

**THE PEOPLE
AGAINST
THE WAR
MAKERS**

by EARL BROWDER

General Secretary, Communist Party, U. S. A.

5c

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BY

EARL BROWDER

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This pamphlet is the text of the report delivered by Earl Browder, General Secretary, to the National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States, in New York on February 17, 1940.

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I.

COMRADES, the main purpose of this meeting of the National Committee is to set in motion the preparations for the 1940 election campaign. I therefore want to start out by submitting to you a resolution which has been prepared on this question, a very brief resolution:

Point 1: This being the year for the holding of the next regular national convention, in accordance with the provisions of the Party constitution, as well as the year of the Presidential elections, the National Committee decides that this year's convention shall be a presidential nominating convention—for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President and the adoption of an election platform.

Point 2: The place and time of the convention to be fixed by us.

Point 3: The National Committee elects a National Campaign Committee which shall have full power on all matters pertaining to the organization of the nominating convention, preparation of filing of candidates and electors in the various states, raising and spending funds, etc. This Committee shall be responsible only to the convention to which it shall make a full report of its activities.

Now, as a basis and background for this setting in motion of the national election campaign, it is necessary for us to review the developments since the last meeting of our Committee, in order to confirm, amend or correct the line which has been followed since that meeting, the adjustments which have been made to the changing world and national situation. I

think you will all understand that the pressure of work, the pressure of events, have made it impossible for us to have the usual complete and detailed preparations for our meeting here. We do not come to you with the usual fully worked-out program or thesis, nor have we a detailed, prepared report on the developments since last September, when last our National Committee met. You have to consider all of our problems in the light of the declarations we have made from time to time since the last meeting. You have especially to give your consideration to the resolution of the Political Committee on October 13,* which first fixed in the main outlines our estimate of the new situation created by the war and the realignments of class forces within the country consequent upon the new situation.

This resolution of October 13 is the basic document already overwhelmingly approved by our Party—I think it can be said, unanimously approved—the foundation for our work at present, which you are asked here to make the official document of the National Committee itself.

Effects of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact

Now, I want to give a sketchy and brief review of the events since last September, the development of our policy in relation to these events. I am not assuming the task at present of giving any final or detailed analysis. The purpose of my remarks is merely to refresh our minds on these things which we all know, and to bring them together in a more or less systematic manner as a foundation for such discussion as may be necessary in estimating the situation and our next tasks.

When we met last, on September 1 in Chicago, it was the moment of that historic collapse of the policy of world imperialism led by Chamberlain and Daladier, the policy which for years had been driving towards finding an outlet for the increasing contradictions in the imperialist camp through a great joint effort of world imperialism against the Soviet Union, with the fascist axis bloc as its spearhead. The collapse

* See *The Communist*, November, 1939, p. 995.

of that policy, which had consistently led the world for years deeper and deeper into war and crisis, was signalized by the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact on August 23, after the British and French governments had made it clear beyond all doubt that their negotiations for a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union had been merely a subterfuge, a pretense, and a smokescreen behind which they had been exerting all efforts toward creating a general war alignment against the Soviet Union.

It was against the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact that British-French imperialism declared war in the beginning of September. It was to break that pact and force the Nazis to carry out the original program, war against the Soviet Union, that the hostilities were initiated. This character of the second imperialist war was fully made clear by the prosecution of the war itself, by the continuation of the whole policy to the point of complete abandonment of Chamberlain's tool, the fascist Polish government, which had been given paper guarantees of support from its guarantors, because they still hoped that the Nazi invasion of Poland would result in their original aim of a clash and eventual war with the Soviet Union.

The character of the war on the Western Front to date, so generally referred to because of its exceptional features as the "phony war," is merely a testimony to the character of the war aims of British-French imperialism supported by the American bourgeoisie. It is a real war, not a phony war. But its peculiar nature which has given it that nickname of the "phony war" is determined by its aim, which is to force Germany to transform the conflict into a war against the Soviet Union.

The Changed World Situation

The character of the world situation has been rapidly changing since the outbreak of the war. Just let me mention a few of the key points which have established the line of the changing relation of forces as a result of the Soviet peace policy and of the family quarrel within the capitalist world. Outstanding is the new position of the Soviet Union in world

affairs. The Soviet Union has emerged not merely as one of the great powers, but as a decisive influence in world politics. It has consolidated its position, consolidated its defenses against possible attacks, enormously extended its influence among its neighbors and among the exploited peoples throughout the world. The liberation of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia, accomplished within a few weeks after the outbreak of the war, is one of the great events of modern history. It answered so many questions which had been bothering some people and gave so clearly and indelibly the character of the Soviet policy that masses heretofore under the influence of anti-Soviet ideology had their eyes opened overnight by the liberating role of the Soviet Union in world affairs. That act of liberation is highly significant for the United States, where we have so many nationality groups cherishing sentimental, ideological, and cultural ties with their lands of origin, as well as being of the fabric of American society. Here we have seen since the liberation of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia the solution within our country of problems of relationships between Ukrainian, White Russian, Lithuanian and Polish nationality groups, which, poisoned by the old bourgeois nationalism, had lived in strained relationships. After the collapse of fascist Poland and the liberation of Western Ukraine and White Russia, we have seen these people coming together as never before since they have settled in the United States, in bonds of friendship, sympathy and collaboration. The ensuing mutual aid pacts between the Soviet Union and Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia further extended and developed the specific phase of the policy of the land of workers' rule in the world given over to war by capitalism. By those pacts the machinations of the war-makers were excluded from another great section of the world.

