
In view of the extraordinary importance of the Plenary Meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party, held in New York on June 11-13, this issue of THE COMMUNIST is presented as a special Plenum number.

We are publishing the full report of Earl Browder; the sub-reports (abridged) of Eugene Dennis, Roy Hudson, and John Williamson; the Plenum Resolutions and Statements; and the speeches (abridged) of James W. Ford, Gilbert Green, William Schneiderman, and Arnold Johnson.

HOLD THE HOME FRONT!

BY EARL BROWDER

I. Our Task Today

THE decisive phase of the war has arrived. The preconditions for the defeat of the Axis have been created by the unprecedented victories of the Red Army in the winter campaign and the merging of the Soviet offensive with the actions of the British and American forces in Africa and the air attacks upon Germany from the West. Today, British and American forces are preparing to open up major actions on the continent of Europe. For the first time the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition will be exerting its combined forces in full coordination against Hitler on the main field of battle. The road to victory lies straight and clear ahead, but victory must still be won in battle.

The road will be difficult, and every advance must be paid for.

Our task today is, in unity with all other forces in the country who place victory above all other considerations, to weld unbreakably the home front, in order to guarantee that the blows delivered against the enemy by our armed forces shall have the full force of the nation behind them.

Hitler and his associates are fully aware that the hour of decision is approaching. And they are acting upon that knowledge, feverishly mobilizing all their reserves to throw into the balance. It would be an unforgivable mistake to underestimate Hitler's remaining power. Above all, we must not underestimate Hitler's fifth column in the United States. Axis hopes are now

centered upon creating diversions behind the main battlefronts, in order to create divisions among the Allies, disrupt our internal unity, sap our strength and prevent it from reaching the battlefields. To hold the home front line is now of equal importance to holding the battle line.

The home front must be protected from Hitler's diversions. Events have already demonstrated that this is our most vulnerable point, that here we are least prepared for the enemy's advance. That is why we must concentrate our attention in this period on the home front, safeguarding national unity, upholding our Commander-in-Chief in the direction of the war, securing maximum and uninterrupted production, mobilizing the masses for most efficient application of all war measures—rationing, war savings, civilian defense, etc.—perfecting the structure of our war economy, and, above all, unmasking the hidden enemy within, the Copperheads, the defeatists, the advocates of a negotiated peace, the profiteers, the black-marketeers, and all their agents and accomplices.

II. *The Nature of Our Alliance With the Soviet Union*

One of the most effective weapons for disrupting the unity of the nation for the war and for undermining our unity with our Allies still remains the legend that the Soviet Union was not our ally but our enemy until June 22, 1941, and that only then did the Soviet Union, by accident, as it were, become our

friend and ally. We saw this legend repeated just a week ago in the *New York Times* editorial in reply to my letter regarding the anti-Communist bogey, and it is constantly repeated in discussions of the war in many circles. It is time that we make an issue of this question and bring some new clarity in the public mind on the nature of our alliance with the Soviet Union and its foundations. So long as false conceptions of this issue are prevalent and unchallenged, so long is our home front most seriously in danger. This, therefore, is a first, key problem in consolidating the home front.

June 22 will mark two years since the Nazis began their invasion of the Soviet Union, almost six months before the United States entered the war as a belligerent. In these two fateful years the destiny of humanity lay in the hands of the Red Army, the Soviet peoples, their socialist system and their leadership—first of all, Joseph Stalin. On the Eastern front the tide of world affairs was at last, after years of threatened complete collapse of civilization, turned toward victory of the peoples, victory of human culture, progress and democracy.

In spite of this evident and undeniable fact, powerful forces in this country still consider it a rebuke to a person to say that he changed his attitude toward the war after June 22, 1941. In the light of history it has become clear that those Americans to whom June 22, 1941, was not a decisive turning point are themselves guilty of the most light-minded carelessness re-

garding the fate of their own country. For at that time the United States was drifting relentlessly into the world storm without regard to the main condition for riding that storm to victory—the condition of having by our side as an ally the Soviet Union.

If we now have a clear perspective for victory in the war this is due, not so much to any American wisdom, but to Hitler's stupidity and to the underlying relation of forces which arose above all such transient factors to impress its character upon the war. The prospect of victory is based, first of all, upon the mighty achievements of our Soviet ally, whose friendship we so cavalierly repulsed for years, whose might we so blindly underestimated, whose profoundly democratic and progressive contributions to world history we so childishly denied. Our country has indeed much to learn still from the lessons of June 22, 1941.

Those who try to perpetuate the prejudices which before June 22 took the place of thought are doing an ill service to our country. There was not a moment since 1935, to go back no further, when the United States could not have had complete friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union for the preservation of world peace. All it required was a sincere demonstration of a friendly approach based upon acceptance of the Soviet Union as an equal. We reached that relationship, however, only after the eleventh hour, and the delay cost humanity dearly—a cost we will long have to pay.

