
OUR TASKS IN THE STRUGGLE TO DEFEAT HITLERISM

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THE involvement of the Soviet Union in the war has profoundly affected the relationship of world forces and has begun a process of reshifting and realignment within all classes and on the part of all nations. Already, even in the short period since June 22, it is possible to discern certain trends at work among the various classes and class groupings in the United States. These are of utmost importance and must be given the closest attention by our Party, since they indicate not only the line of direction of the main forces in the country but also the complicated problems and tasks that face our Party and the progressive, anti-fascist movement if the nation and its people are to be united in the common fight against Hitler.

In the working class and among the more conscious anti-fascist masses there is not only increased interest in but renewed determination to wage the struggle against Hitler to the finish. These masses now see the possibility and opportunity to defeat Hitler and destroy

fascism. This anti-fascist mass not only sympathizes with the struggle of the Soviet Union but desires to give it full support and aid for the military defeat of Hitler, the annihilation of Hitlerism.

While the overwhelming majority of the American people sympathize with and wish to support the struggle of the Soviet Union against German fascism, it must also be noted that certain strata of the population, especially sections of the farmers and the urban middle class, view the involvement of the Soviet Union as an opportunity for withdrawing America from the struggle. These masses determine their position mainly from the consideration of keeping this country out of the armed conflict and have not yet grasped the increased menace which confronts America's national and social security as a result of the new world situation. They do not yet see that a victory of Nazi arms over the Soviet Union would not only win the war for Hitler but would make fascist Germany the single all-power-

ful world imperialist state, a state so mighty as to be able to force its will upon the rest of the world, including the United States. Neither do they realize that if the great land of socialism were destroyed this would inevitably stimulate reaction and fascism throughout the world and would destroy the democratic rights and living standards of the American people as a whole.

It is these masses—sections of the farming population, sections of the urban middle class, sections of the Catholic masses—who are most influenced by the isolationist and pacifist demagoguery of the Lindberghs, Hoovers, Coughlins, Wheelers and Norman Thomases, and are therefore prey to their pro-Hitler appeasement program. It would be a cardinal error, however, to believe that these masses are reactionary, to neglect them, to fail to work among them, or to fail to make a distinction between their honest confusion and the conscious treason of the aims and policies of the "America First Committee" leadership.

In the ranks of the bourgeoisie there are also trends that we must be aware of and pay close attention to. First, there is the camp of the appeasers. This camp is made up of the open friends of Hitler and Hitlerism. Its program has already been made known to the American people in the recent speeches of Lindbergh, Hoover and Wheeler, who openly call for a negotiated peace with Hitler and declare their preference for a united front with Nazi Germany to one with the Soviet Union. This camp therefore rep-

resents today the most reactionary circles of imperialism, the *main enemy* that the American people must combat if Hitler and fascism are to be destroyed.

Another variation of the appeasement theme is the position taken by the Scripps-Howard press, which advocates "a plague on both their houses," a policy ostensibly aimed at the simultaneous destruction of "Hitler and Stalin" but in reality another version of Munich betrayal.

The appeasers represent powerful financial interests and exert a strong influence upon Washington, even though the main section of the bourgeoisie continues to be haunted by the fear of a Hitler victory, realizing that such a victory would be at the expense of the national interests of the United States. It is therefore of extreme importance to watch the trends in the camp of the anti-Hitler and pro-Roosevelt bourgeoisie and to maintain constant vigilance against any moves in the direction of appeasing the appeasers.

As long as the main body of the bourgeoisie is haunted by fear of a Hitler victory over the U.S.S.R. it will continue to advocate aid to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. But if in the course of the war the bourgeoisie is led to believe that Hitler's chances of victory have disappeared or are disappearing, many of the present antagonists of Hitler may turn toward a policy of conciliation or capitulation.

Such approaches to the question already find their expression in the editorial columns of the most influential Wall Street owned news-

papers. This is the meaning of the editorial which appeared in the *New York Times* objecting to the slogan of "Aid Russia." This editorial attempted to separate the Western from the Eastern Front, declaring that the Soviet Front was of secondary importance and only a diversion. This is the meaning of those who advocate a wait-and-see policy, who call for a more rapid arming of Britain not so that she can strike *now*, but so that she can be better prepared to defend herself "if and when the Soviet Union falls."

Tendencies such as these represent grave dangers for the United States and for Great Britain. In the United States as well as in Britain, it would be extremely difficult to put over a policy of outright appeasement. The people are too strongly anti-Hitler for that. Appeasement therefore in part assumes a sneaking form, as it did during the first six months of the imperialist war, during the so-called *Sitzkrieg* on the Western Front. That is why the question of transforming the Western Front into a real front, the question of an offensive on this front against Hitler, is of utmost importance in order to deliver a decisive blow against Hitler *now* when it will do the most good, and in order to defeat any attempts at another Munich betrayal.

