

VII. STOP THE WAR

It is twenty-two years ago that the first socialist state was established, the first break in the world capitalist system, and the most important outcome of the imperialist World War. On this anniversary the capitalist world is again plunged into war, the clouds of which already darken our own land. Issues of life and death for tens of millions of men, women and children are again facing the world.

Because I speak for the Communist Party, which advocates socialism for the United States as the only solution of our problems, a great outcry is being raised in the country, demanding that I and my colleagues shall be silenced. Our "best families," the moneyed people who rule our country, evidently do not have a very deep faith in their own system, for they show fear that the voice of the Communists may bring the walls of their capitalist Jericho tumbling down in the course of this war.

Last week a Federal Grand Jury in New York indicted me with a demand that I be imprisoned for ten years. American newspapers from coast to coast—Republican, Democrat, and Socialist—have hailed this indictment, and expressed the hope that it will be sustained. The Grand Jury acted the next day after the Republican Party National Committee issued a demand for this action, in the name of Congressman J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey.

Since today is my first public appearance since this indictment, perhaps my audience will pardon me if I speak about it briefly, since it is directly connected with the larger subject of our meeting.

District Attorney Cahill, representing Attorney General Frank Murphy, says this is purely a routine matter of enforcement of the

criminal law, without any political implications. In the course of non-political law enforcement, he finds that I endangered the safety of our nation, sufficiently to merit ten years' imprisonment, by re-entering the country after being abroad, in 1937 and 1938, having in my possession a passport in my own name, all in due order, but which it is contended was contaminated by alleged previous passports in 1921 and 1927, obtained under pseudonyms. This is the alleged crime, on the basis of which my modest person became so menacing to the peace and safety of the nation as to require the intervention of the Republican Party National Committee to insure my proper punishment.

Now, I will not take up your time with any general defense of the use of pseudonyms. Whenever pseudonyms are used for the purpose of defrauding individuals or the public, their use is equally reprehensible with the wrongdoing for which they are used; the use of pseudonyms for the purpose of avoiding dangers or serious inconvenience is, however, not uncommon even among our American aristocrats of wealth and social standing, is generally condoned, and has never before become the occasion for legal proceedings eighteen and twelve years after the event.

Strangely enough, the same Republican Party, which now demands and obtains my indictment from a Democratic administration, itself was the administration which obtained the evidence underlying the present action, but *decided that it did not merit prosecution and dropped the matter*. It required the passing of many years, the emergence of the Communist Party as an important force in the country, and *the beginning of the new imperialist war*, to reverse their opinion. Indeed, if the Communist Party, and myself as its Secretary, had given our blessings to this imperialist war, and especially to the governments of Chamberlain and Daladier, no one can doubt that those old passports would have slumbered quietly under the dust of archives in Washington undisturbed. My real "crime," therefore, is denouncing equally both sides in the present criminal and predatory war, in advocating a real neutrality in thought as well as in deed, and calling for the quickest possible ending to the war. That is not mentioned in the indictment, however, because on this question the great majority of

the American people are much closer to my position than they are to those who want to send me to prison. So, this political prosecution of the Communist Party, designed to halt its agitation against the imperialist war and against American involvement in it, is dressed up as a purely "criminal case." It is such a transparent hypocrisy that even many of the worst reactionaries are crying out against it, perhaps with uneasy consciences about similar infractions of the rules in their own circles and families. It would indeed be interesting if Attorney-General Murphy would begin to unearth and publish all the cases of traveling under pseudonyms by prominent Americans!

Mr. Murphy might find out, for example, that the name J. Parnell Thomas is itself a pseudonym. Yes, it must have been a puckish and mischievous fate which directed the Republican Party National Committee to pick out J. Parnell Thomas to voice its demand for my prosecution for using pseudonyms in past years, for this gentleman is himself sitting in Congress, took his oath of office, and is drawing a federal salary, under a pseudonym. He is in fact the son of the late John Parnell and Georgiana Feeney, good Irish Catholics of Jersey City, born to them on January 16, 1895, and christened by them with the name "John Parnell Feeney, Jr."