That mistake is still being per-

petuated. It lingers in the legend repeated in some of our most respectable newspapers, that before June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union was an ally of Nazism. That malicious slander is used to conceal the great historic fact that it was the very existence of the Soviet Union as a neutral which saved the British Isles from Nazi invasion in 1940, a hundred times more so than the moral and material support then being given by the United States to Britain. That lie is used to obscure and hide the truth, so vital to the United States, that it was the Soviet Union which, by its very existence, held back the Japanese militarists from striking at the United States until December 7, 1941, after Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union. It hides the fact that the Hitler invasion of the Soviet Union was a factor which made inevitable the Japanese attack upon the United States. It hides the fact that we must understand, for our own future sake, that the Soviet Union was always a power on our side, even when we rejected its friendship; that invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, was the signal of inevitable invasion of the United States as well, unless the Axis was first destroyed.

So long as the United States does not understand to the full this basic political truth, we are not fully prepared for all of the tasks required for victory. For it still remains true that correct policy, based on knowing our friends and not confusing them with our enemies, is more important than armaments. Our country is still in the first

stages only of its alliance with the Soviet Union. It will be exceedingly difficult to deepen that alliance, as it must be deepened, so long as our country is influenced by the Hitlerite lie that the Soviet Union was our enemy before June 22, 1941, and was only pushed on to our side by a sort of accident, and is therefore, since June 22, only an adventitious friend. It is much closer to the truth to say that the United States only awakened to the historic necessity of that alliance, of which the Soviet Union was long conscious, by June 22, 1941, followed so quickly by December 7, and Pearl Harbor.

Almost all Americans are ready today to join in the universal glorification of the Red Army. That is good as far as it goes, but more fundamental and more important for the victory which must be won is to gain an understanding of our great Soviet ally. We must understand how and why it was that the Soviet Union was the United States' friend and protector in the Pacific even when we were behaving in a most hostile manner and repeating the worst lies about friends. We must understand how the Soviet Union was our greatest friend in Europe and fighting our battles for us even when we were helping Baron Mannerheim and slandering our friend with the epithet "Communazi." We must understand June 22, 1941, as marking the destruction of those old myths and legends and opening our eyes to the truth and not as the occasion for perpetuating Hitler's lies today in a new form.

That is the central thought which we must press home to our country on the occasion of the anniversary of June 22, which will mark two years of the Eastern Front as American boys prepare to open the Second Front in Europe. Let us use this truth to weld our national unity, defeat the fifth columnists and deepen our alliance with the Soviet Union and our other Allies for the more severe battles to come.

III. *The Lewis Insurrection*

The most acute and difficult of our problems are epitomized in the Lewis insurrection against the war. It has become clear that we must characterize the campaign of John L. Lewis and his long list of helpers in these past weeks as nothing less than an insurrection against the war. John L. Lewis has become the key figure and the spearhead of the anti-war diversion, and for this he is manipulating the miners' union, of which he has, over the years, become the unchallenged autocrat. There is not the slightest doubt that Lewis is working and has worked during the past two years at least, as an integral part of the pro-Nazi fifth column, aiming at a negotiated peace with Hitler at the expense of Britain and the Soviet Union, and, in a deeper sense, at the Nazi subjugation of the United States itself. There is no doubt that the miners' strike was developed consciously as a part of that conspiracy. There is no doubt that this is treason against the miners, against the labor movement, against our own country and against the United Nations.

The day on which Lewis called out the miners the last time, the *Chicago Tribune* put out the slogan "Remove Roosevelt." That was approximately the same day on which the *Völkischer Beobachter* in Berlin published a eulogy of Lewis' activities, showing that this strike was no mere carry-over of prewar concepts of trade unionism. This is no mere trade unionism as usual, no mere matter of a certain lag in development, a failure to catch up with the problems of the day. No, it is a distinct intervention in the war, on the side of Hitler, against the United States and the United Nations, and has behind it a whole strategy whose aims we can describe in detail.

This movement aims, first of all, to break down the war economy of our country, to smash the President's economic policies and administration by canceling labor's no-strike policy. It aims to draw the whole labor movement into an unrestrained wave of strikes and struggles of all sorts, throwing the country into chaos and giving the reactionary majority in Congress the pretext to enact anti-trade union legislation. It aims at seizing the leadership of the C.I.O. through Lewis' stooges by discrediting Murray and the responsible leadership and then triumphantly moving into the A. F. of L. to take over the whole labor movement in line with Hutcheson and Woll. This movement aims, by achieving these ends, to halt the American-British plans for the invasion of Europe in 1943. Or, if that is impossible, to weaken its force so that it can-

not press the war to a conclusion. This movement aims at nothing less than the seizure of power in Washington either by forcing the surrender of Roosevelt or, if that proves impossible, by defeating him in 1944, by throwing the country into chaos and blaming the chaos upon the President.

Lewis personally has hopes of being the next President of the United States. And he is encouraged in these hopes by powerful capitalist circles in the United States. That is the outline of the conspiracy which comes to a head in the Lewis strike movement.

This conspiracy has widespread tentacles. We have already noted various manifestations of it over the past several months. To these can now be added the anti-Mexican riots in Los Angeles, which are one of the sharpest expressions of this planned, organized and financed diversion movement aimed to break up the unity of the country and destroy the war morale. We have to mention also the deliberately organized and incited anti-Negro riots and provocations in Detroit, in Mobile, in Newark and many other places. Finally, there is the wave of anti-Semitic agitation which, in the most sinister fashion, is sweeping this country, with very little organized resistance.

