
Speech to the CPUSA National Committee [June 18, 1945] by Earl Browder

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This is the first meeting of the national leadership of the American Communist movement since 1930 to which I have not reported on behalf of the executive body, except for the 14 months in which I was in prison.

It is obvious that the present inner situation, in which the first gunfire of sharp criticism from some Marxists abroad has resulted, in our executive, in the proposal for a sharp and unconsidered turn in policy which makes its point of departure from general theoretical considerations rather than from a concrete analysis of the objective situation, proves without further argument that our national leadership has been resting upon an unsound foundation. I accept this fact as a basic criticism of my own role in the leadership, for I failed to foresee such a crisis of leadership and therefore failed to make any adequate preparation against it.

It seems to me necessary, even though I cannot any longer [report] on behalf of our executive, that I shall make an accounting to the National Committee for my stewardship, that I shall give you freely and frankly the results of my own thinking about our past experiences, about the present world situation, and about the tasks of the American working class after V-E Day.

Was Our Wartime Policy Sound or Unsound?

The basic soundness of American Communists' wartime policy had not been directly challenged in the present discussion until the reports today. But indirectly, by implication, the challenge had been made under cover of the general theoretical issues that are raised. It is therefore required that we re-view our entire war policy and re-test it point by point, especially all those points which were under dispute at any time, for only from the ground of a correct evaluation of the past is it possible to chart our course into the future.

During the period of the spread of the war to involve the Soviet Union and America, I was in Atlanta prison, denied the right to conduct any correspondence about the war or to talk to any visitors on the subject. I did manage to get past the censors with one thought, which I restated in different forms in every letter, sometimes in learned discourses on the Bible, sometimes in discussions of chess and checkers, etc., this thought, namely, that American national interest provided the only sound foundation for war policy which could rally a majority of the nation for consistent carry-through to victory. I flatter myself, perhaps, by believing that my abstruse messages were of any help to the comrades in the field who had the task of adjusting our movement to the realities of war participation in the days following June 22 and December 7, 1941. Regardless of how it was achieved, however, our party did proceed, with more or less clarity, to hold fast to the concept of national interest as the guide to war participation and not leave it unchallenged in the hands of reactionaries who misuse it against the nation. What we had learned through the years of the fight for collective security, and in the nearly two years of the imperialist phase of the war, was crystallized in a higher form during the last months of 1941 and the beginning of 1942.

When I returned from Atlanta in May, 1942, I found our main approach to the war problems correct but with two serious distortions. One was the idea that the struggle for Negro rights must be postponed until after the war; this had seriously endangered our relations with the whole Negro community. The second distortion was a similar attitude toward the colonial liberation movement and specifically toward Puerto Rico. I secured the agreement of our leadership to

the public correction of these distortions in my first public speech in Madison Square Garden on July 2, 1942. But it took more than two years to dissolve this wrong attitude toward Puerto Rico among our membership, requiring a protracted and sometimes bitter struggle. Our correction on the question of Negro rights led directly to the campaign of 1943 that elected Ben Davis to the city council.

In the summer of 1942, I wrote my book *Victory and After* in constant consultation with our executive, with the avowed purpose of bringing coherence and system into our attitude toward all questions of the war, and toward the historical development of the war. The only complaint I have ever heard against this book was from Comrade Foster, who thought it should have gone through his hands for editing before publication; but even he has not challenged any of the political ideas of the book. The final chapter, which was approved formally in meeting by our leadership before publication, laid the foundation for my later book *Teheran*. It is a short chapter, and I will impose upon your patience enough to read it, for perhaps it has been forgotten, as have been so many other things. * * *

(Read Chapter 21, "The Postwar World" from page 250 to top of page 252 in *Victory and After*.)

I have quoted this final chapter of *Victory and After* at length because, if it is true as charged that I have misled the American Communists onto the paths of revisionism, then here is the original sin. So far as fundamental theory is concerned there is not a word in my book *Teheran* that goes farther than the thoughts outlined in this chapter written in 1942, a year and half before *Teheran*. For me it was easy to greet *Teheran* and interpret it as I did because I foresaw its necessity. It was the unfoldment of that which was required by the nature of things; it was as though one were witnessing the public performance of a long-rehearsed play.

We discuss in another place the Marxian theoretical validity of this concept. Suffice it to note at this point that a similar line of reasoning led President Roosevelt to *Teheran*, and led CIO-PAC to formulate its program for the great election campaign of 1944. It was this vision of a possible future that became the platform that enabled

the progressive coalition in America to maintain itself in power and keep out the Dewey-Hoover-Vandenberg crowd. It is very difficult for me now to agree that it is nothing but a petty-bourgeois illusion. In fact it is impossible for me to so agree.

Solving the Wartime Problems of the Working Class.

When I returned from Atlanta, I found the labor movement working under the no-strike policy which had been endorsed by the Communists. I approved of it heartily; but I had to take notice of the fact that organized labor had not yet learned how to perform its role as protector of the working class at the same time as it protected the nation, under the new conditions. In my book, *Victory and After*, Chapter 20, I laid the basis for an integrated wartime policy which, I believe, has stood the test of time and practice and which solved the appearing contradictions. Again I will test your patience with a few quotations:

There is a very pressing and immediate motive for the trade unions to be taking up the economic problem along new lines. The functioning of trade unions as guardians of the economic interests of the workers is becoming more important with every passing day, not only for labor but for the whole country, for production and for victory. Yet the nature of this problem is changing so rapidly that if the trade union movement lags behind in the full understanding of the changes there is grave danger that we will not only have rising economic strains within the country between labor and management, resulting in dangerous economic strife, but we will have political strains unnecessarily arising between labor and the government. We must foresee these problems so that we will not find it necessary to muddle through to a solution. We must be able to see these solutions in time to relieve these strains and to avoid the strife....

