

X

“Should the United States Government Join
in Concerted Action
Against the Fascist States?” *

MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. LIBBY, AND FRIENDS: My task tonight is to sustain the position that the United States, in the interests of preserving world peace, should take part in concerted international action to restrain the fascist war-making governments.

It is in the interest of clarity that Mr. Libby is the spokesman for the opposite point of view, because he is the most consistent spokesman for the neutrality bloc which promises to keep America out of war through isolationist policies.

Before we examine any proposals directed toward world peace, perhaps we should first answer the question—is world peace worth preserving? The most prominent spokesmen for the so-called neutrality policy have generally agreed that it is not worth the effort. They have abandoned the very idea of world peace. They have substituted the acceptance of an inevitable general world war. Some of them even consider that such a war will be of benefit to the rest of the world. They agree only that America should at all costs keep out of the war and, therefore, faced with a world in danger of war, keep out of world affairs.

Allow me to speak against all of these ideas. It is possible to halt those forces which are dragging the world toward war. It is worthwhile doing this because, however bad may be the peace precariously maintained at present, it is better than war. To

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attempt to isolate America from world affairs, at a moment when her moral and economic influence could be decisive in the interests of peace, means in reality to surrender the world to the war-makers, to make America their partner, and finally, to bring that war to the whole American people.

Is it possible to identify the enemies of world peace? Is it possible to direct our main effort toward restraining them? Mr. Libby and his friends say no. They say all governments are equally guilty of threatening world peace. They say any attempt to identify the war-makers means an arbitrary and unreal classification of governments as “angels” and “devils.” They place in the criminals’ dock the government of the United States and President Roosevelt alongside the Nazi regime and Hitler. In the present state of the world it seems rather childish to find it necessary to argue against such a point of view. The whole world knows who it is that sends invading armies across borders and against other nations. The whole world knows who is conducting aggressive war on other people’s territory and who threatens further war. It is not at all necessary to look for “angels” and “devils,” but only to ask who aggressively cross their own borders. They are the governments of the self-styled anti-Communist alliance, the governments headed by Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado. If it is desirable to restrain the war-makers, then it is possible to identify them without the slightest doubt. It is further possible to deal with them as a group, because they are associated with common aims.

Perhaps, however, the war-makers are so powerful and so well placed that the peoples and governments who seek peace cannot hope to restrain them, and must of necessity retreat or surrender? But most obviously this is not true. The war-making governments control—by terror and suppression—not more than 10 per cent of the population of the world. Their control of economic resources is certainly no more favorable to them. Mr. Libby assumes that it is even more favorable to the

peace-seeking peoples by identifying the war-makers as the "have-not" nations. The peace-seeking peoples occupy the most strategic positions geographically, which makes the isolation of the war-makers a relatively simple technical problem. Finally, the peace-seekers have an enormous moral advantage. They express the desire of all peoples, even those controlled by the fascist governments, for peace. This moral advantage can consolidate not only the overwhelming majority of the peace-seeking nations behind a positive peace policy, but it is also capable of arousing the oppressed millions under the fascist governments, once the easy victories of the dictators come to an end. The peace-seeking peoples have an overwhelming advantage in numbers and resources, in geographical and moral positions. They are superior in every factor which can influence the course of world affairs—except the will to use their advantage. This missing factor I wish to help produce. Mr. Libby is against producing the missing factor. This is the essential difference between us.

What is the secret of the success of the fascists in their drive toward world domination? It is an open secret which the whole world knows. It is the division among the peace-seekers. The war-making powers know what they want and move toward it concertedly and ruthlessly. They take one bite at a time out of the world they wish to devour entirely. Manchuria was taken by the Japanese militarists, while the rest of the world did nothing except utter moral condemnation. Ethiopia was invaded by Mussolini—and the gestures of restraint were carefully calculated not to be effective, and quickly abandoned when they inconvenienced Mussolini. The demilitarized Rhineland was occupied and fortified by the Nazis—and again there was only the reading of a moral lecture. Spain is invaded by Hitler and Mussolini and subjected to the most ferocious slaughter—and the peace-seeking nations respond by treating the Spanish republic as the criminal to be quarantined. Austria

is invaded and wiped out as an independent nation—and Mr. Libby, with his associates of the neutrality bloc, hail the event as "a step toward stability." It is clear that the fascists succeed in dragging the world into war because the peace forces of the Western democracies are divided; they have no general plan of action; many of them desert one another; they act with the greatest consideration toward the fascist war-makers and the greatest lack of consideration toward their victims. The majority of peace-seeking nations, the bourgeois-democratic countries, have allowed themselves to become confused and paralyzed by the threat of fascist aggression from without and by the demagogic trickery of powerful reactionary minorities within.

