as one between the general character of these two historical situations. The quality of the conduct of the Allied imperialists is especially the feature to be observed in this comparison.

At the outbreak of the war of 1914-1918, the Allied imperialists were hampered by a lack of preparation which was real. Faced by a decisive superiority on the part of their foes, the Allied imperialists organized defenses which rank with the most striking in military history. Hastily collecting armies totalling about 800,000 which had to face German armies numbering 1,350,000 combatants, the French imperialists opposed the fierce attackers with equal savagery and tenacity. Considering cost in human lives and in materials as a matter of secondary importance, the French imperialists succeeded in stemming the advance of the German armies. At crucial points, the military miracles of 1914 did not consist of "forgetting" to blow up key bridges and to mine roads, of "neglecting" to close corridor-like gaps, of "forgetting" to utilize artillery, and so forth. In 1914-1918, fortresses had to be devastated before being occupied, and no reports of a gigantic fortress being taken intact in twenty-four hours were spread to bewilder the masses. The French imperialists and their Allies, pursuing a policy of genuinely attempting to stop the German advance, threw in every force they could muster, however relatively inferior it might be, and quickly stabilized their positions. Consistently for four years, the Franco-British imperialists stood their ground against all odds.

Equally indicative of the policy of the Allied imperialists in 1914-1918 was the aftermath of that war. Though already warned to be cautious in the face of a new revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat, the Allied imperialists continued their ferocious drive against their German foes after 1918. Repeated threats of proletarian revolutions and even the example of a successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie in Russia were not yet enough to force the Allied imperialists to set aside even temporarily their onslaught against their German rivals and to unite with them against their common class foe. As late as 1923, the French imperialists perpetrated an invasion of the German Ruhr, an invasion bringing with it indescribable chaos and a revolutionary situation in Germany at the end of the year. Hounding their equally rapacious German imperialist foes to the last ditch, the French bourgeoisie in their invasion of the Ruhr continued their battle with all the bloodthirstiness of 1914-1918. The type of imperialist brigandage known as "reparations" remained even longer as a form of warfare conducted by the Allied bourgeoisie.

World imperialism could not, however, continue to live in the manner of 1914-1918 and the immediately ensuing period. International capitalism in general, and German capitalism in particular, passed into a stage of profound crisis. The new feature of this period of crisis which caused the imperialists to pause and gradually reorient their policy was the continued threat of proletarian revolution, starting with the successful Bolshevik revolution in Russia, and the utter inability of the bourgeoisie to extricate themselves in any decisive manner from the conditions of crisis their society faced. Despite the crushing of every revolutionary situation since 1922, due to the treachery of the Stalinist conspirators, capitalist society continued to be shaken by continual revolutionary upsurges culminating in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939.

Pressed by the world shaking crisis and the resultant fierce development of the class struggle, the

world bourgeoisie has been compelled step by step to adopt a new policy. In this new policy, the imperialists are subordinating their internal conflicts to the requirements of their struggle against their common foe, the international proletariat. Unable to continue as if the 1880-1917 period of relative absence of proletarian revolution still existed, the international imperialists have gradually adopted a policy conforming to the basic character of the post-1917 period, the period of the continued presence of world-wide and prolonged crisis and of the repeated occurrence of proletarian revolutionary upsurges. The basis of the new policy of world imperialism is to set aside temporarily its international rivalries and to unite in a major and world-wide assault on the proletariat.

The most striking evidence of the reorientation of international imperialism is the new policy gradually developed by the former Allied imperialists toward their foe of 1914-1918, German imperialism.

Recognizing German capitalism as the chief sore-spot in the world-capitalist system, the Allied imperialists dropped their policy of driving their German rivals to the wall and undertook to rehabilitate the German bourgeoisie. The policy of attempting to squeeze wealth out of the German economy in the form of "reparations" gave way to one of pumping money into it. Propped up by huge loans and investments from the Allied bankers and imperialists, German capitalism began to take a new lease on life. The American bankers alone hold over a billion and a half dollars worth of investments in Germany, with the British and French financiers standing as saviours of German capitalism practically on par with their American colleagues.

