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The World Issue— Defend Democracy and Peace

News from Europe and the Far East casts a lurid illumination upon the issues of the 1938 elections in the United States. Throughout the world the dominant issue is the defense of democracy and peace against the attacks of fascism and war. That is the issue between Hitler and the Czechoslovakian republic, that is the issue in Spain, that is the issue in China. The world teeters on the precipice of a general slaughter, dragged there by the fascist war-making governments of Germany, Italy and Japan. Within each country, the same alignment of forces is taking place as between countries. That is essentially the new alignment within American political life. Only in this light can we fully penetrate beneath the apparent chaos of our election struggles and understand the real forces that are contending for power.

Allow me, first of all, to make some comments upon the most spectacular news of the day, the flight of Prime Minister Chamberlain to Berchtesgaden for a personal talk with Hitler. In many ways it is unprecedented. But in one important respect it follows a recent example, one which had also been the result of Mr. Chamberlain's policy. Not many months ago, the head of an independent State flew to Berchtesgaden for a personal talk with Hitler. At that time also there was much talk of a "plebescite," of "appeasement," of "peaceful solution." Today the independent State is only a historical memory, and the man who flew to Berchtesgaden is in a fascist concentration camp. That State was Austria, and the man was Mr. Schuschnigg. Prime Minister Chamberlain, who caused his fateful journey

and its result, had evidently planned the same trip for the spokesman of Czechoslovakia. When Benes and Hodza refused the role assigned to them, Mr. Chamberlain took it upon himself. It is not clear whether he intends that Great Britain will also assume the consequences for his country, or whether he merely looks upon himself as a proxy for Benes and Czechoslovakia. I may be permitted to express the opinion that neither aim will be accepted by the peoples of Czechoslovakia or of Britain. The Chamberlain policy is finally bankrupt; it is no longer possible to purchase a false and hypocritical peace by throwing the weaker nations one after another to the fascist wolves. If Chamberlain is going to Hitler to deliver to him the defenses of the Czechoslovakian republic, through the transparent hypocrisy of "plebescite," then it only means that Chamberlain's government has decided to go down in the crash of European and world peace. That way lies certain universal world slaughter.

But we who do not abandon the struggle for peace, who know that the fascist madmen can be halted in their wild course by unity of all peace-loving peoples, we who are the overwhelming majority of the world's population, we demand the end to all concession to the war-makers, the unconditional support of Czechoslovakian independence and democracy, the final consolidation of the peace front of the world.

The spotlight is on Central Europe at this moment. But let us not forget the Far East, where the fate of half of the world will be decided. The spokesman for the Mikado's government, in Tokyo, yesterday declared its readiness to make war generally in support of Hitler's demand for unconditional surrender of world democracy. His exact words are significant. He said: "Japan is ready to fight—by arms if necessary—to defeat Communism's attempt to bolshevize Europe." That is the slogan of the Triple Alliance of fascism for the military conquest

of the world—the self-styled "Anti-Communist Alliance"—to save the world from Communism.

Hitler and Mussolini invaded Spain and fight to destroy that republic—to save it from Communism! Italy raped Ethiopia presumably to save that land from the Communism of the Negus! Japan has occupied half of China and killed several million Chinese men, women, and children—on the declared purpose to save that country from Communism! And now Hitler, with the support of Mussolini and the Mikado, threatens to destroy Czechoslovakia to save that little country and the world—from Communism! It is well known that the same judges of the world look upon the Popular Front government of France as an example of Communism! Democracy itself is denounced by them as incipient Communism which must be nipped in the bud, before it gets a chance to develop! And if France, Spain, Czechoslovakia and China are outstanding examples of the "menace of Communism," how much more so must be the administration of President Roosevelt and the New Deal in the United States! It is well-known that the fascist powers look upon our country as "Red" in almost exactly the same terms they use for the Soviet Union, the only Communist land in the world!

