

III. THINK DEEP, THINK FAST, AMERICA

THE whole world is living today under conditions of war and the threat of war. Mass slaughter of a ferocity and destructiveness without parallel already engages nations with a total population of over 500,000,000. Whole nations are disappearing overnight, and being transformed into subject territories and colonies. The very forms of democratic self-government are being wiped out in country after country. A great coalition of military dictatorships has arisen, which openly proclaims its goal of subjugation of the world, and which marches forward to conquer one country after another. The powerful democratic nations, which have the potential power and resources that could halt the war-making dictatorships, have been retreating and surrendering. They have been acting on the theory of "appeasement," but the results have been exactly opposite to their expectations; the more the wild beasts of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo war alliance are fed with the flesh and blood of additional peoples and territories, the more ferocious and insatiable grow their appetites, and the more dangerous grows their menace to the rest of the world.

The old illusion that the United States stands outside of this world situation, that we can "isolate" ourselves from the general danger, has died a quick and inglorious death. American national security, together with the very existence of American democracy, is threatened so immediately and obviously that no one can any longer be so blind as not to see it.

The danger is obvious. But what is not so clear to the great mass of the people is what to do about it, what policy can unite the great

majority of our people to overcome the dangers that beset us. The world is in confusion, old guideposts are being swept away in the rushing stream of catastrophic changes, old policies are revealing their bankruptcy; and into this chaos are being thrown new and wild demagogic appeals and slogans, with the resurrection of ancient ones, all designed to increase the confusion and disunity among the people, to set them fighting one another instead of uniting against the main enemy, the fascist alliance's monstrous military machine of world conquest.

Americans must think deep and think fast if we are to find the path that will lead us through these dangers while preserving the achievements of past progress and keeping the doors open to the future.

The Communist Party is fully awake to these dangers threatening the United States, dangers which we must share as part of the American people, even if as yet only a small part indeed. We believe that we have something to say on these problems which it is important for the whole American people to hear and to ponder over.

Hamilton Fish recently spoke in Chicago, and made the charge that the Communist Party is trying to entangle America in world affairs as part of a "Moscow plot," designed to trick the United States into fighting the battles of the Soviet Union. The same charge is made by Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese spokesmen, not to mention the lesser stars in the galaxy, Herbert Hoover, Hearst, Trotsky, and Norman Thomas.

Let us examine this question in some detail. It is as good a point of approach as any from which to dig into the heart of the whole international situation from the American viewpoint.

Why is the international situation dangerous? Because there are great military powers aggressively encroaching upon the rights and territories of others, including our own.

Who are these aggressive military powers? Everybody knows they are the governments of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Is it in the interest of the United States to stand entirely alone in this international situation, or is it to our interest to find as many

friends as possible, and as powerful ones as possible? Clearly, the more friends we have, and the more powerful they are, the better will be our situation, the more will the danger be reduced.

Is the Soviet Union a friend or enemy of the United States? Clearly, it is not an enemy, and the United States may choose by its own policy whether it shall remain a very distant friend or whether it shall be drawn into ever closer co-operation.

This is truly the most important single question that the people of the United States must decide in the immediate future. Upon this decision will depend American policy in the general crisis out of which will be decided the fate of the world. And our country, it so happens, is the most powerful single country in the world, equal in economic strength to all the other capitalist countries combined.

The Communist Party declares boldly and without hesitation that it is in the national interest of our country to enter into the closest possible co-operation with the Soviet Union for the aims common to both countries: the maintenance of peace, the halting of aggression, the preservation of international order. We declare that anyone who opposes this is opposing the most important single measure in protection of American national interests.

What are the arguments made against this policy? Not one of them stands up under analysis. Let us examine them one by one.

First, there is the argument that we can have nothing to do with the Soviet Union because it is a socialist country, and wants the United States to become socialist also. Certainly the Soviet Union is the country of socialism, and its people would be happy to see America and other lands adopt the same system. But the Soviet Union does not, and never will, try to force any people against their will to take up the socialist way of life. The Soviet Union relies for its influence in this direction entirely upon the logic of its example, which by its extraordinary success in multiplying its national income ten times in ten years does give a powerful argument in this direction.