How and why this John Parnell Feeney, Jr., Catholic and Irish, became transformed into "J. Parnell Thomas," Protestant and Mason, without the "junior," and even entered Congress and took the oath of office under this alias, is a story which he should be allowed to tell in his own words. I understand, however, that there is a federal statute that prohibits any person from holding office or drawing salary from the government under any name other than his own. Since Attorney-General Murphy has become interested in tracing down pseudonyms, is it too much to expect that he will look into this matter, along with many others that may be brought to his attention in the future?

Allow me to remark, in passing, that when years ago I traveled in foreign lands under a pseudonym, a fact which I have never denied, it was not because I was ashamed of my family name, nor to hide anything in my family history. The Browder family settled in Virginia

in the late 1600's, played an honorable role in carving a new civilization out of the wilderness, bore arms against England in 1776 and 1812 and for the Union in the Civil War, gained honorable mention in the official History of the Methodist Church of Kentucky in its earliest days, followed the frontier until it vanished, was always characterized by examples of public service, and never abused the confidence gained from its fellow citizens to amass private wealth. I am proud of my name and of its history, and in my own modest way endeavor to continue the family tradition.

The old frontier, which my ancestors followed in the creation of a new civilization in America, has been replaced by the "social frontiers" between a decaying capitalist system and the new system of socialism which must replace it if the American people are to realize their destiny with all its glorious potentialities. To follow that frontier, to learn all its great lessons and help bring them to the American people, have led me into many far distant lands and into many dangerous places; yes, many years ago even required that I sometimes hide my identity under a pseudonym as the price of being able to return to my native land; yes, under my own name it led me into Leavenworth Prison as the price of opposing our country's entrance into the World War in 1917; but I have nothing in this record to apologize for; no person nor the public has been injured nor defrauded, and I venture to hope and to believe that it has been of some benefit to the American working people with whom I identify myself.

I will not ask your pardon for taking valuable time on personalities, since this is forced upon me by the nature of the attacks, which are not against me but against my Party, and in the last analysis against the labor movement, against American liberties, and against our country's peace and future. Under such circumstances, personalities may become important as symbols of the great social struggles, which now convulse the world, upon the outcome of which depends the future of mankind.

The particular occasion of this meeting is the twenty-second anniversary of the founding of the new socialist society in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of the United States, composed of Americans

who see in the Soviet Union the first realization of the hope of the world, socialism, are being accused, because of this, of being "agents of an alien power" and therefore hostile or dangerous to our own land. Let us examine this question a bit more deeply.

We love our country very much, but we must admit that we find it in something of a mess. Although it is rich in resources, and developed beyond parallel in machinery, science and technique, yet, especially in the last ten years, it has gone backward instead of forward in the production of wealth. The accumulated losses of ten years already total more than the entire existing national wealth. The distribution among the people of that which we do produce becomes more and more lopsided; the diminishing little circle of wealthy families accumulates an ever-increasing share of the production, which it no longer has any idea how to make use of, while the toiling masses find their standards of life declining, with one-third of the population living below the subsistence level, on make-shift relief work or charity, ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed. Surely, there is some terrible mismanagement going on in our country!

Looking over the world, we see the same or worse occurring in country after country. Until we come to the Soviet Union. Here we find something different.

Until something over ten years ago, the Soviet Union was economically among the more backward countries. But about the same time that the United States slipped catastrophically backward, the Soviet Union began to forge ahead at a pace never before seen in world history. So that now, summing up its development since 1928, the Soviet Union is producing *more than ten times as much wealth* as it was then, or an expansion of more than *one thousand per cent* in its economy. The distribution of this wealth has been so organized that, while rapidly expanding its productive equipment, and providing a defense budget that in 1939 is almost equal to the total national budget for all purposes of the U.S.A., it still raised the general living standard by *five hundred per cent*, expanded its educational, cultural, and social security budgets about *two thousand per cent*, and brought general security and relative well-being to one hundred and seventy million

population (recently increased to over one hundred and eighty millions). Surely, there must be some brilliantly good management going on in the Soviet Union!