These are all the supporting movements of the conspiracy against the war, the conspiracy to establish John L. Lewis as Hitler's Gauleiter in charge of our country. Lewis is by no means alone. He has a most impressive list of helpers. There is an unprecedented concen-

tration of forces giving open aid to Lewis and all sorts of concealed aid, uniting those groups and individuals who for any reason are opposing Roosevelt's war policies and who place their special interests above victory in the war. Chief among these Lewis forces we can note the following:

First, without exception and everywhere, that political grouping which identified itself before the war under the title "America First," headed by the Hoover, Wheeler, Vandenberg, Nye, Taft coalition of political figures.

Second, the Southern poll-tax politicians who are in coalition with the reactionary Republicans in Congress and who are preparing behind the scenes a coalition for the 1944 elections of the same nature against Roosevelt and his policies.

Third, the coal operators who have long had a close and confidential relationship with Lewis. Typical of their spokesmen, and of their whole course, is an expression printed in the *Wheeling Intelligencer*. This newspaper, published in Wheeling, W. Va., and directly connected with the coal industry, said editorially in its issue of June 1 in summing up the situation at the moment when the miners were on strike:

"For our part we would rather see John Lewis at the head of labor in the United States than any other man. His very strength is what we need. We consider him not only the strongest but the safest labor leader in the nation."

And these gentlemen are doing

their best to put Lewis at the head of all labor as the American version of Hitler's Robert Ley.

Fourth, the newspapers. The only papers that are excited about the situation and are making a campaign are fighting tooth and nail for John L. Lewis. The others are supporting Lewis with a few words of criticism or gently reprimanding him. In the United States newspaper field, however, you cannot find a single paper conducting a militant campaign against John L. Lewis except the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker*. Day after day, political commentators deal with this whole question in such a way as to build up Lewis as a hero—labor's hero—while at the same time using his diversions to justify anti-labor legislation and prepare the ground for crippling the labor movement.

Fifth, the Hutcheson, Woll, Dubinsky clique, long actively conspiring with Lewis, and in effective control of the A. F. of L. Executive Council. William Green is nothing but their megaphone now. At the very moment when William Green was formally reiterating the A. F. of L. no-strike policy, he expressed pleasure at Lewis' bid for reaffiliation, although the miners were on strike at that moment; and no top leader of the A. F. of L. has denounced that strike.

It is a matter of common gossip that the arrangements have already been completed by the top leadership of the A. F. of L. to bring Lewis into the A. F. of L. at the October convention, and Lewis has promised the A. F. of L. leaders that he is going to bring in with him the

United Auto Workers and the Rubber Workers.

Sixth, the Reuther-Carey grouping in the C.I.O., super-ambitious young men who have been led up to the mountain-top and shown the land over which they will be given command, and who are speculating on a Lewis victory. These men have affirmed their connections with the conspiracy through the medium of David Dubinsky and the Social-Democratic Federation.

And finally, we must mention in this combination all that maze of anti-Soviet groupings in the United States, the professional anti-Sovieteers, the professional anti-Communists, all of whom have been very actively enlisted in this conspiracy and all of whom are making their contribution very energetically. This includes the emigrés of the Second International, the Social-Democratic Federation with its *New Leader* and the *Forward*, the Lovestoneites, Norman Thomas — to whom the latest edition of the *United Mine Workers Journal* devotes almost a half page of eulogy and who in turn eulogizes John L. Lewis—the Trotskyites, the Coughlinites, the Ku Klux Klan and many others.

These are the forces that seized on the Ehrlich-Alter case as a political preparation for the Lewis strike movement. The connection between these two and the meaning of this grouping of all these anti-war forces are shown by a bit of evidence that came to my hand in the shape of a magazine in the Russian language published in New York. It is called *Za Svobodu*,

meaning *For Freedom*. It is the organ of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, old-time emigrés from Russia, professional anti-Sovieteers. The leader of this party is called Victor Chernoff. Victor Chernoff was an honored guest on the platform of the meeting in which Dubinsky launched the Ehrlich-Alter provocation and he was introduced to the audience. Victor Chernoff's magazine for the month of May has in it a very interesting news item. The editor of this magazine, Mr. Zinzinoff, is reported as delivering two public lectures to the New York group of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. One was on "American Magazines on Russia," a survey for the last three months; and the other "A Voice from the Underground," a review of an article by Ivanov Razumik in the Berlin Russian paper *Novoye Slovo* of September, 1942, on the spiritual life in the Soviet Union.

Note that Mr. Zinzinoff, the editor of Victor Chernoff's paper, has in his hand the magazine published by his Berlin associates and is able to deliver a public lecture on that magazine here in New York, the subject being the "Underground," not against Hitler, but against the Soviet Union. How do you think Mr. Zinzinoff is able to get the magazine from Berlin? How are they so closely informed about the activities of their party associates in Berlin? How is it that the S.R.'s in Berlin are able to function so freely?