With the rise of Hitler to power in 1933, the Allied imperialists passed from the phase of financially aiding German imperialism to that of sanctioning and supporting its military rearmament and territorial "re-adjustment." Covering up their new policy with numerous verbal "protests," the former Allied imperialists finally

agreed to Hitler's rearmament program and even contributed to it financially, directly and indirectly. The Nazi remilitarization of the Rhineland was effected with scarcely a flurry. The entire Versailles system was scrapped under the mutual agreement of the German and Franco-British imperialists. Under Hitler's domination and with the sanction of international imperialism, German armed might again became of major proportions.

The territorial advance of German imperialism began virtually under the guidance of the League of Nations, the "moral" puppet of the Franco-British bankers. A plebiscite in the Saarland in January 1935 conducted under the control of League of Nations officials resulted in the return of that territory to the German financiers. With the almost undisguised consent of the British imperialists, the Nazi seizure of Austria was completed in 1938. The next territorial movement of Hitler took place under the aegis of an actual signed understanding amongst the rulers of France, Britain, Germany and Italy, (the Munich Pact of September 1938), with the tacit sanction of American imperialism hovering conveniently on the sidelines. The Sudetenland and then Czechoslovakia passed into Hitler's power. The stage was set by these "peaceful" preparations for the ensuing "war" period in which the cooperation of the former Allied imperialists with those of Germany continued under a new guise.

Each tactic has a definite life period; sooner or later it outlives its usefulness. The policy of more or less undisguised cooperation of the "democratic" imperialists with their Nazi colleagues could not be kept up indefinitely. As the scope of the cooperation became broader, the disguise had to be reinforced so that the cooperation would be increasingly concealed under the growing strength of the disguise. The turning point in the tactics of the imperialists was reached with the Nazi invasion of Poland. At this point the disguise of the "Allied" imperialists took the form of a declaration of "war" on Hitler.

This "Second World War" can be

understood only in light of the background factors and events which have been traced above. It is the "wartime" continuation of this preceding "peacetime" policy of international imperialism. Between the fact that the "Allied" imperialists deliberately turned over the Saarland, Czechoslovakia and Austria to Hitler and the fact that although "war" was declared on Hitler ostensibly to defend Poland, they did not lift a finger in its defense there is an organic, historical connection: The continuation of the Munich policy in the Polish situation is the reality; the declaration of "war" by Chamberlain-Daladier is the deceptive appearance, the disguise which conceals the cooperation of the "Allied" with the German imperialists. Seeming to be in violent conflict with Hitler to the extent of "war," the "democratic" imperialists were able to trick the masses into imagining that now, at long last, Hitler's aggressions would be stopped.

For eight months after the invasion of Poland there reigned the now historic quiet on the Western Front. Almost endless were the "explanations" of this quiet that were forthcoming from the bourgeois spokesmen and their opportunist assistants within the working class ranks. Some of these "explanations" were even plausible in appearance. The rapid unfolding of events after this quiet period, however, provides great aid in understanding its real basis. That real basis is revealed to be the fact that the "Allied" imperialists are not at war with the German imperialists, but are deliberately turning Europe over to Hitler and his Nazi bloodhounds — for a definite reason, as we shall see subsequently.

With the "Allied" forces standing by and not making a single genuine move against him, Hitler quickly swallowed Denmark and Norway. In the newspaper headlines there was great talk of gigantic battles being fought to save Norway from Hitler. (Denmark was conveniently "forgotten" even in the headlines.) Stirring stories about great military exploits by the British forces in Trondheim, Bergen, Oslo, Narvik and in the Skagerrak were

splashed over the papers. Subsequent revelations proved these stories to be fabrications pure and simple, for the fact of the matter is that Norway was given to Hitler with nothing that can be called a bonafide opposition. * Meanwhile the fiction of "war" again served to deceive the masses in the "democratic" nations into thinking that perhaps "next time" the "Allies" would strike their decisive blows.