In certain irresponsible quarters the Communist Party is already being accused of proposing to sacrifice the interests of the workers to the capitalists, because of our firm and unshakable insistence on the necessity of uninterrupted war production. Only a little while ago, that irresponsible journal, *The New Leader*, printed such a charge against us. And some writers who have access to the columns of the official news sheet of the American Federation of Labor have also printed such a charge against us.

That charge is a malicious slander that could only be made by people who put narrow factional considerations above the true interests of labor, which are inseparable from the interests of our country in this war....

Wages must be dealt with upon the basis of providing the most efficient working class for the tasks of production consistent with the supply of consumption goods and services that can be made available in the country in an all-out war economy....

In the current discussion...about the dangers of inflation, the automatic answer is brought forward that inflation must be avoided by depressing the living standards of the working class, that is, by lowering the provision for maintaining the human factor in production.... This is utter nonsense in the economic field; it is idiocy in the political field; and it is the greatest present threat to the war production program....

... The capitalist is allowed his (income), not because there is any "justice" in it, and even less because he has any economic 'use' in the war economy, but purely as a matter of public policy to keep him from becoming so discontented that he loses his patriotism and sabotages the war. The worker, on the other hand, receives wages entirely upon the basis of his usefulness in production.

A National Conference of the Communist Party was held on November 29-30, 1942, with the single item on its order of business of working out detailed labor policy in its relation to war production to apply the principles I laid down in Chapter 20. The outcome of that conference was the pamphlet, *Production for Victory*, which I presume most of you have forgotten, which I would recall to your memory. It dealt, after a political introduction, with the following subjects:

1.— Production Schedules; the Problem of Raw Materials, the Problem of Manpower, the Problem of Small Enterprise.

2.— The Utilization of Labor; Increased Productivity, Piece Rates and Incentive Wage, Stabilized Employment.

3.— Organized Labor in Production; Labor-Management Production Committees, the Trade Unions' New Role.

4. — Obstacles to Correct Policies; the War Department and Production.

5.— Agriculture in the War Economy.

I cannot take time to review the ground covered by that pamphlet; you should re-read it.

This pamphlet was distributed in over a hundred thousand copies, it was studied by tens of thousands of union officials and shop stewards, it gave the basic orientation to the new problems for a large section of the labor movement which later proved the most successful in solving its problems. It is worthy of being re-studied today in the light of our current discussion. It is a central and integral part of the war policy of American Communists, the base from which we were able to keep the spontaneous strike movements of the workers under control, to defeat the conspiracies of the strike fomenters, and to maintain the democratic coalition intact until victory was achieved.

Some Moments in the Struggle for the No-Strike Policy.

The two key leaders in the labor movement, in the battle for and against the no-strike policy, were Philip Murray and John L. Lewis. One of the most important phases of this battle was to build the authority and prestige of Murray within the ranks of labor and to tear down that of Lewis. The battle had to be conducted even within the ranks of the Communists.

I secured the support of the majority of the Communist leadership, and step by step enlisted that of all trade union leaders who listened to our advice. At the same time I publicly denounced John L. Lewis in a series of speeches in the midst of his several coal strikes in April and May, 1943. At that moment there were no other voices raised against Lewis in the labor movement, and even among Communists it was impossible to secure sharp and unequivocal public declarations. I was told privately that I was signing my own political death sentence when I denounced the Lewis strikes at the moment they were under way. All such warnings and hesitations proved unfounded. Once the ice was broken by my St. Louis speech, the tide turned against Lewis throughout the labor movement, and the threatening mass strike movement subsided.

The second great crisis of the no-strike policy came at the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945, with the referendum to rescind the no-strike policy in the Auto Workers Union, with the open repudiation of the policy by Wolchok of the Warehousemen's Union and Rieve of

the Textile Union, all with the support of the Lewis forces (the Socialists, the Trotskyites, the Dubinskyites, and a large section of the daily press and the employers. The center of this crisis was the referendum in the Auto Workers Union. Well, the story is too long to recount, but step by step we succeeded in rallying the auto workers, their leaders, and then the whole CIO, until a smashing victory was registered for the no-strike policy, right in the midst of our last National Committee meeting. It proved that our policy is firmly rooted among the broadest masses, and it saved America from a mass strike movement at the time of the Nazi breakthrough on the Belgian front.

The Fight for the Coalition Before Teheran.

Permit me, without exaggerating my personal role, to cite from my own speeches during 1942 and 1943 to characterize the nature of our party's struggle for the coalition before Teheran; I believe that it is objectively true that these speeches are representative of the activity of the whole party.

You will pardon me if I now inflict upon you a whole series of quotations, and I think it is necessary because of the epidemic of short memories exhibited in the period of discussion.