For these reasons it would be a grave mistake for those who want to see Hitler destroyed to call for aid to the Soviet Union only or to counterpose it to continued and increased aid to Britain. Such a pol-

icy would only be of assistance to the appeasers. It would help Hitler, who is in deathly fear of fighting on two fronts. Every blow against Hitler today is a blow in the interests of the Soviet people, the British people, the people of Europe and of the entire world. We must support these blows *completely*, for no matter who delivers them or for what reasons, they help to defeat and annihilate the main enemy of mankind. Communism is not the issue. The Soviet people are fighting for their national independence and liberty, they are fighting for the liberation of the peoples of Europe from fascist enslavement, they are fighting against Hitler's domination of the world. Today there is but one issue before the people; the complete military defeat of Hitler and Hitlerism.

The Roosevelt Administration

What, therefore, is our position toward the Roosevelt Administration? First, we recognize that at this time the Roosevelt Administration represents those groupings of the American bourgeoisie which aim to bring about the military defeat of Hitler, as is indicated by the recent declarations of President Roosevelt and Sumner Welles, branding Hitler as the aggressor and pledging all possible aid to the Soviet Union. Second, we know that there is great pressure from the appeasement forces upon the Roosevelt Administration and that within the Administration itself there are individuals and groups who favor a policy of conciliation toward fascism. Third,

we also recognize that the Roosevelt Administration is amenable to pressure from the masses and especially from the organized labor movement, and that this independent organization and pressure of the masses will especially assume decisive importance as the most reactionary circles of imperialism increase their activity and pressure for appeasement.

Therefore the progressive labor and people's movement must support every step and action of the Roosevelt Administration directed toward bringing about the military defeat of Hitler, while at all times maintaining an independent policy of criticism and opposition to every half-hearted or conciliatory move, to every attempt at retreat, to every act aimed at appeasement of the forces of Hitler abroad and at home. The labor and people's movement, while concentrating their main fire upon the friends of Hitler in this country, must criticize the Roosevelt forces to the extent that their policy is inconsistent, to the extent that they consciously or unconsciously give aid to Hitler or Hitler's friends.

The only guarantee that the fight against Hitler will be carried to its logical conclusion is the mobilization and unification of the American people, of all opponents of Hitlerism, into a powerful national front of struggle for the military defeat of Nazi fascism. The national unity of the American people is what we must strive for if all the great power of this country is to be harnessed toward this end.

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The line of our Party, which aims at the rallying and unification of the American people in the fight against Hitler, poses before us a host of practical political problems. Some of these we shall touch on at this time, not in order to answer them in detail, but so as to provide a general approach to them.

The Municipal Elections

First of all, we must point out that with the new world situation the municipal elections that will take place this fall in many parts of the country assume tremendous importance. They will offer the first electoral opportunity for registering the sentiments of the masses on the vital issues of foreign and domestic policy. It is obvious that in these elections the progressive labor and people's movement must apply the tactics of the people's and democratic front. They must *at all costs* guarantee the defeat of every pro-Hitler, pro-Munich candidate or ticket. The progressive anti-fascist labor and people's movement must come forward with its own program; a program directed against Hitlerism abroad and reaction at home. It should determine its position toward all candidates and tickets on the basis of this program. Where possible, the progressive labor and people's movement should come forward with its own candidates and tickets, but always bearing in mind the essential need of defeating all pro-Hitler candidates and of obtaining a broad base and mass support for its own candidates or slates.

In most places, as for example in

New York City, it will not be possible to put forward full independent tickets, for the process of political realignment has not yet reached the point where such tickets will represent more than an advanced minority position. This means that side by side with the independent electoral activity of the labor and people's movement, our Party has the task of putting forward strong Party candidates and tickets in the elections.

The new situation provides new possibilities for registering a powerful vote for the Communist Party in the municipal elections this year. Even prior to the new situation, the influence of our Party and the response of the masses to Party candidates have been greater than ever. The best example of this is the vote that Comrade Helen Allison Winters received in the recent elections in Minneapolis. We can learn much from that election even though the slogans used in Minneapolis no longer meet the needs of the new world crisis. What are some of the lessons? First, we must put forward strong candidates, the best mass figures of our Party. Second, we must develop concrete election programs which link up the main local issues with the central slogans of our Party in respect to both foreign and domestic policy. This was done in Minneapolis, where our comrades related the specific questions confronting the people of that city with our position toward the war as such.

