

THE COURSE OF THE WAR AND THE PRESENT TASKS

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I.

THE war is now entering into a new phase. To understand what this new phase is, it is necessary to see clearly what has been and continues to be the Axis strategy.

Knowing full well that the potential resources of the United Nations far exceed those of the Axis, Hitler's strategy is based upon delivering shattering blows in rapid fire succession before the industrial and military might of the United Nations can be fully developed and brought to bear on the fields of battle. In this way he hopes to hold the initiative, to force the United Nations to fight on his own chosen fields and at his own sweet time; to force them to spread themselves thin; to isolate one from the other, and thereby to destroy them piecemeal. The plight of the gallant MacArthur and his staunch band of fighters, isolated and cut off from outside assistance of any kind, is the objective that the Axis seeks to accomplish in respect to the fighting forces and resources of each one of the United Nations.

Already the Burma Road, the lifeline to China, has been severed. The Dutch East Indies have been conquered. India is threatened from

the East and may soon face a threat from the West. Turkey, Gibraltar, Dakar, the Azores, Iceland and the Panama Canal may become the scenes of the new Axis attacks as part of its central strategy to separate and isolate continents and nations, to make impossible a world pooling of Allied manpower and resources and the development of concerted military action.

When all this is related to the contemplated spring offensive of Hitler against the Soviet Union, one must draw the conclusion that the war is entering a new, more dangerous and more critical stage. It would be folly to hide the gravity of the moment by glib talk about great offensives to be organized next year or the following year. What will happen then will depend in the first place upon what happens in the very next few months. The immediate months ahead may very well decide the outcome of the war—the difference between victory and defeat.

But this new phase of the war is not only fraught with great danger. It is also pregnant with great opportunity. The three months that have passed since December 7 have not only been months of

reversal and defeat. They have also been months of great advances and awe-inspiring victories. The Soviet Union and its glorious Red Army succeeded in wresting the initiative from the German military machine. It has ever more firmly held on to this initiative and has been driving the Nazi hordes backward and backward in a military achievement unparalleled in all history. This therefore is the opportunity: the opportunity to defeat Hitler's whole strategy, to beat him, and on the decisive front. If Britain and America were to seize this opportunity and strike with all their power through the opening of a second front on the European continent, it would be possible to defeat Hitler Germany not in the far distant future, but in this very year of 1942. And if Hitler Germany can be beaten in 1942, this would be the beginning of the end for Japanese imperialism as well. For Nazi Germany is the center, instigator and spearhead of the fascist Axis conspiracy to conquer and enslave the world. Its defeat would break the Axis at its most dangerous and yet its most vulnerable point, thereby hastening the day of the complete victory of the United Nations. This is the golden opportunity that presents itself. To ignore it, to muffle this chance, is to toy with disaster.

Offensive action in Europe is of decisive importance and does not preclude offensive action in the Far East, although the struggle in this theatre of war will undoubtedly be of a protracted character. But before any vital change can be brought about in the

Far Eastern sphere of military action an important lesson must be grasped from the defeats suffered thus far. The lesson is: rally the colonial peoples; arm them; give them political rights and then, and then only, can the Japanese war machine be brought to a dead stop. Heroic China has shown the whole world how a people which has achieved national unity and is inspired by the vision of national independence can fight for its freedom. MacArthur's breath-taking, back-to-the-wall resistance against immense odds is also due in no small part to the fact that Filipino soldiers and Filipino tribesmen fight side by side with American boys.

Said the *Reynolds News* of London on January 18:

"We spent millions of pounds to make Singapore an impregnable fortress. But we left out one ingredient. We forgot to make allies of the Malaysians and Chinese who make up the mass of the population."

Since the fall of Singapore and the invasion of Burma there has been expressed both in Britain and American Government circles a growing recognition of the need for a change of policy toward the people of India and the colonial peoples generally. It is our hope that no time will be lost in giving these hundreds of millions of colonial peoples a new deal and thereby enlist them as active allies on the side of the United Nations. Just as the great Abraham Lincoln in order to preserve and save this Union became convinced of the need of free-

ing the slaves, so Britain and America, in order to win this war, must issue a modern Emancipation Proclamation for the colonial peoples of the world.