July 2, 1942: "We now hold the keys to an adequate policy for winning the war. These keys are: the American-Soviet-British pacts and alliance — the bulwark of the United Nations and of world democracy; the Washington and London agreements to open the second front in Europe and to extend all-out aid to China. With the fulfillment of these historic agreements we will have a guiding policy for victory. But this policy must be fought for. The labor movement, the entire people must and will support this policy." . . . "The pacts announced on June 11...outlined a post-war collaboration for the common tasks of world reconstruction. In the Anglo-Soviet Pact this is embodied in a formal 20-year alliance. This is of enormous significance opening up a new era in international relationships, with consequences we now can only begin to understand. It is the complete refutation of all pessimists and prophets of evil, who would weaken our will to victory now by picturing disasters to come after the war. The freedom-loving nations whether capitalist...or Socialist...are pledging themselves to peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the

postwar world. All men who deeply desire the full extirpation of Nazism in all its varieties from the world will not only greet this announced program as an ideal, but will shape their every word and deed to helping to bring its full realization in life.”

October 2, 1942: “The people are behind this war to the end, they are ready for every necessary sacrifice, they are impatient to go ahead. The President is doing the best he can with advisers Who keep jogging his elbow and holding back his arm; he can be criticized only for hesitating to sweep these mischief makers out of his councils and for failing to crack down on the defeatist news- papers. Let us frankly face the facts, however, that the defeatist poison penetrates and tends to paralyze the war policies of our government in Washington. We must learn how to locate the seats of this poison, in order to eliminate them.... Chiang Kai-shek is keeping his best armies out of the war... engaged not in fighting the Japanese but in blockading the Chinese Eighth Route Army... and the New Fourth Army.... What suicidal nonsense is this, by which persons who speak for our own government keep the best Chinese fighters out of the war and create a gap which must be filled by a million American boys?... Our attitude toward Europe is equally ambiguous. Our State Department continues to do business with Mannerheim Finland, Franco Spain, and Vichy France, three puppet regimes of Hitler.... The people must be roused and organized in support of the President against this cabal of Munichmen.”

October 26, 1942: “The United States is not yet exerting its full effort. This is your problem and mine and it will be solved only to the degree that you and I take it up and solve it.... People who are afraid to fight and afraid to die are destined to be slaves of Hitler.... Who is responsible for our slowness and delays? The Chicago Tribune will tell you that our troubles come from the President. But it is not the President who is responsible. It, is the coalition of copperheads.... They who are responsible for obstructing the war effort try to place the responsibility for their obstruction and dissension on the President and on all those win-the-war forces who have been trying to go forward.”

November 8, 1942: "There are still some reactionary cliques in America which cling to their old dreams of helping to destroy the Soviet Union and making partnership with Hitler in dividing up the world. They are not large in numbers, but they are powerful. They are the most bitter opponents of the second front and are the advocates of a negotiated peace with Hitler. They still

dominate most of the American newspaper world. They represent some of the most powerful industrial monopolists in America.... But these native American Fascists are rapidly losing their power over the nation and have already lost their control over the minds of the people."

November 12, 1942: "It is necessary to speak of the past, however, because it is not dead.... Allow me to cite a few examples of current continuation of this prewar thinking in illusions instead of reality, which leads to disaster for our nation. In a recent meeting of big industrialists in New York to consider war policy, the government's efforts to organize and plan the war economy were denounced as 'socialism,' and the chairman summed up the sentiment of those present by saying: *'If we're going to come out of this war with a Marxist brand of national socialism then I say negotiate peace now and bring Adolf over here to run the show. He knows how. He's efficient. He can do a better job than any of us and a damned sight better job than Roosevelt, who is nothing but a left-wing bungling amateur.'*

"Here we have a simon-pure American example of the same treason that destroyed France. And it is deeply embedded among the big industrialists who control the war economy. This is not representative of all American industrialists (for example, at the mentioned NAM conference, the direct Morgan and Rockefeller interests did not join in these treasonable expressions) but it does represent the business-as-usual capitalists who are fighting against the essential planning of the war.... It is not my intention to paint for you a bright picture of the situation, nor to pretend that the problems of the war have been solved or that victory will come easily. No, the Axis will be crushed only at terrible cost, and with the full exertion of all our powers. Every step in the development of policy adequate to victory must itself be fought for, it does not come automatically, heavy obstacles must be overcome. Correct policies when established must still be fought for in practical application."

December 18, 1942: "Those who have read my book *Victory and After* will remember that while there is a certain fundamental confidence in the eventual outcome of the war, I do not in this book engage in any excessive optimism. Indeed, I very specifically hold out the possibility and even the probability that the education of America in the necessities of this war would be accomplished through a succession of setbacks and blunders, and I am sorry to say that the course of events seems to be bearing out this perspective.... One of the most dangerous things in this

war at the present moment is a certain move of irrational optimism that is sweeping the country.... It is evident that we are not yet adequately learning to make war; we are not seriously making war with all forces at our disposal.... This dark picture is causing quite a bit of confusion among liberal circles in the United States. Our liberals are sharply divided: One section swallows the policy of relying on deals with the Darlans 100 percent in the name of military expediency and sharply attacks anyone who criticizes this method of making war; another section falls into complete panic and finds a voice in the speech of Pearl Buck last week in which she said that this war is not a war for freedom any more.... Both these sections of liberal thought in America are even more discouraging than the facts themselves.... These aspects of our war policy can be changed by the intervention of the people, and these things must be changed.... A conspiracy against the war...is organized directly by a defeatist clique in the National Association of Manufacturers.... No- body can straighten out this situation until we get the government in Washington to begin to take a sharp and clear lead in the solution of these problems.... We have sounded the alarm on these things and we have given suggestions of policy that will remedy the situation. We are not trying to intensify the class struggle; we want to help consolidate national unity for winning the war, but we know that national unity requires something more than mere submission of labor to intolerable conditions and practices.... I think the country is going to solve these problems. But I don't think they will be solved automatically; it is going to require a struggle.... The task of the next period is to get that mass support of all elements of the population, especially of organized labor, to the correct policies that can bring us through this crisis."