Neither does the Communist Party of the United States propose or desire to force the introduction of socialism, but relies entirely upon democratic persuasion and conviction to win the majority of

the people to this idea. But even if the Communist Party, as some people still wrongly think, would try to enforce socialism if it could, the fact of the matter is that it couldn't if it wanted to; it is such an infinitesimal part of the population that the very idea is nonsense. The whole first objection, therefore, falls by the wayside; no matter how much one may be opposed to the socialist system, that is no argument whatever against co-operating with the Soviet Union to maintain peace, halt the aggressors, and establish international order.

Second, there is the argument that the Soviet Union is not worthwhile as a friend because it is weak internally, it will collapse under the first blows, its army is no good, and so on. This argument flies in the face of every known fact about the Soviet Union. Never in history has there been an example of a government which became weak while it was making its people and country economically prosperous. And the Soviet Union is prosperous beyond the dreams of other lands. Every five years it is doubling its accumulated wealth and national income, which, because the increase is in geometrical ratio, means that its national income today is ten times as much as in 1927 when it had recovered from the war and regained the pre-war level. It has come up from the position of the most backward of the great powers, to first place in Europe, and second in the world only to the United States. Last summer, on the suggestion of Hitler, the Japanese tried out the fighting ability of the Red Army, at Changkufeng on the Siberian border, and received such a smashing lesson for their pains that it changed their whole outlook on the world. Hitler is driving in every direction from which he does not expect firm resistance, so it is highly significant that he is carefully keeping away from that dangerous Soviet border.

Third, there is the argument that the Soviet Union cannot be depended upon, that it may at any moment go over to Hitler and doublecross the rest of the world. But when has the Soviet Union ever in its history failed to keep an obligation? It is true that the League of Nations betrayed Ethiopia, but that was only over the most energetic protests of the Soviet Union. It is true that France and Great Britain most foully betrayed Czechoslovakia, but the Soviet

Union stood ready at all times to come to her defense when called upon according to treaty—Chamberlain and Daladier were the ones who prevented that call from ever being made. It is true that the Chinese people have been shamefully abandoned by most of the world to the mercies of the Japanese invaders, but the Soviet Union has never ceased to give them moral and material support up to the very limit of possibility. It is true that almost the whole world, including the United States, violated treaty obligations and international law to blockade the Spanish republic when it was invaded by Italians, Germans, and Moors, in order to impose a fascist dictatorship over the Spanish people—but the Soviet Union was the brilliant exception, and never ceased to give the utmost possible moral and material help. It is true that most nations of the world are unable or unwilling to pay their financial obligations—but the Soviet Union has never defaulted on a single obligation, even the smallest. In fact, in every respect, it is the Soviet Union alone among all the great powers of the world that has not in its record a single instance of failure to meet an obligation.

Let us put the question in the simplest possible terms, such as even a business man can understand. The United States must either come to terms with the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo war alliance, which means abandoning the Pacific and most of Latin America to those powers, not to speak of fascist domination within the United States itself, or it must organize resistance to the war-makers. If the United States tries to resist alone, the simple cost of the effort would bring about an economic and political collapse. If the United States takes up co-operation with other nations, she will find that if the Soviet Union is included in the co-operative arrangement it will cost less than half as much as it would without the Soviet Union, not to speak of the danger that any combination of powers without the Soviet Union would not be strong enough to overcome the tendency to split up.

It is already clear even to Neville Chamberlain, the champion of "appeasement," that if he talks about stopping Hitler without the help of the Soviet Union, no one in the world will believe that he

means what he says. Nobody takes him seriously, least of all Hitler, except when he is making friendly signals to the Soviet Union—and even then the world has learned to wait and see whether these friendly gestures are to be followed up by any commitments for democratic action.

This is the situation, and these are the issues, that are the center of the most dangerous crisis the world has been in for a very long time, and in which the American people are trying to find their way.

