

## VI. WHOSE WAR IS IT?

THE war that is engulfing Europe, that threatens also the United States, raises the problem of what attitude to take toward this war, what should be done in relation to this war. What kind of war is this, for what is it being fought, what kind of peace will come out of it?

Some people will not be worried by such problems. They have the answers ready-made for themselves, and they do not need to think. Such are the pacifists, who know in advance that it is wrong to fight, no matter what the issues are, or alignments, who are guided by the slogan that "there never has been a good war or a bad peace." Such also are those who take their opinions without question from the "recognized leaders of public thought," that is, from the ruling class, from the bourgeoisie, from Wall Street.

But the great mass of American people, especially the workers, who are neither doctrinaire pacifists nor uncritical followers of the powers that be, are thinking through these questions for themselves, finding in terms of their own experience, education and independent thinking, their own independent answers.

The Communist Party has issued as the slogan of the day: "Keep America Out of the Imperialist War!" In this slogan are implicit what we consider the only correct answers to all those pressing questions about this war. Let us examine it in more detail.

First, is it correct to describe this as an imperialist war, that is, a war in which both sides are directed by imperialist aims, by rival and irreconcilable ambitions of world domination to which all other considerations are subordinated?

On the side of Nazi Germany, the imperialist character of the war is so crude, so brazen, so obvious, that for the overwhelming majority of all Americans it is taken for granted, without argument, as a matter of common knowledge.

Indeed, it is precisely this most crude imperialist aggressive character of Nazi Germany which is seized upon to mask the equally imperialistic but subtle, sophisticated, devious character of the British-French camp, which decks itself out in the colors of "champion of small nations," "defender of international order," "protector of civilization," etc. For American people, the first and most basic problem is thus correctly to evaluate, without illusions and with the utmost objectivity, the claims of the British-French war-makers to their sympathies. What are these claims worth?

The more clever defenders of British-French claims to the role of protector of small nations, international order, and civilization itself, no longer apologize for the British-French past; they will not deny that the scheme to direct Germany into a war against the Soviet Union had led the British-French bourgeoisie upon the disastrous path of assisting Hitler into power, aiding the rearmament of Germany, accepting the fortification of the Rhineland, sacrificing Austria, strangling the Spanish Republic, betraying Czechoslovakia, tossing Ethiopia and Albania to Mussolini, scrapping the League of Nations, handing China to the Japanese—in sum, to the effective destruction of the foundations of peace and of all international security, and the spread of one-sided imperialist aggression to a large part of the world.

But, so these clever propagandists for Chamberlain-Daladier claim, the British-French ruling classes finally woke up to the catastrophic consequences of their old policy, and made a decisive turn about face, called a halt, and set their feet on a new path, one which had been demanded and fought for by all progressive and democratic forces, including the Communists, a new path which commands the support and allegiance especially of those who had most sharply condemned the old disastrous course. The point at which the British-French bourgeoisie called a halt and started on a new road, they tell us, was Poland and the threat to the destruction of Poland.

Poland, indeed, furnished the turning point in the world-historical process now unfolding at such a furious pace. But not by any means in the sense of the idealistic slogans they put forward to justify and mask the brutal imperialist character of the British-French bourgeoisie and its side in this war. On the contrary, it is Poland and the peoples of that unhappy country which furnish devastating and final proof that the British-French ruling classes are equally guilty with those of Germany for the war, that the workers and their progressive allies can no more support one side than the other, that both are fighting for purely imperialistic aims to which they sacrifice every other interest.

When, last March, Hitler wiped out the last remnants of Czechoslovakia, turned over to his tender mercies the previous September at Munich by Chamberlain and Daladier, it was clear to the world that Poland was the next on the list. Chamberlain, faced with revolt among the British people, gave the solemn guarantee of the British Empire to the integrity of the Polish state; but it was equally clear to the whole world that such a guarantee was practically worthless unless backed up by the military and economic might of the Soviet Union, that Chamberlain could make good only through Russian, not British hands.

In order to create the appearance of seriousness and sincerity, negotiations were opened up with the Soviet Union in Moscow ostensibly to implement the policy long proposed by the Soviet Union of organizing collective security. But as it was proved, nothing was further from Chamberlain's mind than such an outcome. Let us refresh our memories about some undeniable facts of these negotiations between the British-French and the Soviet Governments.