In relation to these mutual aid pacts there was witnessed an act unprecedented in all history. The Soviet Union of its own volition handed back to little Lithuania its former capital of Vilna, which had been forcibly seized by White Guard Poland twenty years ago, in violation of decisions of

the League of Nations and all of the moral authorities of the bourgeois world.

A further significant registration of the new position of the Soviet Union was the armistice with the Japanese forces on the Mongolian borders and the subsequent inauguration of conversations for the peaceful delimitation of frontiers. This was a development of major importance, not only for the countries immediately involved, but for world relations. It represented a further limiting of the field of expansion of the World War, a further registration of the military prowess of the Soviet Union for defense against all possible enemies or combination of enemies, as well as of the improved strategical position of the Soviet Union in world affairs. We have seen how world imperialism, aided by Chamberlain and the British ruling class, finally forced their agents in control of Finland to make a desperate effort to break up this consolidation of the Soviet peace policy in its immediate environment. The negotiations were proceeding with promise of settling the relationship between the Soviet Union and Finland in the same peaceful way, in a way satisfactory to the interests of the peoples, as with Lithuania, Latvia and Ethonia. But those negotiations were suddenly balked by a sharp change in policy initiated from London. The tentative agreements arrived at were overruled. Instead, the Finnish Government, London's puppet, was pushed into an open provocation and threat of military action against Leningrad, only twenty miles away from the Mannerheim line, only a few minutes away from the vast bombing fields that had been set up in White Guard Finland—a provocation based on long preparations to transform Finland into a steel dagger at the throat of the Soviet Union.

It has been revealed in the last weeks that in the period from May to August, while the British-French negotiators were in Moscow, ostensibly trying to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union against Germany, Britain and France had sent forty million dollars' worth of armaments into Finland—armaments that had no possible meaning except as preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

Well, we don't need to go today into all the details of this gigantic conspiracy, this grandiose effort of the world bourgeoisie to turn its forces to the crushing of the Soviet Union. Suffice it to say that all of these enormous efforts and these grandiose diabolical schemes came to wreck. They came to wreck on the Bolshevik vigilance of the Soviet workers, of their Party, and, above all, of their great leader, our Lenin of today, Comrade Stalin.

As Comrade Foster mentioned in opening this meeting, the military news from Finland this morning indicates that the process of the liberation of the Finnish people from their forcibly imposed role of puppets for world imperialism is well under way. We can expect that it will not be long now when a free Finland will work out her own destiny in close friendship and collaboration with the Soviet Union.

Aggressive Role of American Imperialism

Now within the past six months, we have not only had these great events abroad, but we have witnessed big changes within the United States, immediately reflected in the new role of this country in world affairs. How can we characterize these changes most accurately and briefly?

We can note as an outstanding feature that the American bourgeoisie as a whole, U. S. imperialism, has in the face of the outbreak of the open struggle for the redivision of the world resumed its aggressive and dynamic role in world affairs. For some years since the outbreak of the great crisis in 1929, the American bourgeoisie had been sharply divided, as a result of which the aggressive face of American imperialism had been put into the background. The American bourgeoisie had not seen clearly its path. It had been feeling its way, it had been conciliating the rebelling masses of the people at home with some social reforms, it had been conciliating the colonial and semi-colonial peoples abroad through the so-called "good neighbor" policy, and it had been feeling its way in relation to its imperialist rivals with great caution.

But all of its doubts, its divided mind, its paralysis were quickly resolved in the face of the outbreak of the war, with

the opening of the actual process of armed redistribution of the world, and especially with the prospects that clearly arose from the bankruptcy of the Chamberlain policy, the rising threat of revolution in Europe and of the overthrow of the European bourgeoisie. It was the specter of proletarian revolution in Europe which, above all, resolved the divisions and doubts of the American bourgeoisie, restored class unity to it—that class unity which they call “national unity”— and which transformed almost overnight the Roosevelt Administration from a New Deal, progressive administration, leaning upon the people in opposition to the most reactionary section of monopoly capital, into the leader and organizer of all the reactionary forces in the country, the instrument of that class unity *against* the people, the character of which is revealed with startling clarity today, less than six months after the outbreak of the war.

The Demagoguery of "National Unity"

At our National Committee meeting in Chicago in September, we took note very sharply of the voices that were raised from the camp of reaction demanding national unity in terms of establishing a new council around the President which would determine the course of the country. We showed the falsity of that kind of national unity. We warned that it would be a unity of the bourgeoisie against the people. We did not see far enough, however. We saw clearly as far as we saw; but we did not see at that moment that Roosevelt would reject those reactionary proposals for something much worse, that is, that Roosevelt would himself assume leadership of the camp of reaction. Although we always knew that to be a possibility, we did not forecast it, and for weeks we were reluctant to accept the accumulating evidence that this was the course Roosevelt was taking. No one can accuse us that we hastened to withdraw our support from the New Deal and from Roosevelt. If we are to be reproached, it is because we made this break belatedly and reluctantly, and only after the publicly registered and irrevocable facts had made clear beyond all possibility of doubt that the Roosevelt Adminis-

tration had taken the road of reaction and war, that the progressive social legislation and policies of the New Deal had been reversed and scrapped, and that the bourgeoisie and all its hangers-on were united in the drive against the civil rights of the American people, against their advances, against their peace, to drag America into this war.