This is a new kind of war and must be fought in a new way. The immediate months ahead will be crucial and even decisive. The realization is beginning to dawn upon Britain and America that only a policy of the offensive, together with a great democratic unfolding of the war effort, can stir the masses to greater activity and turn the tide of battle. This certainly is one of the most important elements that helps comprise the new phase of the war. It is to be noted in the changes that have been made in the British war cabinet and in the proposals for an offensive which have appeared in statements of various government spokesmen in this country, as seen in the recent speeches of the President, Secretary of War Stimson, and W.P.B. head Nelson and in the letter of General Marshall to the Senate. A new offensive mood is sweeping the country, as testified to by Anne O'Hare McCormick in a recent column in the *N.Y. Times*:

"In the United States it has taken less than three months of unsuccessful war against an underrated enemy to turn the first dismay of the American people into a rising clamor for offensive action.

"Like a current suddenly turned on . . . the emphasis . . . has veered from promises of future victories to a cry for more speed and initiative now."

It would be a serious error, however, to draw the conclusion that

this recent emphasis on offensive action is already a guarantee that the opportunity ahead will be fully grasped. Even if the trend is in the correct direction we must remember that correct conclusions arrived at too late or executed too slowly may still spell defeat. This is particularly true because the appeasers are once again out in the open, trying to confuse the masses, endeavoring to keep America on the defensive, pitting the needs of one front against the other, and doing their damndest to sow suspicion and discord among the United Nations.

Secondly, even the government spokesmen who have waxed eloquent about the need for offensive action have not made clear what they mean by this concretely and whether action on the European continent is in their immediate plans.

Thirdly, we cannot ignore that there is not yet a unified world strategy based upon a full military and political alliance between the U.S.A., Britain, the Soviet Union and China. The U. S. and Britain often act as if they were senior partners, with the U.S.S.R. and China the junior ones. Senator Claude Pepper expressed this thought when he declared:

"It would seem that those who guide its [the Soviet Union's] gallant and heroic course would be an intimate part of every council and conference dealing with the grand strategy of this struggle which embraces the globe. May we not ask, therefore, that more room be made for the Russians at the War Table. . . . We who have profited so much from the unflinching and sacrificial

struggle of Russia and China have not given them their due."

There is only one guarantee that the lessons of the past months will be fully learned and promptly applied, and that is if these questions of central strategy become matters of concern and action for the people themselves. Since December 7 the labor movement has more or less been influenced by the concept that on matters of foreign policy or central strategy, on issues of the conduct of the war, there was no need for action on its part. This is not correct. The labor movement should take the lead on these questions as it does in Great Britain. It should consciously counteract the insidious and treasonable activities of the appeasers. It should press for a full-fledged military and political alliance between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. It should take the lead in establishing international labor unity by joining the Anglo-Soviet trade union council. It should inculcate all of its ranks with the spirit of the offensive and press for the opening of a second European front for victory over Hitler Germany in 1942. It should call for a strengthening of the President's Cabinet and for the inclusion within it of a representative from the ranks of labor. It should apply the lessons of the Far East to America and demand that an end be put to the discrimination which is so rife against the 14,000,000 Negro people in this country.

If the offensive is to be taken on the military fronts, there is one special task: the need for taking the

offensive on the assembly line and winning the battle for production. America has the plant capacity, trained personnel and the raw materials with which to outproduce Hitler, but with all the headway of the past months this battle, the battle that will help decide the outcome of all battles, is not yet won.

There are two reasons for this. First, the business-as-usual attitude of many employers who are more concerned with piling up huge profits than with production. These have resisted the formation of production councils composed of management and labor, have sought unfair advantages and attempted to misuse labor's voluntary surrender of the strike weapon as a means to destroy labor standards and rights.