Chamberlain sent as negotiators to Moscow not even a member of his cabinet, but a group of third and fourth line diplomatic messenger boys, without any clear credentials. This was in sharpest contrast to the handling of negotiations with Hitler by Chamberlain himself. The negotiations were dragged out interminably, from April into August, without the slightest progress being made, and without the slightest sign of any uneasiness on Chamberlain's part. This was in sharpest contrast to the hysterical haste with which Chamberlain

had flown to Berchtesgaden, to Godesberg, and to Munich, in 1938, to rush through the surrender of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. The British-French Governments have never dared to disclose what were their concrete proposals to the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union declared them unacceptable, as being impractical for their professed purpose, and as violating the principle of equal obligations. From the very heart of the British imperialist bourgeoisie itself came unimpeachable evidence of the soundness of the Soviet position, when Winston Churchill wrote last June. I quote:

I have from the beginning preferred the Russian proposals to either the British or French alternatives. They are simple, they are logical and they conform to the main groupings of common interests.

What was the Soviet Union prepared to do for halting the threatened aggression? It proposed, on the basis of mutual guarantees for the integrity of existing frontiers, to meet and throw back any aggression in Eastern Europe by the might of the Red Army and Air Fleet. The British and French Governments rejected the proposals, basing themselves, first of all, upon the Polish Government's refusal to agree to any operations of Soviet forces on Polish territory. The Soviet Union was thus asked to enter a war ostensibly to protect Poland, but was refused the right to fight in the war until Poland had been destroyed and the German army crossed into Soviet territory.

There is not a single military expert in the world who will deny that the Soviet proposals were the only possible means of achieving the declared intention to defeat aggression and maintain the integrity of Poland. When the British-French Governments rejected these proposals they deliberately threw away the only possible barrier to the threatened aggression to Poland. They sealed the doom of Poland and they proved to the world and to history that they were interested in Poland only as the occasion for a war in their own imperialist interests, and a war which they expected quickly to transform into a war against the Soviet Union.

This is further proved by the fact since disclosed that the British-

French Governments took not one single step to put the Polish Government into a stronger position to defend itself. The Polish Government was told to resist the Nazi invasion, with the promise of the full force of the British and French empires in its support. But not a single fortification was erected against the threatened invasion, not even trenches were dug, not even was the Polish army mobilized in full, not so much as a single rifle, not to speak of an airplane, was added to Polish equipment.

True, the British Government negotiated with the Polish Government for a five-million pound loan, but they tangled up the question in so many controversies that the loan was never made, although, at the same time, one of Chamberlain's cabinet was offering Hitler a billion-pound loan, two hundred times as much, as a bribe for a British-German alliance. Clearly, Chamberlain's practical refusal to give Poland even the miserly \$25,000,000 he had promised was simply the instinctive thrift of a typical British businessman who had already written Poland off his books as a total loss, and incited Poland to fight merely in the expectation of thereby involving the Soviet Union in a serious war with Germany, while securing for himself an idealistic slogan to cover British-French imperialist aims.

Why did the Polish Government permit itself to be used as the passive instrument of Chamberlain's intrigues, a role so quickly proved suicidal for itself? That can be understood only when we understand that the Polish Government was itself fascist in character, that it had long degenerated into an instrument of the Hitler-Chamberlain conspiracies against the Soviet Union, and when Hitler, frightened at the prospect of breaking his teeth on the Red Army, suddenly broke his compact with Chamberlain, the Polish Government was as incapable of changing its course as it would have been to change its fascist character.

The general public is very insufficiently informed about the depth of the Polish Government's complicity in the destruction of Czechoslovakia. Most people still think of this only in terms of the disgraceful last-minute grabbing of fragments of that country when the final dismemberment took place. But the Polish Government was deeply

involved with both Hitler and Chamberlain in the long chain of conspiracy that led up to Munich in September, 1938. There has just come into my hands a most illuminating piece of evidence about this.

