

## IX

## The Main Issues

As the election campaign closes, as America prepares to ballot tomorrow in the most important election since 1860, it has become clear to millions that only the Communist Party stated the main issue correctly and sharply from the beginning. Shall America begin to move definitely on the road of progress and democracy, or shall we allow our country to be dragged down the bloody path of reaction, fascism and war—this is the issue which can no longer be postponed of decision.

But if the main issue is clear, the line-up of forces is not yet so definite. True, the camp of reaction and fascism stands forth unmistakably gathered around Landon and the Republican banner. Landon's campaign, directed by Hearst from Rome and Berlin, raised every slogan of international fascism, was modeled closely on the example of Hitler. Most characteristic in this respect is the fantastic charge, placed in the very center of the campaign by Hearst and Landon, that the New Deal is leading America to communism, the implication and even direct charges that President Roosevelt is some kind of secret Communist. This absurdity is the infallible sign of the madness of fascism. Everywhere that democracy has been destroyed, it has been done under the smoke-screen of the Red scare. It is known today to all intelligent Americans that a victory for Landon will be cheered by every reactionary force in our own country and throughout the world.

President Roosevelt is trying to follow the traditional course of the middle-of-the-road. Standing squarely for the maintenance of capitalism, he has gained the hatred of the big-money families, of monopoly capital, by his insistence upon some measure of restraint to their short-sighted greed for mountainous profits and unlimited exploitation of the people. It is

the unbridled ferocity of the Wall Street-Hearst hatred of Roosevelt that has frightened the American people so much that even the Farmer-Labor Party movement, and the progressive trade unions moving toward a Farmer-Labor Party, abandoned their plans for an independent national ticket this year and rallied to the re-election of the President.

The Communist Party has not been able to agree with this decision of the broad progressive movement, even though we can understand it, and though we are more and more reaching fruitful collaboration with the progressive movement on the questions of the day. We would have been glad to withdraw our own candidates in favor of a national Farmer-Labor Party ticket, and worked in this campaign as one sector in a broad People's Front against reaction. But we cannot follow the progressives when they abandon their political independence, and place full reliance upon President Roosevelt's re-election as the solution of our problems. In the absence of a People's Front, or Farmer-Labor national ticket, the Communist Party has campaigned for its own ticket as a means of building and strengthening the foundation for that People's Front which must arise nationally after this election, just as surely as the morning must follow the night.

President Roosevelt's re-election will be a rebuke to the worst reactionaries but is no guarantee against the further progress of fascism in America. And above all else, the American people need a *guarantee* that our country shall not be dragged down the bloody path of Hitlerism, that we shall not be forced to protect our democracy through such desperate heroism as that required of the Spanish people as the price of their liberty. We must learn the bitter lessons of Europe's sorrows. We must fashion new safeguards for our future security. We must build certain guarantees that fascism shall not come to America, that in full truth, "It Can't Happen Here."

Such a guarantee can come only from the joining together into a firm alliance of all progressives, the trade unions, the farmers' organizations, for independent political action, in a Farmer-Labor Party.

Let us be very clear as to what kind of a new party we need. My friend Norman Thomas said yesterday that his party will welcome "the right kind of Farmer-Labor Party"—but he explains that he means a party that will adopt his program. America does not need a new party which is merely another name for the Socialists or Communists—there is not the slightest value in another "third party" in this country. There is only one justification and value in a new party, that is, if it unites not only the million or so voters ready for socialism, but also with them the tens of millions of workers and farmers, not ready for socialism but sick to death of the two old parties and ready and anxious to unite for progress and democracy. Such a party will not give us socialism, but it will be a guarantee against fascism—provided it really organizes now the tens of millions.

That is why we, who are the best advocates of socialism, who really know how socialism can and will be built in America, rejected the slogan of Norman Thomas that the main issue this year is socialism or capitalism. We say, No, this is not the main issue, because this would divide and not unite the American people in face of the danger of fascism and war. We say the issue is progress and democracy, against reaction and fascism, because on this issue we can unite the majority of the American people in the immediate future, for a People's Front government in locality, state and nation.

Reaction and fascism in domestic affairs are always accompanied by increased danger of war internationally. Everyone knows that the imminent danger of war, now menacing the world, comes directly from Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese fascists. So, too, our own reactionaries in this election campaign have revealed their intention to enmesh America in the fascist war camp. Only a Farmer-Labor Party in charge of our government can fully align America with the peace forces of all lands and keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world. A really democratic and progressive America, working with the French People's Front government and with that most developed democracy and stronghold of peace in the

entire world—the Soviet Union—could so unite the peoples as really to curb the war-makers and maintain world peace.

In this campaign America has seen the real face of the Communist Party. America has seen the Communists as front-line fighters in defense of the people's material interests and their democratic rights. America has seen how false are the charges against us, that we are bogey men eating babies for breakfast, enemies of the family, the church, democracy and all things valued by men and women. America has seen how it was the Communist Party, small as it still is, that already performed a vital service for the whole population in clarifying the issues of this campaign, and keeping those issues clear amidst a fog of lies, slanders and misrepresentations. America has seen the Communist Party as the most consistent fighter for democracy, for the enforcement of the democratic provisions of our Constitution, for the defense of our flag and revival of its glorious revolutionary traditions. America has seen that Communism is twentieth-century Americanism.

For the Communist Party, tonight is not the end of our campaign. It is only the beginning of a new campaign to build and strengthen the Communist Party—in order that we can give our full strength and loyalty and steadfast effort to the building of that broader unity of all progressive people, of the tens of millions, in the Farmer-Labor Party which will enable the people to gain control of their government, to build a bulwark of peace, freedom, happiness and prosperity for the whole population.

This is our message to America as our people prepare to ballot on the next course of our government. On this basis we call for a decisive defeat to those who thought the Red bogey man was enough to frighten our country to surrender to Wall Street. On this basis we call for your support to the Communist Party, tomorrow, and every day to follow until organized greed and monopoly capital are only memories.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, from Madison Square Garden, New York, November 2, 1936.*