

VIII. SOCIALISM, WAR, AND AMERICA

TWENTY-TWO years after the first socialist state arose out of the ruins of the imperialist World War, that state, the Soviet Union, emerges as the most powerful, prosperous and peaceful land in the world. The "family" of capitalist nations are again locked in the fierce embraces of a new war, a new "family quarrel" to decide at the price of misery and death for their people how to redivide the world among themselves.

Eight days ago I spoke on this subject at Symphony Hall in Boston. In the course of my speech, which was given to the newspapers in advance in writing, I remarked:

Our "best families," the moneyed people who rule our country, evidently do not have a very deep faith in their own system, for they show fear that the voice of the Communists may bring the walls of their capitalist Jericho tumbling down in the course of this war.*

Who could have guessed that the great newspapers of New York would spring into action so energetically to prove the correctness of this observation? Excerpts from my Boston speech, with a wealth of comment, interpretation, analysis and criticism, jostled for position with the war news on page one, occupied a privileged position in the editorial columns, splashed over into special articles, occupied the attention of noted columnists and commentators, and a week later is, to use a headline from the *Sun*, "still echoing" through the press. The *Herald Tribune*, having suppressed the speech in its news columns on Monday, came out on Tuesday with a hysterical denunciation of the speech,

* See page 61 of this volume.

following a false paraphrasing of it from *The New York Times*, to inquire "whether it is any longer in the interests of the country or its institutions that we permit the Communist Party to continue as a legal political entity." On the same day from Hyde Park came a declaration from an anonymous "close friend" of the President, echoing the *Herald Tribune*.

Needless to say, all this commotion is very symptomatic, testifying as it does not only to the correctness of our understanding and predictions, but also to the mass influence of our party.

In all the hysterical outcry against my Boston speech, great care was taken not to spread the ideas which I actually uttered, but to hide them behind gross misrepresentations and forgeries. The truth is intolerable today to the bourgeoisie, and in the very outcry for its suppression, they must twist and distort it. The *Herald Tribune* editorial, which gave the lead to the President's "close friend," is thus worthy of close study and analysis, as it discloses the anatomy of bourgeois thought in our country today. That editorial said:

That phrase, "a quick transition," is the important one. If words mean anything it implies that what Mr. Browder is hoping for is not a peaceful but a violent revolution; it sounds very much like a call to arms.

Now, of course, every person who heard or read my speech will know that this is a deliberate forgery. In fact, I had merely registered in sober and measured words the technically advanced development of American economy, which has created a condition where, once the American people understood and desired such a goal, there is possible a "quick transition" to socialism, but in the very same sentence I also registered the fact that the American working class is "politically backward" in the sense of not yet understanding or demanding such a socialist reorganization; there was not a word in my speech that so much as hinted a "call to arms." The main point of the whole speech was a demand to stop the war, to throw American influence toward ending the war instead of prolonging it, to bring about a cessation of the use of arms that threatens to destroy millions of men, women and children—but of this not a word was allowed to creep into the newspapers.

Why is the *Herald Tribune*, and with it the whole American bourgeoisie, so anxious to hide the call of the Communists to stop the war, and in its place to create the appearance that it is the Communists who "call to arms"? Because they know that the great majority of Americans, especially the workers, agree with us on this question and also want to stop the war, as the surest way to halt American involvement in it; while they, the capitalists and all their hangers-on, have fully decided to do everything they can to prolong the war, in order to coin huge profits out of the misery, destruction and death that it brings to the peoples.

This is the same sort of lie and misrepresentation used to its fullest extent by the Dies Committee, especially in its lurid and broadly advertised "testimony" of stool-pigeons, spies and provocateurs to the effect that the Communists are planning acts of sabotage against American industries and shipping. Communists are and have always been opposed in principle and in practice to sabotage, terrorism and all individualistic actions, which are typical of capitalist society but never of the Communist movement. The most crushing polemics of all the greatest leaders of the Communist movement, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, for the last ninety years, were directed precisely against the influence of anarchistic trends within the labor movement; in such influence they exposed the hand of the enemy, the capitalists and their agents, who expend great sums of money deliberately to plant and cultivate anarchistic ideas and practices which they consider their best aid to demoralize and crush the labor movement. The truth is that the Communists are the most irreconcilable and sworn enemies of sabotage, terrorism and all similar anarchistic trends. That is another reason why the bourgeoisie is afraid of the Communist Party, and why they commit forgeries and hire provocateurs to try to pin the labels of anarchism upon us.