A certain newspaperman in France sent me a copy of a memorandum which he furnished his paper in May, 1938, but which was never published. He says he is certain that every great power received this information about the same time, that it will be found in the archives of practically every Foreign Office, but that it reached the public only in hints and innuendoes. He sent it to the United States since the French press is strictly censored and the Communist press entirely closed, while in the United States, so far, we still suffer only from the censorship of publishers and editors. This memorandum, citing facts of great historical significance, reads as follows: Remember the date—May, 1938:

The Polish Ambassador to France, Lukaszewicz, has just returned from Warsaw. He declared that without question Poland would declare war immediately on the Soviet Union if that country should, in operation of its treaties, attempt to send troops across Polish territory to support Czechoslovakia. He declared that if Soviet airplanes should cross Polish territory en route to Czechoslovakia they would at once be attacked by Polish planes. He declared that there is a big concentration of Polish planes near the Rumanian frontier for the special purpose of attacking Soviet planes should they attempt to cross in this neighborhood.

He further declared that if Soviet troops should attempt to cross Rumania en route to Czechoslovakia the Rumanian government was committed to declare war simultaneously on the Soviet Union in accordance with the Polish-Rumanian alliance; that if the Soviet planes should attempt to cross Rumania it might be impossible for the Rumanian air force to stop them, but in that event it was probable that the Polish air force would send sufficient planes to Rumanian territory to do the job. These declarations of the Polish Ambassador have been received with satisfaction by the French government, and are the foundations for Bonnet's "predictions" that any attempt by the Soviet Union to give aid to Czechoslovakia would result in its becoming engaged in war by both Poland and Rumania. The reports

from German, Japanese and British representatives in Moscow, pointing in the same direction, are undoubtedly based upon similar information from the same source.

That is the sort of government Poland had, steeped in corruption and intrigue, with both Hitler and Chamberlain against the Soviet Union, ruling its own people with military means, based upon the most backward and oppressive landlordism, aping the worst Nazi practices in oppression of national minorities who compose more than a third of the population, and plunging its peoples into ever deeper poverty. Such was the government of the Polish "colonels," which broke up and fled the country at the first impact of war.

Up until this month, the world has been repeatedly assured that the Polish army was one of the most effective in the world. That opinion was generally accepted without question. It remained for that most reactionary columnist of the Hearst press, Boake Carter, to observe on September 13, after two weeks of war, that the collapse of the Polish army "is astonishing military men" and that "it has ceased to make sense." Mr. Carter then compares this with the experience in Spain. He says:

... In contrast, it took General Franco, with seasoned German and Italian troops, two and one-half years to battle his way against a Loyalist army composed of Communists, rabble, untrained citizenry and the International Brigade—all improperly armed, clothed and fed—before he entered Madrid.

When the British, French and Polish Governments rejected the proposals of the Soviet Union, which alone could have preserved peace or have guaranteed the quick defeat of any aggressor, the Soviet Union was left with no other course open to it but to find its own way to contribute to the peace and welfare of itself and neighbors, and thereby of the world. It had given sufficient evidence of its ability to defend its own borders, to cause Nazi Germany to think twice and a third time before proceeding with its compact with Chamberlain, sufficient to cause it to renounce its war aims against the Soviet Union, and to propose a non-aggression pact. There was no longer the slightest ground for the Soviet Union to refuse this offer, whether

in its own interests, the interests of neighboring peoples, or the interests of world peace.

The course of events since the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact has confirmed a hundred times over the correctness of that action from every point of view except that which incorrigibly, against mountains of evidence, considers Chamberlain and the British Empire the full and sufficient foundation for international order and world peace.

The Soviet Union has kept out of war, as the people of the United States is determined to keep out of this war and the imperialist rivalries from which it arose, but on a much higher level than that of the United States, and only after it had done everything possible to organize world peace. Americans who want to keep out of this war should be in a position to understand and sympathize with the determination of the Soviet Union not to be used as a catspaw for one or another imperialist camp to pull its chestnuts out of the fires of war. America is now being prepared for the role of the catspaw for the British Empire, and we have to decide whether we will accept that role which the Soviet Union refused.

But the Soviet Union has done much more than merely keep out of the war. Without engaging in a war it has been able to accomplish what all the rest of the world confessedly failed to do. It drew the line far from its own borders beyond which Nazi aggression dared not go. It even was able to force the Nazi military machine to retire and to redeem more than half of that Poland which the British-French Governments, with all their paper guarantees, had cast to the Nazi wolves. The Red Army marched. The Red Army marched into Western Ukraine, White Russia and Poland.