Now let us come back to our own country and have a look at our election struggle, in the light of world-wide issues and alignments. Hardly any political group or leader in America will admit being fascist. In fact, all are busy warning America against fascism. That is a good sign, inasmuch as it proves that America is so deeply and consciously anti-fascist, so overwhelmingly condemns the war-making powers, that even the spokesmen of fascism in our public life do not dare show openly their real face, on pain of immediately being buried in an avalanche of public repudiation.

But can we believe that, unlike the rest of the world, fascism has no forces in America? Such a thought would be infantile,

indeed! And to find these fascist forces in America, we should not spend too much time looking at their lunatic fringe, the open Nazi Bunds, the Silver Shirts and so on. Much more to the point is this, to ask: "Which camp, which groups, which candidates, are following the Hitler strategy, are operating under the world-slogan of fascism?"

The answer to this question is an infallible guide to the primary elections, and to the final balloting in November. Every candidate and group which operates under the chief slogan of "Fight against Communism" is following the Hitler strategy, is attaching himself to the world forces of the Triple Alliance of Germany, Italy and Japan, and represents the fascist threat against American democracy.

Who are these candidates and groups? You cannot recognize them by any of the old-time political flags. Some of them call themselves Democrats. Others call themselves Republicans. A few have even invaded the primaries of the American Labor Party. Some call themselves Socialists. There are even a few groups that mask themselves behind the false label of Communists—the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites. They all have one common and unifying feature—they shout that the chief issue is the menace of Communism, and explain that "Communism" so broadly that it includes President Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Since the Dies Committee got to work, we Communists certainly have been moving in high society. With Communists being found under every bed, we have not only learned for the first time that our followers seem to be in the majority but, more important, look at the "quality" of our associates. They give us credit for the World Youth Congress, representing forty million young people in fifty-five countries! They hand us the four millions of the American League for Peace and Democracy, with all the eminent men and women who sponsor and lead it! They hand us the C.I.O., and there is every sign

they will later be ready to give us the A. F. of L.! They assign to our ranks the most illustrious lady of the land, Eleanor Roosevelt! They give us the President himself! And, as the most delicious cherry to top off the dish, they present us with Shirley Temple!

Who could have imagined that the Communists had grown so tremendously, and in such high circles! There is really danger of getting the swelled-head!

But when our sworn enemies hand us millions of dollars worth of free advertising there must be a catch in it somewhere. They are making Communism a subject for discussion among the whole population, and making it popular by identifying it with everything democratic and progressive. Surely, they must have deep and serious motives for such a maneuver as this. They must be playing for big stakes, to be willing to pay such a price for their chips.

Yes, the reactionary political agents for Wall Street are playing for big stakes. They are making a desperate gamble to regain power over the United States. They know quite well that the Communist Party and its following are quite small, at the outside not more than five per cent of the population. They are not afraid of us. But they know equally well that seventy-five per cent of the population are united in support of Roosevelt and the New Deal, and that they have not the slightest chance of winning a general election if it is fought openly and honestly on the issue of New Deal policies and the public confidence in the President. Therefore, they want to vote for or against Communism, knowing the big majority does not know what it is and therefore are against it. They want to make a false issue, to split up and defeat the New Deal majority.

Don't think the issue can be avoided by agreeing that you, too, are against the Communist Party and its program, and by joining the Red-baiters in driving out the Communists, think thus to close the false issue. It just can't be done that way with

the reactionaries and fascists. Once the open Communists are put out of the way, then they will remind you of the even more dangerous *secret* Communists. And how will you know who they are? Only by establishing who proposes the same things the Communists supported. The Communists support President Roosevelt and the progressive New Deal policies; therefore, away with them, we must have a President above suspicion, someone like Jack Garner! The Communists supported the American Labor Party; therefore, outlaw it, as William Green has already attempted in the A. F. of L.! The Communists supported the Wage-Hour Bill—repeal it as insidious “boring from within”! The Communists were for the Ten Commandments—outlaw them! The Communists favored three meals per day for all workers—cut them down to two! And everybody who opposes this program is a *secret Communist* to be gotten rid of in the same way that they propose to abolish the open Communists!