The Communists have never in history made an attempt to overthrow the government of the United States. But there is a party in the United States which did organize a desperate and bloody struggle to do just that. The party which tried with all its might to sabotage, disrupt and finally to overthrow the American Constitution and the

government set up under it was none other than the party of Martin Dies and Jack Garner. And the Communists of that day, under the inspiration of Karl Marx, came to the support of Abraham Lincoln, and in large numbers enlisted in the armed forces and gave their lives to maintain our democratic heritage. Let the record speak on such questions.

We Communists clearly and boldly denounce the present war as an imperialistic one, on both sides, from which the peoples have nothing to obtain but misery, starvation, oppression and death. We demand the stopping of this war. We warn that all the peoples who suffer from this war will not be patient, but will prepare to take the decision into their own hands, if their present "statesmen" do not stop the war. We point out that in Europe this means that the war can only have the effect of placing the socialist revolution on the order of business as a practical question.

Even many of the worst reactionaries in America have recognized these realities, and are hysterically calling for an end to the war because they are afraid of the socialist revolution. Thus, the Hearst press, last Wednesday, in a half-page editorial spread in large type, declared:

Eventually, the suffering of war threatens to extend communism all over Europe.

Not only will Germany probably succumb to communism, but England and France are in grave danger of being overwhelmed by it.

All the nations involved in the war will pay the penalty of bitter, popular disaster, disillusionment and resentment.

Why is it so universally recognized, among all intelligent people whether they welcome or fear the socialist revolution, that the peoples of Europe will inevitably turn to the Communists if this imperialist war is carried on to its logical conclusion?

The answer is: Because this imperialist war is so evidently and inescapably a "family affair" between capitalist rivals, so clearly a natural product and extension of capitalist interests and policies, so tragically inevitable on the basis of a continuation of the capitalist system—that even those who most ferociously blame the Soviet Union

for the war and for the revolutions it prepares cannot really believe their own propaganda.

The answer is further: Because the socialist Soviet Union has been so clearly, from its inception, the champion of peaceful relations between peoples and nations, the only nation loyal to the end to its international obligations, a brilliant example within its own borders of the fruitful collaboration of a family of nations; and, most important of all, because the Soviet Union has demonstrated in life how the peoples can solve the problem of producing a rich and prosperous life for themselves without exploiting, oppressing or robbing any other people, but on the contrary abolishing completely all exploitation, oppression and robbery within its own borders and in its relations to other nations.

During the twenty-two years' existence of the Soviet Union, the American people have been fed with a steady newspaper diet of lies and misinformation about it. This campaign is now being raised to fantastic heights, such as we never saw before. But the truth is mighty, and the gigantic campaign of lies defeats itself. The same liars who picture the Soviet Union as in a state of economic chaos speak tremblingly of the "menace" of the Red Army, as the largest and at least among the few best trained and equipped in the world. How can both things be true, when it is known to the merest amateur that every army is strictly limited in its development by the industrial level of the country which it represents, and that this is more true of the Soviet Union than of any other land, because it draws proportionately less upon the world market than any other?

The same liars who picture the Soviet Union as a prison and charnel house for its peoples, on the verge of collapse and overthrow by a rebellious and suffering people, speak fearfully in the same breath of the "terrible monster" to the East, who threatens to gulp down in a few bites the most highly industrialized countries of Europe, whisper in awe-struck voices that "Stalin has already won this war; the whole thing had better be called off." How can both things be true, the supposed extreme internal weakness and the very apparent and indubitable increase in strength in international relations?

The liars unmask themselves by the glaring contradictions in their lies, and because they cannot hide the dramatic emergence of the Soviet Union as a great power.

Our newspapers have hidden behind these lies the greatest news story of all history. That is the story of the epoch-making successes of the new socialist economy. It is the story of mankind discovering how to conquer nature with science, machinery and technique, which in turn are conquered and harnessed to the social will of man.

To obtain the full flavor of this greatest news story of all history, let us turn our memories back to 1926, 1927 and 1928. Those were the years of a much-publicized American prosperity, which caught the imagination of the whole world. From every land, commissions were being sent to America to study the system of wealth production and distribution which had made America the envy and the model of other capitalist lands. This great prosperity reached the dizzy heights of producing in 1928 about eighty billion dollars, roughly, in national income. When the great crash of 1929 dissolved the boasted American prosperity, the world forgot the rainbow illusions of the preceding years, and American national income slipped back by 1932 into the forty billion class, and is now somewhere in the sixty billions. But let us suppose, just for the sake of the argument, that the United States, instead of dropping into a terrible crisis, had found a way to utilize its national economy so that, instead, it began to expand its production at the rate of 10 per cent each year, up to now, 1939. Then, by 1932, instead of a national income of some forty-five billions, which we had, there would have been more than one hundred forty billions, or considerably more than three times as much. And by 1939 this would have reached around two hundred thirty billions of dollars, that is, this year alone we would have produced one hundred sixty-five billions more in wealth than is really the case; and for the whole period of eleven years we would have produced almost one thousand billions of dollars more than was the case in actuality, or a little nest-egg equal to \$7,500 for every man, woman and child in the country. If we Americans had been able to make our economy perform on such a scale, can anyone doubt that the whole world would be

going to school to us, trying to learn how to imitate our achievements?