It is clear that the whole problem is that of defeating the reactionary minorities within, and achieving some degree of a common front among the peace-seeking nations. The trump card of my opponent and his associates of the neutrality bloc, upon which they gamble all their chips, is, in the last analysis, the confusion and disunity among the peace-seeking peoples and their assumption that this condition is not remediable. They assume that there is no leadership capable of bringing any unity among the peace-seekers. They point to the fact that when the Soviet Union, through the Litvinov proposals, gives the initiative to this end, the Western democracies are silent, refusing to allow the land of socialism to lead the peace forces. They point to the fact that when the Mexican republic, through President Cárdenas, offers a similar initiative, the great democracies are too proud to take a lead from one of the smaller nations. They point to the fact that Britain, assumed to be among the democracies, has turned her back on the goal of organized peace and, under the leadership of Chamberlain, is making her own terms with the war-makers at the expense of the rest of the world. They point to the fact that the French republic, itself saved from a fascist insurrection only by the

hasty erection of the *Front Populaire*, is paralyzed by fear and drags at the apron-strings of Chamberlain. Where, they triumphantly ask, is there a leadership which can bring any stability into this swamp of indecision and cowardice?

There is not the slightest desire on my part to evade or underestimate any of these difficulties. It is only by facing them fully and frankly that we can find the way to overcome them. But we declare that it is possible to overcome all difficulties, it is possible to organize the world peace-front. This is possible, however, only on condition that we set ourselves this task, that we refuse to surrender either to our own difficulties or to the threats of the war-makers. We declare that the alternative is to surrender the world to universal catastrophe.

From where can the leadership come that has the possibility of organizing the peace forces of the world? We propose that it shall come from the United States. The United States has the strongest selfish interest in peace, without which it cannot maintain world commerce so necessary to it under the present system. We say that the United States is in the privileged position of being able to assume world leadership for peace without serious danger to itself. The United States holds in its hands the key to world peace. The question before us is, shall we hesitate, fumble and drop this key through fear or incapacity? If we do, that will be the most unprofitable and most shameful page in American history.

Let us, before we proceed further, examine in more detail this privileged position in which the United States finds itself. I am glad to note that on this point Mr. Libby agrees with me. He has written several times recently that the United States is entirely immune from foreign invasion. In February, 1938 he wrote: "We should give due consideration to the fact which is vouched for by leading military and naval experts, that our country cannot be invaded. . . . We cannot have a war, therefore, unless we seek it abroad." I will leave it to Mr. Libby to

establish this point in detail. I accept it as substantially correct with two important qualifications: first, that it is true only for the immediate period and the present world-relation of forces, but will be changed substantially if the fascist governments succeed in subjugating Western Europe and China; and second, it is true only for continental United States and does not apply to the Philippines, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, or Alaska. I must, however, draw opposite conclusions from those of Mr. Libby from these facts. He says that, since we are safe, we should risk nothing for the peace of the world. I say, precisely because we are safe for the present we, above all, must take the leadership in preserving the peace of the world, which is also to guarantee our own peace for the future.

A further feature of America's privileged position is our unexampled economic resources. Not only has the United States almost half of the world's accumulated wealth and productive resources, but we are also most nearly, among all nations, economically self-sufficient. Considering the greater mobility of American wealth and production, we can easily say that the economic weight of our country in world affairs is equal to, or greater than, that of all other countries combined.

In short, we are not exaggerating when we say that the United States occupies a position as nearly ideal as one could hope to find in this imperfect world, for leadership in organizing world peace.

Power without responsibility is soon dissipated. We propose that our country should accept the responsibility that goes with power. We propose American leadership to save the world from war.

Of course, we are keenly conscious that anyone who advocates world peace in this practical way will be charged with being in favor, in reality, of a preventive war against the fascist powers. I feel certain that Mr. Libby will repeat this charge tonight as he has been making it heretofore at every

opportunity. When President Roosevelt, in his famous Chicago speech advocating quarantine of the aggressors, gave a brief indication of such a positive peace policy as I am defending, the neutrality advocates joined in the shout that this was a policy of dragging America into war. But what do we actually propose? We propose to make peace profitable and war unprofitable. We do not propose war or any steps that would lead toward war. We do not propose any entangling alliances, nor any limitation upon American freedom of decision and action. We do not even propose that America shall accept leadership from any other country. We do not propose to abandon any of the great American traditions in foreign policy. We do not propose any revolutionary innovations.

The sum and substance of a positive peace policy, according to our conception, is to withdraw America's economic and moral influence from direct or indirect support of the war-making governments, and to cast this influence instead on the side of peace and the peace-seeking nations. We propose that the United States should distinguish between those nations which violate their obligations to us to refrain from warlike aggression against their neighbors, obligations which they voluntarily assumed by solemn treaty, and those governments which on the contrary observe these treaty obligations. We propose that the United States shall cut off all economic intercourse with those governments which violate the Kellogg pact outlawing war, and shall maintain and extend our economic relations with the governments which observe their treaty obligations and especially with those who are victims of aggression. We propose that the United States shall follow a policy designed to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.

The whole substance of the policy which I defend here is

embodied in the provisions of the O'Connell Peace Bill, which is now before Congress.