For that we get the answer in the May 2 news dispatches from Stockholm, which report that Hitler is

organizing a Russian army against the Soviet Union with the assistance of the old emigrés who have long operated in Berlin against the Soviets. These gentlemen are in active military collaboration with Hitler in Berlin and their activities are reported immediately and in detail to their agents in New York who are so bold as to speak about it publicly on their platform, and publish it in their paper.

From this we can understand much better the significance of the Ehrlich-Alter case. And these are the gentlemen most actively fighting for John L. Lewis today. And David Dubinsky boasts to the newspaper reporters how six months ago he made plans for Lewis to go back into the A. F. of L. Is it not plain from these related facts that we are dealing with a widely ramified conspiracy, of which the strike movement is a part? These facts expose the clumsy legend that, in this strike movement, we are dealing with militant trade unionists whose only fault, if there is one, is an excess of zeal.

Do We Support All Strikes?

Lewis' stooges, especially the Trotskyites and Norman Thomas Socialists, the Social-Democratic Federation and the George Sokolskys, have raised the cry that strikes must always be supported, and especially by the Communists. They are trying to convince us that we are renegades from the principles of Lenin and Stalin in condemning the strike movement; that it is against the laws of nature for Com-

munists to be against strikes. Yes, they go so far as to quote Lenin against us and for John L. Lewis. Such references to Lenin are beneath contempt and are an obvious cover for treason to trade unionism as well as to the nation. Even in the days when strikes were in the main progressive acts and to be supported, Lenin never failed to warn, and on this he had the agreement of all sound trade union leaders, that not all strikes can be supported, that the consequences of a strike must always be taken into consideration before a strike is advocated, planned, carried out or supported. The consequences of an act are the determining factor of the class attitude toward it. That is a basic rule of all sound trade unionism. Way back in 1902 Lenin had occasion to criticize a program that had been advocated by one of the organizations in Russia and which extolled strikes as the best means of struggle. The strike, Lenin replied,

“. . . is only one of the means, not always even one of the best. It is enough to indicate the necessity to give leadership to economic struggles in general; sometimes this leadership must be expressed by restraining strikes.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. V, p. 130, Russian edition.)

Today in the United States it has become an imperative duty of all sound labor leadership to restrain strikes and to do everything to dissolve the strike movement. You cannot have strikes and win the war.

Today it is the anti-war capital-

ists, the admirers and friends of Hitler, those who want to bring Nazism to the United States, that want strikes; the strike policy is their policy, and they do not hesitate to use strikes freely to prepare their way to power.

Do you think employers are universally against strikes? That is just as foolish as to think Communists are always for them. There are employers who like to use strikes and like to have the labor movement in a condition where they can provoke strikes when and where they please. David Dubinsky helped to pave the way for Lewis when he staged the stoppage of the dress-makers in New York, despite the fact that he and the employers had already agreed on a settlement. There was a deliberate purpose behind that move; it was to spread the idea that strikes during wartime are legitimate.

John L. Lewis betrayed the miners months ago when he blocked every effort to lay the foundations for settlement of the needs and grievances of the miners before the expiration of the contract. Way last summer, Ickes proposed to Lewis and the coal operators to put the miners on a six-day basis, give the miners time and a half for the extra day, increase production for the war, and alleviate the manpower shortage. We must not allow the miners to forget that Lewis joined with the mine operators to reject this, although in May, in the first strike, when this was imposed upon the industry, the Lewis forces hailed it as the first victory for the strike, when it could have been had six

months before the contract expired.

In general, Lewis has stubbornly refused to permit the union to take up the problem of production, or to relate the miners' income to production. Lewis has connived with the employers to place all possible solutions of the economic issues of the mining industry in such a form that to settle them would require granting higher profits to the operators, thereby smashing the economic policies of the Roosevelt Administration.

The Incentive Wage

This line, and especially the line of preventing the linking of the workers' income to production, has been followed by all anti-war elements. It is the platform of the defeatists' conspiracy inside the labor movement as well as outside. This has come to the fore in the issue of the incentive wage. The question of incentive wage is the question of unifying the economic interests of the workers and the economic needs of the war, so that they act not to defeat one another but to help and supplement one another.

By linking the workers' wage income to production and productivity it is possible to stimulate production for the war enormously and at the same time give the workers the increased wage income which they desire and need without in any way undermining the existing economic relationships or causing a general shake-up or initiating an inflation spiral. Much headway

has been made in the understanding of this question on a mass scale, a question which we first raised in November, 1942, when we stressed the basic importance of the production problem. But not much headway has yet been made in applying the program of incentive wages, especially upon the scale required for the war. The problem before us is to carry the issue of the incentive wage over from the stage of discussion to the stage of action, by having it applied in life by the trade unions in collaboration with the government and with those sections of the enlightened employers who are ready to welcome it. It is necessary to break down the resistance and sabotage of this issue within the labor movement which come from people with special interests, most of them linked up with Lewis, and to overcome that section of the employers whose resistance is based upon shortsightedness, greed and inertia, as well as that section of the employers whose resistance is political, caused by their connection with the defeatist conspiracy.