Now, with this fanciful, imaginary picture of a possible America in our minds, let us examine the record of the Soviet Union during the last eleven years. We find that they expanded their national economy at the rate, not of our fanciful 10 per cent, but of more than 22½ per cent. Instead of multiplying their national income by 300 per cent in eleven years, as we imagined the U. S. doing, the Bolsheviks multiplied it by 1,000 per cent, or ten times. If our Utopian imaginary America had kept up with the rate which the Soviet Union actually achieved in hard fact, we would this year alone have a national income of over eight hundred billion dollars, or an average of more than \$6,000 for each man, woman and child, while the additional income over the past eleven years would amount to more than \$25,000 per head of the population.

Surely, this is big news, isn't it, and good news? Men have discovered a way, and proved it in practice, to multiply national production of wealth at a rate which, if applied to the U.S., would bring our country a material prosperity beyond the wildest dreams of Dr. Townsend or California's "Ham 'n Eggs" movement.

How were the American newspapers able to hide such tremendous, world-shaking news from the American people, and palm off on them in its place the atrocity tales of the anti-Soviet propaganda?

They were able to do it because, first of all, the Soviet Union began to operate its new epoch-making socialist system at the end of the last World War, in a country which had been completely ruined and crushed by the war and the armed interventions; it had to go through years of the most terrible difficulties and privations, with almost no help from the outside world, and surrounded by hostile states. It had to start from almost nothing, and build entirely with its own resources. Thus, while in its twenty-two years of existence it has covered the ground that required over one hundred years for the United States, it still remains at about the general level our country was thirty or forty years ago; it will require about seven or eight years to cover this gap, and thus overtake and surpass the United States also, if we continue as in the past ten years. Only then can the Soviet

Union begin to demonstrate that society of abundance, which is the higher stage of socialism, called communism, which in the United States, once we took the socialist path, would be possible almost immediately, in the first years.

In the United States, our accumulated wealth and national production is still two to three times as great as that of the Soviet Union, which has a population almost half again as large. And yet, for all our greater wealth and productivity, two-thirds of our population is excluded from any secure place at the economic table of the nation, while one-third actually lives on makeshift and charity, ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed, in the very shadow of enormous stores of wealth that are unused. In the Soviet Union, in contrast, the entire population is productively employed, the general standard of life has increased about five-fold in ten years, and the whole population lives in comparative security. In our country, the educational system is progressively deteriorating, and especially higher education is more and more being denied the mass of the people. In the Soviet Union, in contrast, they have multiplied the educational and cultural budget more than twenty-fold in ten years. So that even with only a fraction of the available national resources, as compared with the U.S., the Soviet Union has brought to its population a life of hope and progress and security, which has been inexorably fading out of the American scene since 1929.

Surely there is something new, vital and important in the Soviet Union, which American workers, and the American toiling people generally, should be deeply interested in.

Is it not within the realm of possibility that we might be able to learn something from the Soviet Union that we could turn to good advantage in our own country?

Ah, but it is precisely this modest suggestion which, above all, causes our newspapers to become apoplectic with rage. It is this suggestion in my Boston speech which was the real reason why the *Herald Tribune* spoke ominously about Section 4 of the Federal Criminal Code, and ten years' imprisonment, and "orders from Moscow," and "agents of a foreign principal," and all the rest of it.

And it was this, also, which enabled the relentless newspaper reporters to force the gracious First Lady of the land into a corner and wring from her the declaration: "I don't think any of us countenance activities of anybody who openly acknowledges that he or she owes first allegiance to a foreign government."

It seems that the time has come for a more careful examination of this whole question of "allegiance to a foreign government." This charge is the ideological spearhead of the growing attempts to outlaw the Communist Party, and to make the very subject of socialism a forbidden one. It is the issue around which has been created the greatest confusion. And yet, our country has sufficient experience, in its own history most widely popularized among the masses, to clarify this question.