What would be the result of the application of this policy? It would mean the immediate lifting of the embargo against republican Spain—a shameful embargo which was an unfriendly act against a democratic government, a violation of our own treaty obligations and against the interests of America. In its place, it would lay an embargo against all commercial and economic relations with Germany, Italy and Japan, as well as against Franco's armies of invasion in Spain. It would mean that American scrap iron, cotton, chemicals and machinery would stop going to Japan to assist the enslavement of the Chinese people. It would mean stopping the hundreds of thousands of aerial bombs now being shipped from America to Hitler. It would mean the complete divorce of American economy from its present service to the war-making governments.

Mr. Libby is already on record that this does not create the danger that the fascist governments will counter such an embargo by making war against the United States. But many of his friends in the neutrality bloc do not agree with him on this. In particular, Dr. Charles E. Beard, speaking for an important part of the neutrality bloc, has written in the *New Republic* directly against the policy I am defending, that if the United States ever undertook such a task, then in all likelihood the fascist powers in a "war frenzy," "a spirit of world power or downfall," "would strike back" and make war against the United States. Against this argument of the Beard section of the neutrality bloc I place the evidence of Mr. Libby himself that "our country cannot be invaded, we cannot have a war unless we seek it abroad." Unfortunately the unity of the neutrality bloc is an unprincipled one, and Mr. Libby and Dr. Beard simply agree to disagree on this point, without in any way disturbing their harmonious co-operation in keeping America isolated at all costs. This difference of opinion between

them is merely a division of labor. Mr. Libby is to round up for neutrality all those who will agree on the basis of the argument of safety, while Dr. Beard shall round up those who can be scared into neutrality by the threat of immediate invasion.

Would this policy, which is embodied in the O'Connell Peace Bill, bring the United States into entangling alliances or limit our freedom of decision and action? Not in the slightest. We propose that the United States should assume no special obligations toward any government except the obligation of impartially applying this policy to all and sundry. Once the policy is established, of course, it is assumed that the United States would welcome the adherence to the same sort of policy by as many governments as would wish to do so or which could be persuaded to do so. We know in advance that some important powers will immediately follow the lead of the United States, among them certainly the Soviet Union and Mexico. We can assume that the people of France would greet such action by the United States with the deepest joy, because it would liberate their People's Front government from its humiliating bondage to the pro-fascist, tory government of England. We can reasonably expect that, with such a profound change in the relation of world forces, the British Labor Party would shake off its present paralysis of fear, and actively rally the peace-loving majority of the English people behind it. We can be absolutely certain that, as a result of such a policy, the peoples of Spain and China would be enormously strengthened in their heroic struggle against the fascist invaders and would quickly administer for the first time some decisive military blows against the invaders and thus realize in the most practical fashion the popular slogan, "Take the profits out of war." Through all of these consequences of the adoption of the O'Connell Peace Bill the United States would find its privileged position of exemption from the immediate threat of war not weakened, but, on the contrary, greatly strengthened. In facing every ques-

tion it would in no wise be hampered in freedom of decision or action by any entangling alliances or special obligations.

Is there any danger that with such a policy the United States would become a catspaw for the sinister ambitions of other powers? Would there be any danger of falling under the domination of "perfidious Albion," or raking British chestnuts out of the fire? This is the great bogeyman of one section of Mr. Libby's neutrality bloc. His associate, Mr. Quincy Howe, has written a whole book on the subject, the conclusion of which is that the British Tories are so damnably clever and Americans such constitutional simpletons that the only way we can avoid being the catspaw of British imperialism is by complete withdrawal from world affairs. But, strangely enough, neither Mr. Howe nor any other Anglophobe has the slightest difficulty continuing in the closest comradeship with Mr. Libby when he praises the Chamberlain tory government for capitulation to Mussolini, says this is the only path to peace, and openly advises the United States to model its own foreign policy on the example of Chamberlain. Strangely enough, they fear British imperialism only if the Labor Party should come to power and swing England to the support of a world-peace front headed by the United States. But they are quite complacent toward a British imperialism expressed in Chamberlain's alliance with fascism and even want us to follow England along that shameful road.

Would the policy that we propose require us to break with the great American traditions in foreign policy? No, on the contrary, precisely this policy, and only this, would give us a continuation of that greatest of all American traditions in this field that was established by Thomas Jefferson as Secretary of State under Washington's administration. At that time the young and weak American republic, occupying a position far removed from our present overwhelming strength, was not afraid, in the interests of peace and democracy, to boldly chal-

lenge the reactionary aggressors and align itself on the side of their victim. When in 1793 France, a new republic such as Spain today, was attacked and blockaded, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

The idea seems to gain credit that the naval powers combining against France will prohibit supplies, even of provisions, to that country. . . . I should hope that Congress . . . would instantly exclude from our ports all the manufactures, produce, vessels, and subjects of the nations committing this aggression, during the continuation of the aggression, and till full satisfaction is made for it.