January 17, 1943: "The relation of forces has turned against the Axis and in favor of the United Nations. Public thinking...has reacted to this new phase in a peculiar manner. First, there has been a wave of shallow optimism which considers the war practically over... second, there has arisen...an opposite and equally shallow pessimism which suddenly is overwhelmed with the unsolved political problems of the war, and throws up its hands in despair, repudiates all responsibility for the war, predicts a new war immediately after this one and sits back to await the realization of its lugubrious prophecies. My remarks today are mainly directed against both these harmful tendencies.... All shallow optimism and complacency become most dangerous here. . . . The solutions must be found in the understanding and patriotism, of the vast majority of the people, especially the workers, roused

to action and organized.... More organization and activity of the people provide the basic solution to all the problems of a people's war."

February 2, 1943: "Yes, our national course is ambiguous. The President has charted a clear and correct policy, but it is challenged not only by Congress but also by members of his own cabinet and executive appointees. Instead of a showdown and clarification, the nation drifts along with compromise and appeasement of irreconcilable policies.... We cannot leave such questions to be settled at leisure. The war goes on, and time waits for no man or nation. If our national policy in its application remains ambiguous, then the results it will bring to our nation will also be ambiguous.... There is a loudmouthed cult in our country which is willing to admit every weakness and error so long as it can blame it on the President. These are the demagogues of reaction. But there are too many honest democrats, progressives, and even labor men, who weaken the President's position by leaving all problems for him to settle, by failing to take energetic action themselves to help solve all these problems.... Now they chide the President for conciliating his enemies, but they are themselves among the first conciliators. No one has any right to criticize the President who is not himself in the midst of the hottest and most uncompromising fight to halt the mob of reaction.... American democracy needs more confidence in itself in order to win the war. It needs to snap out of the hypnosis induced by Hitler and Martin Dies, in which the cry of 'Communist' raises hysterical fear and sets the Democrats to examining one another for hidden 'reds' and protesting each his own innocence of the terrible charge of which few know the meaning. American democracy must grow up, and stop believing in ghosts and witches.... We must strengthen the Anglo-Soviet-American alliance in the fires of war so that it will be an indestructible instrument for an ordered peace. All this must still be won. It can be won only by fighting."

February 15, 1943: "We have the stage today, in the evolution or exercise of our foreign policy, when the whole country must be awakened to the fact that we face the possibilities of serious catastrophes in Europe if this kind of unintelligent attitude continues to prevail in determining the policies of our government. On many occasions our President has given a clear lead for a correct policy. But it is impossible for him in his position to conduct the whole struggle for this policy. The citizenry generally

— the rank and file — must take up the struggle for the correct policy that has been enunciated....”

March 4, 1943: "We have no kind of guarantee in American policy for the release of the prisoners (in North Africa), but must depend upon an increased vigilance and awareness of the American public, and its increasing pressure upon Washington. We have no guarantee in American policy, because more and more the declared policies of the President are being transformed into their opposite in the course of application.... We find our nation is not only incapable of releasing the Spanish prisoners in North Africa, despite the directive of President Roosevelt, but also that it is incapable of keeping in prison the Nazi agent, Viereck. We bungle both ways; our errors have the fatal quality of keeping the anti-Fascists locked up and turning a Nazi fifth columnist free.”

March 8 [?], 1943: “It must be admitted that Hitler is doing better on the diplomatic than on the military front. At the moment when his armies before Stalingrad were being cut to pieces, he again appealed to the ‘gentlemen of the West’ for help against the “menace of Bolshevism’ — and the general response he has received must have surprised even Joseph Goebbels.... Clearly the war is at a crisis, a major turning point. The Red Army of the Soviet Union presented us with the possibility of victory this year — and we suddenly learn that exceedingly influential circles in our country are fearful of this victory even more than they formerly were fearful of defeat.... Fear of victory arises inevitably in all those circles which refuse to see the Soviet Union as a long-time friend and ally, and which have always considered the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition a mere expedient of the moment, unfortunately necessary but to be discarded at the earliest possible moment.... As a matter of fact, it is those Americans who dream of ruling the world in the style of Hitler who are worried about the Soviet Union. It was a big mistake to imagine it possible to ‘utilize’ the Soviet Union to get rid of a rival for world rule, Hitler, while ‘utilizing’ Hitler to smash the Soviet Union. Those who reasoned thus overreached themselves; they were too clever by far. For it simply does not work out that way in life. The Soviet Union is growing stronger in the course of winning the war, not weaker. And with crash of Hitlerism will go all the dreams of world conquest wherever such illusions may be held, even if they are in the pretty head of a new American Congresswoman.... I am not one of those who becomes pessimistic because of the many dangers through which our country is now

passing. The appeasers and copperheads have strength in the government only to the degree that they have been able to camouflage their true policy and intentions before the country. They have been successful in their camouflage so far only from lack of aggressive leadership from the President's lieutenants and from the organizations of labor and the people. Everyone has fallen into the bad habit of depending upon the President to do everything."

