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LABOR AND THE WAR

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By Wm. Z. Foster

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LABOR AND THE WAR

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE fascist aggressors have at last brought the war to our shores. When, on December 7, the Japanese military assassins, under cover of peace negotiations, sneaked up on Pearl Harbor and butchered a large number of our people, and when Hitler and Mussolini, as their part in the conspiracy against the American nation, also declared war against this country, by these cowardly and brutal actions the fascist aggressors swept away the isolationist fallacies that had been confusing the American people and taught us the terrible lesson that we must fight with all our strength to preserve our national existence. The assaults of the fascist powers upon us created a national unity among our people such as we have never known in all our history.

The United States is now organizing its vast forces to deliver a mighty blow against the fascist enemy. It is mobilizing its huge man-power, its gigantic industry, its tremendous natural resources. Together the peoples of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, China, the occupied countries, Latin America and the United States will destroy the fascist murderers and wipe their poisonous regime from the face of the earth. Hitler, Mussolini and the phony "Sun God" Hirohito will rue the day they launched their wanton aggression against the American people.

War Until Complete Victory

Upon taking up arms in war the American people must understand very clearly that the governments of Germany, Japan and Italy, which are controlled by great bankers, industrialists and landlords, are waging a desperate imperialist war to dominate the whole world. The choicest prizes they have their greedy eyes fastened upon are the United States and the

whole Western Hemisphere. To accomplish their murderous purposes they are deluging the world with blood, wrecking its economic life, and enslaving and pauperizing untold millions of people. Victory for the modern barbarian fascist powers would result in a misery and degradation of the conquered peoples such as the world has never before experienced.

The countries lined up against the fascist aggressors are fighting for their very existence. Their liberties, their economic well-being, their national independence are all at stake. The occupied countries and those attacked are waging a great war for national liberation. This is a just war; one which the peoples of the world must support with every ounce of their strength. It is a fundamentally different type of war than that of 1914-18, when the struggle was between two rival groups of imperialist powers. Attempts of such pseudo-Socialists as Norman Thomas to condemn this war also as an imperialist war constitute help for Hitler. The present war is all humanity fighting to defend itself against the most sinister, powerful and dangerous enslaving force that has ever arisen in all history.

The first great lesson to be learned from this war, therefore, is that there can be no compromise with the fascist butchers and tyrants. The present governments of Germany, Japan and Italy, together with their armed forces, must be completely smashed. All talk of making a negotiated peace with the fascist mass murderers or with anybody connected with them (and there will be lots of this talk as the war goes on) must be summarily rejected as direct aid and comfort to the enemy. The greatest mistake the democratic capitalist governments have made in the past has been their attempts to temporize with the fascist states. Their policy of appeasement, which rejected the policy of collective security proposed by the U.S.S.R., brought about the disastrous downfall of the Spanish Republic and culminated in the ruinous sell-out of Czechoslovakia at Munich, was the main reason why the fascists were able to build up their strength and to launch the present war. Our government, by its arms embargo against Republican Spain, its applause for Munich, its shipment of war materials to war-making Japan, also had a hand in the fatal appeasement

policy, and it still has remnants of this policy in its dealings with the fascist puppet states, Vichy France, Spain and Finland.

The fascist governments of Germany, Japan and Italy are international outlaws. There must be no thought of dealing with them. They must be utterly defeated. The great task is for the allied anti-fascist peoples to win a complete victory in the war against the fascist savages now tyrannically ruling over the Axis states. Only then will it become possible for the peoples of all countries, including those of Germany, Japan and Italy, to so reorganize the world as to make possible a just and lasting peace.

Organized labor, representing the working class, the class with the most to lose by a Hitler victory and the most to gain by a Hitler defeat, must do all possible to strengthen the American people in the death struggle they have to lead against Nazi Germany and its allies, puppets and agents. The trade unions must not only steel themselves for the fight, but also help tirelessly to stimulate the whole American people, so that the present war shall not be ended until the Nazi vipers—the fascist book-burners, anti-Semites and union smashers—are crushed, once and forever, under the heel of the freedom-loving peoples of the earth. As an integral part of the working class, the Communist Party has pledged its all to the struggle, whether on the firing lines in battle or on the assembly lines in industry.