About the same time Jefferson wrote to Morris, Minister to France, the following:

We received information that a National Assembly had met, with full power to transact the affairs of the nation, and soon afterwards the minister of France here presented an application for three million livres, to be laid out in provisions to be sent to France. . . . We had no hesitation to comply with the application . . . and we shall . . . omit no opportunity of convincing that nation how cordially we wish to serve them . . . placing our commerce with that nation and its dependencies on the freest and most encouraging footing possible.

What America needs today, what the world needs, is a foreign policy based upon these lines of Thomas Jefferson. The general line of such a policy has been proposed by President Roosevelt. It is contained in the O'Connell Bill. The whole country must be rallied to support it, and to demand its energetic application in life.

Does the policy which I defend call for a revolutionary change of the principles of twentieth-century American foreign policy? No, on the contrary, the basic principle of all American post-war foreign policy is embodied in the Kellogg-Briand pact, initiated by the United States and signed by almost every government in the world, which pledged its signers to abstain from war as an instrument of policy. We propose nothing

further than the recognition of all violations of this treaty, the exclusion of the violators from economic intercourse with us, and the provision of economic aid to the victims of such violation.

Let us pass on to the consideration of some of the typical and standard arguments of the isolationist school of thought, which Mr. Libby shares and which must be answered here. One of the most used is the argument that America must not take sides against the war-makers, because, while they may be formally violating treaties and world peace, in reality this is only because they have been unjustly dealt with; that they are the "proletariat among nations," that they represent the "have-not" peoples, whose demands must be vindicated against the rich nations, against the "haves." We cannot join with Mr. Libby in assuming that, even if this were true, America should assist or condone the resort to war to remedy the supposed grievances. But we challenge the assumption of Mr. Libby's facile classification into "haves" and "have-nots." If we are to assist the "have-nots" against the "haves," then surely we must help Ethiopia take possession of Italy and not the other way around; we must help Manchuria to some of the Japanese wealth; we must help the Chinese people make Japanese economy serve their great needs and not the other way around. The wildest stretch of even Mr. Libby's imagination cannot paint Czechoslovakia as a "have" nation in contrast with Nazi Germany which threatens its destruction. It is true that the bandit governments, when they have gobbled up the small and most "have-not" countries, will move toward the object of their greater ambitions, the wealthy countries, and, above all, the United States, but that is only the music of the future. I have yet to hear Mr. Libby or any of his associates propose that that half of the world's wealth which is held by less than 10 per cent of the world's population of the United States should be divided up among the other nations of the world in order to bring about

that equality among the peoples which would wipe out this classification of "haves" and "have-nots." Perhaps Mr. Libby does believe that America's wealth should be so distributed. If so, he should tell us tonight. If not, he should drop the meaningless classification of "haves" and "have-nots" which is only a shame-faced justification for fascist aggression. It is an interesting historical sidelight on this argument that it was Japanese imperialism which taught this slogan to Mr. Libby and his friends, which first justified military aggression against weaker peoples on the grounds that the aggressor was hard up, a "proletarian among the nations," and needed the booty. Every common criminal is equally justified in his crime.

But Mr. Libby, in common with all his associates, strenuously objects to the introduction of moral standards into the relations between nations. They say it is unrealistic and dangerous. They say this is the unreal classification of governments into "angels" and "devils." They cry, we all are sinners together, therefore let none pass moral judgment upon his neighbor. Since Mr. Libby is personally a Quaker and a pacifist and also, if he draws the logical conclusions from his position, a philosophical anarchist who would desire the immediate dissolution of all governments, there is a certain logic and consistency in his position, but for the great majority of workaday Americans, who are not Quakers, are not pacifists and not anarchists, this summary dismissal of moral standards from the field of foreign relations is unacceptable. We are too keenly conscious of the results of such an attitude in the destruction of the standards of morals and justice between man and man, of the disintegration of all social ties, that must flow from the adoption of amorality as our guiding principle in international relations. The advocates of neutrality and isolation argue for the acceptance of international anarchy as the permanent condition of world affairs. We declare that the time has come when the continuation of civilization itself, in America as everywhere,

depends upon world organization to enforce a minimum moral standard among nations.

The world organization of peace, like the organization of civil society itself, cannot begin by passing judgment upon all past crimes that arose from the prevailing anarchy, but it must begin by establishing certain standards which everyone must now live up to or find the world organized against them. These first primitive conditions for a world organization of peace have been established in the Kellogg pact. Any government which sends armed forces outside its own borders into the territory of another government without its consent, or which blockades the ports of another government, or furnishes arms and munitions to insurrectionists against another government, with or without a declaration of war, is guilty of violation of the Kellogg pact solemnly subscribed to by all the governments of the world, is guilty of aggression, is guilty of a crime against world peace, a crime which threatens the very existence of civilization. The foundations for a certain basic world order which will prevent war by making it unprofitable, has thus been laid. Mr. Libby and his friends would have us abandon this foundation. We propose American leadership in further building upon this foundation.