In general, we can sum up our tasks in relation to the Lewis insurrection against the war in a few simply stated aims which we must set for all conscious and honest men in the labor movement and outside. These provide the key to the solidification of the home front for the next crucial period in the military struggle.

We must expose the Lewis conspiracy and isolate it in the labor movement on the basis of rejecting his strike policy, laying bare his

anti-war alignments and purposes and rallying every patriotic element in the population against him, showing his attempts to wreck the Roosevelt Administration not as narrow personal partisanship but as fascist partisanship for Hitlerism. We must make it politically impossible for the American Federation of Labor to carry through its contemplated coalition with Lewis.

Second, in those unions where Lewis has promised that his stooges are going to bring them along with him, like the Auto Workers and others, we must force those agents into the open or force them to break with Lewis and his policies not only in words, but in deeds. We know who some of these people are. Reuther is one. Carey is another. And anyone who refuses to speak out against this Lewis insurrection can be looked upon as a probable member of the conspiracy, only awaiting the moment when he will be called into action.

We must unite the C.I.O. behind the leadership of Phil Murray and his clear and correct program for the labor movement, and we must work with every honest leading element who goes along with Murray in the fullest collaboration, giving them our confidence and support without any regard to possible past or present ideological differences.

We must bring the healthy leading elements of the American Federation of Labor and the C.I.O. into working collaboration with the consciousness of the task that faces them, on a state and national scale, looking toward the real unity of the

labor movement, not a unity which consists of consolidating the anti-war elements in control at the top, but a unity of labor to win the war and win it against the Lewises or any other pro-Nazi provocateur.

We must build the unity of all anti-Axis elements for the war now, and for the 1944 elections, which are already a practical issue today in the course of the conduct of the war.

IV. *The 1944 Presidential Elections*

The preparations for the 1944 election campaign are not formal and traditional preparations. They bear all signs of the development of a major battle for power between two fundamentally irreconcilable trends of policy. The question of the President's succession involves the determination of whether the United States goes forward in the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition to the unconditional surrender of the Axis and all its works, with the reconstitution of the world order on that basis, or whether the U. S. shall dissolve the coalition and embark upon a course of salvaging the Axis powers and combining with them against our present Allies, Britain and the Soviet Union. That is the issue of the 1944 elections.

This issue is being fought out in both major parties. In the Democratic Party it is the dividing line between the pro-Roosevelt and anti-Roosevelt groupings. In the Republican Party it is represented in the Willkie camp versus the regular Republican machine. The struggle is complicated by the fact

that the only clear hope of a straight Republican Party victory in 1944 lies in the nomination of Willkie. That, however, would represent a defeat for the reactionary coalition second only to Roosevelt's re-election or the election of a person standing for everything that Roosevelt does. And the anti-war coalition will fight against Willkie with almost the same fanaticism they display against the President.

Thus it is that the main current of thinking in the defeatist camp turns in the direction of securing a three-way division of the electoral vote that will deny a majority to any candidate, thus throwing the election into the House of Representatives, which is controlled by the reactionary coalition. To bring about such a result, the reactionary coalition must first split the labor support of Roosevelt in the North, create economic chaos and social struggle on a broad scale, thus carrying the North at least in the majority; second, splitting the Southern poll-tax states away from Roosevelt or Roosevelt's candidate, behind a rival Democratic candidate named by a rump convention which will keep Roosevelt off the ballot in the poll-tax states. For this they aim at all costs to prevent the repeal of the poll tax.

For the labor and progressive movements, as for all who put victory above all other considerations, preparations for 1944 are therefore an integral part of the home front of the war effort which must be made now, not next year. Special political groupings and organizational efforts have a positive value

today only as they are formed under the sign of unity for victory, under the slogan of holding the home front. The dominant issue is not Right wing versus Left wing; it is not the New Deal against the Old Deal; it is not the keeping of the status quo; it is not anything but for victory against the defeatists.

And in this whole struggle, whether it be electoral alignments for 1944 or the daily questions of life today in the development of the war, our friends and our allies are not determined by any ideological considerations, or any formal political alignments. We are partners and allies with every American who is ready to fight the defeatists at home and prosecute the war to victory at all costs. That is our political platform today and next year; along that line we must carry on without deviation. That is the line of struggle for the next period of the war, and the line for the 1944 elections.

V. Problems of the War Economy

A few words about our war economy. The tempo of construction of an all-out war economy in the U. S. has been distressingly slow. The chief obstacle has been the policy of appeasing the defeatists' opposition. Even the elementary and minimum seven-point program enunciated by President Roosevelt in April, 1942, has not been carried out. Most of the disturbances of national unity could have been avoided or controlled by full application of the seven-point pro-

gram. Most of the C.I.O. minimum program, still to be fought for and achieved, is merely the concrete enforcement of that seven-point program the President enunciated. The deeper problem of organizing the national economy for war is only now being seriously approached.

A few days ago the President by executive order set up an Office of War Mobilization. Thus there came into being essentially that structure of authority which had been put forward in the Tolson-Kilgore-Pepper Bills with the support of labor and a large part of the other classes.