That is the strategy of the reactionaries, of the allies of Hitler, of the agents of Wall Street and the economic royalists. If it works, the New Deal majority of the people are hopelessly split up and demoralized, the reactionaries ride back into power, the trade union movement is strangled, the people’s organizations are suppressed—and America has taken the first steps on the sorrowful road to join the German people.

Today the old political flags and names are meaningless. Cutting across all the old labels and groupings and parties, there emerges the outlines of two new parties which embrace the entire population in two new camps. There is the New Deal Party and there is the Anti-New Deal Party. These are the only real national mass parties in the United States at this moment.

Victory for the New Deal Party means keeping our country on the path of a progressive and democratic development. Victory for the Anti-New Deal Party means going back to Hoover

and the Hoovervilles under a regime that would never give us another chance for a New Deal through Constitutional processes.

That is why the Communist Party clearly and without hesitation declares its support of the New Deal Party and policy, proposes and works for the unity of the majority of the people behind a single progressive candidate for each electoral office, subordinates itself and its own particular ideas to the necessity for this broadest unity of the majority of the people.

That is why in New York the Communist Party accepts and works for the success of the American Labor Party ticket, believing that it is the most important instrument for the unity of the majority of the people in this city and state.

No candidate or party that receives Communist support is under any special obligation to us, other than that obligation taken to the whole of their supporters. We have had no special voice in determining candidacies or platforms. We have not pressed any special claims or ideas of our own within the broad democratic front. We only claim our right and duty to join with the majority of the people to achieve the common aims upon which we all agree.

The reactionaries would like to make it appear that this is a terrible conspiracy on our part, a monstrous thing which all respectable people must join in rejecting. But by this they only reveal their own rejection of the American democratic tradition and practice. And they put themselves in a very peculiar position. Do they mean to imply that they demand that the Communists should, instead, support the candidates and policies of the Anti-New Deal Party? But if our support is supposed to damn the New Dealers and Labor Party men, why wouldn’t it also damn the Anti-New Dealers? Then it must be that the reactionaries are demanding that the Communist Party must put up a complete ticket of its own and refuse to unite with anyone else. If this is what they mean, let them say

so frankly, and tell the public that it is they, the Anti-New Dealers, who want the Communists to come out and fight for public office, that they will take the responsibility for a Communist ticket that the Communists themselves would like to withdraw for the sake of unity of all progressive people. Of course, we must say, that whatever the reactionaries want of us, there is little likelihood that we will give it. We usually examine their wishes in order the better to defeat them.

The Communist Party is helping to unite the majority of the American people to defeat the candidates of Wall Street reaction, fascism and war. No Red-baiting campaign can frighten us or move us an inch from this path. And we warn the whole camp of progress and democracy, that they can make no concessions to the Red-baiters without seriously compromising their own cause and endangering the victory of the majority of the people. If you give one finger to the devil of Red-baiting, he will never be satisfied until he possesses your whole soul.

I have been informed that Mr. Louis Waldman, one of the candidates for a minor office on the American Labor Party ticket, has been indulging in some special Red-baiting of his own, and repudiating the support of the Communists among the great mass of followers of the Labor Party. In the special case of Mr. Waldman, and any one else of like mind, it may perhaps be necessary to provide for an exception to our general policy; if he gives us a letter demanding that we shall not support him, we shall probably have to oblige him by seeing to it that he receives no unwanted Communist votes to compromise his doubtful purity. We only hope that his agreement with the main slogan of J. J. O'Connor and Father Coughlin may not lead him in to more open political alignment with those gentlemen.

So far as we are concerned, everything we do or say is guided by one major consideration: Unity of the progressive majority

of the people at all costs! One single candidate to represent that unity, for each electoral office! We give this to you as the most faithful guide which can be found for the effective fight for democracy, for progress and for peace.

Of course, we must frankly say that the candidates and policies of the broad democratic front by no means correspond to what we think is necessary even to meet and solve the most immediate problems. The New Deal Party on a national scale is still unorganized, and is only beginning to hammer out its program. We have contributed our ideas on such a program to the general public discussion, bringing all the various lines of thought developed by the New Deal and the labor movement, into something like a systematic and rounded-out program based upon minimum democratic needs under the present capitalist system. We recommend it to the serious study of all.