Those who would have us abandon moral standards between nations are not only helping to maintain world anarchy and contributing to the eventual triumph abroad of the fascist powers, but they are also leading us toward surrender to fascism within our own country. Our most ardent neutrality advocates, like Mr. Libby, draw the logical conclusion from their position when they denounce the boycott of Japanese goods as a warlike measure and demand that the boycott movement shall be disbanded in the interests of peace. They draw the logical conclusion when they demand that we shall stop all criticism of the crimes of Hitler and Mussolini. They draw the

logical conclusion when they attack the supporters of Spain and China among the American people as the real war-makers and the real danger to the peace of America. But the further logical conclusion of this demand for moral neutrality in face of the crimes of the fascist war-makers is the break-down of all social and political morality within America itself. When Mr. Libby proclaims there is no democracy worth helping in other lands, he is thereby undermining and discrediting our own democracy in America and weakening it before its domestic enemies. When moral standards are abandoned in foreign relations, they will quickly decay and disappear in domestic relations, as has happened in the domestic life of Germany, Italy and Japan. Our neutrality advocates have cynically abandoned moral standards. We appeal for the strengthening of moral standards.

Some of Mr. Libby's associates, whose collaboration he has gladly welcomed in joining the so-called Committee to Keep America Out of War, try to ridicule us, the members of the Communist Party, for our championship of international morality. Particularly, Norman Thomas, Jay Lovestone, Bertram Wolfe, accuse us that thereby we have abandoned the teachings of Marx and Lenin, have abandoned our revolutionary Communist principles. They, on their part, claim to uphold the teachings of Marx and Lenin by ridiculing moral standards between nations as a guiding principle. By this, however, they only expose their own hostility to the teachings of Marx and Lenin, their own renegacy from the revolutionary principles of Socialism. Against all such arguments allow me to quote to you somewhat extensively from the Inaugural Address to the First International written by Karl Marx in 1864. Dealing with the czarist conquest of the Caucasus, the suppression of the Polish uprising, and the Russo-Turkish war, current events of the day, Marx said:

The shameless approval, mock sympathy, or idiotic indifference, with which the upper classes of Europe have witnessed the mountain fortress of the Caucasus falling a prey to, and heroic Poland being assassinated by, Russia, the immense and unresisted encroachments of that barbarous power, whose head is at St. Petersburg, and whose hands are in every cabinet of Europe, have taught the working classes the duty to master for themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations. The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes.

Here, in the very words of Marx, we have formulated the precise description of the policy we urge upon the United States today. We propose nothing else than that the United States shall establish as the guiding principle of its foreign policy "to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations." Marx himself tells us that the fight for such a foreign policy forms part of that general struggle for the emancipation of the working class. This is just as profoundly true today as it was when Marx first wrote it in 1864.

Mr. Libby and most of his associates deny there is any relationship between alignments on foreign policy and those on domestic issues. But we cannot accept this shallow separation of the two. We admit quite readily, of course, the continued existence of great confusion among the masses and among some of their leaders, but we believe this confusion is being rapidly dispelled. Just as in the domestic political issues of our country, so also on foreign policy, we find the growth of two new political camps which cut across old party lines, one the camp of progress and democracy, the other the camp of reaction and fascism.

The camp of reaction and fascism in our domestic life is the main force behind the policy of neutrality and isolation. The camp of progress and democracy is the main force behind the policy of concerted action under American leadership to restrain the fascist war-making governments. When Mr. Libby called upon his followers recently to rejoice, because, as he expressed it, "Hoover resumes leadership in international affairs," and joyously reported Hoover's return from a visit with Hitler and his complete rejection of the theory of concerted efforts against aggressor states, we have a right and a duty to ask what this means in the domestic life of our country. When Mr. Libby advises us to listen to Boake Carter for our radio interpretation of the news, when he asks us to agree with William Randolph Hearst's editorials on foreign affairs, when he asks us to get inspiration from Father Coughlin's radio sermons—all in the interest of peace—we have the right and the duty to ask him what kind of company is he getting us into, what will be the effect of this kind of leadership on the daily life of our country? It is a fact that all the most sinister powers in America, monopoly capital, Wall Street, the sixty families, and all their most loyal agents, are fighting on the side represented by my opponent this evening and against any action to curb the bandit fascist governments.

On the other hand we have the following significant alignment of forces on the side which I am defending tonight:

Organized labor, both of the American Federation of Labor and the Committee for Industrial Organization, overwhelmingly support President Roosevelt's Chicago call for quarantining the aggressor, as well as the O'Connell Peace Bill. Most of the articulate intellectual circles, university professors, students, writers, are, in great majority, supporting the O'Connell Bill for concerted action against the aggressors. Church organizations, outside of the Catholic hierarchy, are at least three-fourths on the same side. The political forces

aligned with the New Deal are almost unanimously in its favor. The great student-strike movement on April 27 marched at least 90 per cent under the banner of lifting the embargo against Spain and the adoption of the O'Connell Peace Bill. In a recent gathering of peace advocates called in Washington, with the participation of Mr. Libby himself, with the objective of turning attention away from concerted action and toward abstract problems of world economics, a revolt among the guests against the program of the leadership of that conference disclosed the majority on the side of concerted action to restrain the fascist war-makers. During the past six months the progressive majority of the American people have decisively broken away from the false neutrality policy. They are emphatically supplementing their progressive and democratic platform in domestic affairs with a progressive and democratic foreign policy, the policy of quarantining the aggressors. At the same time all the forces of reaction are gathering for a desperate last-stand fight to maintain the old, bankrupt neutrality-policy.

