

The Second Front in Europe and the Russians today

by Webster Griffin Tarpley

The 40th anniversary of the Normandy landings coincides with a campaign of bellicose hysteria on the part of the Soviet propaganda apparatus designed to equate the United States and its present allies, especially the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan, with Hitler and the Nazis. Current Soviet propaganda has embarked upon an unprecedented denigration of the American contribution to the defeat of the Nazis. The psychological dynamic governing such excesses of the Big Lie emanating from Moscow in this period has to do primarily with the fact that the Soviet leadership is presently engaged in an enterprise of world conquest and empire exactly parallel to that of Hitler. The Soviet need to project the Nazi label on the United States is further increased by Moscow's connivance with every known Nazi and neo-Nazi organization in Europe, from Genoud's Switzerland to East Germany, the classical Nazi-Communist state.

The recurrent themes of Soviet historiography regarding the Second World War include a litany of Soviet losses during the conflict, the idea that only the Soviets made any substantial contribution to the defeat of Hitler, and vituperation on the issue of the delayed Second Front on the European continent. A random sample can be taken from the editorial, "Victory Day," in the May issue of *New Times*:

Often enough the compilers of American "scenarios" for a third world war casually mention the possibility of that war taking a death toll of 100-200 million. But the World War II death-toll of 50 million is not a speculative statement, it is a gruesome fact. To this day, it haunts the homes left never to return by those 50 million, 20 million of whom were citizens of the Soviet Union.

Later in this article we read:

And it was the Soviet people who broke the back of the fascist beast. Hence, we can only smile at the efforts of numerous Western propaganda mongers to make it appear as if the opening of the Second Front in Europe, the 40th anniversary of which they are preparing to celebrate, all but decided the outcome of the war.

New Times continues:

We have the greatest respect for the fighting men of the armed forces of the United States, Britain, and other countries who made their contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany. It is not they but the political leaders of the West who were asked, and who are asked now: Why was the Second Front not opened before 1944?

The blatant lying and self-righteous hypocrisy of such typical Soviet commentary become obvious most especially in the context of events to which the Soviets seldom refer, and of which they continue to deny certain salient facts. This involves the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of Aug. 23, 1939, and the Nazi-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of Sept. 27, 1939, with the secret protocols to each of these, which existence is indignantly denied by the U.S.S.R. until the present day.

The opening of a Second Front in Europe was indeed unduly delayed, largely because of British influence on the matter. But whatever can be said about the United States' conduct of the war, this country was never allied to Hitler, as the Soviets most emphatically were from August 1939 until June 1941. The United States never drew up a bill of territorial demands as a precondition for joining the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, the Tripartite Pact of September 1940. This is exactly what Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov did, in the fall of 1940. And the Axis, of course, was an aggressive alliance directed against the United States.

Stalin's policy after the Munich sell-out of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France in September 1938 was to control Hitler through raw-material dependency and to employ his services as a marcher-lord satrap against the Western powers. It was the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact which permitted the desperate Hitler to unleash World War II, as it was the Russian deliveries of vital oil, raw materials, and foodstuffs that permitted the functioning of the Nazi war-machine during those years in the face of a British sea blockade that otherwise might have debilitated the sinews of German aggression. The NKVD and the Gestapo worked in synergy

against opposition elements in both countries. Stalin promised Hitler a naval base on the Arctic Ocean. The Soviets negotiated the purchase of German warships, hoping to obtain the battleship Bismarck.

It was during the period of the Hitler-Stalin alliance that the Nazis completed the conquest of continental Europe, with absolutely no interference, but rather active support, from Russia. Half of Poland, all of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia ceased to exist because they were incorporated into the U.S.S.R. Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, Greece, and France were all conquered by Hitler during the time of the Nazi-Soviet alliance. Romania and Finland had parts of their territory detached by Stalin and were thus driven into the Axis camp.

The question of a Second Front in 1942 or 1943 must thus be preceded by the recognition that a Second Front in the West had existed until the fall of France in June 1940, and that Stalin had deliberately and willfully allowed that front to be terminated. Just as he had allowed Hitler to eliminate the 50 divisions of the Polish army in 1939, when they were fighting the Nazis, Stalin permitted the Wehrmacht to destroy the 100 modern divisions of the French army in May-June of 1941. This was the second front that Stalin would call for later, when it had to be recreated through an amphibious operation that represented the greatest logistical exertion in history.