Our American newspapers leaped to the defense of Chamberlain, like a pack of well-trained hunting dogs. They leaped forward without a second's hesitation, they knew all the answers in advance. They didn't have to think a single moment before they began to vilify the Soviet Union, brand the march of the Red Army into Western Ukraine, White Russia and Poland on its mission of liberation and protection, as a "partnership in aggression" with the Nazi aggressors.

But already before the month of September is over, when war has been going on less than a month, through all the howling of the dogs of reaction, the truth forces its way through for all the world to see.

The most rabid anti-Communists in America, who happen to have family connections in Poland, are publicly praying that their relatives may find themselves in the area occupied by the Red Army. American newspapermen in Rumania are forced to note in their dispatches that refugees, who fled across the border before the advance of the Nazi armies, returned immediately to Poland when they learned that the Red Army had come.

Behind the Red Army lines, the peasant masses, long among the most exploited and oppressed in Europe, are fulfilling their age-long dream of undisputed possession of the land. It is their land for the first time in history. The quarter of a million-acre estate of Prince Radziwill was one of the first to be distributed among the landless peasants. That is why they are so profoundly angry with the Soviet Union and the Red Army. They are angry because they know that this news that the land is being distributed to the men who dig the land and who raise the crops, that news they can't stop from spreading like wildfire throughout Europe and the rest of the world, especially throughout Eastern Europe. The peasants are getting their land, and no censorship and no blockade can stop that news from penetrating over the world. And let us not forget that Eastern Europe, as well as Central Europe, including Germany, rests upon the foundation of a land-hungry and exploited peasantry, who are going to learn this news and are going to watch for the day, which is coming soon, when they can do the same thing in Germany and Eastern Europe.

That is what Dorothy Thompson meant when she wrote the other day that what we are facing is not a war, it is a revolution. Yes, the revolution is marching in Europe.

What all the might of the British and French Empires could not accomplish, under Chamberlain and Daladier, over the years, has been accomplished by the Soviet Union with its Red Army and its peace policy, in three weeks.

A new alignment of mighty peace forces is arising in the world.

Chamberlain and Daladier destroyed the old peace front that we were fighting for all the time, but a new peace front is coming into being more powerful than anything dreamed about by the so-called democratic governments, who sabotaged and destroyed the peace front. A new peace front, led by the mighty Soviet Union, and more and more drawing into alignment with it the oppressed and exploited peoples of Eastern Europe, and finally of the Western Europe area, and America as well.

If the gentlemen statesmen and diplomats of the so-called civilized Western democracies are not able to keep peace in the world, the peoples of the world are getting ready to show them how to do it.

It is clear that the masses of the people of the United States, the workers, farmers, toiling middle class, do not belong to and do not want to be tied up with the imperialist camp of Chamberlain and Daladier. The American people do not want to cast in their fate with the rotten and corrupt British and French Empires, which call themselves democracies, but which are, as rapidly as they know how, proceeding to destroy what is left of democracy in their own countries.

Only the day before yesterday, we got the news that the great French Republic had outlawed the Communist Party of France, the third largest party in the country, a country divided into a dozen parties. Well there have been many governments in the past which tried to dissolve Communist Parties. For six years Hitler was telling the world that he had dissolved the Communist Party of Germany, but only last week the American bourgeois correspondents informed us that the Communist Party of Germany was out on the streets as strong as it was in 1932. And now the French bourgeoisie, in the name of democracy, boast that they have liquidated the Communist Party of France.

Well, by that act they have struck a heavy blow against French bourgeois democracy.

But Daladier can no more kill the French Communist Party than Hitler could kill the Germany Communist Party. The French Government proceeds to deny the simplest political rights to the third greatest party in the country. The party, with a majority above all

other parties combined in the Paris area, has been dissolved by decree—and still they expect us to consider France a democracy.

Everywhere, throughout the world, the enthronement of the bloody dictatorship of monopoly capital, that we call fascism, has always begun with the dissolution of the Communist Party, but it never ended there, but always proceeded to the destruction of the democratic rights of all the people. And in the United States we see Mr. Martin Dies has immediately announced that he proposes that the United States follow quickly in the footsteps of the French Republic, and outlaw the Communist Party of the U.S.; we know what that means. It is an announcement that they intend to take America on the same path that the French Republic is being taken and take it into this imperialist war on the side of the British-French camp.