April 1, 1943: "A chief leader of the anti-Soviet conspiracy in the United States is a certain Mr. N. Chanin. This gentleman operates as a leader of the so-called 'Jewish Labor Committee.' ... This group of American conspirators, with their allies from the emigration, appointed as their representatives in the Soviet Union Messrs. Ehrlich and Alter, and heavily financed them through the channels of the Polish government-in-exile.... These agents...were informed that 'the Stalin regime, too, will be 'shot to pieces' and that the 'last shot will be fired from America.' ... But everyone who goes into the Soviet Union for the purpose of destroying the Soviet government is in grave danger of being himself destroyed. That is what happened to Ehrlich and Alter.... It is not my role to speak here in defense of the Soviet Union. Our great ally needs no defense from me. I speak in defense of our own country, the United States, which is more endangered by this miserable conspiracy hatched on its soil than is the Soviet Union.... Let me ask Senator Mead, Mayor LaGuardia, and those responsible labor leaders who fell into the anti-Soviet net of conspiracy, to turn for inspiration rather to Thomas Jefferson. If they have no personal knowledge of Ehrlich and Alter, and they have not, they could at least have maintained the position Jefferson took when he faced the conspiracy of Aaron Burr, the traitor who had even more respectable friends than Ehrlich and Alter. Jefferson told us how to handle such conspirators in the following immortal words: 'I did not wish to see these people get what they deserved; and under the maximum of the law itself, that *inter arma silent leges* ["in times of war, the law falls silent"], that in an encampment expecting daily attack from a powerful enemy, self-preservation is paramount to all law. I expected that instead of invoking the forms of law to cover traitors, all good citizens would have concurred in securing them. Should we have ever gained our Revolution, if we had bound our hands by manacles of the law, not only in the beginning, but in any part of the revolutionary conflict.' (*Writings*, Vol. 12, pg. 183.)

In the case of Ehrlich and Alter, there is no reason to deplore their execution except upon the part of those who share their aim

to destroy the Soviet Union and its Socialist system. The whole democratic world has reason to rejoice that the Socialist state has always had the courage to strike hard and accurately and ruthlessly at its counter-revolutionary conspirators." "It is necessary to clean out the Ehrlich-Alter conspiracy from American soil. For this conspiracy is directed toward breaking up the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition."

April 9, 1943: Here I wish to note, without quotations, my speech at the Jefferson bi-centennial in which I trace the Jeffersonian policies in the development of American democracy and of American capitalism, and show the Marxists as the only consistent heirs of Jefferson. If we have revisionism to deal with in my writings, undoubtedly it is to be found in that speech. I stand by that speech in its entirety as soundly Marxist; I will defend it in detail when it is attacked in detail.

September 2, 1943: "What are the consequences that must flow from another postponement of the second front? Unquestionably such an eventuality would result in a profound deterioration of the relationships between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. The failure to realize the second front even during the beginning of the third year of coalition inevitably changes the relations between the leading powers, for it poses the alternative: Either Britain and the U.S. are **unwilling** to carry any proportionate share of the fighting, or they are **unable** to do so. And either of these alternatives is fatal to the concept of full coalition between the three leading great powers. Coalition, partnership, is equally impossible in its full sense, whether the default of obligations arises from weakness or from bad faith.... Without the second front in Western Europe that will engage a considerable fraction of Hitler's total armed forces, there does not exist serious coalition warfare. If the...coalition does not conduct serious coalition warfare, what is left of the coalition? ... The unfortunate consequences of such a deterioration of the coalition would injure most of all the U.S. Only a shallow and vulgar conception of American national interest can ignore the supreme interest which the U.S. has in orderly world relationships which depend, in the last analysis, upon close friendship and collaboration between the two most powerful countries in the world, our own country and the Soviet Union.... We should finally understand that we must meet the Soviet Union halfway, as equals, if we want such a close and enduring alliance. We should understand that words

carry weight in international relationships only to the degree that they are backed up by deeds. If it is not clear from the well-known facts revealed by the war that the U. S. has the most to lose from a weakening of the coalition, that fact will be beyond doubt in the further development of events.... Above all we should understand we are all taking part in this decision — by what we do and say, or by our passivity leaving the decision to others.... We can be certain of only one thing, that the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition is going to be much more consolidated soon, or it is going to deteriorate most seriously, that it cannot drift along as at present, and that each one of us has a duty to perform in participating in that decision.... It is my opinion that the President is fighting for a correct policy, and that he is fighting much better than most of his liberal critics who are so ready to cry out that he is betraying them. He is fighting in his own way, of course, and it is not the way of the Communists nor is it the way of labor as a whole. The greatest weaknesses displayed in his leadership are weaknesses that could be remedied by more solid and consistent and energetic support from labor and all who put victory above all. Now, as so many times in the past it is fatal to demand that the President must defeat the reactionaries single-handed, without participation of the masses in the fight, and to make the President responsible for failures which are really the shortcomings of his necessary support. We are in this war to the end with the present Commander-in-Chief, we have no prospect of getting a better one, but could easily get a worse one. The sooner we adjust ourselves to this reality the better it will be for the prospects of victory.”