Is it unpatriotic, is it un-American, to call attention to this contrast, and to suggest that we in the United States might be able to learn something to our own advantage from the Soviet Union?

If the United States had been able to progress economically since 1928, at even *half* the rate shown by the Soviet Union, we would have this year a national income of over four hundred billion dollars, instead of sixty-five or seventy billions as is really the case. Isn't that something worth striving for, trying to learn how to accomplish? If the Russians and their associated family of nationalities can do it, is there any inherent reason why the American people can't do *at least half as much*?

When we search for the explanation of why the United States, together with most of the world, is slipping backward economically, while the Soviet Union forges ahead so magnificently, and emerges as a giant of strength and progress, we are finally forced to find the answer in the difference between two systems of social organization, the difference between capitalism and socialism. It is not a difference in technique, for the Soviet Union is still behind the United States and Germany in this regard, as in the productivity per worker, and is *still learning from us* in this field. It is not a difference in the human material, for Americans are much better equipped on the whole for industrial advancement, and have less difficulties to overcome. It is not a difference in history and background, for this is all to the advantage of America. It is not a difference in natural resources, for the Soviet Union has hardly begun to exploit its enormous reserves, while the United States is not making use of those it has already developed. No, the difference in results can be explained by nothing else but the difference between capitalism and socialism.

And what is the essential difference between capitalism and socialism? It is this: Under capitalism, the national economy is the private property of a very small class of finance capitalists, who allow the great mass of the working population to operate that economy only

to the extent that it contributes to swell the profits of those capitalists; under socialism, the national economy is the common property of the nation, of the whole working population acting through their own state organization, which puts every man and machine into maximum operation without any artificial restriction. Under capitalism, the national market is strictly limited by the enforced poverty of the working population, and accumulating surplus production brings on recurring and ever more violent crises, the very increase in wealth causing the deepest misery among the masses, and even stopping the whole national economy; under socialism, the "national market" has no limit except that of the national production itself, for the whole population is working to satisfy their own needs, socially determined and regulated, and there can be no crises or unemployment. Under capitalism, production is regulated by private profit, and is necessarily anarchistic, without plan; under socialism, production is the planned adjustment of possibilities to needs, becomes a matter of scientific determination, the conscious action of the organized nation of producers.

Furthermore, looking over the world, we find among the capitalist nations not only the grossest economic mismanagement, which dries up the stream of wealth production, but also the most extreme *political mismanagement*. This is now expressed in the new imperialist war, which is disrupting the world, threatening death and starvation to millions, already beginning to engulf the United States with the rest of the world. This war between imperialist Germany on the one hand, and the British and French empires on the other hand, is a *family quarrel* of rival capitalist imperialisms, who cannot agree upon the division of the world among themselves. The only way the ruling classes can find to settle their quarrels is to mobilize the millions of their populations and send them out to slaughter one another. In contrast with this, we see in the Soviet Union a great family of many nations, living in peace and the most fruitful co-operation with one another, and exerting all efforts to live in peace with all their neighbors without exception.

Is it unreasonable to suggest that perhaps it is the *capitalist* system which makes it impossible for the capitalist nations to live at peace

with one another, while it is the *socialist* system in the Soviet Union which gives it its strikingly peaceful character?

Of course, I am quite familiar with what the newspapers are shrieking day after day, that the Soviet Union could have prevented the war and refused to do it, that it "betrayed" the innocent "democracies" of France and England, and so on. I wonder if you, my audience, have ever stopped to realize what a profound admission is contained in this argument of the *moral superiority of the Soviet Union* over the capitalist states, even though it is masked in the form of an accusation of guilt against the Soviet Union. For what the accusers are actually saying, though they do not realize it perhaps, is that the capitalist nations cannot keep peace among themselves without the help of the socialist Soviet Union.