One World War, One World Strategy *

The second great lesson to be learned from the war is that inasmuch as the Axis powers are united and are fighting the democratic powers with a coordinated strategy, they themselves must be combatted by a fully united opposition. The fascists are proceeding upon the basis of one war, one strategy, one central command. Every major move that either Japan or Italy makes is linked up with the Axis main center in Berlin.

* As this pamphlet goes to press the news dispatches announce the formation of a great world compact among the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, China and 22 other nations. This is a big advance toward the full development of a world alliance and world strategy.

Therefore, in order for the anti-Hitler states to win the war, they, too, must be thoroughly organized among themselves. They have a great preponderance of strength in man-power, industry and economic resources; but these advantages can result in victory only if they are fully coordinated and utilized. Especially necessary is it, therefore, that the American people completely free themselves from all remnants of isolationism. We must realize that our fate is bound up with the rest of the world, which is all menaced by Hitler. There must be a thoroughly knitted alliance between the U.S.A., Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., China and other anti-Nazi peoples. It is not enough that each of these powers do all it can individually, or that they act on parallel lines. Nor can merely an Anglo-American alliance meet the situation, as many are now urging. Nothing short of a close offensive and defensive pact among all the democratic powers will suffice, one that will work upon the basis of a world strategy. Such an alliance is a life and death necessity for the democratic powers if they are to counteract Hitler's strategy of defeating his enemies one at a time. Only thus can they march on to a decisive victory.

As the war now stands the glaring need for a unified strategy among the democratic powers fairly strikes us in the eye. First, there is to be considered the war role to be played by the United States. When Hitler and Hirohito deliberately forced this country into the war what they had immediately and first in mind was to help Nazi Germany defeat the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain by switching American help away from them. Hitler hoped that henceforth the U.S.A. would have to turn its full attention to Japan in the Pacific, thereby weakening its fleet in the Atlantic and slowing up the flow of munitions to Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. Obviously this dangerous stratagem must not be allowed to succeed. While the United States uses all necessary means to smash imperialist Japan it must at the same time find the way to give greatly increased support to the nations fighting against Hitler. The main enemy in this war is Nazi Germany, and the whole world strategy of the democratic allies, which can only be worked out jointly, must be aimed at accomplishing Hitler's

defeat. Under any and all conditions the fight against Hitler in Europe, especially on the Eastern front, must be strengthened. The *New York Times*, January 2, said, "At present the Russian front is by all odds the main battle line." On December 17, the *New York Herald Tribune* correctly stated this basic consideration as follows:

"The Russian front is still overwhelmingly the major front. . . . The one place, as conditions now stand, where the whole world war might be won is European Russia. . . . If the Russians could destroy Hitler's offensive power, all the rest would follow."

Another problem that can be decided effectively only by a unified world strategy is the war role of Great Britain. After its heavy defeats in the early part of the war, that country assumed a defensive policy against the German air bombings and submarine menace while it armed itself for the expected Nazi invasion. But with Hitler's march into the U.S.S.R., the opportunity and the need for England to take the offensive and open up another European front, in Hitler's rear, became imperative. There was much slowness in doing this, however, and it was only under great pressure from the English people that the British Government finally began its offensive in Libya. Obviously there is a burning need for a world strategy that will provide for a second great Allied front in Europe, especially through Anglo-American cooperation, one that will catch Hitler in the deadly trap of a two-front war.

Still another problem requiring a unified world strategy relates to the role of the U.S.S.R. with regard to the struggle against Japan. There are many in the United States who are now clamoring for the U.S.S.R. to launch at once an offensive against Japan from Siberia. But such people forget the fact that the Red Army has been bearing for six terrible months the whole brunt of the struggle against the main enemy, Hitler's mighty army. To open up a Siberian front against Japan solely with Soviet forces would mean in reality for the U.S.S.R. to take on also the major burden of the struggle against that country. As it is, the U.S.S.R. is doing its full share, and more.

In an Associated Press dispatch of December 18, this situation is correctly appraised:

"In terms of long range results, the Nazi reverses in Russia represent a victory no less for the defenders of Hawaii, the Philippines, Singapore and Hongkong than for the Russians themselves because, as the experts view the war, every plane, gun and man lost by the Germans in Russia is a loss in potential reserve strength for Japan. . . . The mightiest blow yet struck for victory in the Pacific, many military men here believe, has been driven home not in the far-flung battle zones of the Far East, but on the blood-stained snows of Russia."

