

Max Shachtman
New York, N. Y.

Dear Max:

In your N.I. (11/42) article on "25 Years of the Russian Revolution", which I just read, there appears the sentence: "It followed this by smashing the possibility, at least for a long period of time, of its rule being replaced by the rule of an outright military-Bonapartist dictatorship, represented by reactionary Praetorians like Tukhachevsky"...." I would like to be further enlightened as to the basis of this sentence and characterization of Tukhachevsky.

I would like to bring to your attention two matters: (1) During the court-martial of Tukhachevsky, Trotsky wrote an article on the beheading of the Red Army, wherein he reserved judgment on Tukhachevsky. That is, he stated, since he had been a Tsarist officer, etc. etc. there might have been a possibility that he favored an alliance with Germany, etc. etc. (2) When that article appeared in the Russian Bulletin, it agitated Barmine and Krivitsky who, at the time, were flirting with our movement. They wrote the Old Man that his article on the Red Army shows how completely out of touch he was with present-day Russia; that his analysis, in general, was excellent, etc. etc. But as to even hinting that Tukhachevsky's Soviet loyalty was to be questioned, meant not to know a thing either about Stalin's machinations or about Tukhachevsky personally. They were directly involved in military work, counter-espionage in Germany, etc. and they knew that Tukhachevsky had absolutely no German orientation." All this is to say, that in view of the fact that I was then with the Old Man (who, although he wrote no other article on the question, did "pacify" Barmine and Krivitsky) and know the circumstances around that particular article, and in view of the fact that heretofore we had not singled out Tukhachevsky as a reactionary Praetorian, I am completely confused by your characterization.

Com'ly.,

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2/24/43

MS:

The few old copies of the Russian newspapers handed to me by Al are not sufficient to make a story. The only way to handle it that I can see is to summarize at least a month's issues at a time. At the time you first asked me to write an article on the Russian press --it was November, I believe-- I had gathered information from the press from the start of the Russo-German war through June of 1942. When you refused to do the writing for me, on the basis of my notes, I asked Jimmie to do it. He did. I handed that article in to Mannie, with the note that since it was based on information from the Russian press, which J. could not read, he felt that his name should not be used; I suggested the article be published unauthored, altho my name could have been used as the source of the information. The article however was not published & no reason was ever offered me as to the cause of the LA editorial policy. The only reason that I now bring the matter up is that you should know the article was written. Also, that if it had been published, then the material contained in the issues now given to me, plus what I might be able to gather in the library, could be a follow-up, but otherwise it makes no coherent story. The press contains the regular repetitions of (a) the "socialist emulation" started by this or that factory, and (b) the necessity to defend the "fatherland" by exterminating the German. Here is a sample of the latter Soviet propaganda, from the Komsomolskaya Pravda (organ of the C.C. & Moscow Committee of the Youth) in its issue of July 28, 1942: (the caps, or rather black type, is in the original):

IF THERE IS QUIET ON YOUR PART OF THE FRONT, IF YOU AWAIT THE BATTLE, KILL THE GERMAN BEFORE THE BATTLE. IF YOU LET THE GERMAN LIVE, THE GERMAN WILL HANG THE RUSSIAN MAN AND VIOLATE THE RUSSIAN WOMAN. IF YOU KILLED ONE GERMAN, KILL ANOTHER -- THERE IS NOTHING GREYER FOR US THAN GERMAN CORPSES. DO NOT COUNT THE DAYS. DO NOT COUNT THE MILES. COUNT ONLY ONE THING: GERMAN KILLED BY YOU. KILL THE GERMAN! --THE OLD WOMAN-MOTHER ASKS YOU. KILL THE GERMAN! --THE CHILD BEGS OF YOU. KILL THE GERMAN! -- MOTHER EARTH CRIES. DO NOT MISS THE MARK. DO NOT LET ANYTHING SLIP. KILL!

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