Let us look back to the revolutionary war of 1776-1783, which laid the foundations of our nation with all its subsequent greatness. Recall the famous Frenchman, Lafayette, who entered the military service of the infant republic and, by his services on the staff of George Washington, won such a feeling of gratitude to the whole French nation that more than 140 years later America entered the World War at France's side under the slogan "Lafayette, we are here!" Did Lafayette become a bad Frenchman because he offered his life in the service of the United States?

When Lafayette returned to France, after participating in the American Revolution, he could not reconcile himself to the corrupt and bankrupt political, economic and social system that ruled his country. He took part in the rising efforts to apply some of the principles he had learned in America, which efforts culminated in the great French Revolution, and the founding of the first French republic. Was he a bad Frenchman because he wanted to bring to France, his own native land, the great advantages of progress and democracy which he had helped to establish in the United States?

American history is studded with honored names of the citizens of other lands who helped put America in the forefront of world progress, and who did their best to transmit American experience back to their own people and their own lands of origin.

Why, then, should it be considered outside the scope of American understanding that American Communists, who see in the great socialist Soviet Union a great historic step forward for all mankind, should give to it their unbounded admiration and support, should propose that our own country learn its great lessons, without thereby yielding one jot or tittle of their loyalty to the United States and its people?

Listening to our statesmen and reading our newspapers nowadays, one gets the conviction that they look upon the Soviet Union as an enemy, if not the chief enemy, of the United States. Indeed, many seem to consider it the only enemy. But how can the Soviet Union be considered anything but a friend, and a very good friend, even by those who look upon capitalism as the best of all possible systems, and upon socialism in the Soviet Union as a bad mistake? Thanks to the Soviet Union and its growing strength, America has been relieved of enormous international pressures, that had grown quite menacing, and which were mitigated not by American action (our statesmen seemed quite helpless in face of the advancing Axis combination) but entirely by the action of the Soviet Union. But while the American nation gained such great advantages from the smashing of the Axis by the Soviet Union, the American monopolists and reactionaries seized upon this, not to consolidate the common interests and friendship between America and the Soviet Union, but demonstratively to cultivate hostility, while cuddling up to Chamberlain and even proposing a bargain with the Mikado, at the expense of the Chinese people.

Yet it was Chamberlain, and Baldwin before him, that betrayed the interests of the United States to the Japanese imperialists, over long years down to date. Stalin didn't do anything like that. It was the British rulers who, over years, systematically built up the Frankenstein called Hitler, and destroyed the foundations of world peace. The Soviet Union didn't do anything like that. It was the British Tories who intrigued among the Latin American nations to block the American aims of a Pan-American solidarity against the war threats from Europe. The Soviet Union didn't do anything like that. In fact, there is nothing whatever that the Soviet Union had *done* in the inter-

national arena, where it can touch American interests, that can possibly explain the hostility of the American bourgeoisie. That hostility can only be explained on the grounds that they dislike the very idea of its existence, and that this grows into hatred precisely because they see the Soviet Union growing strong and powerful and calling for an end to the war. In short, they hate the Soviet Union, not because they are Americans, for as Americans the Soviet Union is helping them, but they hate it as *capitalists*, because they fear the successful example of the Soviet Union will stimulate the American people to try the socialist way out of our difficulties, which we have been unable to solve under capitalism.

The capitalist press, the radio and the pulpit are unitedly trying to convince the American people that the very idea of socialism is alien to the American tradition and American habits of thought. But that is not true; it is most profoundly false. The Declaration of Independence, which substituted the sovereignty of the people for the sovereignty of the King, also transferred the King's final ownership of the national economy ("*eminent domain*") to the people as a whole; therefore, it is a basic proposition in the common law of America that all property is only held in trust by individual owners on behalf of the people as a whole. That trust is valid only as long as it can be shown to conduce to the welfare of the people as a whole; when the people understand that the era of monopoly capitalism has long ago ended the time when private property in the national economy promoted their welfare, they will also remember the ancient and honorable tradition of "*eminent domain*," or the final ownership that is vested in the nation as a whole. It was Abraham Lincoln who expressed that great American tradition in its most popular form, when he said:

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it.

Socialism is neither more nor less than the taking possession of their country by the people, and operating its economy for the benefit of all, as the common property, through the people's institutions formed and adjusted to that purpose. Monopolistic capitalism, senile and decaying as it is today, is profoundly hostile and destructive to the American

tradition, which can be protected and developed further only through socialism.