Besides the foregoing, there are a host of other problems of military strategy and industrial mobilization (the vital role of China, for example), all of which can be solved correctly only on the basis of a closely coordinated world pact of common strategy among the great powers at war against the Axis. Steps in this general direction were the Roosevelt-Churchill conferences at sea and in Washington, the American-British-Soviet conferences in Moscow, and the various other similar meetings among the democracies. But in estimating such conferences we must not forget that only a solid offensive-defensive alliance, firmly resolved to fight the war to the complete defeat of the Axis, can meet the present difficult situation.

Organized labor, like the rest of the American people, has an urgent interest that the great world coalition of the democratic powers be built up and that it carry on an organized and uncompromising fight to destroy the fascist Axis. To facilitate this the trade unions have the need also to link themselves up internationally. This is necessary, so that the democratic power of labor can be exerted to develop a determined struggle against the Axis, to defeat appeasers who would sell out the war, to hold in check imperialists who would use the war for their own interests, and to help work out a just and durable peace when the war is over. The British and Soviet labor organizations have taken the lead in creating the needed international solidarity of labor by establishing the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. Both the C.I.O. and A. F. of L., as a major war need, should without delay affiliate themselves to this committee.

For a Solid National Unity

In order to help effectively to smash the fascist Axis powers the American nation must stand thoroughly united. As a people we have the common interest to defend the national independence, the civil liberties, and economic standards of our country against the onslaughts of the fascist world marauders. Also each class going to make up our nation has its own special class reasons for action against the national enemies. As we have seen by the fall of France and other countries, a victory by Hitler would not only strip our nation of its democracy and subject it politically to the tyrants of Berlin, but every section of our population would also suffer in the general disaster. The capitalists would have their power clipped, their profits slashed, and their industries reduced to auxiliaries of German economy; the small business men and shopkeepers would be ruined in huge numbers by the victorious Nazi monopolists; the farmers would have their markets destroyed and their lands taken from them for the benefit of Nazi land grabbers; the professionals would share in the general and disastrous reductions in American living standards; the workers would be reduced to semi-starvation and semi-slavery levels by the ruthless Nazi capitalists.

The American people are fully resolved to defend to the death our country and its rights. Already we have seen this national unity around our government coming into being after Pearl Harbor, by the overwhelming manifestation of anti-Axis sentiment, the collapse of the opposition in Congress to the government's anti-Hitler program, the sudden evaporation of isolationist illusions, the liquidation of the America First Committee, the big wave of volunteer enlistments, etc. Nevertheless we would be fools were we not to see that in this country there are still plenty of Quislings and Pétains, eager to wreak havoc upon the United States such as the fifth columns did upon Norway and France.

The fifth columnists—who are made up not only of German, Italian and Japanese government agents but also of American reactionaries—are compelled, since the shipwreck of the America First Committee and the collapse of their isolationist

demagoguery, to adopt many new and insidious means to undermine the morale and fighting unity of the American people. While some proceed to actual sabotage of industry, others, like the Trotskyites and Thomasites, condemn the war as imperialist; or, like Coughlin's Christian Front, blame the war on President Roosevelt and threaten to have him impeached after the war is over. Then there are those of the stripe of Pegler, who try to destroy national unity by violently attacking the trade unions. There are also a host of other fifth-column elements who try to direct America's war effort entirely against Japan and thus to help Hitler by cutting off all aid to Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.; who utilize the war emergency for profiteering, who try to weaken the world anti-Hitler coalition by slandering the U.S.S.R.; who spread defeatism and panic-mongering by magnifying our own weaknesses and Hitler's strength; who oppose a decisive victory over the Axis and call for a negotiated peace with Hitler; who sneakily cultivate anti-Semitism; who, like Lindbergh, condemn the war by a feeble endorsement of it; who hypercritically find fault and snipe at the government; who try to sow confusion by attacking the Communist Party and other progressive organizations, etc.