Well, that implicit confession of the capitalist statesmen themselves happens to be true. The ruling classes of the capitalist countries, from the very nature of their system of social, economic and political rule, inevitably throw the world into the most destructive wars which have today grown so terrible as to threaten the destruction of civilization. Only the working class, rising up in alliance with the rest of the toiling population, and taking the decisions out of the hands of the capitalist class, can prevent war, can maintain peace. And the Soviet Union is the highest expression of this rising up of the working class, which has taken complete power into its hands and has reorganized its society upon the basis of socialism, without capitalists and without exploitation.

The Soviet Union, with the energetic support of the Communists and advanced workers of all lands, did everything in its power, up to the very last moment, to prevent the outbreak of the imperialist war. It went so far as to offer a mutual defense pact to Britain and France, backed by the full military might of the Soviet Union, with the sole condition that the pact should be to prevent or throw back any aggression wherever it might occur, and that the responsibilities should be equal on all sides. But all such offers were rejected by the British-French ruling class, which made it clear that they wanted **nothing** but that the Soviet Union should rake their imperialist chestnuts out of the fire and be finally left with the war directed against itself by

the whole capitalist world and on its own borders. When it finally became clear that all hope of a real Peace Front had thus been destroyed, the Soviet Union had no recourse but to find its own path toward peace, in its own way.

The statesmen of the capitalist "democracies" dealt with the Soviet Union in the most insolent and high-handed manner, with the full support of their Socialist Parties and reformist trade union leaders, as if upon the assumption that the Soviet Union needed their help so desperately against the threat of Nazi aggression it must perforce pay whatever price was demanded. But such an assumption was a profound mistake. These gentlemen must have been misled by their own propaganda about the supposed "weakness" of the Soviet Union, by which they had tried to persuade Hitler to carry out their Munich agreement with him, to attack the land of socialism. As it turned out, the Soviet Union proved itself to be the one country completely and entirely capable of taking care of itself.

George Bernard Shaw wrote in the press a few days ago that "Stalin has won the war already," and that the whole thing had better be called off. Even the most bitter enemies of the Soviet Union admit that its own interests have been advanced magnificently, that it has emerged from the latest events tremendously strengthened, that it has been able to do this while maintaining strict neutrality and peaceful relations with all countries. Well, that is an important test of statesmanship, whether a government is able to serve the interests of its own people. Can the same thing be said, in this period, of the government of any single capitalist country, including our own? Evidently, the new socialist system of society produces not only a superior type of economy and economic leadership, but also a superior type of state and statesmanship.

In the leadership of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., we have had many hearty laughs lately, as we read in all the journals and newspapers of all other political parties and trends their uniform judgment, which unites them all, that "Stalin has dealt a death-blow to the Communist International and the Communist Parties." Do these ladies and gentlemen, from Dorothy Thompson to Trotsky, really believe

that the masses of the world are attracted and won to the support of such unbelievably bankrupt, inept and disastrous leadership as that displayed by the rulers of the capitalist countries together with their Socialist and labor supporters? Or that these masses are repelled from the example of such brilliant successes as have been and are being won by the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin? If they are really so stupid as to believe their own propaganda, then their downfall is more imminent than we had thought. For in truth, a great wave of respect and admiration sweeps among the workers of all lands, including the United States, for the Soviet Union, for its world-shaking successes, and for the genius of the leadership that made such achievements possible. Never before has the Communist movement of the world reached such heights of prestige and influence among the masses as it enjoys today.

We American Communists have been advocating, and continue to advocate, close collaboration between our own country and the Soviet Union, for the advancement of peace and the common interests of these two greatest nations in the world. Among the American masses, this proposal gains new strength since it has been proved to them by events that the Soviet Union really is the powerful and great country that we said it was, that it is not begging for our help but merely offering the co-operation of equals. And these American masses cannot be pleased, they can only be disturbed, when they see our government in Washington, with a persistence worthy of a better cause, systematically provoking and cultivating an atmosphere of bad relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Such a course is capable of a rational explanation only upon the assumption that Washington, having proclaimed its un-neutrality in thought, is preparing rapidly to become un-neutral in deed, that is, to enter the imperialist war in support of Britain and France.