This is progress, but everything now depends upon how quickly this centralized authority which has been created takes up its tasks, whether it really begins at once to produce centralized all-out plans for the national economy. You cannot have such plans without having the centralized authority to produce them. But the existence of the authority does not automatically produce the plans and now it is necessary that the country shall make it known to the Office of War Mobilization that it expects order to be brought out by the economic chaos—not by the adjustment of differences and quarrels by an umpire, but by the prevention of differences, quarrels, bottlenecks, breakdowns by means of planning and direction of economic life according to plan.

Agriculture for War

We must begin to give this more emphasis now also in relation to

agriculture, to which the country is beginning to turn its attention. Price fixing can be maintained only by the firm establishment of planned production. That applies to all phases of the war economy, industry and agriculture. We must insist that the economic plans shall cover not only production of war material, but also industrial production for the civil population, and agricultural production for industry and for food.

In agriculture, there are two features of the war economy which require over-all planning and administration. These are, first, the system of production subsidies. It is clear to all who accept the necessity for the maintenance of the present price structure that the only way in which the pressing problems in the field of food production can be met is by production subsidies. Herbert Hoover's elaborate platform for the removal of all ceilings on prices of agriculture is merely another attempt to wreck the economic program of the Administration with a political objective. All of the enemies of production subsidies in the food production program are enemies of the all-out prosecution of the war. It is necessary that we make this clear to the country, to labor, as well as to the farmers, and win general support to the concept of production subsidies for food.

Second in the development of agricultural production are the technical aids to production. Some beginnings have been made in the way of providing through a national economic apparatus the necessary

technical aids to production. Such aids on a proper scale must include an organized system of machinery rental and repair stations adjusted to the type of agriculture in each section, auxiliary transportation services which are required to replace the breakdown of private transportation, and a labor army for seasonal demands in agriculture which cannot by any means be taken care of on the basis of individual employment, even if organized and protected by governmental agencies. The labor question in agriculture clearly will require a national organization of labor to supplement the labor of the individual farmer and the individual hired worker.

VI. *The Dissolution of the Communist International*

It is necessary for me now to pass on to a few words on the significance of the dissolution of the Communist International. We have published the decision of the Presiding Committee of the Comintern, as well as many documents from various countries and from our own party, in relation to this action. It is not necessary for me to review these documents with you here. We can assume that you are familiar with them, that you have studied them, and that you already have a common body of opinion as to their significance.

The action taken on May 15 and completed on June 10 cancels the organizational association of the various national Communist Parties. Thus is closed an era of the devel-

opment of the world's working class movement. It is quite clear that we have a most profound, positive estimate of the role of the Communist International during this past period. Especially we must emphasize that in this period, and due above all to the role of the Communist International, there has finally been realized that coalition of all the progressive forces in the world that gives us the guarantee of the final elimination of fascism and Nazism from the world. That is a tremendous achievement. We must further emphasize that in this period now closed, under the guiding hand of the Communist International, there has developed in most of the major countries—and many of the smaller ones—mature Marxist working class parties, in most cases under the name Communist, which are playing, and will continue to play, a most vital role in achieving the tasks of this war, which are the supreme tasks of this historic epoch, and of guaranteeing an ordered world development after this war is over.

Our party, the Communist Party of the United States, being without international affiliation since November, 1940, is not called upon to participate in the decision which has already been finalized. This is an event, however, which demands our political evaluation and conclusions to be drawn, since it profoundly influences the national and international life within which we work.

The Axis was brought into existence as an anti-Comintern, manipulating the spectre of Commu-

nism, to prevent the effective coalition of the democratic states jointly to resist aggression. With the disappearance of the Comintern, this Axis weapon has been to a very great degree rendered harmless to the cause of democratic unity. It has destroyed the legend that Communist Parties in the various countries act upon any other basis than the interests of their own nation; it thereby facilitates the unity within our nation of all patriotic forces, as well as the unity of the various nations, for the joint struggle against the Axis.

The dissolution of the Comintern has further cleared the boards for the emergence of higher forms of international solidarity, which must find expression also in international trade union unification, first of all in the Anglo-Soviet-American trade union council, to parallel the coalition of governments and peoples.

There are special questions relating to our own party and the relations of our party to national unity. The dissolution of the Communist International creates new and more favorable conditions for the integration of the Communist Party of the United States into our own American democratic life and national unity. It is true that our party, already in 1940, had dissolved its affiliation and had taken all programmatic steps requisite to the proper adjustment of our relations to the democratic national front. But all circles in America who were infected with Hitler's anti-Comintern bogey in any degree denounced our disaffiliation and other move-

ments as a fraud, insisting that so long as the Communist International existed there could be no disaffiliation except by renegacy and fighting against the Communist International.

Now that the Communist International is no more, this argument has lost even a semblance of plausibility, and the Communist Party has a more advantageous position and a better atmosphere in its struggle to secure full citizenship on our own merits, and without the fear of ghosts.

To begin the process of the immediate utilization of these more favorable conditions, I wrote a series of letters, with the agreement of our Political Committee, to the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. These have been republished in *The Worker* of June 6.