Organized labor, with its 11,000,000 members and their families, amounting to one-third of the whole American people, constitutes a tremendous factor in building national unity. The trade unions, the most solidly democratic force in this country, should be the very backbone of every phase and branch of the war effort. They must especially be on the alert to fight against every manifestation of the fifth column both within their own ranks and among the people at large. Labor has the right to expect that such leaders as John L. Lewis and W. L. Hutcherson, who were connected with the America First movement, will now display real activity in the fight against Nazi Germany.

While participating in all the people's movements of the national unity, organized labor faces as one of its most urgent tasks the need to unite its own ranks. Labor unity is necessary for national unity; for developing our full national effort against the Axis powers. The C.I.O. and the A. F. of L., in

the interest of the nation, should bury the hatchet and work together. The path to trade union unity is united labor action upon all issues connected with the war. Already, under pressure of the war emergency, this unifying process is well under way. In almost every important city in the country the A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods are increasingly co-operating to build the powerful national unity against Hitler. The harmonious collaboration of the two big trade union national federations in the President's recent labor-industry-government conference forecasts further important developments along this general line. Eventual complete organizational unity of the labor movement, upon the basis of the recognition and preservation of the C.I.O. industrial unions, can readily develop out of the present working together of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. on war issues.

For a Torrent of War Munitions Production

To defeat the Axis powers the United States, while equipping and utilizing its own armed forces, must also make its matchless industries pour out a veritable deluge of planes, tanks, guns, ships, etc., with which to help arm the anti-fascist fighters of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, China and other countries. In this crucial battle for production, which even yet is barely getting under way, organized labor has vital contributions to make, and is making them. Its services are invaluable to the nation in helping solve the many complex problems involved.

Among these tasks an elementary one is to insure the continuance of production by the avoidance of strikes. The trade unions, which acutely realize the need for uninterrupted production, unitedly proposed to do their share in this matter, during the recent labor-industry-government conference called by the President, by voluntarily agreeing not to strike while the war emergency lasts and to settle their economic grievances through the mediation and arbitration machinery to be set up by the proposed national war labor board. This decision should be adhered to strictly throughout the ranks of labor.

Another elementary problem in bringing about the maximum possible production of war munitions has to do with the training and distribution of workers for the war industries. Here, in the Labor Policy Advisory Committee (headed by Sidney Hillman) of the Office of Production Management, representatives of the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods, sitting together, have made many important contributions, although very much more remains to be done.

There are a host of other even more basic industrial problems than the above-mentioned involved in securing maximum output. There is to be combatted the harmful "business-as-usual" attitude, which prevents plants from being utilized for war production purposes; there are the great monopolists who, fearing post-war overproduction, oppose all efforts at plant expansion in their industries; there are the greedy concerns which grab fat government contracts for themselves and refuse to farm out any of them to smaller companies; there are a maze of problems relating to priorities in industrial materials; there is the acute question of unemployment due to the conversion of plants from peace-time to war-time production; there is the danger of direct sabotage by reactionary firms and individuals; there are innumerable old-fashioned and uneconomical production methods in effect, etc., etc.

The trade unions must be given full opportunity and responsibility in helping solve these and the many other knotty industrial problems bred by the war emergency. This means that organized labor should be accorded full representation upon the many official committees and boards dealing in one way or another with questions relating to production. At present these agencies are top-heavily loaded with businessmen and their representatives. The A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. have repeatedly demanded greater representation on all government boards, and this should be insisted upon, both nationally and by city and state bodies, as a major requirement for the successful prosecution of the war. Employer and government resistance against such labor representation must yield.

Especially necessary also is it that organized labor be accorded a strong voice in the management of war production, not only on Government boards, but right in the industries

themselves. The futility of leaving the control of war industry virtually to the whims and interests of employers to decide was demonstrated by the recent report of the Tolan Committee, which showed that, despite the war emergency, Ford will have only 7 per cent of his workers employed on war orders by September, 1942, and General Motors will have only 9 per cent by next June. Had it not been for the stubborn opposition of the employers to the introduction of the Reuther Plan and similar proposals by labor a far better showing would have been made to date.