With Hitler's moves into Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, we reach the phase described at length in the first part of this article. Opening Hitler's path at every crucial point in the Lowlands and in Northern France, the "Allied" imperialists and their High Command completed the work of placing capitalist continental Europe under the domination of the Fascist boot. Naturally, this job also required a system of disguises. With the conclusion of the Norway-Denmark phase, Chamberlain, Daladier and Gamelin were "ousted" and the promise given that the new leaders, Churchill-Reynaud and the new generalissimo Weygand, would conduct the "real" war against Hitler. But the Weygand who — in the promises — was to conduct "total" war against Hitlerism turned out to be precisely the one who effected the final phase of placing almost the entire of continental European capitalism under the fascist form of bourgeois rule. It was Weygand, the right-hand man of Foch in the war of 1914-1918, who with an army of five million men intact was one of the chief factors in bringing the Nazi forces into France to assist in the establishment of a French fascist dictatorship.

With this act, another phase of the present policy of world imperialism comes to a close.

The essence of this policy can be grasped by a total view of the events which have unfolded since September 1939. Out of these events there emerges the figure of Hitler as the gendarme of world imperialism. Hitler is being used by world imperialism to * See THE BULLETIN of the Leninist League, April-May 1940, for details on this aspect of the "war" in Europe.

place the fascist jackboot on the neck of the proletariat throughout capitalist Europe, as the preliminary step to wiping out the remaining conquests of October in Russia. The process of Hitlerizing Europe took a circuitous route through Central Europe and Scandinavia and has reached France at the time of the present writing. Here the upsurge of the workers bursting forth in 1934-1936 and only temporarily quelled by the French bourgeoisie with the aid of the Stalinist, Social-democratic and other opportunists, has been given a stunning blow by the introduction of Fascism. Far more important than the columns of motorized troops which entered Paris and the other industrialized areas of France are the arms of the Gestapo which accompany the Nazi troops wherever they move. The extermination of the proletarian vanguard of France, a potential menace of huge proportions to the bourgeoisie, is being accomplished now by Hitlerism, a Hitlerism not fighting against, but collaborating with French imperialism. The fascization of France accomplished by the unique method of bringing in the Nazis represents the true fundamental character of what has been passing for the "Second World War." This so-called "Second World War," is a class war of world imperialism against the world proletariat, and not at all a Second World War in the sense of a war amongst the imperialists similar to that of 1914-1918.

This class feature of the so-called "Second World War" is what accounts for its numerous "peculiarities." This class feature is the basis of the "failure" of the "Allied" imperialists to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium in the decisive manner of which they were capable had this been their intention. This class feature is the reason for the ability of the Nazis to march through France as if on parade, while vital French bridges were left intact, while fortresses were evacuated without a fight, while French artillery and tanks and "Allied" air armadas were conspicuous chiefly for their remaining unused.

The total crushing of the

European proletariat under the heel of Fascism will be only the prelude, however, to the major aspect of the task which world imperialism has set itself for the present period. In general this task can be described as a world-wide effort to rehabilitate international capitalism and retrench it on a new basis. The major aspect of this task is an assault on the Stalinized Soviet Union, the restoration of bourgeois private property therein and the division of its huge territory and unlimited wealth amongst the imperialist powers. Only on the basis of such a conquest can international capitalism extricate itself to any practical extent from its present state of crisis. The present assault on the world proletariat taking place under the name of the "Second World War," if not counter-acted by revolutionary action, must reach its culmination in the destruction and partition by international imperialism of the Stalinized Soviet Union. This scheme, if successful, will accomplish the historic task of the international bourgeoisie in the present period, namely, to restore capitalism to its former world-wide scope by re-introducing bourgeois-private property in the land containing the remnants of the economic conquests of the first successful proletarian revolution. This is, and can be the only perspective of the international bourgeoisie today, and it is only in the light of this perspective that the "peculiarities" of the so-called "Second World War" can be understood.