There are, of course, still some examples of confusion and a crossing of lines of the two main camps on the question of foreign relations. Outstanding of these is the alignment of LaFollette and a few Congressional progressives with the neutrality bloc. These people are the constitutionally unbranded, unpredictable and, even in domestic policies, not consistently progressive; at the present moment they are engaged in some fantastic speculations on a possible political realignment which would bring them into one camp with the Republican Party of Hoover and Hamilton. Henry L. Stimson and a few other outstanding figures of former days in the reactionary camp come out for concerted action against the war-makers, but these exceptions only emphasize the rule.

The fascist bloc of war-making powers operates under the flag of the anti-Communist alliance. The neutrality bloc within

America agrees with the slogan of Hitler that the menace of Communism and of the Communists is what is endangering the peace of the world. Because the American people are so overwhelmingly against fascism, our own domestic anti-Communist alliance says it is against fascism and Communism, but in all their arguments and in their practical activities we find the menace of fascism figures very little, if at all, and their main concern is to fight Communism. And who are the Communists? The anti-Communist alliance certainly is not primarily concerned with my small party. Their definition of Communism is so broad that it includes the New Deal and President Roosevelt himself, especially it includes the policy of quarantining the war-making governments. The anti-Communist slogan in America has exactly the same significance as Hitler's use of this same slogan to establish his bloody dictatorship over the German people. It has exactly the same significance as the same cry against the Spanish republic. It is preparation for the fascist destruction of democracy and the republic also in America.

The organization for which Mr. Libby speaks has declared officially that it "does not co-operate with Communists or fascists." I do not question that this prohibition against co-operation with fascists is applied to the open, self-labeled fascist groups in America. But these are not the most dangerous expressions of fascism in our country. Hitler also spoke against fascism when he was fighting for power; he operated under the slogan of socialism; he called his party the *National Socialist Party*. We must not be surprised that American fascism is taking on the banners of democracy and even of labor. Who can forget our famous "Liberty League," even though the du Ponts would like to have us forget it. And with these, the most dangerous, fascists who sail under the flag of liberty like Hitler did under the flag of Socialism, are precisely the most powerful and welcome supporters of Mr. Libby's viewpoint.

Must I mention any names other than those of Hamilton Fish, Father Coughlin and William Randolph Hearst to substantiate this charge?

Mr. Libby's organization does not co-operate with Communists, they say. Surely they do not co-operate with the Communist Party, for on the question of the road to peace we stand in opposite camps; but when they can find anyone who calls himself Communist, but who at the same time supports neutrality and isolation then we find Mr. Libby and his organization are quite ready for the closest collaboration. Mr. Libby is a member of the Committee to Keep America Out of War. This body was launched at a meeting in the Hippodrome, New York, on March 9, in which Mr. Libby sat on the platform. Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard, the meeting's chairman, praised one of the speakers, Mr. Bertram D. Wolfe, as "the tireless organizer" of the whole affair. Mr. Wolfe calls himself a Communist. He made a speech at that meeting, in which he declared that in case of war between the United States and Japan he proposed to work for the defeat of the United States. Not Mr. Libby nor any of his associates on that platform repudiated that slogan at the meeting or since, and they continue to work together in close alliance. Mr. Libby may reply that Mr. Wolfe is not really a Communist at all. That is absolutely true, and we would like to emphasize this to the whole world. Mr. Wolfe has for years, however, maintained close connections with the Bukharin group in the Soviet Union, the leaders of which a few weeks ago were executed for applying in the most practical way in that country the slogan that Mr. Wolfe put forth for America, the defeat of our own country in a possible war with Japan. Is it too much to ask Mr. Libby if he agrees to collaborate with people who call themselves Communists only provided they stand for the defeat of the United States in case of a war with Japan? Or does he agree to collaborate with that kind of self-styled Communist only be-

cause he knows they are not Communists at all but sail under a false flag? And may we ask what Mr. Libby thinks about this use of the slogan for the defeat of our government when faced with a fascist power, when this slogan is put forth from the same platform on which he sits, under the auspices of an organization of which he is a leading member? We, on our part, are prepared to answer this question with full sharpness. We consider Mr. Bertram D. Wolfe no better than an undercover agent for Japanese imperialism. We declare that if, in spite of all our efforts for peace, Mr. Libby's policy should prevail and therefore war should in fact occur between Japan and the United States, then we consider that the interest of world progress, of peace, of democracy, of the independence of China's four-hundred millions, of the future of America and of the Japanese people itself, all joined to demand the defeat of Japan's militarist government in such a war, and we would make that defeat a major guiding consideration of our whole policy under present world relationships.