We have no guarantee that the American bourgeoisie may not accept the leadership of Martin Dies. We have not heard for a long time now a single responsible voice raised in Washington against Martin Dies and his program. Those voices which spoke up so courageously in 1938 have become strangely silent. Martin Dies may have some of his detailed pronouncements denied in a half-hearted way, but there is no longer a voice raised in Washington boldly denouncing the political course that Martin Dies wants to take the United States on. Let's understand the significance of that.

One of the first decisive steps on the road of American entrance into imperialist war will be serious attacks upon the Communist Party of the United States. Do you think that anybody wants to outlaw the Communist Party of the U.S. in order to keep America out of the war? And if there is a big demand right now to outlaw the Communist Party, can it have any other reason except the determination to get America into this war?

The fight for a peace policy in the United States today is, first of all, a fight to keep the United States out of any involvement in this imperialist war, that means, to keep the United States from any involvement not only in a military way but from any involvement in economic and political support and sympathy. The victory of either one of these gangs of imperialist bandits will be a defeat for the

people of their own country and for the people of the world. The only possible victory of the people will be the overthrowing of the bandits at the head of both camps.

We can support neither one side nor the other in the imperialist war. The former distinction between the fascist and democratic nations has lost the meaning it once had, and is rapidly losing any serious political meaning at all.

The fight to keep the United States out of the imperialist war is presented in a very distorted form in the discussions now going on around the special session of Congress, and around the issue of the Neutrality Act and what to do about it. I read yesterday a very significant political comment written from Washington saying that the difference between the pros and cons on the Neutrality Bill and its revision had been reduced to such a small area that it could be placed on a postage stamp. There is a great deal of truth in that observation.

But it would be a great mistake if you should conclude that the great body of Congress has come together in general agreement in order to represent the desire of the majority of the masses to keep out of this war. They are coming together upon the general agreement that whether America gets into the war sooner or later, they all agree that they want to make as much profit as possible out of this war right now. That is the dominating mood in Congress today and it is a most shameful and dangerous thing for America.

All considerations are being subordinated to the question of how American monopoly capital can get the maximum profits out of the European war, with the result that everybody that is thinking like that is not very anxious that this profitable war should end very soon; the longer it lasts the more profits. Even President Roosevelt made his bow to this motive in his message to Congress. In this respect there is very little difference, if any at all, between the representatives of the two sides on the discussion on the embargo.

Let us understand this—that profits out of this war will not do America any good. More than that, profits out of this war are going to be a curse to the American people. Out of the profits derived from the blood of the peoples of Europe will arise stronger and stronger

those forces that will drag America into the war, when profits can no longer be made only from Europe but will have to be squeezed out of the blood of American boys. The only way to keep America out of war is to keep the profiteers from making profits out of the war. The main line of struggle for peace for America is a struggle against monopolists and profiteers, don't forget that. Only if the American workers, farmers and middle classes fix their eyes on this line will they be able to defeat those forces that would drag our country into war, the forces of Wall Street, monopoly capital and the profiteers.

These rapidly narrowing differences about the Neutrality Act are no longer of decisive import for the future of our country; the divisions on this among the upper strata of the bourgeoisie are not deep and are easily reconciled. The masses of the people who really want peace and to keep out of war are divided on this confused issue and lose their force. That is why our National Committee declared that we could not identify ourselves with one side or the other of this alignment, because we see enemies on both sides, and we see our friends on both sides, and our task is to fight the enemy on both sides and unite the workers and farmers of both sides against the reactionaries and Wall Street.

The struggle against the profiteers and monopolists has to be a struggle against the worsening of living standards; it has to be a struggle for a better life, higher wages, shorter hours, more social legislation, unemployment and old-age insurance, all sorts of safeguards for democratic rights, the extension of democratic rights, which is just the opposite of what the majority of our Congress is thinking about in Washington today.

We cannot depend upon any other power in this country to accomplish these things than the power of the workers and workers' organizations and those progressive forces aligned with the working class to keep America out of the imperialist war.

Every moment this war continues, the danger grows more sharp that America will be dragged into it. That is why we say: if we want to keep America out of this imperialist war we also have to put up a great

united demand of the American people — Stop this imperialist war! — before they have a chance to drag us into it.

The Soviet Union today issued a statement to the peoples of the world that it considered the continuation of this imperialist slaughter a senseless thing and hoped that some friendly government will cooperate in calling a halt to it.