There are, without doubt, powerful forces at work in our country to undermine and destroy the great American traditions to which our people owe their greatness. But these forces meet no opposition or criticism from those who rail so loudly against the Communists and against the socialist system. One of these forces is represented by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. We have no quarrel with the great mass of Catholic workers in America, we support their religious liberty unconditionally, we find a growingly sympathetic attitude toward socialism among them which we welcome. We will always extend the hand of fellowship to our Catholic brothers. All the more necessary is it to point out, however, that the First Encyclical of Pope Pius XII contains a direct attack upon a fundamental American principle, the separation of Church and State, which may have a seriously deleterious effect upon American public life if it is followed up with practical efforts and proposals. The Pope makes a direct attack against "those ideas which do not hesitate to divorce civil authority from every kind of dependence upon" the appointed representatives of Rome.

Precisely those ideas, however, were woven into the foundations of American democracy, under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson. It was Jefferson who wrote the Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, adopted by Virginia in 1786, which became the guide for our country's handling of this question. This Act established:

...that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever...nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

When president, Jefferson declared: "I consider the government of the United States as interdicted by the Constitution from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, discipline or exercises."

There are growing signs that the Catholic Church hierarchy are not content to influence the lives of their own flock, but have the ambition to determine more and more the laws and administration of the states and the nation in line with their professed creeds. This trend threatens difficulties in the future which should be warned against. We must repopularize Jefferson's teachings on religious freedom today, for there are to be seen dangerous tendencies to revert to religious tests and slogans in the conduct of public affairs. It is part of the general assault against popular liberties and the sovereignty of the people.

In these days of world crisis and war, the Communist Party is needed more than ever by the American working class, and by the masses. With the former liberals and progressives, with some honorable exceptions, frantically scuttling for shelter from the impending storms, abandoning their principles until fair weather shall return, among all political organizations only the Communist Party stands firm, as the organized vanguard, and leads the way through storm and stress without wavering. The Social-Democrats dominating the American Labor Party in New York have assumed the dishonorable role of the first open war party in the country; the Norman Thomas Socialists and the Lovestoneites voted enthusiastically for their resolution, explaining afterwards that "the only part of the resolution that is binding is its anti-Communist clause." Norman Thomas has explained that he can support the war only when it is turned against the Soviet Union and has guarantees of being successful. The Trotskyites openly provoke war against the Soviet Union. All and sundry of the open and masked war-supporters pray for the suppression and outlawing of the Communist Party, help to bring this about, and proclaim to the world that the Communist Party is already dead anyway.

Last Tuesday's election results have already informed the world that the news of our death had been greatly exaggerated. Although the enemies of democracy had illegally ruled the Communist Party off the ballot, yet 50,000 workers went to the polls and wrote in the names of our candidates, Cacchione, Amter, Begun and Crosbie. That was a demonstration of confidence, enthusiasm, intelligence and fight-

ing spirit, which no other group in American political life could show. It registered a rapidly growing influence of our party among the masses which, if our candidates had been on the ballot, would surely have doubled our previous vote.

On the other hand, the American Labor Party sacrificed its magnificent opportunities in order to play the part of lackey, more zealous than even his master, in support of the war. It became more warlike than ever the bourgeois parties and candidates. It treacherously turned its efforts chiefly toward defeating its own most popular and fearless leader. Dominated by Socialists who had already wrecked their own party, the American Labor Party leadership was led down the same path that destroyed the Socialist Party in the past years.

Yes, the Communist Party in New York and throughout America, has demonstrated that it is very much alive and growing stronger at a more rapid pace than ever before in its history. Let our friends take courage, and let our enemies beware of believing their own propaganda about our political death. If there are such persons who believe that the Communist Party grew strong and influential only because they tolerated us, and that once they have turned their mighty frowns against us our Party will thereupon wither and die, they must now learn that Communists are made from a different, more durable, material. Our party is strong because it is nurtured in the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, in the accumulated wisdom of the greatest thinkers, teachers, and guides produced by mankind. Their thought is ineradicably implanted in the minds and hearts of the American working class. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, supreme embodiment of these teachings, goes forward from achievement to achievement, from victory to victory, lighting the way for the workers of all the world. The Communist International, association of all the Communist Parties of the world, holds fast in all its many national links to its great tasks of struggle against the imperialist war, for peace and socialism. Yes, the Communist Party of the United States grows strong because, bone and blood of the American working class and fighters for the great American revolutionary traditions, it stands in unbreakable solidarity with the workers of the whole world,

and, before all, with those who have built a mighty fortress of socialism and peace, the glorious Soviet Union.

Speech delivered in Madison Square Garden, New York City, November 13, 1939, on the occasion of the Twenty-second Anniversary of the Socialist Revolution in Russia.