The greatest danger to the peace of the whole world is the retreat of the peace-seeking nations before the fascist offensive. The fascist menace has grown on its easy victories. If this course is not stopped, the fascist war aggression will soon be on American soil itself. This is apparent to anyone with the slightest knowledge of the course of world affairs since 1931. Yet, the neutrality bloc and not least its spokesman, Mr. Libby, find their only hope of world peace in continued retreats and surrenders to the fascist powers.

Within the past few weeks Mr. Libby's official organ, a publication called *Peace Action*, often under Mr. Libby's signature, has expressed an attitude toward current events which is identical with Chamberlain in London and leads in the same direction of coming to agreement with fascism on its own terms. With regard to Austria they expressed "relief to have this inevitable union over with" and concluded that "it will

be a step towards stability." They are satisfied that "The future of Spain is apparently in process of solution . . . in the discussions between Chamberlain and Mussolini." They are hopeful that Czechoslovakia "will now sever itself from Russia and develop its ties with Germany." They declare that "Danzig belongs to Germany and will return to Germany." They express the hope that Germany and Poland, while settling the corridor problem, will also decide without disagreement the fate of Memel and, presumably, also of Lithuania. They say "these changes . . . should have been made years ago." They urge the United States to follow in the Far East the same disgraceful course Chamberlain has followed in the Mediterranean, toward Hitler, and toward Spain. They speak apologetically of Franco's bombardments of Barcelona, against which they are unable to arouse any indignation whatever, not even as much as the Pope who blesses Franco. In judging the effects of Franco's recent military successes in Spain they cannot see in this any new menace to European peace; on the contrary, they conclude, "Europe is much nearer peace today than it was a month ago." These are quotations from the current issues of *Peace Action*, edited by Mr. Libby. In not one single issue of that paper, not one single article, not a paragraph, not a sentence, can be found a word in condemnation of Hitler, Mussolini or the Mikado, as the violators of world peace. And all of this, which clearly represents the path of surrender to the war-makers and to fascism, is presented as "peace action." Such is the conclusion to which neutrality will bring all its adherents if they do not break once and for all with that bankrupt policy.

Those for whom I speak, and on this I am sure I speak the mind of the majority of the American people, see in every victory of the fascist war-makers a darker gathering of clouds of war over the world, including America. We declare Chamberlain's criminal sell-out has stimulated every reactionary and

war-making force. We see in the conquest of Austria a knife in the back of the Czechoslovakian republic, the last oasis of democracy in central Europe, which can stand only by unity with France and the Soviet Union. We find Spain's contribution to world peace in the heroic republican forces that brought Franco's foreign armies to a halt. We find the hope of the Far East in China's magnificent national unity and military successes against the Japanese. In short, we see every one of the questions from the exactly opposite viewpoint of Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado, and therefore from the exactly opposite viewpoint of my opponent of this evening and of his associates. They see peace only in the victory of the fascist dictators; we see peace only in the defeat and destruction of fascism. That is why my opponent wants the United States to continue helping the fascist dictators; that is why we demand that the United States shall take the lead in concerted efforts to halt them.

Would a courageous initiative by the United States against the war-makers receive enough support in the world to defeat them? Yes, we would have overwhelming support if we displayed a firm policy. It is certain the Soviet Union would wholeheartedly support such a policy. We would end the hesitations of the French government and its dependence upon Britain. We would encourage British democracy to throw over the cynical Chamberlain. America alone could change the whole course of world affairs by our moral and economic influence. We could ensure the victory of the Spanish republic, which was almost at the point of victory several times while American influence was thrown the other way. We could ensure the victory of China which, without our help, is already bringing Japan to the verge of collapse. The defeat of the war-makers in these two areas would shatter the myth of their inevitable victory, would release the democratic aspirations of their own people, who would quickly abolish their

defeated dictators. And we could do all that without the slightest danger of involving the United States in war. Failure to do this will create for us the danger of war. The United States enjoyed for a time a privileged position. This makes it our inescapable responsibility to use this position to help organize the peace of a world in which no other land is so fortunately situated. If we delay too long, our immunity will quickly disappear in a world made victim to fascist aggression, conquest and destruction. By acting now against the war-makers of the world, we *can* keep America out of war.

FIRST REBUTTAL

I want first of all to express my warmest appreciation to Mr. Libby for having so ably proved my case for me. I am sure that his speech convinced more people than mine did of the absolute necessity of breaking once and for all from a neutrality attitude which can lead us to such consequences as he proposed to us here tonight. Not all advocates and spokesmen of this policy are fair enough to us to be as frank as Mr. Libby, and I think we should thank him for his frankness.