The American bourgeoisie is acting in its new unity around Roosevelt—now the darling of all camps of the bourgeoisie which only a few short months ago hated him with a fierce intensity. Now they are dripping with honey and rose-water towards him. The task they are taking up through Roosevelt and his Administration is two-fold. I would place as first in their consideration for determining their course, the fear of revolution in Europe and the determination to save the European bourgeoisie at all costs; and, second, to accomplish that in such a way as to advance the hegemony of American imperialism over its rivals and bring incidental profits to American capitalists in the process.

That is the meaning of the new course of the Administration in Washington. That is the meaning of the abandonment of neutrality. That is the meaning of the gearing of American economy at once and immediately as the war reserve of the Allies. That is the meaning of the new budget, the hunger-and-war budget. That is the meaning of Roosevelt's course in relation to Finland, the direct intervention to help Britain stop Finland from coming to an agreement with the Soviet Union, and the present course of direct economic, and even a degree of military, aid to Finland of the Mannerheims.

That is the meaning of the new negotiations with Japan, where very openly an attempt is being made to reach an agreement on the division of the spoils of the conquered China. That is the meaning of the new tone in the Latin American relations, in which Sumner Welles becomes the symbol of a military protectorate over the Americas, a new tone in dealing with economic relationships. That is the meaning of the unprecedented establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican, without authorization and over the head of Congress. That is the meaning of the new Colonel

House mission to Europe, undertaken by the same Sumner Welles, famous since his exploit in Cuba of upsetting an elected government, and installing a military dictatorship in behalf of American capital. That is the meaning of the whole hamstringing of American democracy, the offensive against the labor movement, the offensive against democratic rights, the offensive against the living standards of the American people. The true face, the true role of the American bourgeoisie has come out sharply and vividly, and we have class relationships in all their nakedness—class struggle cutting through all the pretenses and sophistries of the bourgeoisie, the relations emerging, the real struggles developing, which will determine the fate of our country and of the world.

Looking Towards the 1940 Elections

Perhaps this will suffice, for the moment at least, as a review of the main developments of the past six months. We must turn our attention, on the basis of this estimate, to the future to say what will come out of this, what problems it presents to us, what forms the struggle will take, what policies we must project, especially looking towards the 1940 elections—policies that will best advance and protect the interests of the mass of the people, first of all of the working class, of the masses of the toiling farmers and of the impoverished city middle class, the great majority that we call the people. Clearly, these interests of the masses, these interests of the people and of all the separate sections of the people—workers, farmers, youth, Negroes and others—these interests cannot be defended through any of the old political channels from which some benefits have been derived up until the outbreak of the war. The mass of people already recognize this. This is not something that is the monopoly of our far-sighted eyes.

The most near-sighted can already see that the protection of their immediate interests is not advanced through the Republican Party, or any faction of it; through the Democratic Party, or any faction of it. On every question directly of interest to the mass of people, there is unity between all of these leaders, groups, factions and parties. That is what they

mean by "national unity." They mean their getting together against the people, unitedly to advance the basic interests of their class, the bourgeoisie, and first of all of the monopolist bourgeoisie.

Seeing Through Roosevelt

That this is clearly seen, and has been registered far beyond the limits of our influence, is shown by the speed with which the mass movement of the people suddenly dropped the issue of the third-term for Roosevelt. One year ago, the idea of the third-term for Roosevelt aroused great support from the people, from their mass organizations, while arousing apoplectic fury among the bourgeoisie. All of that suddenly changed. The masses have dropped that issue like a hot potato. More and more they have specifically declared themselves against it in no uncertain terms. But among those who threw apoplectic fits six months ago at the idea, there is a sudden new friendliness and receptiveness toward it. The third-term idea has graduated into high society. It is now a respectable citizen on Park Avenue. It doesn't walk around the haunts of the labor movement any more. It is not seen at meetings of the unemployed.

Organized labor has distinctly expressed itself as completely disillusioned with Roosevelt and his Administration. The organized unemployed have expressed themselves with equal decisiveness. And last week-end, we saw most dramatically staged in Washington the confrontation of Roosevelt, his Administration and his policies, by the organized youth movement of America.

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of this great gathering of the youth in Washington. The newspapers, their columnists and special writers have become obsessed with the Citizenship Institute of the youth in Washington, and they have been writing about it ever since. Their reactions are most interesting. Yesterday, in the *Herald Tribune*, Dorothy Thompson produced another one of her masterpieces, a letter to the Youth Congress. To those of you who haven't read it, I recommend it; it is most interesting, most

interesting in the way in which the chief ideologists of reaction in America come to the defense of that same President whom a year ago they denounced as a near-Communist, and label everybody that criticizes him as a Communist or under Communist influence, a "Communist stooge." A year ago, anybody that supported the President was dubbed a Communist or a "Communist stooge."

Another example is Walter Lippmann's column this morning. Walter Lippmann finds that the youth insulted our President. The idea—they insulted our President! And this comes in a column which for five years has made a specialty of insulting the President of the United States. The most expert insulters of the President of the United States suddenly become excited because the Youth Congress remains cold and refuses to applaud the President when he tells them there is no hope for jobs and you must not expect them; there is no hope for peace and you must not fight for it.