That the Administration has begun to recognize this is to be seen by the recent speech of Donald Nelson, which is of great significance and will play a mighty role in tapping the initiative and productive capacity of American labor. This address calls for the setting up of production committees of labor and management in all plants; encourages initiative and proposals from the workers and promises that these will be carefully considered and acted upon. It advocates merit awards for exceptional labor and the development of friendly competition between plants, departments and men. It is suggested that every war production shop have a scoreboard giving the daily standing and how it compares to the established quota.

The action of the War Labor Board in abandoning the former

policy of competitive bidding for government contracts is also very important in that it will enable small manufacturers to receive government contracts even though the costs may be higher. Thereby war orders can be spread, and an end be put to the situation in which large corporations have a monopoly of war production contracts.

Here, too, it would be a mistake to believe that Donald Nelson's speech has solved all problems. This speech should be discussed in every shop and every union. The workers themselves should take the lead in making concrete proposals to management, in seeing that production councils are set up, that competition is organized and that the initiative of all the workers is tapped and put to use.

The second reason for the slowness on the production front is that many workers have not yet been made to feel the urgency of the need and have in some cases, due to provocation on the part of employers, permitted themselves to fall into working-as-usual methods. Regardless of how justified any grievances of the workers, there is no justification for strike actions today. Every strike only interrupts production, only serves the enemies of the nation. The workers today produce not only for wages; they produce for the nation, for the war, for the defense of everything they hold near and dear. Controversies and disputes there will be, but these must be solved by peaceful means, through collective bargaining, mediation and arbitration.

The Victory Labor Board can become an important instrument in harnessing all the talents and energies of labor for the war effort and in making possible a peaceful solution to industrial controversies and disputes. This will all the more be so to the extent that the Victory Labor Board takes energetic steps to stimulate and advance unity of action in the ranks of labor among the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods and as it becomes the articulate medium through which the labor movement raises all questions of war policy with the government.

At this time a great controversy is raging around the issue of economic demands, of wages and hours. The *Daily Worker* editorial article "A War Labor Policy," which appeared on March 4, provides a realistic approach to the solution of this problem. In answer to the demand of certain people for a policy of freezing wages at their present levels the *Daily Worker* replies:

"A policy of controlling wages can only be accepted as part of a general economic policy on the part of the government which includes democratic rationing, control of prices, control and heavier taxes on excess profits, taking into account the workers' voluntary savings through purchase of Defense Bonds, adjusting upwards the real wages of the low income groups, and ascertaining that the real wages of any group is sufficient to assure the highest level of productivity."

Democratic rationing and price control are today of far greater importance as a means of guaranteeing

an adequate standard of living for the workers than that of a rise in paper wages. Why? Because as we turn out more planes, guns, tanks and battleships, more and more workers, raw material and plant capacity will be diverted from the production of consumers' goods. It is estimated that in the year 1942 there will be \$80,000,000,000 to be spent on consumers' goods with only \$65,000,000,000 worth of consumers' goods available. The demand for food, clothing and luxury articles will therefore be much greater than the supply. This will have the tendency of boosting prices even higher than their present levels. As long as this tendency is not checked and stopped, the demand for higher wages on the part of labor cannot be ignored. However, the more basic solutions are:

1. Rigidly controlling prices, especially on retail commodities;

2. On items in which a scarcity is in sight, to organize a system of democratic rationing, as is now planned in respect to sugar. Otherwise the workers, and especially those from the lower income groups, will be unable to "receive the goods necessary to assure morale and maintain productivity and efficiency."

As the shortages develop in one or another line of consumers' goods, the Communists must explain to the workers the reason for this. It is part of our task to make the workers and the people understand that *all* will have to sacrifice if the war is to be won, for these sacrifices will be nothing in comparison to those imposed upon us if the war is lost.

Every union should discuss these questions, should demand immediate government action in respect to price control, rent control and rationing, for only in this way will it become impossible for the appeasers and enemies of the nation to utilize the difficulties of the war as a means of confusing and misleading the people.