It should not be necessary to repeat here, that there is nothing of Communism or socialism in the platform of the broad democratic front, of the New Deal or of its main support. Nor do we of the Communist Party propose to insert anything communistic or socialistic in it. We do not propose to "push Roosevelt to the left," as one brilliant idiot informed the Dies Committee. We of the Communist Party do not ask the American people to pass judgment on our ideas of the future development of society in the elections. We warn the people that it is only the reactionaries, the anti-New Dealers, the economic royalists, who raise the issue of Communism as the issue of this election, and they do it dishonestly, as a tricky maneuver, to break up the unity of the people who in their great majority support the course of President Roosevelt.

In the primary elections, and in the final balloting in November, the American people will be standing at an historical crossroads, choosing their course for many years to come. We will be deciding the immediate fate of our country. And the

course of the United States may easily become that factor which determines the fate of the entire world.

One of the outstanding merits of President Roosevelt has been his clear vision of the inter-relation of domestic with world affairs. When last October in Chicago, he made his historic declaration in favor of "quarantining the war-making powers," he was looking further and deeper into history than the majority of his own followers. He knew quite well that our country could not march forward on the democratic path successfully, if the rest of the world falls into the morass of fascism; he saw that we cannot have peace, if we facilitate the surrender of the rest of the world to the war-makers. He understood the decisive role that America, holding half of the world's effective wealth, might play in turning the scales toward international order and peace or toward anarchy, destruction and war. Since last October the vast majority of the people have learned that lesson. Today it is the President's direction against the war-makers, toward international co-operation for peace, which has the largest and most enthusiastic support among the people, even more decisively than his domestic policies.

The President is implementing this positive peace policy only in the most guarded and cautious manner. Clearly he is much disturbed by fears of the Machiavellian diplomacy of Mr. Chamberlain. He is not yet certain how far the American people have thought through this policy to its necessary conclusions in bold action that is needed to guarantee peace. All the more reason, then, that we here and all other meetings and groupings that support the peace policy of the President, shall discuss in more detail the concrete steps that our government could and should take to apply its policy, and to give the President the benefit of our counsels.

It is good that Roosevelt has made it clear to the world that the American people abhor warlike aggression and throw their moral influence on the side of the victims of aggression. But we

should each and everyone of us, as well as our organizations, write to the President, to Secretary Hull and to the press, urging in this critical hour that our government declare: That the United States is prepared to consult with all governments wishing to preserve orderly relations, on the means required to restrain those powers which demonstrate an intention to break up these orderly relations by military aggressions; that in such consultations the United States is prepared to exert its full moral and economic influence to secure the enforcement of the general will to peace.

We should further point out, that the universal aggressive operations of German fascism, which is conducting an economic war against the United States, has already brought that country under the provisions of existing legislation, which authorizes the President to cut off all trade by a general embargo, and call upon the President to register our protest against this universal aggression by immediately applying that embargo.

We should never allow it to be forgotten, that Czechoslovakia and the problem of its protection is merely part of the world situation; that China occupies a front line trench for the protection of the rest of the world; that America cannot continue complacently to supply Japan with more than half of munitions of war to murder and subjugate the Chinese people, except at most dire peril to its own future; that we must move decisively toward a complete embargo against Japan.

We must finally wipe out the shame of our assistance to the fascist powers in their invasion of Spain, by lifting the embargo on that republic and opening our markets wide to the Spanish people.

For Spain, we must at all costs win some active material help from the American people, corresponding in some measure to the almost universal sympathy that exists. Especially now, when general war mobilization threatens to cut Spain off from her life-line of foodstuffs with the Soviet Union, we must realize

that if Spain shall be fed during the coming period it can only be from America. The Spanish people have not hesitated to shed their blood without limit for the preservation of the republic, for the defense of world democracy as well as their own. They have been far too modest in their demands upon us, and far too patient under our shameful cancellation of their treaty rights with us, not to speak of our own abandonment of all international law. The people of the United States, if we seriously mean to do anything to halt the war-makers and preserve peace, must assume the task of feeding Spain.