Mr. Libby has told us tonight quite openly that he proposes, as the way to peace, to make the fascist nations prosperous. If we make them prosperous enough, they will stop threatening us with war. I asked Mr. Libby if he was prepared for that purpose of dividing American wealth among the fascist nations. He did not answer that directly, but I think we can see that this is the logical conclusion which must be drawn from his remarks.

Mr. Libby expressed agreement with us on some points. But it is a strange agreement. I said neutrality is murder. Mr. Libby says he agrees with me that neutrality is not enough.

Starting from a premise that moral standards must not be applied to fascist nations, Mr. Libby suddenly begins to wax

moral—we find he has not lost his morality entirely. We are glad to see that he does not entirely disregard moral standards, but it seems a little strange that moral standards come in and are allowed to operate only on condition that they operate in favor of Hitler and Mussolini; that he adheres to morals only when they operate in favor of the war-makers; that an embargo against the war-makers is wrong because it will starve the helpless women and children in Germany, Italy and Japan, while an embargo against loyalist Spain is all right. I think it is not an accident, it is not at all an accident, that in the forty-five minute presentation of Mr. Libby's road to peace he did not have one single word of condemnation for the bombardment of Barcelona.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Libby relies mainly, for bringing you around to his point of view, upon telling you about the terrible, terrible things that are going to happen when "the boys come home." He wants to frighten us by telling us what our enemies are planning against us, the terrible things that Hitler is going to plan against us if we cross him. He forgets one thing: the fascists abroad and at home will make their plans, but when it comes to executing these plans we are going to have something to say about the question.

Mr. Libby is disturbed because I don't propose that the United States go to war; and as most of his argument is directed toward the horror of war, he must conclude in spite of everything that I do propose war, so he says "an embargo against the war-makers is a war measure." But, my dear Mr. Libby—we propose an embargo against the war-makers; you propose an embargo against both the war-makers and their victims; therefore, you propose war against both of them, war against friend and enemy alike. You say embargo is an act of war, but the whole purpose of the Neutrality Act is designed to place the embargo against both war-makers and

victims—if the embargo is war, you propose twice as much war as we propose, war against the whole world.

Mr. Libby assured us that if we dare take action against the fascist dictators, this will only consolidate the people of these countries behind their dictatorships, and he draws a picture following the American declaration of embargo of the women of Italy rushing with their wedding rings to Mussolini. But what is the truth of this? These dictators live upon the cheap victories presented to them by policies such as Mr. Libby wants us to follow. When those cheap victories stop, the dictators will fall. One good stiff licking is enough to finish Hitler, because so far from having the support of the German people, Hitler can exist only so long as he can create the appearance of invincible power that even forces the British lion to crawl at his feet. The moment that illusion is wiped away, at that moment the house-of-cards of fascism will begin to tumble.

The reason why Mussolini grew strong in the period of so-called sanctions is not because the sanctions were applied, but because the sanctions were sabotaged; that made Mussolini strong.

Well, I have one minute. Let me use that for a statement regarding the name of Mr. Libby's organization. It is the "Council for Prevention of War." I think after hearing Mr. Libby giving the policy of that organization here tonight we should propose in the interest of honest advertising they change their name to the "Council for the Granting of Full Power to the War-makers in the Rest of the World."

FINAL REBUTTAL

My opponent has tried to put me in a position of being absurd, by stating that I stand for the "status quo" and he wants to remedy the ills of the world. When you examine this

a little more deeply, this argument becomes an apology for the fascist war-makers. We do not defend the "status quo" but we say, so long as there exist war-making governments in the world that are changing the status quo by means of invasion of other people and destruction of other nations, talk about peaceful change is so much poppycock.

It is uniform among the advocates of the neutrality-bloc policy to ascribe the most serious danger to world peace as coming from the Soviet government whereas the danger from fascism is only the danger of resisting fascism. Yet, at the same time that those people are trying to scare us by saying that the Soviet Union is bringing about war, they come with their clever provocation to demand why the Soviet Union hasn't gone to war already. I will tell you why the Soviet Union has not gone to war—because it stands for exactly the same kind of policy we are proposing for the United States, not war but the organization of peace. It is the privilege of everyone to disagree with the inner organization of the Soviet Union if they don't like socialism, if they prefer capitalism, but it is not the privilege of anyone who wants to stand as a peace advocate to try to slander the Soviet Union by saying that it is not a peace advocate, and at the same time try to provoke it to go to war. The Soviet Union remains, as it has been through the whole post-war period, the most reliable, the most stalwart, the most powerful bulwark of peace and progress for the peoples of the entire world.

We say the time has come when the world must choose between war and destruction or organized peace. The United States has the peculiar opportunity of taking the lead and organizing the peace of the world. We cannot, however, protect ourselves and protect the world from the threatening catastrophe if we follow the course that has been defended this evening by Mr. Libby. The time is short. If we disregard too long

our opportunity, it will quickly disappear and the fascist aggression will increase. By acting now against the war-makers of the world, we can keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world!

Debate at Madison Square Garden, May 4, 1938.