The Murray Plan of industry-labor-government councils in the various industries offers a practical means to accomplish the indispensable end of speeding up production by giving labor a real voice in war industry. The Reuther Plan for the automobile industry and the Bridges Plan for the marine industry, and similar workers' plans in steel, metal mining, farm equipment, and other industries, the best by far that have been produced by anybody in these spheres, indicate the constructive force that the trade unions can exert in industrial management in war industries. In a host of shops, industries and cities the labor organizations, especially those of the C.I.O., are now participating in cooperative movements with the employers and the government and are bringing forward constructive proposals to intensify munitions production. This whole development should be broadened and speeded up.

In the vital question of increasing production of all types of war materials, as in all other civilian war activities, the question of trade union unity is of paramount importance. There is a very great need for the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods to come together nationally and to agree upon a unified program for labor's participation in the organization of war production. Such a plan, backed by the whole labor movement, and which might well be based upon the general principles of the Murray Industrial Councils proposals, would do much to break down the present opposition of the employers and the government to labor's actual participation in the management of industry. United labor action for solving the many problems now facing war

industry would enormously increase the munitions output of American plants. It would go far towards developing a uniform production plan by the Government to replace the present confusion, and it would be a powerful force in counteracting the influence of the Knudsens and for the achievement of the great \$150,000,000,000 victory production program.

Civilian Defense in Total War

Besides the political and production tasks outlined above the trade unions have a host of other duties to perform in helping mobilize the whole American people for total war against the fascist mass murderers. In the vast field of civilian defense work the need for unified trade union action is imperative.

So far as the armed forces are concerned, we may be certain not only that the working class soldiers, above all those of trade union training, will be models of courage and devotion, but also that the armed forces will be given every civilian assistance by the trade unions. The fighting spirit of labor in this war has already been heroically exemplified by the brave A. F. of L. construction workers on Wake Island, who dropped their tools, took up arms, and fought side by side with the regular troops in the defense of the island against the Japanese invaders. By the education of their own youth, by fully supporting the United Service Organizations, and in every other way the trade unions will do all possible to raise and sustain the morale of our armed defenders.

A most important civilian problem is that of financing the war. Here organized labor can do a big job by helping sell war bonds and stamps among its membership. This should be done in an organized way by the committees in the shops, and not merely left to banks, employers and other forces.

A plan that could be profitably applied widely by trade unions is that of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which aims to sell to its 300,000 members, during the next six months, \$25,000,000 in war bonds, or the equivalent of two weeks' pay for each member.

There is also the task of developing the war relief services. In addition to giving full support to such organizations as the Red Cross, the British War Relief, the Russian War Relief, the United China Campaign, and many similar movements, the trade unions have the job of building their own relief organizations—the Committee for American and Allied War Relief, in the C.I.O., and the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor, in the A. F. of L. The C.I.O. nationally has shown its appreciation of the importance of war relief work by deciding to raise \$1,000,000 per month for it. Active support of and participation in such movements as the Fight For Freedom and Defend America Committees are also an important trade union task.

Another vast field for trade union war work among civilians is that of helping organize the population against air raids. This problem has now become very acute. It cannot be left for solution simply to the Office of Civilian Defense. People's organizations of every kind, above all the trade unions, should pitch in and assist in the tremendous amount of organization work that has to be done. In all the local and other defense councils organized labor should be fully represented, which is not now the case. In every neighborhood and apartment house the union members should be in the forefront of the air raid protection work. An indication of how organized labor should proceed in this matter was given recently by the International Fur and Leather Workers Union in New York, when it arranged to have 1,000 shop stewards become air wardens in their respective shops, and arranged with the civilian defense authorities for the systematic mobilization of its membership in the neighborhoods for anti-air-raid work.

In carrying out the many tasks of this type thrust upon them by the outbreak of the war the trade unions should bear in mind a few elementary principles, including the following: (1) they should be keenly conscious of their great responsibility and not passively wait for others to give the lead, but seize the initiative themselves and, jointly with the proper governmental authorities, throw their whole vast organizations into the urgent tasks; (2) they should be on guard against fifth columnists, who will find a fruitful field for their de-

moralizing work in organized civilian war activities; (3) they should be at all times conscious of the enormous role that women are playing in every branch of civilian war work, a role which will steadily increase as the war progresses; (4) they should avoid tendencies towards so-called trade union "narrowness" and, realizing that this is national unity in action, work freely with organizations of all kinds, including those of the employers and the government; (5) they should prevent their war work committees from consisting merely of top officials, and should see to it that the largest possible numbers of the union membership are drawn into all types of local committees and activities; (6) they should realize the need for the unions to plan systematically their war work. The C.I.O. Industrial Council of New York City has given a good lead in this direction. Every local union, every city and state body, every national union, should have similar programs of war activities. And the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. could do nothing better to help mobilize the American people to win the war and, thereby, also to advance trade union unity, than to confer together on a national scale and prepare a program of war work for the whole labor movement.