One thing has become clear beyond all doubt. The American capitalist class and all its supporters, whatever other differences they may have among themselves, want the present war to continue indefinitely, in order to coin great profits out of the disasters of other peoples, in order to seize the markets formerly held by rival powers, and gain

other advantages over them. That is why the newspapers of supposedly-neutral America carry on a more violent war propaganda than even the newspapers of Britain and France. And that is why they demand the suppression of the Communist Party which carries on the only consistent and effective fight against the imperialist war.

This imperialist war, with relentless inevitability, is tearing away the veils of hypocrisy behind which the monopoly capitalists were hiding their ruthless dictatorship. Thus "democratic" France is already indistinguishable in the brutality of its inner regime from the fascist dictatorships. Thus "democratic" America, even while it is still technically neutral, forgets its liberal dreams about a "New Deal," and loses itself in a wave of reactionary sentiment. The truly democratic working class, and the toiling masses find themselves faced with a bourgeoisie which has been reunited against them, which forgets its former inner quarrels, which drops its "liberalism" like a wornout cloak, all from the panic fear and hysteria that sweep over them as they realize that they can no longer solve their problems, that it is equally dangerous for them to make war or to make peace, because in either case the working class is preparing to take the decisions out of their palsied hands. This is most apparently true in Europe. But in America, also, we see the same currents developing at a truly dizzying speed.

How can we explain the reactionary hysteria that is gripping the American bourgeoisie in face of the imperialist war? They know quite well that the conscious and clear-headed movement for socialism in this country is still quite small in relation to the whole population. Why then do they display such fear of the Communist Party which heads this movement? The answer is: Because they know quite well the extremely precarious situation of European capitalism, they know that this war is placing the socialist revolution on the order of the day there as a practical question. They are preparing to come to the rescue of their class brothers in Europe against the rise of the revolutionary working class. They know that America itself, despite the political backwardness as yet of our working class, is technically, objectively, the country which is the most ripe, the most prepared, for a quick

transition to socialism, for which it lacks only the understanding and the will of the masses to that goal.

In the *Sunday Worker* today, there is printed a Manifesto of the Communist International, and in the *Daily Worker* yesterday an article by Georgi Dimitroff, entitled "The War and the Working Class of the Capitalist Countries." These documents present the most complete and profound analysis of the world situation we face today that has yet been made. It synthesizes and completes the policies which have been developed by the Communist Parties of all countries since the outbreak of the imperialist war a little over two months ago. It is impossible for me, in the limited time permitted by this meeting, to transmit that message to you with its full richness and depth, its penetrating analysis and its deep insight into the forces that are struggling to determine the destiny of mankind, its clear illumination of the path which must be taken to restore peace and prosperity to the peoples of the world. I can only deal with and elaborate a few points, and recommend for your most serious and sustained attention and study, this historical article by Dimitroff and this new Communist Manifesto.

The chief issue before the working class and toiling people of all countries is how to put an end to the imperialist war which is destroying and crushing them. This is no less the issue before us in America, even though our government has not officially entered the war. Every day this war continues, the forces in America that will drag us into the very center of it are growing bolder and more impudent, waxing fat on the war profits of their mercenary neutrality. Every day this war continues, there rises more viciously the sweep of reactionary assaults against labor's rights and living standards, and against all democratic civil rights. Clearly, the fight of the American people to protect themselves, their peace, their living standards, their liberties, is summed up in the fight to keep America out of the imperialist war, to halt all direct and indirect involvement in it on one side or the other, and to bring this war to an end as quickly as possible. And that is certainly the deepest-felt desire of the American people.