September 26, 1943: “The cold, hard truth is this: that unless we get down off our high horse, unless we, the U. S., consolidate the alliance with Britain and the Soviet Union on the basis of equality all around, which means every one doing something like his part in fighting the war and treating each other with full respect in reorganizing the world after the war, there is not the slightest prospect for us to emerge from this war with anything that can properly be called victory. For whatever else victory may mean, it is entirely meaningless for the U. S. as we know our country unless it brings a prolonged period of orderly relations between nations. We have a national interest in peace, and it is our greatest national interest.... While we must stop all childish thinking about the Soviet Union fighting our Far Eastern war for us, it still remains a basic truth that our close friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union is an absolute necessity for the final and satisfactory solution of the Far Eastern phase of the

war, especially in terms of the stabilization of East Asia and her peaceful inclusion into the modern world. But if we want that invaluable cooperation of the Soviet Union, we must so shape our policies that they bring into harmony our own national interests with those of the Soviet Union. There is such a broad case of common interest, obvious to all men of good will, that intelligent men of whatever ideological trend should be able to work out such a common policy, given the will to do so.”

October 4, 1943: “It was the characteristic genius of George Dimitrov that he pointed unwaveringly throughout these 10 years to the unity of Communists and non-Communists, of all democrats of whatever ideological trend, as the master key for the defeat and destruction of the Axis and its Nazi architects. Today such unity among the United Nations and such national unity within are the obvious and accepted key to victory. Such unity is the foundation of the French Committee of National Liberation. Such unity is the secret of the magnificent People’s Liberation Army in Yugoslavia which is winning that land from the Nazis plus the Mikhailovich traitors even before any military help comes from the outside. Such unity is the living spirit of the Greek resistance, the Polish partisan movement, and all the risings of the peoples of the Nazi-occupied lands. Such unity rises with might and disunity out of the rubble of the collapsed Mussolini regime in Italy. Such unity is the supreme sign of victory in every country in the world.”

I have made these citations from the record, which characterize the work of the whole Communist movement and not merely for one speaker, because the voice of responsible men is in danger of being drowned by those who forget or never understood that record, and the great achievements that flowed out of it.

If anybody can look at that record and talk about capitulation and lack of independent leadership, then the discussion has gone to a level in which I cannot participate.

The Presidential Election of 1944.

The 1942 Congressional elections gave sweeping gains to the reactionary forces, so that Roosevelt was faced with a hostile majority, composed of Republicans and anti-Roosevelt Democrats. This was obviously in contradiction to the attitude of the masses of the people.

It revealed that the Democratic Party, as an organization, was less integrated and less dynamic than the Republican Party; that, therefore, the Democratic Party could be the vehicle for a people's victory only when it was supplemented by independent organizations of labor and the people (including dissident Republicans), in a broad coalition, such as had won previous elections for and under the leadership of Roosevelt.

Already in the middle of 1943 it was the judgment of our Communist executives that the needs of the nation at war required that Roosevelt should be a candidate for a fourth term. Without Roosevelt as a candidate it was clear that both Democratic and Republican parties would be dominated by their reactionary wings; that the labor, liberal and independent members of the Roosevelt coalition would either be dispersed or isolated in a minority third-party movement, and America would be taken over by the appeasement and pro-Hitler forces.

That was not an easy task. The President's own personal desires were against it. His own party organization was honeycombed with Farleyism. The bourgeoisie was dominated by violent moods of opposition to him. The liberals were running wild and accusing him of betrayal of the "New Deal." Labor was deeply disaffected, blaming Roosevelt for the Congressional and administrative sabotage of his program. The Republicans and anti-Roosevelt Democrats were riding high and confident of victory. It looked like a hopeless task to secure Roosevelt's candidacy.

There was not even a national labor center from which to launch the "draft Roosevelt" movement. The CIO-PAC was formally initiated in 1943, but it was paralyzed at this stage, due to its acceptance of the Dubinsky idea that labor's endorsement of Roosevelt should be withheld until the last moment before the Democratic Convention as a "bargaining point" in dealing with the government's labor policy.

We had to spend the last half of 1943 breaking down all these difficulties and launching the "draft Roosevelt" movement from below, from the local unions and city councils, from state trade union conventions, and from some state committees of the Democratic Party that we had judged correctly as to the basic mood and tendency of the masses; before January, 1944, the draft movement had attained

such intensity that the Democratic National Committee went unanimously on record for Roosevelt's candidacy, although it had been the base of the main opposition to it until that time. From the beginning of 1944 the problems became one of convincing Roosevelt, not that he could be nominated, but that he could win the election.

In order to win the election it was necessary to extend and activate the pro-Roosevelt forces both to the right and to the left, to cut into the Republican following, to raise steadily the morale and enthusiasm of the Roosevelt movement until it reached its height at the election, while blunting and turning aside all the issues and slogans of those who believed it was "time for a change."