An offensive on the military front and on the production front likewise calls for an offensive on the political front, against all appeasers, all fifth columnists, all enemies of the nation. Immediately following the attack upon Pearl Harbor, the Coughlinites, Hearsts, Lindberghs, Wheelers, Nyes, Fishes and Norman Thomases jumped on the bandwagon of national unity and proclaimed—in words—their support of the government and their loyalty to the nation. But no sooner did they feel that the moment was opportune to leave their holes than these weasels began to undermine the government's war policy and to throw confusion into the ranks of the people.

The question that we must ask ourselves is: why did they feel safe to engage once again in their sniping warfare? First, because at the time these people proclaimed their loyalty there were sections of the press and sections of the people who took them at their word and forgave them for their past sins. Secondly, because the labor and progressive movements thought that once national unity was achieved this signified that the appeasers were beaten—and for all time—and that there was no longer a need for vigi-

lance, no longer the need for struggling against them.

The result? The appeasers went on a rampage. They demagogically made use of certain weaknesses in the Civilian Defense set-up in order to ridicule the organization in the eyes of the people. They succeeded in ousting Mrs. Roosevelt, and in pretty nearly emasculating the whole non-protective phase of the civilian defense program. They similarly succeeded in defeating the President's proposal for \$300,000,000 for the unemployed resulting from economic dislocations. In true Copperhead style they strove to utilize the reverses and defeats in the Far East in order to demoralize the masses and destroy their faith and confidence in the alliance of the United Nations and in final victory.

At first certain Administration elements attempted to conciliate these forces by making concessions to them, as in the case of the O.C.D. But this policy of conciliation only whetted their appetites. When Mayor La Guardia, for example, made concessions to the reactionaries in the form of the removal of Commissioners Kern and Sayre from the Civil Service Commission, he only reaped a whirlwind in the form of the Queens "revolt" among the air-raid wardens, an action inspired and organized by the "Christian" Front and the Coughlinites.

The enemies of the nation cannot be conciliated, they must be fought, isolated and defeated. The Cliveden Set and the poison-peddlers, as the President aptly termed them, must be driven back into their holes,

must be removed from the political life of America.

It is in this relation that we must understand the true significance of the Browder case. Certainly President Roosevelt and every other sensible person knows that Earl Browder is in jail for no other reason than that he is the leader of the Communist Party. Why has he not been released? Because there still are people in Washington who believe that it is necessary for Browder to remain in jail in order to conciliate some of the appeasement, red-baiting, enemies of the government and the war. But you can't conciliate the Fishes and the Dieses. You can only fight them.

The campaign to release Earl Browder is therefore not merely a fight for justice, a struggle to bring back into our fold our most beloved and greatest leader—it is also a struggle against the whole concept of conciliation to the red-baiters and appeasers. To conciliate the enemies of the nation is to permit them to carry on their nefarious work of undermining and destroying national unity. The freedom of Earl Browder is therefore necessary so that red-baiting and appeasement can be buried for all time, so that national unity can be strengthened in the interests of the successful prosecution of the war. *Free Earl Browder!* This must be the cry that rings out throughout the ranks of labor and the nation.

In this fight against the enemies of the nation labor has a great responsibility. Labor should ferret out the Nazi and Japanese spies and saboteurs. Labor should demand

that the Deatherages and Dennises be given no posts of responsibility, and be ruthlessly removed from every position in which they can be of harm to the national effort. Labor should take the offensive against the appeasers, reacting to every issue in Congress, in the State Legislatures and in the City Councils.

In all this labor must strive to achieve complete unity of action in its own ranks. To the extent that it can accomplish this, it can play a qualitatively greater and even decisive role in influencing and determining the coming Congressional and gubernatorial elections. In these elections labor and the people as a whole must guarantee the defeat of every appeasement candidate and the victory of those candidates, regardless of political affiliation, who by their program and record are pledged to an all-out no-compromise struggle against the Axis and its agents and tools in this country. Every Congressman and Senator, every aspirant for political office must be made to realize *now* that appeasement politics or politics as usual are not only unwise but dangerous and bound to result in his own electoral defeat.