America has a tremendous potential influence in world affairs which,

if consistently applied to bring this war to an end, in co-operation with other nations that also want peace, especially the Soviet Union, could force the cessation of hostilities, could lay the foundations for a peace that would be neither a Munich nor a Versailles. But this great role, which would fulfill the aspirations of the working people of America, is being sidetracked, sabotaged, and abandoned by the American capitalists and the politicians who take their orders, because it does not fit into their greed to coin huge profits from the war.

The President and his Administration succumb more and more every day to this greed for profits by American monopoly capital, and make use of its former prestige among the masses to secure their acceptance of the program of Wall Street. The economic royalists, who a short time ago hated the President so much that they openly discussed his assassination, and whose hatred was welcomed by him in the 1936 election, have rushed to his side again and are the most vociferous in protesting their undying love and devotion—and the President reciprocates their advances. Un-neutrality in thought is openly proclaimed, which is already becoming an entente with the British-French imperialist camp, and has opened the way for a whole series of un-neutral deeds which lead with inexorable logic toward wholesale participation in the war. If the American people want to realize the peace they hold so dear, they must learn to fight, and fight effectively, against this course upon which our country is being taken.

The guilt for this war lies upon the ruling classes, the bourgeoisie, of all the capitalist countries, and most especially upon those of the belligerents. But at this moment the responsibility for continuing this war lies, before all, upon the British and French imperialists who have rejected the very thought of a halt to hostilities, and who feverishly work to involve all other countries in the slaughter.

Especially vicious and depraved is the propaganda that is being carried on in this country, to the effect that our country will find its way back to prosperity by profiting out of this war. But the profits of a "war prosperity" will be coined out of the misery of the American workers and toiling people just as much as it will from the catastrophes of the peoples of the belligerent lands. War profits, even in pros-

pect, have already aroused the forces of American reaction to a tiger-like ferocity, which they begin to vent against the Communists but which already reach out for the whole labor and progressive movement, which is being intimidated and attacked on a scale not seen since the last war.

Imperialist reaction makes a great show of strength in our country today, and strides the public stage with much bluster and brutality. But we must never forget that twenty-five years ago, tsarist reaction in Russia appeared even more invincible, by all surface indications, at the moment it was riding to its quick destruction. The Communist Party of the U.S.A. appears small and weak in comparison to the gigantic tasks which history has placed upon us of leading one hundred and thirty million Americans to a new socialist system. But we must never forget that twenty-five years ago the Russian Bolsheviks appeared even weaker, a persecuted and outlawed group, but today that Party heads a nation of one hundred and eighty millions, the strongest in the world, and its voice is listened to by those who sit in the seats of the mighty, as well as by the masses of all countries.

With our knowledge and understanding of history, therefore, which we have gained from the greatest teachers of mankind—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin—the Communist Party faces the storms of wars and revolutions now raging over the world with calm confidence in ultimate victory for peace and socialism, and deep enthusiasm for the struggle. These are days in which, despite all sufferings and trials, a glorious future for humanity is being born. Imperialist reaction defeats itself in the very fury of its assaults upon the people, and forges the weapons for its own destruction.

Twenty-two years ago, out of the struggle against the first imperialist World War, the working class and the toiling people rose to power on one-sixth of the earth's surface, and proceeded to abolish capitalism and build a glorious new society of socialism. Out of the struggle against the present imperialist war, new defeats will be administered to the decaying system of capitalism and all its agents, additional lands will be won for socialism.

"Only the people are immortal," said Comrade Stalin, and because

the people require socialism, as the necessary precondition for life and growth and progress, we are supremely confident that all obstacles, even the most formidable, will be broken down and destroyed, that all enemies will be defeated, that the working people will have the final victory and take possession of the earth, bringing peace, prosperity and happiness to all mankind. That is the great lesson of the twenty-second anniversary of the founding of the first great socialist state, the Soviet Union.

Speech delivered at Symphony Hall, Boston, November 5, 1939, on the occasion of the Twenty-second Anniversary of the Socialist Revolution in Russia.