and at the Potsdam Conference in July of 1945 the question of the Straits control was brought up with the Russian supporting the viewpoint that only Black sea nations: Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey should control these waterways. Turkey, realizing that such an arrangement would most certainly find her outvoted 3 to 1 plumped for United Nations control.

Throughout 1946 tension mounted between Russia and Turkey with Russia demanding the cession of large tracts of Turkish lands in eastern Anatolia and along the Black Sea coast. Part of this territory (Kars and Ardahan) had been annexed by the Czars in 1878 but had been returned to the "Young Turk" revolutionists in 1920 by the Bolshevik revolutionists who violently denounced the Czars for the imperialist grab. In short, Russia was demanding nothing less than military control of the Turkish Straits, and the Turks, with American and British backing were ready to fight over the question.

OUTLET TO THE SEA

The Turkish Straits are of course of vital concern to the U. S. S. R. not only as a means of getting her ships into the Mediterranean, but also because these waters afford an enemy the opportunity of access to the Black Sea in the event of war. It has therefore been the Soviet policy to seek control over the whole area surrounding Turkey both in Europe and in Asia. Because of American opposition via the "Truman Doctrine" she has not succeeded as yet in gaining command in Turkey and Greece and it is at least questionable that, short of a major war, she will be able to do so. At any rate it can be said that the U. S. will do everything it can to prevent the Russians from breaking out of the Straits. In the **N. Y. Times** for Mar. 18, 1951 is a story of a rising sentiment in Washington in favor of giving Greece and Turkey full (rather than only associate) membership in the Atlantic Defence Pact. In other words, the Atlantic Ocean, already for convenience stretched to take in Italy, is now being extended to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, on the Asiatic borders of Turkey, the Iranian tensions which have been in the news on and off for five years are once again mounting.

THE ISSUE OF OIL

Bounding both Soviet Russia and Turkey in Asia is the oil rich country of Iran (Persia). It seems that British and American interests have dominated Iranian ail fields for many years. In fact Iran is the source of fuel for the British Navy. Russia has been on the outside trying to muscle in, so far with no success but if quite recent developments mean what Western commentators seem to think they mean, her prospects would seem to be brightening.

Before the end of the war in Europe, in October, 1944 a dispute arose between the U. S. S. R. and Iran when the latter refused to grant Russia oil concessions in her northern territory. There was a mass demonstration of Iranian leftists and a cabinet resignation, but still no concessions to Russia. The Soviet Union which had occupied the northern part of Iran during the war had apparently sponsored an autonomous movement among the population of Iran's Azerbaijan province and the Iranian Govt. entered a complaint to the Security Council of the United Nations against Russia, thereby bringing on the first crisis in that august body. The question of the withdrawal of Soviet troops also became an explosive issue at the time, giving rise to fears of a major war. For many years strong rivalry has existed between Russia and Britain over Iran. Neither country would allow the other to dominate it exclusively. Like Turkey, Iran is of vital concern to Russia, not only because of its oil, but because it can also be used if necessary as a means of access to the sea. Under British or American domination Iran could also be used as a means for the

access of these "liberty-lovers" to the Caucasus and Caspian oil regions of Russia and into Central Asia. Another point which undoubtedly interests Russia is that by controlling Iran she can be in a somewhat favorable position to "liberate" the Near East and even march on to India.

It seems that within the past year the Iranian Tudeh (pro-Russian) Party picked up considerable strength and in November of 1950 a trade agreement was signed between Iran and the U. S. S. R. According to Philip Toynbee, writing in the **N.Y. Times Magazine** for March 18, 1951, there was "almost universal hysteria of applause (greeting) the announcement . . . Conservative and nationalist newspapers vied with each other in paying honor to the achievements of Lenin and Stalin, in recalling with satisfaction that Iran had been the first country to recognize the new Soviet state, and in stressing the natural and enduring friendship between the two countries." Before long the Iranian government began to show a strong anti-British and American attitude, banned B. B. C. and Voice of America broadcasts and proceeded to expropriate and nationalize the oil fields. His Majesty's "Socialist" government in Britain, strong advocates of nationalization at home, protested most bitterly that the agreements between themselves and Iran over oil concessions in that country could not be terminated by unilateral action. Whether this will actually be done remains to be seen.

That the Soviet Union had anything to do with the assassination of the pro-Western premier of Iran is a hotly debated issue. There is no question however that Russia will stand to gain much from a possible nationalized oil industry in Iran, for as Toynbee sums up in his article: "A Russian military invasion of Iran is not an immediate probability. But Iran can become a satellite country without a single Russian soldier crossing the frontier." It is somewhat difficult to picture the Iranians themselves, the vast majority of whom live in abject poverty, resisting the Russians. In fact the Soviet fields might well look green to the Persian sharecroppers who make up the bulk of the peasantry, and the six to ten year old children who work in the carpet industries. (**N. Y. Times**, Mar. 18, 1951).

RUSSIA IN THE FAR EAST

Soviet Russia's imperialist ambitions in the Far East are well known by now. She seeks to prevent America or any other nation, including "Red" China from exploiting the resources of Manchuria. The Korean War in which millions of Korean civilians have become homeless casualties in the "liberations" of that country and unknown thousands upon thousands of conscripts and "volunteers" in the belligerent armies have lost life or limb is as much due to Russian imperialism as to the imperialism of the West.* The U. S. S. R. has come a long way since 1917. Her boundaries and her domination has been extended over the years from the shrunken borders of the Brest-Litovsk and Versailles Treaties to an empire greater than anything enjoyed by the Czars. Although Lenin had originally contended that a victorious proletarian revolution would not tolerate a permanent army and a secret police, the Red Army and the Russian FBI are currently the largest organizations of their type in the world. Soviet Russian imperialism, like American and British imperialism, has become a problem to grapple with. Our message to our fellow workers who suffer under the yoke of these imperialisms both at home and in the conquered lands is: Get rid of imperialism by getting rid of capitalism. Unite with us in building a world-wide socialist organization for the purpose of abolishing the wages system and introducing a sane system of society — socialism.

Harmo

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*See **The Western Socialist** for June-July and Aug.-Sept., 1950, and Jan.-Feb., 1951.