In this meeting between the President and the Youth Congress, we see the confrontation of the American bourgeoisie and the American people. And if everyone who refuses to accept this new course of hunger and war for the people is to be turned over to the Communist Party, then, my friends, you must get prepared for an unexampled recruiting campaign, because you are going to have the majority of the people in this country.

Of course, we would make a great mistake, a great mistake indeed, if we should assume that this is true, that the great, broad and deep turn of the American people against Roosevelt means a conscious turn to Communism and the Communist Party. That is not true, and don't let the reactionary propaganda fool us for one moment. These vast masses will turn to Communism and the Communist Party only to the degree that we can reach them and educate them and organize them in the struggle, not spontaneously or automatically; but the great spontaneous movement against the hunger-and-war program of the American bourgeoisie is a tremendous opportunity for us to organize the people for their immediate interests and, through serving the people in the immediate struggle, bring

them much more rapidly to the Communist Party and to our socialist program.

It is this which determines our tasks for 1940. The American people could hardly miss the dramatic contrast between that Roosevelt who, up to a year ago, expressed their immediate desires more or less, and the Roosevelt who today places himself as the leader and organizer of all the forces that block the immediate demands of the people.

Roosevelt—Yesterday and Today

I was interested these last days in collecting a few quotations from the new Roosevelt and the old Roosevelt and in placing them in that same confrontation that we saw at the Youth Congress last week-end. You should remember his speech to the Youth Congress. The President said to the young people, "Don't, Don't, Don't." He told them a lot of things they were not to do. He told them not a thing about what to do. Only a year ago, in his Jackson Day speech, one of the high points of the President's discourse was this statement: "The young generation of Americans by a very large majority intend to keep on going places."

It was a splendid expression and a true one. The realization of that fact rose up to smash the President in the face at the Youth Congress last week-end.

In 1936, the President said in his famous Madison Square Garden speech in New York: "Business and financial monopoly, organized money, are unanimous in their hatred for me—and I welcome their hatred."

In 1940, the President says in his Jackson Day speech:

"Most American presidents had to drop their hair shirts or else lose their political shirts. And when you have learned not to worry at all about all these things, there is really a lot of fun in this job. . . . [After] a terrific battle of words, a forensic philippic, a fifteen-round heavyweight championship bout, the two contestants five minutes later will be found sitting in the cloak room with their arms about each other, laughing and joking."

Let us go back to 1939, to the old Roosevelt. Speaking on the period of Jackson and American politics when the Democratic Party lost the election campaign after generations of control and didn't come back until long after the Civil War, Roosevelt, in January, 1939, said these words:

"Jackson's successor, reputedly a smart politician, could not keep the Democratic Party in power because he and they drifted from principles to politics. . . . They failed to deliver what they had promised. . . . In 1840 the new Whig president back by the descendants of Hamiltonian aristocrats made his first tender of the Secretaryship of the Treasury to old Nicholas Biddle himself whom Andrew Jackson had so roundly trounced and driven from the temple. From Andrew Jackson to Nicholas Biddle—four short years."

But at the Jackson Day dinner 1940, one year later, the new Roosevelt says:

"Alexander Hamilton is a hero to me because he did the job that had to be done—to bring stability out of the chaos of currency and banking difficulties. Thomas Jefferson is a hero to me despite the fact that the theories of the French revolutionists at times overexcited his practical judgment."

Yes, quite clearly, we have two entirely distinct Roosevelts. Of course, perhaps it was always the same Roosevelt; but a year ago it was still the Roosevelt representing a section of the bourgeoisie leaning upon the working class. Today it is the Roosevelt standing at the head of a united bourgeoisie fighting against the working class. That is the difference; that is all the difference in the world, and it is that changed class relationship that we must keep our eyes on and understand and make the masses of the American workers understand.

Back to Tweedledum and Tweedledee

We are back again in America to the old two-party system of tweedledum and tweedledee, or, to preserve that clever and witty improvement upon the formulation given to us by

the old Roosevelt, "tweedledum and tweedledummer," although which one is "tweedledummer" is today very hard to decide. That is, we have again, as far as the major party structure in the country is concerned, that same two-party system which Engels described as far back as 1891:

" . . . Nowhere do 'politicians' form a more separate, powerful section of the nation than in North America. There, each of the two great parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions. It is well known that the Americans have been striving for thirty years to shake off this yoke, which has become intolerable, and that in spite of all they can do they continue to sink ever deeper in this swamp of corruption. It is precisely in America that we see best how there takes place this process of the state power making itself independent in relation to society, whose mere instrument it was originally intended to be. Here there exists no dynasty, no nobility, no standing army, beyond the few men keeping watch on the Indians, no bureaucracy with permanent posts or the right to pensions. And nevertheless we find here two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends—and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality exploit and plunder it." *

The three-term issue has been transformed because of this transformation. That which was the form of the demand for the continuation of social progress, for peace, has been transformed by the logic of changing class relationships into its opposite. That is why that third-term demand has shifted its habitat. It is no longer among the masses; it is in the counting houses. Significantly, among those inhabitants of the political

* Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Volume II, pp. 458-459, International Publishers, New York.

underworld, the Trotskyites, Lovestoneites, and Norman Thomasites, we see the same startling transformation taking place. Remember how a year ago they became indignant when we said the masses were justified in their demand for a third term. But in the last few months many of them have softened up and become open converts to the third-term demand. They have accepted it for the same reasons as the economic royalists. For the very reason that the masses have dropped it, they take it up.

