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For a Common Front Against the  
War-makers

YOUR convention of the Communist Party of Canada meets at a moment when the whole world stands at the crossroads, pondering the most fateful decisions. The horrible fumes of a new world conflagration already hang over every home. A small minority of desperate international bandits have been able, because the great majority of peace-loving people have been disunited and are retreating, to drag the whole world again to the brink of the abyss.

At this moment, above all others, your Party has a most responsible role to play, above all in helping to create and strengthen a common front against the war-makers. This critical moment in world history puts to test all men, all leaders, all programs, all parties. It is against this background that it is my duty and pleasure to bring to you the warmest fraternal greetings of the Communist Party of the United States and of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and to wish you the most fruitful deliberations.

It would indeed be strange if the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States should fail to have the closest and most brotherly relations. By our close collaboration, which expresses our full internationalism, we are at the same time continuing the best traditions of our two nations. Today, on the most vital question of war and peace, and the regroupings taking place in our political life, there is an essential similarity and close relationship between us in the problems we face and the solutions we must find. It is hardly possible that our two countries should part company now at the crossroads of history and take opposing paths.

Why is the whole world threatened by war today? Why is it that no city can be sure that it may not be awakened any night by the crash of bombs dropped from the air? Why is it that three governments have been able to terrorize the world?

There is a direct succession of events, during the past six years, which inevitably created the present situation. In 1931, the Japanese militarists marched unannounced into Manchuria, seized control of it by violence, and transformed it into a Japanese colony with a puppet government called Manchukuo. The whole world shuddered, the League of Nations and the U.S.A. declared the act a violation of international law and solemn treaties—but nothing was done, the great majority who wanted peace based upon ordered agreement could not themselves agree upon any common action. This helplessness and futility was not lost upon the other bandit powers.

Hitler tore up the Locarno treaty, marched into the demilitarized Rhineland, fortified it, and brought his gigantic war-machine directly to the borders of France. Again nothing happened—the democracies were terrified by the threat of war, retreated before the aggression, bowed before the accomplished fact.

Mussolini, originator of fascist banditry, drew the next conclusion by throwing an army of invasion into backward and helpless Ethiopia, member of the League of Nations. This time there were gestures of organized resistance; the League denounced the aggression and declared economic sanctions against Italy. But just at the moment when sanctions could become effective, just when the U.S.A. was ready to declare its co-operation, the Tory ruling circles in Britain torpedoed the ship of peace by exploding upon the world the Hoare-Laval proposal, broke up and scattered the peace front, and opened the road to Addis Ababa for Mussolini. Again the bandits were told in effect that the world was their free hunting preserve, that the forces of peace were helpless before them.

Then the bandits struck again, this time into the heart of Europe; Mussolini and Hitler made their joint invasion of Spain, with the help of Moorish mercenaries, and under the

slogan of a war of Christianity undertook to destroy the Spanish Republic. The democratic nations responded with the hypocritical farce of the "non-intervention" policy, which blockaded Republican Spain while the fascist rebels were freely supplied with men and munitions by Mussolini and Hitler—a positive help to the bandits, in which, to our shame, the U.S.A. also joined with its irrational "neutrality" law. Again the international bandits were told in effect that they could freely roam the world with a torch of war.

With such a complete breakdown of international law and morality, why should the Japanese not have assumed a "neutral" world would also complacently witness their horrible atrocities in China? The democratic nations had done everything possible to encourage banditry! During all this period, only one great power had stood out as an uncompromising fighter for peace, had never deserted Ethiopia, had stood firmly by the side of the Spanish Republic, had given practical aid to China. That power, the most reliable bulwark of peace, was the land of socialism, the Soviet Union.

But six years of unresisted international banditry, six years of constant "scuttle and run" policy by the democracies of the West, had so clearly brought the whole world on the brink of disaster, that we now witness a great upheaval of the people, demanding that a halt be called upon the bandits. This peoples' uprising began with the movement to aid the Spanish Republic, which brought the flower of democratic youth from the whole world into the Republican trenches in Spain, in the glorious International Brigade, and our own Mackenzie-Papineau and Abraham Lincoln Battalions. Now it has become a great storm of protest against Japanese banditry in China in which the whole labor movement in the English-speaking countries is already mobilized in a "boycott Japanese goods" movement. This upheaval of the peace-loving peoples of the capitalist democracies found its strongest, most far-reaching voice in the great speech of President Roosevelt in Chicago.

In the past few years, we Communists have been the sharpest critics of President Roosevelt, even while we were his

staunch supporters when he fought against the reactionaries for progressive policies. Our criticism of the President has been especially sharp against what we considered his cowardly surrender to the reactionary neutrality policy. All the more clearly then because of our past criticism of President Roosevelt's foreign policy, must we of the Communist Party declare our full and complete support to the line laid down in his Chicago speech. It is the only course which can save the world from a terrible catastrophe.

We have no illusions that the new course charted by President Roosevelt will be easy to execute. Above all we are conscious of the strong and bitter enemies who will oppose a positive peace policy with all their power. These reactionary forces own or control most of the daily press of the United States; they control many leading positions in the President's own party. They are working hand in hand with Hitler and Mussolini in world affairs. They will move heaven and earth to defeat the President and his policy. Only the active support of the masses of the people in the United States, as well as in Canada and the other democratic countries of the West, can overcome the resistance of the accomplices of fascism and carry this positive peace policy into effect.

We have in the United States a group of pacifist societies who, in the name of peace, are counseling unconditional surrender to the international bandits. Whatever their motives, such pacifists have become no better than the conscious agents of Hitler and Mussolini. The time has come to end the fascist menace to world peace. Everyone must line up on one side or the other. Whoever is opposed to collective action for peace, is an enemy of peace, an agent of the international bandits.

More than ever we are conscious that only a socialist reorganization of society can, once and for all, abolish the causes of war and bring permanent peace to the world. But the great majority of the people in the United States and Canada especially, are not yet ready for the fundamental solution of socialism. But they do want peace; they are ready to fight for peace; they have the leadership for peace of the head of the

most powerful capitalist nation, President Roosevelt; they have the People's Front in control of France, with a powerful will for peace; they see the iron battalions of the Spanish People's Army throwing back the invaders from their land; they see the great Chinese people uniting into a solid front of heroic resistance to Japanese invasion; they know above all they have the complete support of the great and powerful land of socialism, the Soviet Union.

Therefore, the masses know that it is possible to stop the war-makers now, the determination to do that job is growing throughout the world. The fascist war-makers can be stopped. They must be stopped. That is the task of all progressive humanity. To that task we dedicate our full strength.

Quarantine the fascist war-makers!

Unite the peace-loving peoples for collective action!

Stamp out international banditry!

*Address delivered at the Opening Session of the Eighth Dominion Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, October 8, 1937.*