For Protection of the Workers' Economic Welfare

Nothing is more important to the success of America's war effort than the maintenance of the greatest possible physical well-being of the great masses of our people. Healthy, well-fed, and well-cared-for workers are especially indispensable for the achievement of a maximum production of war materials, as well as to provide the necessary soldiers. This means that a major responsibility in the war situation, for the Government, the trade unions and the people generally is the protection of the economic standards of the toiling masses. It goes without saying that, with probably an eventual 50 per cent of all American production going for war purposes, the people as a whole will have to make serious economic sacrifices. But such sacrifices must be fairly distributed among those elements best able to stand them. The workers will bear their

full share of the war's burdens, but they must be prepared to see that other classes and groups do the same.

At present the capitalists, following business-as-usual methods, are utilizing the war emergency to carry on a profiteering orgy. Leon Henderson, Price Administrator, said recently that for 3,000 leading corporations profits will be up this year 60 per cent over 1940, when they were already 19 per cent over 1939. The cost of living is skyrocketing, in the past year having advanced at least 12 per cent. Economists are warning that the trend today is pretty much the same as in World War I, when the cost of living doubled in the period from 1916 to 1920. Meanwhile, due to hardboiled employer resistance, wages of the workers generally have lagged behind, or remained stationary, and now it is proposed in Congress to slash over \$1,000,000,000 from W.P.A., farm relief, C.C.C., and other useful social services.

In view of the fact that the trade unions have voluntarily pledged themselves not to strike during the war emergency it becomes imperative that the Government take firm and speedy measures to check the rising cost of living, to avert the looming danger of inflation, to protect the physical welfare of the workers. There is strong need for comprehensive legislation to control prices, to curb profiteers, to limit war-time profits, to distribute equitably the tax burden, and to protect the health and safety of the workers in the speeded-up industries. There is also a big need for Government wage boards to lend a more attentive ear to the grievances of the workers than was done in the recent cases of the workers in the captive coal mines and on the railroads, when it was necessary for the workers to reject the awards made and to call for a rehearing of their cases.

So far, however, very little has been done by the Government along the foregoing lines. This is because of the opposition of capitalists who are out to grab all the profits they can while the grabbing is good. These people, who howl loudly at every demand of the workers for wage increases, at the same time fight desperately against all attempts in Congress to enact a practicable price control bill. And when Secretary Morgenthau enunciated recently his very modest proposal to

restrict war-time profits to 6 per cent the spokesmen of business, especially of the great wealthy trusts, yelled that it was being proposed to expropriate them and to establish socialism.

In order for the Government to develop the protection of the workers' economic standards, which are fundamental for advancing the country's war effort, it is necessary that organized labor should step more definitely into the picture. Labor must become more active politically. Wages, hours, working conditions, priority unemployment, and a host of other economic matters of vital consequence to the workers have now become political questions, to be regulated by Federal legislation and administered by Government boards. Hence, if the workers' interests are to be adequately protected the trade unions must develop real political activity. They should insist upon full representation in all Government appointive bodies, from the Cabinet on down, and in every city, state and national election they should make their strength felt. Such political activity by labor is necessary, not only in the immediate economic interests of the workers, but also for the strengthening of every phase of the nation's war struggle against Nazi Germany and its allies and puppets. But it must be said again, in the case of political action as in the matters of production, civilian defense, etc., that the A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods can make their influence count effectively only if they are united around a common program. United action on all war issues, which include the economic standards of the workers, is an imperative need for the labor movement and for all our embattled people.