Not Third Term—But Third Party

The issue among the masses today is no longer third term, it is third party. Here we have the issue in which we cannot say that the way is clear or that the masses are clear about the question. The masses know that they have no opportunity of advancing their interests through either of the major parties, but they don't yet see the way out to achieve the political expression that will unite them and register their united demands, how to break through the barrier of two major parties owned and controlled by Wall Street. It has been done before in American history and, in fact, as we have pointed out many times, there has never been a major new direction taken in the national development of America except when the masses crystallized themselves in the new-party formation and broke through the old-party formation.

The solution of the great crisis of slavery in the United States was found only by breaking through the old party system and founding a new party. Lincoln led the Republican Party to power four years after the founding of that party in opposition to the two great mass parties of the day. We have the same problem of the mechanics of founding a democratic expression of the people today that Lincoln faced in the late 1850's and in the election of 1860.

We cannot find any short-cut in this deeper crisis of today—a world crisis in every sense as well as a national crisis—that Lincoln and his co-fighters were unable to find at that time. This is a fight for the unity of the people. It is a struggle to find organizational channels which can bring the majority of

the people into an expression of their deep-felt common needs and desires. It is a struggle for finding the concrete practical expression of democracy, understanding democracy in its historic sense of the rule of the people.

Marxist-Leninist Concept of Democracy

Perhaps it would be useful for us to give a few words to the question of democracy at this point, since new angles of this problem are coming up. The present development, rather, is bringing forward concretely some phases of the problem of democracy which have been in the background for some time. And I should like to offer a few quotations from our Communist classics on the question of democracy, of which I think we would do well to remind ourselves. The first is from a letter of Frederick Engels to Eduard Bernstein, dated London, March 24, 1884. In it Engels summarizes the theoretical position of Marxism on the question of democracy. Commenting on an article by Bernstein in the *Sozialdemokrat* of that year in which the concept of democracy had been dealt with in a loose and vulgar sense, Engels said:

“This concept changes with the *demos* [people] at every given time and therefore does not help us a bit. What should have been said, in my opinion, is this: In order to seize political power the proletariat also needs democratic forms; but like all political forms they are only means for them. But if democracy today is wanted as an *end*, one must base himself on peasants and petty bourgeois, that is, on classes which are in the process of decline and are reactionary in relation to the proletariat the moment they try to preserve themselves artificially. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the *consistent* form of bourgeois rule is precisely the democratic republic, but which, because of the development already achieved by the proletariat, has become too dangerous—but, as France and America show, is still possible as the mode of bourgeois rule. Thus, the ‘principle’ of liberalism as ‘something historically developed’ is actually only an inconsistency; the liberal constitutional monarchy is an adequate form of bourgeois rule first at the beginning when

the bourgeoisie is not yet altogether through with the absolute monarchy, and secondly at the end when the proletariat already makes the democratic republic too dangerous. And yet the democratic republic continues to remain the *final* form of bourgeois rule: that form in which it is destroyed." *

Let me add two brief quotations from Lenin on this question, from his polemics with Karl Kautsky. Lenin said:

"Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy. The Soviet government is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic."

And again:

"The Soviet Republic is a proletarian democracy, a democracy for the poor, and not a democracy for the rich, as is really the case in every bourgeois democracy, even the best."

Wide dissemination of the rich classic selections from the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the question of democracy and its relation to the class struggle will help us in the coming period to guide more effectively the democratic mass movement in America, to unfold its fullest possibilities without ever falling into a vulgar, petty-bourgeois democratism.

* *The Letters of Frederick Engels to Eduard Bernstein and Others*, edited by Eduard Bernstein, Berlin, 1925. pp. 141-142.

II.

Now, for a few observations on the work of our Party and its tasks, along more concrete lines. First of all, about the concerted attack against the Communist Party that has been launched by the combined forces of reaction with a special viciousness in the past months. You all remember how this attack was carried on last September under the banner: "The Communist Party is dead." They were just going out to bury our corpse for us. Curiously enough, at the very time that they have proclaimed the Communist Party to be dead, or dying, or at least chopped in pieces, the same reactionaries and their agents have been giving the most fulsome testimonials to the vitality of the Communist Party. They have been describing a most remarkable ghost which by remote control has been manipulating great masses of people in the United States: the whole American Youth Congress—just stooges for this dead Communist Party!

We must, of course, avoid either of these extremes of estimating the position of our Party and its influence and its vitality. It would, for example, be the most serious mistake for us to take the reactionaries' estimate that the Youth Congress is a Communist, or a "Communitic" or a "Communist-inspired" movement. It is nothing of the kind. And for us to be influenced by the reactionaries' cries so that we feel—well it's good to believe, maybe it's true—that would be as dangerous in its way as to fall under the influence of the slogan that the Communist Party is dead.