This is no great task for the American people. In fact, one of our most embarrassing domestic problems is a *surplus of farm products*, in which our government is investing hundreds of millions of dollars, and for which there is no immediate market. Instead of allowing this farm surplus to deteriorate in the warehouses, or to be destroyed, we should demand that it be sent to Spain on liberal credit terms, and thus help our own economy at the same time we perform a positive service to Spain and the world.

Every one of these proposals is solidly based upon conservative precedent, upon traditional American principles and upon established international law and the Kellogg Pact, solemnly ratified by all the nations of the world. And who can doubt that if these steps were taken by the United States government, that they would tremendously improve the chances for maintaining world peace? If we rouse the American people to actively advise and demand these things from our government, as the necessary steps to carry out its own declared policy, we will be reviving the best American democratic traditions, we will be making democracy work, we will really be defending democracy and peace.

Allow me to conclude with a few words about the Soviet Union and its relations to the United States and to the world. I wish to address myself especially to those who do not approve

or understand the new socialist society of the Soviet Union, and who do not want socialism in the United States. You, my liberal and conservative friends, are deeply interested in maintaining peace, and you know that the threatening general war will be the greatest catastrophe the world has ever witnessed. Do you not see that the Soviet Union, by always following a policy of peace, has the trust and confidence of all its neighbors? Do you not see that there is no weak nation that fears aggression from the Soviet Union? Do you understand why France and Czechoslovakia have found their surest protection against aggression in the mutual-defense pact with the Soviet Union? Do you see that the Soviet Union's good neighbor policy toward China has been that unhappy land's only resource to withstand a Japanese conquest? Do you understand that if Japan could harness China's four hundred million people to her war machine, that a Japanese war of aggression against the United States would be inevitable?

All these are indisputable facts. When you face them, then ask yourself the further question: Is not the Soviet Union, by its policies, helping the world toward stability, democracy, international order and peace? Are not these policies in the interests of the American people also?

Of course they are! Is there any person who would dare suggest that the Soviet Union should follow different policies?

There are reactionaries who suggest that the United States may itself become involved in war with the Soviet Union. Allow me to point out that such a war would be possible only under two sets of circumstances: One would be, if our own anti-New Deal crowd should get into power in the U.S., joined with the fascists, and with them made war against the Soviet Union to destroy the socialist society. That will not happen, because the majority of the American people are going to remain united around the New Deal and President Roosevelt's

peace policy. The second would be, if in the Soviet Union the fascist agents and spies, the Trotskyites and Bukharinites, had been able to succeed in their recent conspiracy to seize the government there. That will never happen because, having tried and failed, they will never get another chance to try again.

We have every evidence then, for convincing even the most conservative but peace-loving American, that the Soviet Union is a power for peace in the world, that it is serving the interests of America in world affairs, and that it is and will remain the firm friend of the American people and nation.

This is an important fact. Upon its recognition depends the full development of that international co-operation which is so necessary to maintain a measure of peace in this war-torn world. The two most powerful nations in this world are precisely these two countries, the United States and the Soviet Union. At the same time they are the two countries most devoted to world peace.

For the same reasons that the Soviet Union is the firm support of all peoples seeking democracy and peace, on a world scale, the small Communist Party in the United States, where we still have to win the people to socialism, stands in the front ranks of the defenders of democracy and peace here in this country.

The Communists of the whole world are working in the same direction.

With these facts, which can be easily verified by every honest citizen who has escaped from the fantastic, mad-house, atmosphere of the Dies Committee and the Red-baiting circles, we will break through the strategy of the Anti-New Deal Party of reaction and monopoly capital. We will help the progressive majority of the American people to maintain their unity, to maintain their control of the destinies of our country. We will help to achieve a smashing victory for progress and democracy

in the primaries and in the November elections. We will help turn the tide of American and world events away from reaction, fascism and war, and toward a future of peace, plenty and prosperity for all the people.

Address delivered at the Velodrome, Coney Island, New York, September 15, 1938.