For a Strong and Democratic America

The maintenance and strengthening of American democracy are fundamental for the winning of the war and the smashup of Hitlerism. This is true because in this people's war the more democratic support our Government has from the people the greater our striking power as a nation will be against the Nazi world war machine. There are those in this country, isolationists and appeasers of the Lindbergh, Coughlin, Nor-

man Thomas brands, who declare that our entry into this war necessitates that we turn ourselves into a totalitarian system in order to win it. But this is a lie. A nation cannot fight fascism if it becomes fascist itself. Democratic peoples are far better fighters than those held under the lash of fascist dictators. This has been brilliantly demonstrated in Spain, China, and above all in the U.S.S.R. Indeed, the nemesis of Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito is precisely the lack of the democratic support of their peoples for their autocratic regimes, a fact which will culminate finally in popular uprisings against these war-making tyrants.

The effective conduct of the war will, of course, require certain restrictions, such as the temporary abandonment of the use of the strike and the holding of free speech within limits that will not furnish information or fifth-column aid to the enemy. But such voluntarily adopted limitations should not and must not be allowed to curtail the body of the people's democratic rights. Instead, our democracy must be systematically expanded during the war, by the building and strengthening of the trade unions, by according greater representation to labor in all Government bodies, by a wide extension of trade union participation in the management of industry, by a more equitable distribution of the costs of government, by a broad growth of civilian defense organizations, by the opening of many occupations at present closed to women workers, by facilitating the entry of Negroes into industry and condemning prevalent Jim-Crow practices, by breaking down many of the barriers that now stand in the way of the advance of youth in most walks of life, by developing generally a closer working together of the genuinely democratic elements of the American people. The United States should and must come out of this war with a stronger and more vigorous democracy than it had when it went in.

But the growth of American democracy during the war will not take place automatically. The democratic masses must be alert and on guard. There are hosts of enemies of the people who will use every means to try to distort the necessary war discipline of our nation into a monstrous system of totalitarianism. We would be blind were we not to see the danger

in such reactionary developments as the passage in the House of the anti-strike Smith bill; the adoption, also by the House, of the Dies amendment, which would outlaw the Communist Party; the open shop attitude of the National Association of Manufacturers; the pest of Westbrook Peglers, Boake Carters, General Johnsons, etc., in the press and on the radio; the many unjust restrictions that have been placed upon the foreign-born; the sinister activities of the Dies Committee, the Christian Front and the K.K.K.; the stubborn resistance by reactionaries to the release of Earl Browder from prison; the autocratic practices of Hoover's F.B.I.

All these reactionary forces and developments, and many more, are working to undermine American democracy during the war. But they can and will be counter-checked by the forward democratic surge of the great bulk of the American people. The successful prosecution of the war demands the democratic functioning of the people. The American people will not make the disastrous mistake of trying to fight Hitler abroad on the basis of totalitarianism at home. On December 15 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Never did that great document need more guarding and more systematic application than it does now. And in helping protect and develop American democracy during this greatest crisis in our national history organized labor has an acute need for alertness and unity in its own ranks.

From the Defensive to the Offensive

A tremendous advantage enjoyed by the fascist powers in this war up till the present time is that they have been on the offensive, whereas the democratic powers have fought on the defensive. To win the war this situation must be basically changed, with the allied democratic powers developing a sweeping attack. Signs multiply to show that this democratic offensive is now beginning to take place.

The fascist offensive really started in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria and began the aggression against China which still continues. Then came the wanton invasion of Ethiopia in 1934. Next in line was the joint conquest of

Republican Spain by Hitler and Mussolini during the years 1936-39. Then quickly followed Hitler's grabs of Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938, and Memel and Poland in 1939; while Mussolini was busily seizing Albania.

In the face of these menacing and organized aggressions by the fascist states Great Britain, France and the United States adopted a policy of retreat and appeasement. They weakly sent notes of protest to Japan, and at the same time they shipped to that country vital war supplies. Under cover of a hypocritical non-intervention policy, they allowed Republican Spain to be cut to pieces by the fascist invaders. They came to the fatal understanding with Hitler at Munich which gave him Czechoslovakia and flung the door open for the present world war. Only the Soviet Union took a determined stand against these fascist aggressions. In the League of Nations and in direct negotiations it repeatedly proposed that the democratic powers establish a policy of collective security by an international peace front, which at that time could have easily halted the still weak fascist powers. It offered finally to join an offensive-defensive military alliance to stop Hitler. These proposals were ignored by England, France and the United States, the reason being that reactionaries in these countries considered that the real enemy was not Germany but the U.S.S.R., and they were building up Hitler to fight the U.S.S.R. When under these impossible conditions all the efforts of the U.S.S.R. to create a united peace front failed, and when war between the Anglo-French bloc and the Axis powers had become inevitable, then, by its non-aggression pact with Germany, the Soviet Government took the only course it could in standing out of the line of fire.