It is in this light that we must learn to estimate the significance of some of the current political catchwords. One of these catchwords or slogans that deserves deep examination is the demand that the United States must fight against "dictatorships of both right and left." What is meant, practically, by those who use this catchword is that the United States must refuse to co-operate with the Soviet Union. Its consequence, therefore, for those who adopt it, is to oppose every step by President Roosevelt to align the United States with the peace forces of the world to halt the aggressors. Which means, as a further step, to line up with the open apologists for the war-making powers in the practical issues of the day. We see this in Congress in the pronouncements of Senator Nye and of Representative Fish, to mention only two examples. We see it outside of Congress in the curious unity of views between Hoover, Norman Thomas, and the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites, who fully agree, whatever other differences they may have, that President Roosevelt's measures against the aggressor governments are the main danger to the peace of America and of the world, a view fully shared by the axis powers.

President Roosevelt has expressed the majority sentiment of the American people, one which embraces an ever growing majority, in his utterances and actions against the aggressors. With this trend of American public opinion and sentiment we of the Communist Party fully associate ourselves. We consider that the President's leadership in this movement has been his greatest single contribution to American and world democracy.

We are not uncritical, however, in our estimate of the President's role. The United States has hesitated, and vacillated, and thereby

failed lamentably to exert its full influence in the world. It has missed opportunities, the loss of which has terribly worsened the general situation. It has drawn back before responsibilities, and allowed Chamberlain to lead us by the nose, to the serious detriment of the world and harm to American interests. The most flagrant example of this is in relation to Spain.

Recently the American people were shocked at the information that the State Department in Washington had granted unconditional recognition to the puppet government of butcher Franco in Spain. Thus was completed the cycle of blunders and crimes that began with the shameful embargo against the Spanish republic two years ago, for which history will demand payment from America at a terrible rate of interest.

Of what use to withdraw the American ambassador from Berlin in protest against the murderous attacks against the Jews, if we rush with indecent haste to send an ambassador to Hitler's puppet in Burgos, at a moment when he is slaughtering hundreds of thousands of disarmed and defenseless prisoners, and putting additional hundreds of thousands into penal labor camps?

Of what use to rally the Latin American countries against the fascist penetration, through the Lima conference, when we rush American recognition to the chief instrument of fascist aggression in the Americas—the Franco government, which had just announced its “protectorate” over all Spanish-speaking peoples and especially former parts of the lost Spanish empire, on the model of Hitler's “protectorate” over Czechoslovakia?

Of what use to spend new billions of dollars on naval and military expansion, caused by the fascist threat to the Americas, when we rush America's confirmation of Franco's power over the prostrate Spanish people, and thereby multiply overnight the influence of fascist Spain upon the Latin American countries?

Such things can only be estimated as criminal blunders, as harmful to America as to the world, conceding that the desire and main aim of the President's policy run in the opposite direction. But they represent a victory within our government of persons and forces

who represent, not the line of Roosevelt, but that of the Munich “appeasement” policy. When President Roosevelt allowed these forces to take charge, first in the embargo against the Spanish republic and now in the recognition of Franco, he canceled out a large part of his tremendous contribution to the protection of world democracy and international order against the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo war alliance. This bitter truth must be spoken out loud, for if many more such betrayals in the spirit of Munich are perpetrated, the budding hopes of world democracy for a new alignment to stop Hitler and the war axis will be nipped by the sharp frost of disillusionment and despair. President Roosevelt has a position of high moral and political authority before the peoples of America and the world, but if he is to maintain that position and wield it in the interests of international order and peace, he must keep himself clean of complicity in the systematic betrayals that are being organized by the Munich men, he must stop the trafficking and compromising with the axis powers, he must make a clean break with the bankrupt and discredited policy of Chamberlain and Bonnet.

Now, when it is officially announced that the war in Spain is over, it is a terrible sign of the condition of the world that there begins the most horrible mass slaughter, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of disarmed and defenseless men and women, whose only crime is that they fought for their democratically-elected government. We must demand from Washington that it wipe out at least a part of the shame of recognizing Franco, by the strongest possible diplomatic protest against the massacres going on in Spain, and by the sending of American ships to transport to Latin American countries those Spaniards marked for death by the butcher Franco.

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