The right-wing Democrats, surrendering before the sweep of the "draft Roosevelt" movement, conducted a flank attack directed against Vice President Wallace, hoping to split the South away from the ticket on this issue. Wallace made a magnificent fight up to the last moment in the convention, thereby roused all the militancy of the labor and left-progressive sections, prevented the reactionaries from uniting upon one of their own camp for the vice presidency, and when the main body of the convention united around the relatively unknown Truman, Wallace went down the line for the ticket (thus consolidating the left), while the right wing was neutralized and their split stopped by their empty "victory" of getting Truman in place of Wallace. Thus was one of the main strategic attacks of reaction against the unity of the Roosevelt forces defeated, and Roosevelt placed in a stronger position than before that attack for the final election. Since I have been subjected to some of the bitterest attacks because I supported this strategy of Roosevelt, I think I should declare here and now that my opinion is firmer than ever that it was correct; that it helped substantially to secure the election victory, and that I accept full responsibility for it.

Another danger to the unity of the Roosevelt forces that had to be dissolved was the "third party" movement. We, therefore, supported, without hesitation, the move that initiated in Minnesota to merge the Farmer-Labor Party with the Democratic Party, which was effectuated before the presidential election and helped carry the state for Roosevelt. The Minnesota merger had national repercussions in heading off and rendering harmless the many third-party movements which were

based on Social-Democrats, Socialists, Trotskyites, Lewisites, and their assorted allies. I am more than ever convinced that the decision was sound; that we should not now, any more than in 1944, change our policy in the direction of encouraging or supporting third-party movements; that we should continue to keep our eyes fixed on the task of maintaining the effective unity of a majority of the country's voters around the Roosevelt program. A third great danger became apparent early in 1944: Labor's legitimate aspiration for direct representation in the national government, by inclusion of one or more of its leaders in the Cabinet, could not be promised realization by Roosevelt, largely because of the split between AFL and CIO; but, at the same time, it was clear that Dewey would readily make such a promise, having previous commitments to John L. Lewis, who straddled the AFL-CIO split by having been the founder of the CIO and presently negotiating readmission to the AFL — but a greater danger to labor than Lewis in the government could not be imagined. It, therefore, became necessary to oppose uncompromisingly the launching of a militant campaign for labor representation in the Cabinet during the 1944 campaign, because that would have helped Dewey and, if it was really taken up by the labor movement would have defeated Roosevelt. I am still of the opinion that our decision was entirely correct and that it should be confirmed today, since it is still called into question.

Roosevelt's Victorious Election Platform.

A fourth basic point of strategy which occasioned bitter disputes was the necessity to keep the mass campaign for Roosevelt on a non-partisan basis. Some comrades insisted that we go all out for the Democratic Party and against the Republican Party. We who then composed the majority stood solidly and without appeasement against this tendency. We insisted upon the non-partisan policy as a basic necessity for the full mobilization and effectiveness of the political action committee of AFL and CIO, as well as the various citizens' committees not to speak of the "Republicans for Roosevelt" clubs, which were of tremendous importance. At least one-third of the workers and other voters mobilized by these various committees to

vote for Roosevelt were traditionally Republicans and retained ties to Republican candidates on state and city levels. A partisan campaign would have alienated these voters and would have introduced dangerous elements of dissension into the campaign; it would have endangered the solidarity of the trade unions. I am more convinced than ever that we were entirely correct in our stubborn and intransigent insistence upon the non-partisan nature of the campaign.

The main factor of Roosevelt's election success was his promise to the people that victory would bring a lasting peace for many generations with full employment and a rising standard of living— that is, the platform of Teheran.

The platform of Teheran was what brought to the campaign the fighting, crusading spirit in the struggle for Roosevelt's election. That, and that alone, could overcome the war weariness of the masses; their innumerable grievances which they had been taught to lay at the door of the Roosevelt Administration; their remnants of isolationist thinking; their tendency to listen to anyone who suggested a quick and easy way out of the war.

I venture to assert that an indispensable element of this success of the Roosevelt electoral appeal was the work of the Communists in tirelessly explaining and deepening the understanding of the masses as to the meaning of Teheran, as to the practical possibility of realizing the goals set forth. If we had followed any other course, if we had indicated any element of doubt in our minds, I am convinced that Roosevelt would have been defeated.

To emphasize the deep historical importance of this victory, which could not have been won without the full force of the Communist contribution, I want to repeat to you what I wrote at the time of the election, because I am afraid that most comrades have forgotten these things already.

(Cites in full articles printed in The Daily Worker of November 7, November 9, and November 12 [1944]).

We enter the period of beginning of reconversion, after V-E Day, with a war still to be finished in the Pacific and with inadequate preparation of government, management or labor.

Our inadequate preparation could not be avoided, since bitter experience in the half-year before V-E Day had demonstrated that preparations for reconversion were immediately reflected in most serious relaxation of the war effort. Therefore at the advice of our most trusted military leaders all such preparations were delayed until after the military decision. The death of Roosevelt further delayed all planning and added to the confusion. The exploding of all divisive forces that followed V-E Day, as we had foreseen — to some extent- has further added to the difficulties. It is necessary for the labor movement to study this problem and take the lead in formulating policy for the nation, just as it did in the period of conversion to war.