What the 14th Congressional District Election Signified

We want an accurate and objective estimate of our own Party and its position in American society, the trends of its

development. In order to get such an objective estimate, at least the elements of an objective estimate, perhaps as good a beginning as any could be made with an analysis of the special election in the 14th Congressional District of New York. Now, what did this election show? It showed, first of all, that while there did exist a potential majority of the people against both old parties, the situation had not matured to crystallize that majority behind the Communist Party at the moment. And no matter how many votes may have been bought or stolen from us, no matter how many voters were intimidated against voting for us, that fact stands out as unchallengeable.

But when we proceed to a closer analysis of what happened, we find the following, in comparing 1940 with the last general election in 1938: Whereas that year when we were in a bloc with the American Labor Party and the New Deal and when our vote was decisive in defeating Dewey and electing Governor Lehman, and we were going with the stream, we received 11.6 per cent of the vote cast in the 14th Congressional District—on February 6, 1940, after five months of the most strenuous united attacks upon us by every other political camp, when the American Labor Party leadership together with the Democratic Party were waging a war of extermination against us, what happened as a result of this change of forces?

First, the American Labor Party disappeared from the scene entirely. (What would they have said about the Communist Party if we had disappeared the way the American Labor Party did? Then they could have said with some show of consistency that the Communist Party is dead.) The Democratic Party dropped 45 per cent of its total vote, or almost 20 per cent of its proportion of the total vote—from 69 per cent to 57 per cent, while the Communist Party advanced from 11.6 per cent to 13.6 per cent. In other words, we were the only political organization which advanced its proportion of votes in this district. The Republicans stood still—in proportion.

This testing of forces took place under the maximum con-

centration of fire of all other camps against us. That was the only issue in the campaign—to defeat the Communists, and they really had the jitters about whether they could do it or not. When we bear in mind that none the less we not only maintained our strength, but advanced, I think we can say realistically that our Party has held its ranks solid, has multiplied its effective work, and has extended its influence deeper among the masses. That is unquestionable.

This is what was shown in the 14th Congressional District. Is this borne out by an examination of the situation in the country generally? We can get some evidence on this point from the Party registration and dues payments. From the statistics compiled to date we can say that during this period of concerted attack upon us, a period in which the F.B.I. and local police have raided our offices and even broken into private homes, with the newspapers howling intimidation against us every day, the Party registration is almost, if not quite, as high as a year ago, while the dues payments are at the highest point in Party history.

On the other hand, there are many weaknesses in respect to registration and dues payments and in the adjustment of the organizational functioning of our Party to the new situation—weaknesses which demand our most concentrated attention and the complete absence of any self-satisfied approach to this question. But in spite of that, we can say that the record proves that our Party is holding fast and has displayed an unconquerable spirit, an unbreakable unity in the face of all attacks. The Party has learned how to defend itself against a world of enemies.

How to Safeguard the Party

Among the most valuable things that we have learned in this struggle I would state the two essential features of the defense of the Party: First, more energetically, more intensively, more broadly going to the masses; and, second, taking systematic measures of a technical nature to safeguard the membership and the Party organs from interference by enemy attacks.

These two things must go together. If we try to go to the masses without the most careful systematic measures of technical defense, technical safeguarding, we may be leaving ourselves open to serious blows. But if we rely upon technical safeguards without the most intensive reaching and consolidating of mass contacts, all technical safeguards will be valueless. The constant reaching and appealing to the masses, the consolidating of our relationships with them, together with the most complete possible technical safeguarding of the Party organs and membership—these two things must go together. We must say, however, that in our practical experience we do not always find that they do go together. It will be necessary, with the comrades here from the various districts, —and we apply this test very concretely to each district—that we pose the question and have it answered: Have you properly combined these two features of Party defense in the work in your district, in your state, in each city?

At this point, let me raise very briefly, for reference and more detailed discussion, the very important matter that defense also means the building of special defense funds, local and national. No part of the Party can neglect or overlook this question without serious risks.

Now, as to the more general and permanent phases of the Party's work. I was rereading that section of my report delivered to the last Plenum in September, the section entitled: "The Communist Party—Its Role and Tasks." * Aside from certain topical questions, I find that much of what I said then is exactly what has to be said today also. And I don't want to take up time repeating what has been said before, what has been printed and read by most of the Party. I but want to recall your attention to that section of my September report and to suggest that a large part of what it set forth must be renewed and revived. We must review our approach to all the problems of Party building, not only in the light of new problems, but by constantly reemphasizing the old prin-

* Earl Browder, *Unity for Peace and Democracy*, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

ciples of our approach to this question. Concretely, I want to mention for purposes of emphasis, certain features of our work on which we must constantly have a check-list, which we must be reviewing from week to week, in which we must make systematic progress, no matter how difficult the circumstances of our work.

Party Literature to the Masses

First of all, the question of literature to the masses. In the first principle of Party defense that I spoke of—going to the masses—the most important role is played by mass literature. We have made certain definite improvements in this respect in the last six months. During this period we have, I believe, distributed more pamphlets than in any previous year in our Party's history.

That is an improvement. But can we say that this measures up to the possibilities of the situation, especially in the circulation of one-cent and two-cent pamphlets? I think that in an historical moment in which the enemy is making Communism and the Communist Party the central issue in the life of the country we must admit that with better organization of our work, we can multiply the present distribution of pamphlets, especially cheap pamphlets; for these mass popular pamphlets are precisely the sharpest weapon we have for influencing the masses, and through the masses, the actual course of events in the history of our country and of the world.