As was to be expected, considering its confused and vacillating position on the war, the first reaction of the *New York Times* was swift and angry refusal to consider as open to discussion the position of the Communist Party in the United States. This was evidently not based upon any new thought in the light of the new stage in world history, but was a mechanical hangover or carry-over from the past. The *Times*' editorial reaction to my second letter was still stubborn, but already in a defensive tone, and conceded the legality of the Communist Party.

The editor of the *Times* was evidently uncomfortably aware that his defense of the appeasement of Japan, which he described as oppo-

sition to Japan short of war, was exactly the formula of Chamberlain and Daladier at Munich and contrasted sharply with the Communist Party declaration of 1937 to support war if necessary to halt Japanese aggression.

Also the editor evidently began to realize that his pet formula, the dissolution of the Communist Party of the United States, raised more problems from his approach to the question than it settled, although he could not yet find any new ground for continuing the discussion. Although the *New York Times* is by no means a decisive organ of public opinion, on the whole, we must take these reactions as symptomatic and, considering the source, not unfavorable to the prospects of a further broad discussion which we will take to the entire country and which will finally place the problem of the Communists in America in a new light entirely.

It is not without significance that the *Herald Tribune*, a more objective and realistic organ, even if equally prejudiced, did not rush in to print with a ready-made answer, but withheld its comment. These letters addressed to the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* are, of course, in reality directed to all Americans, including the responsible governmental leaders of our country and of the war. We sincerely hope and expect that our approach will receive the response in the same spirit of national unity for the war in which those letters were written. This discussion is by no means closed. It is only opened.

It is necessary for the war, for

victory, for national unity, that our country shall understand anti-Communism as a defeatist political instrument of the same order as anti-Semitism, just as harmful, and no more a private problem of the Communists than anti-Semitism is a problem only for the Jews. Both are equally weapons for Hitler. You don't have to be a Jew to know the damage of anti-Semitism. All you have to be is a decent democrat. The same thing is true, for the same reasons, of anti-Communism. Both are obscurantist political witchcraft. And only at the price of complete exposure and rejection of these ideologies is it possible to have any kind of sane, healthy, democratic life in our country. The presence and continued operation of anti-Communism and anti-Semitism and the other features of Nazi ideology are destructive of all clear thinking, of all sound political relationships; they are destructive of national unity and are productive of defeatists in the war. To clear the air of these bogeys is a common duty of all democrats. Of, course, this is not to deny that we Communists have our own special duties in breaking down the walls of suspicion and distrust that have been built up against us and against national unity by years of repetition of lies and slander. We must be patient and persevering and never allow ourselves to be provoked by these lies into hot words or hasty actions. Only complete calmness and collectedness and persistence in bringing forward the truth against these lies will meet this problem from the point of view of Com-

munist participation in this task.

VII. *Communists and the Trade Unions*

One angle of our work becomes of greater importance every day—namely, our relations to the world of trade unionism. We must emphasize especially what is true generally of the relationships of our party to mass organizations, that it is the duty of the Communists, and we must school the Communists in this duty, to so conduct themselves as to convince all their honest fellow citizens, even the prejudiced ones, that there is no truth whatsoever in the fairy tales that the Communists want to dominate or to capture the trade unions, or any other mass organization. We have no such program. We have no such desires and we want to prove it by our smallest act and word. To this end it has become more necessary than ever now that we clean up in the odd corners of our party whatever remnants may be hanging around of old methods of work, carry-overs from the days when we were a persecuted minority in which the main stream of public life was not developing along the lines that we supported and in which fractions and fractional methods of work were used to some extent in trade unions and mass organizations. Some years ago we put an end to this as a system of work in our party. A recent inspection of our work in the field disclosed that some remnants of this old approach still continued, in spite of the declared policy of our party. Let us here make it clear

that we want to sweep out all those remnants completely. In the trade unions Communists need no special organizational forms of any kind. Everything that we have to do, our tasks and aims, we share with the great majority of the trade union members and leaders; and we must make that clear beyond any question and we must establish that in the practical life of our party so that no one can doubt it.

Communists can and must work in a most free and democratic manner in trade unions and other mass organizations with all other honest patriotic forces under the one main banner which unites us all, of unity to win the war, to hold the home front firm. There is not and there must not be any special discipline among Communists in the trade unions. The party, of course, will continue to demand of its members their complete adherence to trade union decisions and policies democratically arrived at, as well as the full support of our national war effort, to which everything else must be subordinated.

The Communist Party has its own special discipline in the sense of demanding these things of the member. But this is no discipline which in any way runs contrary to or crosses the discipline of the trade unions, which are autonomous organizations to which the Communists subordinate themselves in the same way that all other members of the trade unions do. There are no special demands in the interests of the Communists, no special interests of the Communists; we demand only equal democratic rights.

And even this is not merely for ourselves. It is a firmly established historical fact that when equal democratic rights are denied to the Communists that is the beginning of the loss of democratic rights for the entire population. And in fighting for our democratic rights, we are fighting not for a special interest, we are fighting for the democratic rights of every man and woman in America.