Stalin's geopolitics were unquestionably based on the traditional Slavophile dualism of Mother Russia, on the one hand, and the putrid West on the other. Stalin regarded the total of all the divisions west of his border as the enemy. From his point of view, the positive feature of Hitler's conquest of Europe was that this total was continuously in decline. It is indeed remarkable that as Hitler extended his conquests, and became more and more awesome in Western eyes, Stalin became more aggressive and demanding, simply because the military arithmetic, by Slavophile reckoning, was more and more favorable to Russia.

Similar considerations apply to the question of Soviet human losses in the war. The 20 million Russian war dead are martyrs whose honor and memory will live in history. But to a bloody tyrant like Stalin, human losses were never a paramount consideration. His own regime slaughtered a comparable figure in peacetime. In addition, during the period of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the U.S.S.R. absorbed some 21.2 million people—11 million Poles, 12% of the population of Finland, and others in Romania and the Baltic states. Thus, from the point of view of Stalin's monstrous demographic calculations, the losses suffered by the U.S.S.R. during the hostilities had been amply pre-discounted in advance.

The Nazi-Soviet alliance of the Ribbentrop-Molotov period is often attributed to Stalin's purported desire to gain time in which to prepare Russia's defenses. Such expla-

nations are ludicrous. In the spring of 1940, when Hitler was preparing to attack France with some 135 divisions, total German regular army divisions in the east were but four divisions, with six additional territorial divisions. Arranged against these were at least 100 Soviet divisions. Had Stalin indeed been looking for the right moment to deal the Nazis a knockout blow, that was obviously the moment, with military success fully guaranteed. But Stalin wanted to use Hitler as his satrap, and did not attack.

Comparative Soviet and American losses during the war are a favorite Soviet propaganda theme. It is summed up at its crudest in N. N. Yakovlev's "CIA Against U.S.S.R.," published by the Molodaya Gvardia publishing house in 1983. Molodaya Gvardia, it will be noted, is the publishing center for a clique of anti-Semitic, Great Russian Third Rome imperial chauvinists. Yakovlev writes: "We lost 20 million infinitely precious lives, the Americans, 400 thousand men." Yakovlev then stresses that this means that Russian losses stood in a 50 to 1 relation to U.S. losses. The Russian losses were unquestionably very severe, and do reflect the preponderant part of the fight against the Nazis that was assumed by the Red Army. But inordinately severe losses are not necessarily in proportion to military effectiveness. They may also reflect the tenets of military doctrine. It would have been very easy for Douglas MacArthur, for example, to roll up extravagant casualty lists in the Pacific war through a series of frontal assaults on Japanese-held islands, but he regarded the substance of generalship as the avoidance of such losses wherever possible. Such speculation is in any case beside the point: no hecatomb of American dead would placate the Soviet commentators, whose essential starting point is Slavophile hatred of the putrid West.

The one point on which the Russians are unquestionably right is that of the Second Front. The cross-channel invasion should have been carried out in 1943, as demanded by Gen. George Marshall and other American commanders. Sir Winston Churchill's bitter and partly successful delaying action against Sledgehammer-Roundup-Overlord reveals through its hopeless contradictions the irrationality of oligarchical methods applied to military strategy. Churchill wanted the Germans and Russians to bleed each other white to enhance the power of the British Empire. Stalin's charge that Churchill was a coward is also telling: Churchill was convinced that large-scale land operations on the European continent would lead to the greatest slaughter, like the decimation of the British army wrought by Field Marshal Haig at Passchendaele in World War I. Churchill saw in every large-scale amphibious effort a reprise of his own fiasco at Gallipoli. He wanted to employ troops in peripheral and coastal areas, behind geographic barriers that prevented the full weight of massed land armies from being brought to bear, and where sea and air support would have its greatest relative

effect. His chimera of Aegean and Balkan operations were a combination of these premises and a desire to keep the Russians away from the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

Churchill's machinations were irrational: Every delay of the Second Front meant that the Russians would advance farther and farther west into the heart of Europe, erecting a hegemony that stands to this day. A cross-channel attack in 1943 would have spelled American conquest of Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and other vital centers of Central and Eastern Europe. This would have saved a whole series of countries from Soviet-vassal status, and might have avoided altogether the division of Germany, the single greatest source of European instability and pessimism. Because of his personal background, Franklin D. Roosevelt himself thought prevalently in terms of naval strategy, and did not force through the cross-channel invasion at an appropriate, early date.