This emphasis upon literature should not be taken to mean neglect of mass meetings. Mass meetings become more important than ever, although through mass meetings we can never reach as broad a proportion of the population as we reach by literature. Mass meetings furnish something which literature alone cannot give—the consciousness of the power of the collectivity of the people, and there is nothing that can substitute for mass meetings to create that collective spirit out of which the Party is most effectively built, and to recruit the militants and actives who will further extend the distribution of our literature.

Bring the Voice of the "Daily Worker" to the People

We must say that in this past period we have realized as never before the indispensable role of the *Daily Worker*. Can you imagine us coming through these past six months without the *Daily Worker*? The *Daily Worker* is just like the air we breathe; for us, the *Daily Worker* is the most powerful published organ in America. But its circulation has not appreciably increased in this period. There has been a small, steady, spontaneous growth; there has been no real effort of our Party to expand in a serious way the circulation of the *Daily Worker*. We did not first understand the full potency of this weapon that we have in our hands. The enemy understands it and is preparing new blows against the *Daily Worker*. The leading Republican candidate for President is preparing the trial of Clarence Hathaway, its editor, and has demanded a blue ribbon jury on the grounds that an ordinary jury is not capable of passing upon the complicated issues of this case which requires people of extraordinary capacities, such as bankers, insurance brokers, members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Why is Mr. Dewey bringing this blue ribbon case against the *Daily Worker* and its editor as one of his principal issues of campaigning for the Presidency of the United States? To prove he can attack the Reds as effectively as Roosevelt and Murphy can. It is a matter of competition between them to see who can do the best job to put Reds behind bars and close up their institutions.

Well, we don't think they can close up the *Daily Worker*; we think that if they do, there will be a new *Daily Worker* appearing the day after. But we could feel so much more sure of that if we had a daily circulation of 100,000. Why can't we do it? The situation cries aloud for it. Yet this is one thing in regard to which we make such little progress. Let us set ourselves to thinking seriously about it.

More Concentration on the Mastery of Theory

Next to the question of the mass circulation of literature, I would place the task of more intense and more concen-

trated political, educational work, the task of the mastery of theory, not merely by leading strata, but by the Party as a whole. We must promote self-study and study-group discussion. We must popularize our classic literature, the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, utilizing these works as the weapons for mastering our own problems today. We must deepen the study of our own history, the history of our country and the history of our Party, in regard to which we made a good beginning last year and which must not be forgotten in the pressure of the tasks of today. Let us utilize and circulate more broadly *The Communist*, our monthly journal, which is doing a good job in spite of all difficulties, and is an indispensable weapon today. In its new format, it is adapted to broader circulation than ever before. Certainly the new conditions, politically, facilitate every effort to circulate it.

Building the Party and Its Leading Forces

Next among our tasks, I would emphasize recruiting, systematic recruiting, with an eye, first of all, to basic industries and the basic proletariat of the country. Recruiting has been somewhat neglected in this past half year; it must receive more attention in the coming period. The election campaign months must be a period of recruiting and strengthening of our Party's ranks; and this is possible.

The next task I would stress is the careful and intensive study of the problem of leading Party personnel, the problem of selection, training and promotion of leading forces. I have nothing new to say on this, except to emphasize that under present conditions, not only is there no excuse for neglecting this task, but there is every reason for redoubled attention to it; for in times like these we have more problems to cope with than in the former, more peaceful period. I was almost going to say more normal period, but I think the period of war is more normal as long as capitalism lasts. We are now in a more normal period than we were a couple of years ago.

For Closer Bonds With the Trade Union Masses

Next I would mention the need of the Party organs and the Party membership for maintaining constant vigilance and attention toward the trade unions and their economic struggles, to guarantee the utmost effective activity of all our forces and of all who are influenced by us in the struggle to build the trade unions for the achievement of their objectives, to unify them and to raise them to a higher level of political understanding and activity. The trade unions are the basic organizations of the working class, and our Party is the Party of the working class. Only ever closer bonds between our Party and the trade union masses will provide us with the sources of vitality and growth which we require.

Attention to the Problems of the Negro People and the National Groups

Great stress must be given to the problems of the Negro people, the struggle for Negro rights and, in the course of that struggle, the problems of anchoring the Party ever more firmly among the Negro masses. In this respect, we have a contradictory situation, contradictory trends. At a moment when the mass movements largely developed under our influence of the past are demonstrating their independent vitality, their permanence in moving forward, we have a certain slipping back in the more direct phases of Party activity and Party building among the Negroes. I think we must say that this, first of all, can only result from the fact that our Party's leading committees have allowed their attention to the Negro question to be diverted by the pressing problems of the immediate struggle—a great mistake. It is a great weakness which may become dangerous for us and for the mass movement among the Negroes if we do not instantly check it. We must devote the Party's attention to this problem and re-establish the healthy relationship between the developing mass movement and mass struggles among the Negroes and our Party, its membership and apparatus.