We must warn all of our party leaders that they will often be faced with temptations when non-party people approach the party in a friendly way and say, we want to discuss with you about the conditions in the trade unions, this or that union, this or that problem. Of course, we have the right and duty to discuss with every one all public questions, including trade union questions, which are not matters of indifference in the general political life of the country, but we must never fall for the temptation of party leaders discussing with other party or non-party trade union leaders detailed questions of trade union life in any way which pretends or assumes to commit Communists in the trade unions to follow a particular line. These decisions are not made by our party in consultation with anybody in the trade union movement. Those decisions are made only inside every trade union by the members of the trade union, including the Communists, of course, and are never made by party representatives on the outside. And let us make sure that that understanding is carried to the whole labor movement, and espe-

cially that it is enforced in the practice of our party.

VIII. "The Internationale"

At the time the dissolution decision was published, the Associated Press called me up and asked me for a statement as to what American Communists were going to do about the song "The Internationale." Without having had any preparation for such a momentous question, my reaction was to laugh at it and reply I really couldn't say. We never had any party decisions about songs, and I didn't suppose there were going to be any, that without party decisions we sang the "Star Spangled Banner" and I supposed we'd still continue, and I don't see any reason for changing our singing programs, which include "The Internationale."

I am afraid, however, that I took this question too lightly when I answered the Associated Press over the telephone. Thinking the matter over afterwards, I realized that while this question of songs has never been a matter of party decisions but merely of customs, to the outside world these things assume a great importance, especially as the spotlight is turned by enemies of ours and of the war effort upon precisely such small questions as that. Thinking further over the situation I had to admit that perhaps we made a mistake in not having party decisions about questions of songs because, if we had had party decisions, I'm sure that the American party would never have decided to change the words of "The Interna-

tionale," making our American version of it different from that used in any other part of the world. You know that in America we have for many years been singing a refrain of "The Internationale" as the "International Soviet." That's not done anywhere else in the world. That's a special Americanism. Some very zealous, very sectarian worker in the cultural world gave it to us and we thoughtlessly accepted it and it became an established custom. We never even reviewed it. We never even discussed it. Suddenly, without discussion, on the initiative of one person, the American Communists began to sing about the "International Soviet," where all the rest of the international labor movement sang about the "Internationale." It's a small difference, but it's a difference which has been exaggerated into a programmatic question in America by our enemies. Perhaps we'll have to break a long-standing tradition of having no decision about songs and officially change the American version of the "Internationale" back to the international version. I cite this as just one example whereby, by becoming more international, we will adjust ourselves closer to American realities. This was an Americanism that separated us from the American people.

IX. Conclusion

I must bring my remarks to a conclusion. I have concentrated this report upon a few outstanding questions which seem to me to be key to the central questions of the

day upon which there must be main concentration. This very narrow selectivity is not in any way to belittle the importance of other questions. It is to serve mainly as a matter of establishing the proper emphasis and the proper relation in terms of programmatic development of our daily work.

We can sum up what we have to establish in the Plenum, that our main task today is the struggle for the solidity of the home front and the political education of the American workers and the masses of the American people in the course of the struggle.

The task that we have before us is the most revolutionary task of history, the task of extirpating the Axis from the face of the earth. Nothing could be more revolutionary than that. In this revolutionary task we have the collaboration of the broadest circles that are subjectively not revolutionary at all and who object to the use of the word "revolution" because they see something sinister and subversive about it, although they agree wholeheartedly and completely with our revolutionary aims of the extirpation of the Axis.

Our special task as Communists is the political education of the millions, to bring deepened political understanding in the course of the struggle. The masses are learning from life.

Lenin wrote, way back in 1902, some words that I think are advantageous for us to remember at this moment, over forty years later, in a quite new historical situation. He said:

"The strength of the proletariat consists in this, that its number and compactness grow as a result of the process of economic development itself, at the same time as among the big and petty bourgeoisie there is growing disunity and disintegration of interests. In order to register this natural advantage of the proletariat, the political party of the working class must attentively observe all conflicts of interest among the ruling classes, using these conflicts not only to get fractional benefits for one or another stratum of the working class, but in order to educate the working class as a whole and also with the purpose of extracting a useful lesson from each new social political upset."

With the proper adjustments to the period of history in which we are living, that thought expresses our most profound central special task which only we can carry forward in the midst of this general struggle for victory.

Another quotation from Lenin:

"In the history of revolutions the contradictions ripening during decades and centuries come to the surface. Life becomes tremendously rich. On the political scene appear as active fighters the masses, who hitherto remained always in the shadow and therefore were ignored and even despised by superficial observers. These masses learn through their experience, trying their first steps, groping for the road, formulating their tasks, checking themselves and the theories of their ideologists. Those masses are exerting heroic efforts to reach the heights of gigantic world tasks imposed upon them by history and no

matter how big may be some defeats or how enormous the flow of blood and number of victims, nothing can equal the importance of this direct education of the masses and classes in the process of revolutionary struggle."

What Lenin said forty years ago of that stage of the revolutionary struggle is fully true today in that supremely revolutionary task in which we are engaged with the

broadest masses of our country and others, the extirpation of the Axis. While giving complete and full leadership and energy to the main task which we share with the broadest democratic camp, our special task is, at the same time, to guarantee the political education of the working class and the toiling masses of our country, preparing them for their future historical role.