National unity is not something static, is not something that can be taken for granted. It must be fought for at all times, defended from those who wish to destroy it, and thereby raised to new and higher levels.

II.

When America picked up the gauntlet thrown down to her by the Axis, there were many who believed that this war would be easily

won without too great exertion or sacrifice—that victory was sure to come in time merely because our cause was just and our potential industrial and military power great. Even in our own ranks there was a feeling that once the sword was drawn everything would take care of itself; all we had to do was to merge ourselves with the masses and go along with the stream.

But the developments of the past three months, the heartbreaking reverses and defeats suffered by the United Nations in the Far East, the new outburst of appeasement activity in the nation, the numerous examples of business and politics as usual, show that complacency has not yet been completely eradicated and that national unity and a correct war policy are objectives that cannot be taken for granted, but must be fought for day in and day out until victory is achieved.

The period since December 7 has been crowded with important events and great activity resulting in a closer welding together of the nations fighting the Axis and in an increased mustering of the human and material resources of the nation for the war. The Declaration of the Twenty-six United Nations, the President's Victory Production Program, the growing unity and initiative of the labor movement in behalf of the national effort—all indicate the progress attained.

In this situation the Communists have a special role to play in the furtherance and strengthening of national and world anti-Hitler unity.

It is not enough that our

party, the Communist Party, point to the general trend that is positive, for the danger has grown, the time is short, and there are many submerged rocks upon which the ship of state can be wrecked. The role of our party is not merely to indicate which way the wind is blowing; it is that of a working class political party which endeavors to influence both the direction and velocity of the wind, which helps determine the course of events, the course of the war itself.

This means that our party above all must constantly educate the masses as to the just character of the war and the stake of our nation in its outcome. It must at each stage of the struggle analyze, note and endeavor to correct weaknesses, warn of the dangers and pitfalls ahead, and point the way to victory. Our party must bring this understanding to the working class and mobilize it as a conscious force supporting the government, building national unity, struggling against the appeasers and enemies of the nation and constantly pressing for a more resolute and determined course to win the war.

Today all party and Young Communist League members have great responsibilities. It is their job to be examples to the workers in their shops and to the neighbors in their community. But they have another task as well—to be conscious forces clarifying the masses, answering their arguments, explaining each development in the war, combating the tendencies toward demoralization, panic or thinking as usual, raising the morale of the people

and cementing the national unity.

This means that every Communist must be on the alert, must keep abreast of all developments, so that he can become a force for correcting weaknesses, for improving things, for getting things done, for activizing and mobilizing his fellow workers. This means first of all that every party member and Y.C.L.'er should be a reader and a *daily* reader of that great working class newspaper, the *Daily Worker*.

The *Sunday Worker* and the *Daily Worker* are not only instruments for educating and guiding our party members; they are the most important weapons that we possess in clarifying the masses and in stimulating them into greater activity. That is why the campaign to build our press, to double the circulation of the *Sunday Worker*, is not motivated by business-as-usual considerations on our part. The spreading of our press today has a new significance, is tied up with the winning of the war. For who can doubt that every worker who becomes a reader of our press becomes thereby a more intelligent fighter for the nation and for victory? And this is all the more important because the path ahead is strewn with obstacles and leads through dangerous detours. If in the course of but three months so much has happened, so many difficulties have been encountered, certainly at a time when the war is entering an even more crucial stage the voice of our party, its clarity and resoluteness, can be a most important factor in furthering our nation's success.

Nor should we underestimate the prestige of our party and its ability to influence the course of events. For instance, who can get the workers to surpass themselves in the battle for production? Certainly not the employers, whom the workers mistrust and for ample reason; nor the daily capitalist papers, that always angle the news against the workers and their unions. But when we speak up, many workers will listen; for they know us as the staunch defenders of their interests, as the best builders of their unions.