Next I would list the problems of the foreign-born, the

question of the protection of the foreign-born against discriminatory practices and legislation upon which the reactionary camp is concentrating a great deal of attention and energy today. *It should suffice that I mention this, to re-establish its tremendous importance for us and for the whole future of our country.*

Our Party's Tasks in Regard to the Youth

Let me turn briefly to the question of the youth, that most decisive section of the population, which is coming into political activity as never before in the history of our country, which is demonstrating the most healthy political development. It is necessary to refer to this question, especially because the very breadth and soundness of this great mass youth movement we have seen may give rise to notions in our Party ranks and among our leadership that there is nothing to worry about as far as this vital sector is concerned, that here everything is well and going ahead flourishingly. But that complacent attitude towards the youth movement would be the most dangerous thing for us, in that it would overlook its most critical point, namely, that the youth is not Communist as the reactionaries tell us, that it is our job to bring Communism to the youth movement and really to educate the youth of America in Communism. This we have not yet begun to any serious, broad, and deep extent; but that is the task our Party must take up in relation to the youth.

For Intensified Work Among the Farmers

Next I would mention the problem of the farmers. The farming masses are in revolt against the hunger-and-war program of the Administration, against the two principal parties of the bourgeoisie, perhaps as deeply as any other section of the population, but not in terms of organization and of conscious political expression of unity and of contacts with other sections of the people. The farmers represent the weakest sector of the movement for the people's front in the United States. This condition calls for great efforts to remedy it.

Again I am not able to add anything to what I said last September on this question, except to point out that the problem presents itself in sharper form than ever, that the masses of farmers are more ripe for independent political expression and organization than they have been before, but that we are not yet prepared to tackle the problem seriously enough to be able to show some significant results. It is one of the major tasks that we must undertake to carry through in the course of the 1940 election campaign.

Utilizing All Potentialities in Work Among Women

It is necessary again to say a special word about the field of work among the women, their activization, their organization, and the special problems which that work entails. All of our Party's work is directed towards the women as to the men, but there are special issues and problems, special political considerations in activizing women on a larger scale and in making them a more potent political force. We are still not utilizing these potentialities as much as we could; we are not utilizing them as much as will become increasingly necessary with the further maturing of the world crisis and the world war.

I want to call your attention to the approach of May Day. May Day must represent another stage in the rousing and organizing of the mass movement against the war. It must be organized on the broadest possible united front basis, in the best tradition of our previous May Days. But we must take every step to insure that the observation of May Day this year will involve larger masses than ever before. We must do everything to see that the revolt of the masses against the hunger-and-war program of the Administration shall be adequately registered in all the May Day manifestations.

Aid to China and the Refugees from Spain

I want to refer at this point to the question of China, and of our help to China, and again to urge that we shall not allow the special issues of China to be submerged in the new situation. We should see that the work in aid of China is con-

tinued and strengthened. We should develop the tradition of that great surgeon, that great man, that great Communist, Dr. Norman Bethune, who, as our representative, gave his life to the Chinese people in their struggle for national liberation.

We should clear up the slight confusion that seems to be rising in some circles with regard to the demand for an embargo of trade with Japan, because the government of the United States is so obviously playing with this question for purposes of negotiating an agreement with Japan at the expense of China. Some people have drawn the conclusion that to continue to fight for the embargo might merely play into the hands of American imperialists in its maneuvers. That is a wrong conclusion. The best way to smash the maneuvers of American imperialism is to create such a mass demand for an embargo in this country that the government cannot play around with this issue for purposes of negotiation.

We must also call attention to the conference now taking place in Mexico City on aid to the Spanish refugees. Out of this conference we hope will come a new and practical program for doing something effective for the refugees from the Spanish Republic. This remains one of our first international responsibilities.

We are one of the few supports in the world for the Communist Party of Spain, and for all the republican refugees. We must use every influence we have to crystallize a broad mass support for the refugees and their resettlement, and continue to maintain the direct help from our Party to the Spanish Communist Party, which has to operate largely, at this moment, in exile.

The Bolshevik Unity of Our Party

Finally, there is the question of Party unity. We have discussed this very much in the past, fruitfully I think, and I believe we have demonstrated the achievement of a unity of a Bolshevik character in our Party.

I think that we never fully understood the profound significance of this as much as we have in this last period. What does it mean when the entire bourgeoisie of America, the most

powerful capitalist country in the world, is obsessed with the idea that it must at all costs break the Communist Party of the United States? The American bourgeoisie is obsessed with that idea. And when all its blows, all its machinations, all its schemes and efforts result only in the creation of an even more solid unity of the Communist Party, the bourgeoisie becomes fearful of this unity, this unbreakable solidity, this monolithic quality of the Communist Party. Why? Because it realizes instinctively, if not through rational processes, it realizes perhaps more keenly than we sometimes do, the historic significance of this political manifestation of the unity, unshakable and unbreakable, of the Communist Party—the party of the working class. In that one fact the bourgeoisie sees its own doom as a class. In breaking down that unity it sees its only hope for survival through the crisis in which its system is gripped.

Through the struggles that we now experience, our Party is learning to understand, treasure and safeguard that basic Bolshevik quality, that steel-like unity. Such unity is not mechanically brought about, not imposed; it arises out of the very nature of our Party, its relationship to the masses, and its mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory. Through these experiences, we are learning to raise this quality of ours to an ever higher degree and to transmit it to the masses of the American people. It is the problem of the socialist revolution as well as of victory in every immediate battle—the unification of the working class, the unification of the people. This will be realized through a Party which is indestructibly united. This Party will lead the American people to victory in the immediate struggle against hunger and war. This Party will unify the whole American people for socialism.

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