What is the significance of this? You remember how in the past weeks the newspapers and radio have been repeating to us on the one hand that Stalin has made an alliance with Hitler and that Stalin has abandoned the revolution and is now engaged in unprincipled power politics with fascism against the democracies, and at the same time these newspapers and radios tell us—after all it was all a very clever game of Stalin's in which he was inciting Hitler to fight the democracies and the democracies to fight Hitler and wants both sides to continue the war and bleed each other white until finally Europe is exhausted and then Stalin will step in and take it over.

But it happens that the whole course of the Soviet Union from inception down to date has always been a struggle for peace, to prevent war from breaking out, and when it did break out to stop it as quickly as possible, to secure a democratic peace; and that is what the Soviet Union is doing now. But whereas, not so long ago, the voice of the Soviet Union was not listened to in world councils, today we have a situation where the proposals for peace of the Soviet Union will have to be taken seriously by every government in the world.

By proposing the immediate cessation of this senseless slaughter the Soviet Union has again proved that all of those who talk about the U.S.S.R. being interested in continuance of war are liars. The Soviet Union has always, following the teachings of Lenin, utilized the contradictions among the imperialists in the cause of peace, in the cause of the liberation of oppressed peoples. There were long years of the first period of the building of the new socialist system when the country was almost helpless in a military sense and almost any combination of imperialist powers, if they could have gotten together, could have sent armies in and destroyed the socialist system. How was the Soviet Union able to exist in face of a world of powerful

enemies when it was so weak? It was able to exist and defend itself because not only did it have its own small but growing force, but it played the contradictions of one imperialist camp against the other and utilized these so skillfully under the leadership of Lenin that in spite of its relative weakness, it gained time that was necessary for it to become strong, until today no possible combination of powers that could be brought together can ever defeat the Soviet Union.

Now today again, under the leadership of Stalin, the Soviet Union is again giving a brilliant example of Leninism, of how to utilize the contradictions among the imperialists in order to prevent them from carrying through their imperialist schemes of oppression and war, of how to rouse the masses so that they can intervene and stop the bloody business of imperialist war, showing how the people can make peace over the heads of their rulers, how to find a people's road to peace.

That is the significance of these great developments of the past weeks. That is the thing that frightens the bourgeoisie of every country, including our own, that is the thing that makes them so desperate and so enraged, so full of the hatred they spew out every day through the columns of their newspapers. Well, the gentlemen have reason to be afraid, because when peoples begin to arise the exploiters are not going to last very long, in any part of the world.

The bourgeoisie, the capitalists and all their hangers-on are abandoning as rapidly as they know how the defense of democracy and are abandoning the defense of progressive social measures. It is not an accident that we see together with this movement to scrap all progressive measures of the New Deal, as the spearhead of that movement, such a terrific, unprecedented campaign in this country against the Communist Party at this moment.

Why are they so excited about our small party? Why do they move heaven and earth to spatter us with all sorts of synthetic mud? Why are they making preparations for the outlawing of our party? It is because not only are they thinking about getting America into the war, but they know that that course can only be put across on the American people if they destroy American democracy, and the destruction of

democracy always begins by denying democracy to the Communists. That is a law of politics in the modern world.

Great changes are taking place in the relationship of class forces. A section of the American bourgeoisie was standing on the platform of the maintenance of American traditional democracy, and for that aim they were taking a progressive course. Some of them may still fool themselves that they still stand on that platform, with only one limitation—the Communists shall not be included in the concept of American democracy.

When Congressman Dies, day before yesterday, said he wanted to outlaw the Communist Party, the progressive Democrat, Congressman Voorhis of California said, in amendment to Mr. Dies' declaration: "Well, if we are going to have to do it, let's do it in such a way that we don't harm American democracy." Well, I venture to predict that six months after Dies should succeed in outlawing the Communist Party, "Comrade" Voorhis will be purged from Congress as a secret Communist. The moment the open Communist Party has been abolished, every known progressive will be under suspicion as a member of the secret underground Communist Party, and they will have 100 per cent "evidence" to prove it. After all, aren't you trying to think straight?—That is the sign of a Communist. After all, aren't you talking for peace? Ah, that is a sign of Communism. After all, aren't you a New Dealer? Well, everybody knows that the New Deal was a result of the "secret machinations" of the Communist Party.