The epoch of modern imperialism can be divided into three chief parts. The first, that extending up to 1917-1918 marked the most prodigious clash between groups of exploiters in the history of class society. Its keynote was the world imperialist war of 1914-1918. The second part, a transition from the first to the third part, was an irregular one which at times combined features of inter-imperialist struggle with features of class war in which international imperialism more or less united against the proletariat. A most striking example of such a combination is found in the period of 1918 to 1920. During this period the Allied imperialists

continued to bleed their German rivals and at the same time united with them as far as possible in an assault on the new Soviet Republic. In the face of the rising crisis of world capitalism, this "mixed" policy could not be continued. The third part, which begins in Russia in 1917, is marked by the unfolding of the class struggle in its highest, its final form, that between the international proletariat and the international bourgeoisie. Its keynote is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. After the revolutionary crisis in Germany in 1923, the class war gradually came to supercede the inter-imperialist conflicts until at present it is completely dominant.

Unless this world-wide dominance of the class war, overshadowing the inter-imperialist conflict, is understood, the course of events in the present will remain a mystery, the workers will remain at the mercy of bourgeois swindlers and their opportunist assistants. It is not easy to grasp this basic feature of the present historical period in its entirety. In a previous article in our publication there can be found a unique example of what may result from failure to understand the complete domination of the class war element in the present period. The article entitled, "On Hitler's 'Seizure' of Norway," (THE BULLETIN, April-May 1940), contains the prediction:—"There will be no Nazi invasion of Belgium!" (p. 25) This obviously false prediction was based on the idea that a move on Hitler's part toward the West would signify that the imperialists are really fighting each other because their plan of uniting against the proletariat and the Soviet Union had for some reason failed. It was not fully grasped to what extent the present level of development of the class struggle could drive the imperialists. That the needs of the class war would require the turning over of Belgium — as Poland, for example, was turned over — to Hitler was out of the range of our understanding. And that France itself would be given over even for a second to Hitler's policing was a notion utterly beyond even our remotest conception. And yet these seemingly fantastic events have materialized. That Hit-

ler was being used as the gendarme of world imperialism we understood, but the extent to which he would be thus used was revealed only by the unfolding events around the move into the Lowlands and France. It is possible that the full height of the development of the class struggle in the present historical period has not yet been revealed even by the remarkable course of history so far. The task of revolutionary workers is to develop the necessary vigilance and sharpness to grasp the true character of the class struggle in its entirety.

VI. THE POSITION OF THE OPPORTUNISTS

The fundamental feature of opportunism in general is that historically it carries out the line and policy of imperialism. In the capitalist epoch, there are only two possible, mutually exclusive positions, that of the bourgeoisie and that of Marxism. Regardless of what may be the unique aspect of any particular variety of opportunism, its general characteristic, distortion of reality, places it politically and ideologically in the service of the capitalist class. It is necessary to strip the outward shell with which opportunism camouflages its reactionary character and makes itself palatable to the workers, and to reveal its basically pro-bourgeois nature.

Concerning the so-called "Second World War," there are two basic positions to be discerned. One, that of the bourgeoisie, which maintains that there is a genuine war raging amongst the imperialists in Europe and which endeavors to conceal the actual cooperation of the imperialists in their common assault on the international proletariat and in their preparation for their forthcoming attack on the Stalinized Soviet Union. The other position is that of Marxism, which exposes the fraudulent and sham character of the "war" alleged to be going on amongst the imperialists and which reveals the class character of the events in Europe. Marxism endeavors to combat the bourgeois distortions of the nature of the class struggle. The

opportunists unanimously present the bourgeois position on the "Second World War," and thus assist the imperialists in distorting the character of the class struggle.