There is one profound difference between the problems of conversion and reconversion. Conversion was directed toward satisfying a war-market whose only limit was our physical capacity to produce; the market was given and was automatically effective. Reconversion has but the most limited markets instantly available, and the peacetime market for full production and employment has yet to be planned and created. It will not come automatically. Without plans for realizing peacetime markets approximately equal in volume to the market of war, all talk about full employment or 60 million jobs becomes the purest of illusions, becomes only empty shouting into the wind.

The basic problem of reconversion is therefore the problem of markets on a scale to match American productive resources multiplied more than twice in the course of the war. Let us write this into our book as item number one, and begin to find answers to it, or else admit that we are abdicating leadership of the nation on this key question.

On the Discussion of the Duclos Article.

I have already published my basic reply to the charge of revisionism directed against me by Jacques Duclos in *The Worker* of June 10. I make this a part of my report without repeating it here. And that contains my basic estimate of the relation of forces in the world which must be the starting point for any Marxist thinking.

We have undoubtedly been suffering from a number of vulgarizations and distortions of our correct political line, which require correction. They can be corrected, however, only upon the foundation of that political line and not upon its abandonment or disintegration — which is the course being attempted in the draft resolution that has been placed before this National Committee meeting.

The draft resolution tries to ride off in all directions at once. Its estimate of the relation of forces is based upon superficial and temporary phenomena. Its program of action is but an incomplete carryover of our correct program of 1942 to V-E Day, while discarding the theoretical foundations upon which it was erected. It thereby introduces, for the first time in 15 years in any basic resolution of our movement, a fundamental conflict between theory and practice. It is my opinion that this represents the most fundamental revision of Marxism which has ever been committed in our movement. Its self-critical section, so-called, is a mechanical parody of Marxist self-criticism which has in practice opened up a veritable Pandora's box of deviations, a large part of which borders dangerously upon and even begins to merge with Trotskyism.

* * *

The correct Marxian attitude to the problem of the economic reconstruction of backward and devastated areas is that which I put forth at our convention in May 1944, in my response to the greetings of the Latin-American delegates. Permit me to quote from that address:

(Cites paragraph bottom of first column page 98 to bottom page 99 — CPA Convention Proceedings.)

This policy corresponds to the policy formulated by the Latin American Federation of Workers which unites the labor movements of most of the Republics, in fact all that function with any freedom. It corresponds to the program of the democratic mass movements and parties of those countries. It corresponds to the program of the Communist Parties of those lands. It corresponds to the program of

the Chinese Communist Party, which declares that "foreign capital shall be encouraged to invest in China in conformity with Chinese laws to aid the development of the nation's economy." It corresponds to the policy of every Communist Party everywhere which has faced squarely the issue and given it a considered answer. It corresponds to the policy put forward by Lenin, for the Soviet Union in its first difficult period after the revolution and before the giant rise of socialist industry under the Five-Year Plans.

I have not had time to complete my re-study of Lenin for that period, but even in cursorily looking over his speeches of 1920-21, I was immediately struck by this expression:

"This union (of the Soviets) with the state trusts of the advanced countries is absolutely essential for us owing to the fact that our economic crisis is so profound that we shall be unable to restore our ruined economy by our own efforts, without equipment and technical assistance from abroad. Merely importing this equipment is not sufficient. We can grant concessions on a wider basis, perhaps, to the biggest imperialist syndicates.... Thus we can catch up a little, if only a fourth or a half, with the modern advanced syndicates of other countries.... Negotiations have already started with some of the biggest world trusts. On their part, of course, it is not merely rendering a service to us ; they are simply doing it for the sake of unlimited profits." (Vol. 9, pp. 96-97, *Selected Works*.)

And further:

"We know that capitalist industry was built up in the course of decades with the assistance of all the advanced countries of the world. Have we already dropped into second childhood to think that at a time of dire distress and impoverishment in a country in which the workers are in a minority, in a country with a tortured and bleeding proletarian vanguard and a mass of peasants, we can complete this process so quickly?" (*Ibid.*, pg. 128.)

The Resolution Must be Completely Rewritten.

I must come to a close, although there are many questions I have not been able even to touch upon. I must finish with some proposals on the resolution:

1.— The resolution must be referred back to committee to be completely rewritten. The Committee should be guided in redrafting by the following points:

(a) Our policy since 1942 has been basically correct, has proved itself so in life, and has brought victories and advances in all fields to the nation and to the working class, including the matter from the change from Party to Association.

(b) We therefore reject the charge that our policy has been based upon or has included any revision of Marxism.

(c) The basic analysis of the relation of world forces contained in my speech of June 2 must be included in the resolution.

(d) The program of action for the next period must be solidly based upon the rapid and complete defeat of Japan, while simultaneously carrying forward the tasks of reconversion to a peacetime economy and full employment, and must include a rounded-out series of proposals for realizing the peacetime market, both foreign and domestic, equal in volume to the war market.

(e) There must be organized a campaign of education from top to bottom of the Association in the fundamentals of Marxism and its application to current world and national problems, combatting the simple opportunistic vulgarizations of our correct policy and eliminating them, and especially to stop the influx of Trotskyism and semi-Trotskyism which is the most corroding and destructive form of degeneration of Marxism — which is the main danger before the Communist Political Association at this time.

2.— The functioning leadership of the Association, in the Board, must be composed of members of the Association and National Committee who in their majority have not succumbed to the onslaught of alien ideas and fallen into panic before them in the course of the current political discussion.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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