To whom will the Negro people listen? The gentlemen who say this is a war for democracy and yet condone the discrimination of Negro people all around them? No, these people only provide fuel for the appeasers. A large percentage of the Negro people will, however, listen to our party and its press, for our party is the party of James W. Ford, the party that fought to free Angelo Herndon and the Scottsboro Boys, and continues to fight day in and day out for the Negro people. Certainly it is no accident that the maiden speech of Communist Councilman Pete Cacchione in the New York City Council was a speech for Negro rights.

The *Sunday Worker* and the *Daily Worker* can speak to hundreds of thousands who know us by our deeds and to tens of thousands more for whom the events of the past months have been eye-openers—who now begin to grasp the truth about socialism, who begin to see Communists in a new light.

Of the utmost importance in

connection with all we have discussed is the question of building the party. Recruiting is not a task for the exceptional comrade, it is a task for every member of the party, for every member of the Y.C.L. and especially for those in basic industry. Every member in our ranks should ask himself or herself: What am I doing to recruit, from my shopmates, my neighbors, my friends or from my own family? Every comrade should remember that people who were not ready for party membership, or who were uninterested a few months ago, may be more than ready today. These are new times; masses learn in days and weeks what it formerly took them years to learn. This will become increasingly more true during this whole critical juncture of world history. But how many of our members appreciate this change, understand its significance and act accordingly?

Our party faces many problems; of mass work and of internal organization. The party branch is the key for the solution of many of these problems, for it is the branch that is the party for the individual member and it is the branch that is the party to the people in the community. Our branches must be live educational and mobilization centers, open to the public, speaking out on all issues of the day, whether it be on matters of foreign policy or on such questions as how best to carry through the tin can salvage drive in their own territory. The most important party functionary is the branch organizer—for he should not only be a leader of the branch, he

should also be a leader in the community, the spokesman of the party, the person best known and most respected by the workers in his community. A combination of these two qualities is difficult to find and that is why the good branch organizer is the unhonored and unsung hero in our party organization.

Our party today faces a dearth of cadres. Many of our younger men are answering the call to the colors, are being drafted. At the same time our tasks have multiplied. We therefore need more active people, more leaders. But when we say we have a dearth of cadres we mean only that these have not yet been found; but they do exist, they are in the lower ranks of our party. These must be found, promoted, and given greater responsibilities. This is especially true of our shop workers and our women comrades.

Of decisive importance in accelerating the process of training cadres is systematic Marxist-Leninist education. More of our members should study *The Communist* and promote its distribution, should delve into the classics of the founders and developers of socialism as a science. And, in this respect, more attention should be given to the building of the Workers' School, the great institution of Marxist-Leninist education. Every functionary, every worker who aspires to leadership, should take a course in the Workers' School or in its extension division.

A last point. Our party stands for

democracy and practices democracy. The leadership of the party rises from the ranks and always remains responsible to the ranks. This means that the leadership is not only subject to control from above, it is also subject to control from below.

We want freedom of criticism, as long as it is well founded and constructive. We want all party members to think about how to improve and build the party and to make concrete proposals and suggestions. Only together, only by harnessing the intelligence, devotion and ability of every member of our party can we do the job that must be done.

Let us permeate our own ranks with a new spirit of the offensive. Let us increase our efforts for the freedom of our great leader, Earl Browder. Let us activize our members, build our press and recruit thousands of more workers into our party. Let us find and promote new working class leaders from our ranks. Let us do our part in mobilizing the masses for the military offensive and the offensive on the assembly line. Let us help bring into being a new European front against Hitler and a full military and political alliance between the U.S.A., Britain and the U.S.S.R. Let us help rout the appeasers and the enemies of the nation.

Let us face our tasks confident in the correctness of our policies, determined that no sacrifice shall be too great in the noble task of bringing victory to America and its allies.