With one voice, the Stalinists, Trotskyists, Oehlerites and other opportunists proclaim that the "Second World War" is a genuine inter-imperialist war similar in fundamental character to that of 1914-1918. "The war that has broken out in Europe is the Second Imperialist War," proclaim the Stalinist bureaucrats (Declaration of the National Committee, C.P. U.S.A.). Following suit, the Trotskyite leaders stated: "...the war in Europe is an imperialist war, with the arch-reactionary Hitler on one side, backed at the moment by the treacherous Stalin regime and with the imperialist governments of Chamberlain and Daladier on the other" (Socialist Appeal, October 17, 1939). At the time when the collaboration of the "Allied" with the German imperialists had reached the point of deliberately bringing Hitler into France to help establish fascism there, the Trotskyites declared: "Germany has unloosed all the furies of hell in a major offensive to which the Allies are replying in kind (sic!) with all (sic!) their forces of destruction" (Socialist Appeal, June 29, 1940 — our emphasis). An organic part of the pseudo-Bolshevik camp, Oehler writes: "Everybody should know that the second imperialist war started last September with the German invasion of Poland and the Anglo-French declaration of war." (Fighting Worker, July 1, 1940.) Strictly toeing the pseudo-Bolshevik mark, Stamm stated: "The war in Europe is an imperialist war. It is the direct result of the imperialist peace of Versailles. Like the war of 1914-1918 it is fought on all sides for imperialist ends." (Revolt, Sept. 16, 1939.) "The Second Imperialist War is a continuation of the First which lasted from 1914 to 1918," cry the Shachtmanite leaders (Labor Action, July 1, 1940). Statements of similar character could be produced from all the opportunists who pose as Bolsheviks, for in spreading this fraud they stand together solidly. Nevertheless, the numerous "peculiar" features of this "Second Imperialist

War" are so obvious that the opportunists are constrained to "explain" them. This also they do in the manner of the bourgeoisie. A few examples are in order.

The imperialists, straining themselves to conceal the class reasons for the "peculiarities" of the "Second World War," put forth a variety of "military" reasons for the "queer" course of the events in Europe. The opportunists, following the line of the imperialists, likewise offer "military" reasons. Why did the Nazi forces march through France as if on parade? Was it because the French and British imperialists and their High Command, for political reasons, opened the path for the Nazis? Not at all, in the Trotskyist "explanation." It is because the French capitalist class has become amazingly stupid about military affairs, "explains" the Socialist Appeal. "It entered upon the conflict with a positively myopic disregard of the real relationship of armed strength," writes Stern (Socialist Appeal, June 23, 1940). One would imagine that the French bourgeoisie appeared on the scene only yesterday, and that before it had time to lift a finger it was forced into a war. It would seem, if we follow the Trotskyites, that the French bourgeoisie, despite their demobilization of two classes, did not have an enormous army numbering five million men, the greatest fortifications in the world, the second largest navy in Europe, a prodigious degree of mechanized forces including the most powerful and most numerous artillery, a vast, first-rate tank force, a gigantic air force, to say nothing of the sources of military strength at its disposal from its partner, British imperialism, (We shall also say nothing of the stream of supplies passing from the United States to France and England.) Nor did the French bourgeoisie have the advantage of the experience of the war of 1914-1918 and of the two decades intervening thereafter, the Trotskyist "explanation" would lead workers to believe; the French bourgeoisie had merely "myopia." We observe, however, that this alleged "myopia" was of a very "peculiar" character, for it led the French bourgeoisie to create one

of the most gigantic and powerful military organizations in history and then deliberately to refrain from using it against German imperialism. Due to the fact that the French bourgeoisie had as its policy not to utilize its armed strength against the German imperialists, but to open the path for the Nazis, all talk about inferiority, "myopia" or stupidity is just so much deception.

It is not our intention at this point to give a complete picture of the various distortions committed by the opportunists. For such a picture, the reader has but to go to the bourgeois press whose "explanations" he will find reproduced point by point in the opportunist publications, tricked out of course in the latter with "Marxist" lingo. In the opportunist press of the pseudo-Bolshevik variety, there will be found a great deal of noise about "turning the imperialist war into a civil war," and about the "need for a social revolution." These Marxist phrases serve simply as a cover for the fact that the historical function of the pseudo-Bolsheviks is to preserve the power of imperialism. The distortions of the opportunists with respect to the character of the so-called "Second World War" is only one aspect of their total function which is to mislead the advanced workers, who are their most immediate victims, and through the advanced workers, to mislead the toiling masses in general.