The Soviet response to the delay in the cross-channel invasion was to attempt to open separate peace talks with the Nazis through Stockholm. In December 1942, an NKVD agent told a German diplomat: "I guarantee you, if Germany accepts a return to the 1939 border [the Molotov-Ribbentrop line] you can have peace in one week." Only the fanatical stupidity of Hitler prevented these peace feelers, which were repeated over the course of 1943, from yielding more concrete results.

Stalin formally stated to Roosevelt and Churchill at Tehran that, without American Lend-Lease shipments, Russia could never have held out in 1941 and 1942. No Russian official, however, ever acknowledged this fact in public. Lend-Lease, which permitted the President to order delivery of all types of supplies and materiel to countries designated as vital to United States security, was one of Roosevelt's greatest triumphs. Lend-Lease began with the "garden hose" press conference of December 1940 and the "arsenal of democracy" speech of that same month. Churchill defined its passage by the Congress as one of the great climacterics of World War II. Lend-Lease deliveries to all countries eventually reached the titanic sum of more than \$50 billion. Of this, \$11 billion was earmarked for embattled Russia. U.S. deliveries to the Soviets included, among other things, 12,000 tanks, or more than twice as many as Hitler was able to muster for Operation Barbarossa. It included 75% of all the jeeps trucks and tractors used by the Red Army in the course of the war, food supplies equal to more than half of the Red Army's consumption during the war years, 8,200 anti-aircraft guns, and more.

In March 1943, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Standley, a military man by background, stated in public that the Stalin regime was systematically suppressing any information regarding U.S. Lend-Lease deliveries, and was cultivating the public impression that Russia was fighting wholly unaided. Standley was soon replaced by Averell Harriman.

In the present hysterical phase of feverish Soviet preparations for planetary aggression, all pretensions of historiography are thrown out the window in favor of an unprecedented surge of fantastic slander and vituperation. Professor N. N. Yakovlev of *Molodaya Gvardia* and the Russian Party writes in the already cited May 1984 issue of *New Times*:

Upon landing in Normandy, American troops promptly earned the deplorable reputation of being an army of robbers. Their progress across Western Europe was one of a long series of murders, robberies, and rapes.

In reality, such atrocities were the official policy of the Red Army, sanctioned in the pages of

Pravda by the blood-thirsty Ilya Ehrenburg, who urged Russian soldiers to exact revenge from every German who crossed their path, and who dreamt of the obliteration of Paris, Rome, and the other Western capitals.

In the article mentioned, Yakovlev quotes the historian David Irving as follows:

Patton and Montgomery had said in private that if there were a danger of war with Russia, it would be better to tackle that danger now than to postpone it: At present, the British and the American forces were on the scene and fully mobilized. In a letter, also dated May 1945, Patton described the Russians as "a scurvy race and simply savages," adding that "we could beat hell out of them."

The Normandy invasion was a product of the monumental exertions of Franklin D. Roosevelt to rouse the American people from their stupor of isolationism and indifference and to move them to accept responsibility for the fate of Europe. Roosevelt has the historic merit of having been, during 1937 and 1938, the only head of state and government to have understood the necessity of crushing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, the arch-appeaser, complained on one occasion that Roosevelt had goaded Britain into war.

Thanks to Roosevelt's success in engaging the vast power of the United States for the defense of Europe, Judeo-Christian Western civilization escaped the Hobson's choice of Hitler, Stalin, or British imperialism. Western Europe and the United States are today a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*—the sharers of a common destiny.

At Yalta, Stalin pointedly asked Roosevelt how long United States troops would be kept in Europe after the conclusion of hostilities. Roosevelt, who knew the lummock tenacity of American isolationism and indifferentism, said two years would be the limit. Since then, Russia has exerted inexorable, implacable pressure to oust America from Europe. Today, civilization itself depends upon imparting a new vigor to the European-American community of purpose.