In this year's election we will be the only national party which will put emphasis on a domestic pro-

gram of struggle for democracy, and for maintaining and safeguarding the economic standards of the masses. *It is our job to make the struggle for a correct foreign policy inseparable from the struggle for a democratic and progressive domestic policy.*

The Building of the People's Movement

The new situation also requires on our part a broader approach to the question of rallying, uniting and organizing the masses of people in the fight against Hitlerism. First of all, in this respect, we must beware of the tendency among our comrades to think this is the time to settle old scores. Nothing would be more conducive toward disharmony and disunity; nothing would be more helpful to the friends of Hitler, than any inclination on our part to see the new situation as an opportunity to argue out all controversial questions of the past. Nor must we permit ourselves to be provoked by Social-Democratic leaders, by bourgeois liberals and by other opponents and enemies of our Party. While defending the past and present position of our Party, we must do so in such a fashion as to turn the attention of the masses to that which unites them as against that which divides them. Regardless of whether these masses understand or agree with the policies of the Soviet Union or of our Party, they do agree that Hitler fascism must be destroyed, they do want to work toward this end, and that is what must be the center of our discussion and activity. Our Party

must work in a modest fashion, in the style taught us by Comrade Browder, must not appear as if it were grinding its own axe, must always aim to bring about the greatest unity of the masses in the common struggle.

This means that while we must exercise great patience with those who agree with the need for the destruction of Hitlerism, we must also remember that considerable masses are still honestly confused, still take their orientation from the slogans of yesterday, and have not been able to draw the new conclusions from the new situation. This is especially true in respect to the mass movements with which we have cooperated and to which we have given our support in the past. These movements and their leaderships may not be able to reorientate themselves rapidly. It is our task, however, to continue to cooperate and help build these movements, for there is no doubt that in time all the forces involved in them will understand the needs arising from the new situation and will themselves help in building these movements around new slogans and new activities. It would be an unfortunate thing if because of delays and hesitations among certain individuals and groups we ceased to give the necessary cooperation and help in strengthening and building of such movements as the American Peace Mobilization, the American Youth Congress, the National Negro Congress, etc.

While continuing and increasing our support to these important movements, we must, however,

warn against a certain organizational fetishism which may creep up here and there within them. Once these movements clarify their own positions and policies, their main task is that of winning the support of *all* organizations of the people and first of all of labor for a correct position—for aid to the British and Soviet people and for an all-out fight against Hitler. This is task number one, regardless of whether these groups are ready to endorse or enter these organized movements as such.

We must remember that the antagonisms and suspicions of yesterday will not disappear overnight. This means that where masses or organizations agree with the common fight against Hitler but do not wish to enter any of the aforementioned movements, this cannot be placed as an obstacle to unity and struggle. The interests of the struggle require the most flexible and most varied approach to organizational forms. In the shops, in the trade unions, in the mass organizations of the people, in the neighborhoods, the masses should be encouraged to set up their own committees, their own groups and their own activities.

Furthermore, it is necessary to establish a positive, friendly and cooperative relationship with existing committees and organizations which aim to rally the people against Hitler. By such efforts it will be possible to organize parallel actions and at a later date joint actions, on a local, state and national scale.

It is likewise important to help

labor and the progressive forces adopt a positive approach to such movements as the Civilian Defense headed by Mayor La Guardia and to the United Service Organizations. The progressive forces should aim to cooperate with these movements and to help build and transform them into great popular mass organizations of the people devoted to national defense and to the struggle against Hitler.

The new world situation places added significance on the work among the foreign-born population and the national groups, especially among the masses whose homelands have been overridden by the armies of fascism. The Jewish people; the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians and Finns; the German and Italian masses; these are some of the most important national groups today. In our work among the national groups we must consciously eradicate every last vestige of sectarianism. Here especially we must eliminate any tendency to settle old scores and must work with the objective of creating national fronts of these peoples for the defeat of Hitler and for the freedom and independence of their lands of origin. The progressive forces among these groups must be ready to cooperate and work together with *every* and *all* opponents of Hitler, regardless of who they are and what their political program or belief. If this is done, it will not only be of great assistance for the building of the unity of the American

people, but will encourage the oppressed masses of Europe along the path of struggle for their liberation from the Hitler yoke,

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These are a few of the many problems confronting us in our work among the masses, in the struggle to unite the people for the destruction of Nazi fascism. The approach given here is a general one as no attempt has been made to exhaust the subject, to dot the i's and cross the t's. All that we have attempted to do is to broaden the outlook and perspectives of our entire Party. Only to the extent that we can help unify the masses, only to the extent that we can help build a great people's movement against Hitler, will there be a guarantee that Hitlerism will be defeated and that the American people will play their historic role in making this end possible.

We are still too close to the world-shaking event that has occurred to see all of its ramifications. One thing, however, is clear. The fate of mankind itself is at stake. Therefore we can do no less than to inspire the masses as well as our own membership with the need for an all-out effort. Our fight is not only one against Hitler and Hitler's friends in this country, it is also a fight against time. It is with this understanding and in this spirit that we must boldly face the new giant tasks thrust upon us by history.