The relation of opportunism to the "Second World War" and to the present situation is a fundamental, historical one. The international imperialists have been able to arrive at their present operations because of the Stalinist degeneration of the first Workers State. Imperialism successfully marches forward in its onslaught against the world proletariat and in its preparations for an assault on the degenerating Soviet Union because of the paralysis of the working class due to the Stalinist virus seething in its veins. Since 1922, the international proletariat has been defeated in every revolutionary situation because of the treachery of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky who,

plotting to preserve their bureaucratic power and privilege, had to disrupt the developing proletarian revolution. There would be no Hitler in power in Germany to act as the gendarme of world imperialism if in 1923, when German capitalism was on the brink of collapse, the German toilers had not been paralyzed by the treacherous directives of Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev, Stalin and their fellow conspirators for bureaucratic power. Breaking loose from the bonds of bourgeois power, the mighty German working class would have swept over Europe, and the reverberations of the revolutionary upheaval in Europe would have sent capitalism crashing to its destruction on a world-wide scale. The Stalinist degeneration of the Bolshevik movement, however, operating since 1921-22, has made it possible for the bourgeoisie to enter into schemes of unprecedented daring and scope. If the present historical period comes to a close with the bourgeoisie as the victors, the primary reason for this will be the treachery of Stalin and his political satellites, Trotsky, Shachtman and the other pseudo-Bolsheviks.

Regardless of what the stage or form of the class struggle may be, the first step toward the victory of the proletariat is the formation of a Bolshevik party. Today, in the epoch of the Stalinist degeneration of the original Bolshevik movement, the first step toward proletarian victory is to form a new Bolshevik party. The chief responsibility for effecting this step at present rests with those advanced workers who already realize the need for such a new Bolshevik party. These advanced workers stand historically at the head of the entire proletariat. It is first and foremost their duty to unearth the truth, to test the Marxist character of their politics against reality, to determine whether their politics be truly Marxist. The followers of Trotsky, Shachtman, Oehler or Stamm who find their leaders repeating the distortions furnished by the bourgeoisie about the character of the "Second World War" must conclude that their position is anti-Marxist. The falsification of the present situation by the pseudo-Bolsheviks is not at all accidental; it is rooted in their dis-

tortions and fabrications about the entire post-revolutionary period which had its beginning in 1921-1922. Clearly, any tendency which hides the truth about Stalin, Trotsky and other renegades from Bolshevism, any organization which spreads the fraud that the British and French imperialists are engaged in a war against the German and Italian imperialists, is not furthering the cause of the masses. Quite the opposite. Objectively, and in some cases subjectively, such tendency is aiding the international bourgeoisie to fool the workers and usher in Fascism.

The unprecedentedly rapid fascization of Holland, Belgium and France provides vanguard workers with a brutal warning of what the future holds for the masses. Realizing that the present historical period of capitalist instability requires action swift and decisive beyond that of any period previously faced, the bourgeoisie aim at leaving no time for the workers to search for an understanding of the present situation and to gather forces for revolutionary action. In the days to come there will be no period of

relatively quiet years in which the toilers will have time to reorganize themselves along Marxist lines. One ferocious assault after another in rapid and continuous succession and similar in devastation and scope to that in Europe is what the bourgeoisie have in store for the masses in the very few remaining countries not yet under the boot of fascism.

Workers who already realize the need for a new Bolshevik party must apply themselves intensely to the task of analyzing the present situation and the political tendency they follow. Investigation and discussion, thorough, decisive, and intense is the prime requirement in the gathering of forces for a new revolutionary party. Rejection of every variety of deception and illusion is the beginning of the struggle for the new Bolshevik party. A calling to accounts of all the pseudo-Bolshevik leaders and their ejection from the proletarian vanguard must be the first point on the agenda of the advanced workers today.

THE LENINIST LEAGUE U.S.A.

A POST-SCRIPT ON THE "BATTLE OF FRANCE"

The fact that the Anglo-French imperialists have been cooperating with, rather than warring against, the German imperialists long prior to and since September 1939, meanwhile trying to create the opposite impression for reasons outlined in the article, "The Case of Holland, Belgium and France," has led to situations almost unparalleled for fantastic quality.