These gentlemen think that democracy is something that can be handed around to chosen people and denied to others who happen to be Communists—but by this position they have already abandoned the struggle for democracy.

The newspapers have been making a great noise about the sad conditions within the Communist Party. Fifty million copies of newspapers every day are repeatedly telling the 100,000 members of the Communist Party that you have lost faith in the leaders of your party and especially in the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, something that we are very proud and happy about, the condition of the Communist Party today is one of unexampled unity, unexampled enthusiasm, un-



examined courage and fighting spirit such as the Communist Party has never known.

Of course, we have had casualties. There never is a battle without somebody getting hurt. There never is a great struggle or great historical turning point without people who lose their way and who rapidly change sides. We have had a few, and, I warn you, we will have some more. I have not the slightest doubt about that. So far, there have been about a dozen or so. In the next few weeks, there may be even a couple of dozen more who will run away from the fight. The most extraordinary thing is how few there are, with all the force of the American radio, bourgeois press turned upon the Communist Party to try to persuade each and every individual member that he had better dissociate himself from this "criminal" organization, and threatening the most dire measures against those, threatening their livelihood; the most extraordinary thing, with all this mighty labor of the mountain of American capitalism, is the most they have been able to bring forth has been twelve or fifteen little mice.

When the fight becomes a little hotter, they may get as many as 50 or 60 or even 100, but we still have 99,900 members of the Communist Party, better Communists than ever before, and I can assure you, dear friends, that the Communist Party is winning more friends and more future members than it has in the whole twenty years of our previous history.

Of course, I don't want you to understand that I belittle the significance of those, even the few, who left the Communist Party as a result of the turn of history and the tremendous new tasks facing us. We should not laugh it off. It is significant to us, entirely aside from the question of the individuals or their motives; it is significant, first of all, that almost without exception, all these examples of people who run away from the fight now are people who in one form or another are in the closest class relationships with the upper middle or upper classes, or else people who for long years have become soft or a little rotten from too long sitting in comfortable office chairs of bureaucratic positions.

Now, when such people as that leave our movement, what does it

mean? It means that while they may be important in themselves, or may not be, they have this importance—they are like the importance of straws in the wind. It means that strong winds have begun to blow; a storm is coming up, and when a storm is coming up, the first gust of wind blows away straws that have been lying around.

It is unquestionably true that storms are coming, great social storms, great social struggles, and all the faint-hearted and muddle-heads are going to clear out. I want to ask you, do you feel weaker because they are gone, or do you feel stronger? You feel stronger. Our enemy is powerful; the great social struggles are going to be difficult, but we face the future unafraid and we tell the workers of America not to be afraid. The enemy is powerful, but the working class of America is powerful too and becoming more powerful every day, and under the blows of battle are going to become powerful enough to win.

If the reactionaries try to outlaw our party, it will only multiply our contacts and our influence among the masses. We do not invite these attacks; we would much prefer if the American bourgeoisie would maintain the traditional American democratic system. We Communists have co-operated loyally, persistently, for the maintenance and strengthening of this democracy. Sometimes we have even leaned over a little backwards and gone a little bit too far to demonstrate that the dangers to this democracy come not from the Communist Party, but from those who talk loudest against the Communists. We have done everything to maintain and extend and to defend the American democratic system, in order to save America from fascism. No one can say that any weakening of American democracy has come from the Communist Party.

Today the greatest menace to American democracy comes in the name of anti-Communism. But it is not up to us; we are a small party, relatively weak in this country. We cannot by our own unaided efforts maintain American bourgeois democracy if the bourgeoisie that owns the economy of this country desires to scrap that democracy.

But we warn these gentlemen that if they think they can outlaw the Communist Party and then proceed with their planned attacks against the labor movement and the dragging of America into this imperialist

war—we warn them they are making a great historical mistake. They may think that they are fighting for another lease of life of their rotten and decaying capitalist system, but history will prove them wrong. By going on such a course, they are taking the shortest road to the downfall of American capitalism. The American people are going to fight for their democratic rights; they are going to fight for their living conditions; they are going to fight for peace, and those who go against those desires of the American people are going to be swept off the boards of history.

*Speech delivered at Town Hall, Philadelphia, September 29, 1939.*