Even after the world war had begun in September, 1939, over Hitler's attack upon Poland, the democratic capitalist countries still remained on the defensive and were paralyzed with appeasement tendencies. Chamberlain and Daladier were still in the saddle in England and France, while isolationism prevailed in the United States. So it was easy for Hitler, with his steam-roller "blitzkrieg," swiftly to demolish, one after another, the armies of Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and to drive the British

into the sea at both ends of the Continent—in Dunkirk and in Greece. The decisive thing that prevented Hitler from climaxing his great offensive by the conquest of the British Isles was fear of the great Red Army in his rear, a situation which undoubtedly saved the national independence of Great Britain. At this period great gloom hung over England and the United States and Hitler's complete victory seemed certain.

It was only after the U.S.S.R. was forced into the war by Hitler's treacherous invasion in June, 1941, that the Axis powers began to meet with real resistance and that the basis began to be laid for the necessary great anti-fascist counter-offensive. Hitler, whose armies had acquired a reputation of invincibility, expected to "clean up" the U.S.S.R. in a few weeks and then to turn back to his delayed invasion of England. But the powerful Red Army and the united Soviet people, valiantly fighting to defend their socialist homeland, wrecked Hitler's plans of conquest. As this is being written (December, 1941) the Nazi armies, after suffering gigantic losses of men and material and failing in their major objectives of destroying the Red Army and capturing the key Soviet centers, are in retreat along the whole eastern front. The Red Army is on the offensive from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. And badly battered Great Britain, thanks to the respite gained by the tremendous fight made by the Red Army and with the help of American munitions, has been able successfully to assume the offensive in Libya. The brave Chinese people, too, after four years of heroic warfare, are also in some places pressing Japan harder and harder. In the face of these favorable developments the former pessimism is now evaporating and the peoples of the world are beginning to see the goal of victory. Hitler's retreat from Moscow is the military turning point in the war.

These are, of course, only the beginnings of the great offensive necessary to destroy Nazi Germany and its allies. But now that the United States, with all its great potential of manpower and industry, has been plunged into the war by the Japanese militarists' perfidy, the possibilities for developing the great world offensive against the Axis powers are vastly strengthened. But the Nazis and their allies are strong; they

control nearly all Europe and a large part of Asia, and it will take a fierce, powerful and prolonged struggle to defeat them.

This war is not being fought to set up socialism; the various peoples are fighting to defend their national independence, their civil liberties, their democratic organizations, their living standards against fascist attack. And they are aiming to make secure these hard-won elementary rights in the peace that will eventually be formulated at the end of the war. The Communists are wholeheartedly with the broad masses of the American people in fighting for these democratic goals, but feel that the ultimate solution to the question of introducing an era of genuine peace, prosperity and freedom can best be achieved when the great industries and the transportation system become the property of the whole people, when socialism is established. Only if the war is won, fascism destroyed, democracy maintained, can the people have the right and opportunity to work out the solution to their other problems.

In the historic struggle now going on between world democracy and fascist barbarism, the American people may be counted upon to do their full share. But to this end it is necessary that they, especially the great trade union movement, be alert to see to it that our Government, in joint alliance with Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., China and other anti-fascist peoples, determinedly follow a policy aimed at the complete destruction of Nazi Germany and its allies; that there be no negotiated peace with or appeasement of the fascist mass murderers; that a common world strategy of all the anti-fascist nations be resolutely applied; that American productive capacity be raised to the uttermost; that national unity be preserved through eternal vigilance and a firm hand against the fifth column; that the winning of the war be recognized as a life and death question by the whole American people.

However difficult the struggle may be in the period ahead the united anti-fascist peoples of the world will carry it through to a victorious end. They will, at any and all costs, rescue humanity from the terrible fascist menace that now hangs over it. They will utterly destroy Hitlerism and will then set about so reorganizing the world that such a war holocaust as this can never occur again.

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