Workers will easily recall the roaring headlines heralding the start of what was referred to as the "Battle of France." The vivid reports of a "vast Nazi blitzkrieg" and of a "tremendous clash of millions of soldiers" in the "greatest battle in history" cannot easily be forgotten. This reported "Battle of France," guided by Churchill-Reynaud, has already gone down in history as the Waterloo of the

Twentieth Century.

Yet less than two months after this epochal "Battle of France" was reported to have occurred, one finds in a leading journal of the imperialists, The New York Herald-Tribune, a featured article beginning with the amazing sentence: "It now seems quite clear that there never was a Battle of France, a battle for Paris, or whatever it was called in the days before the country's collapse." (Walter Kerr, July 23, 1940. Our emphasis)

Some of the high-lights in this article are worth reproducing. The reporter, Kerr, was a member of the Paris Bureau of The New York Herald-Tribune and made first-hand observations of what was occurring during the alleged "Battle of France."

It appears in this latest light on the situation that the Nazi "blitzkrieg" against Paris consisted of troops without tanks and armoured cars, and whose vanguard was composed of bicycle troops: -

"I have talked to refugees who were overtaken on the road by the German advance and who then returned to Paris. They never saw any real fighting. And on two of these roads the Germans advanced without tanks and armored cars: their vanguard was composed of bicycle troops and their striking power was mobile artillery." (Ibid. Our emphasis)

Concerning the "wave of flame and steel" which was alleged to have driven the French soldiers back, Kerr has this to report: -

"At first it was believed that they were simply driven back by a highly mechanized army that rolled forward on a wave of flame and steel. But this theory has been discarded, for except along the Somme and the Aisne and at isolated spots, there is no evidence of battle." (Ibid. Our emphasis).

As for the Somme-Aisne sector, Kerr has this to say concerning the French army: "It never put up much resistance to the Somme-Aisne offensive." Others substantiated the general character of Kerr's observations. A well-known French journalist was interviewed:

"Stephane Lauzanne, for many years editor of 'Le Matin,' returned to Paris a week ago, disgusted with what he had seen in Angers. He looked out of his window one morning and saw three battalions of colonial troops moving south, the city's garrison. They were marching in good order, he said, but there were no officers with them. He went out to ask a sergeant, and this soldier shrugged his shoulders and said he did not know where the officers were. They had ordered him to lead the retreat. One hundred and forty Germans captured Angers the next day without tanks." (Ibid. Our emphasis)

It should be mentioned that the city

of Angers which this handful of Nazis without tanks took over is one of 84,000 population, for France a sizeable city. Kerr states on his own account: "I know that entire divisions surrendered without a fight, at St. Valery-en-Caux, for example, just south of Dieppe." (Ibid. Our emphasis) Thus went Churchill-Reynaud's "Battle of France." "They surrendered without a fight," "they never saw any real fighting," "there is no evidence of battle."

The stories issuing from the Franco-British-Nazi high commands about the raging of a "Battle of France" were out-and-out fabrications. The actual fact, shown by this and other reports was that the French Army and the British forces were whisked away by the "Allied" leaders and the path cleared for the Nazis to occupy French territory. **THE FRENCH ARMY WAS NOT DEFEATED.** It was withdrawn intact together with the British troops without a fight so that with the aid of the Nazis a Fascist regime could be rapidly set up in France. The mythical "Battle of France" consisted actually of sporadic fighting by isolated groups of soldiers who, deserted by their officers or determined in any event to fight to the last, offered independent - i.e., independent of the "Allied" generals - resistance to the Nazis. Other reports indicate that small detachments of Polish soldiers, bitter and enraged against the Nazis, were especially noted for this sort of desperate last-ditch fighting. The French Army as a whole, and the British forces, were, however, removed from the scene immediately upon the Nazis' advance into France. This is the only possible conclusion from a careful study of the reports which have filtered through.

Naturally, the bourgeois journalist, Kerr, does not provide a Marxist political explanation of the events he witnessed. He attributes what he calls the French collapse - (actually there was no collapse, but success on the part of the "Allied" imperialists in their collaboration with Hitler) - to "eight months of idleness after September," "a censored press that was not allowed to hint that anything was

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