

VI. AN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY FOR PEACE

FOREIGN policy is a matter which deals with all the problems of war and peace. Our country is preoccupied today with the question of war. Yet there is almost complete absence of any serious discussion of foreign policy. In Congress wildly hysterical military appropriations are passed, one after another, that now mount up to fifteen billions of dollars, two-thirds of which no responsible person had the slightest idea was needed four months ago. This hysteria of appropriations was inaugurated by a message from the President, which solemnly recited the exact number of hours and minutes required to reach Omaha, Nebraska, and St. Louis, Missouri, by airplane from certain countries to the south. Candidate Willkie, on October 2, recorded the fact that he was "shocked" to learn the dangerous international position of the United States. He discoursed at length on his shock, but so far as policy is concerned, he said nothing new whatever, while he re-emphasized his agreement with the course on which Roosevelt has been and is taking our country. Like the President, like Congress, Mr. Willkie displays a naïve and childlike faith in dollars, expressed in military appropriations for machinery and implements of war, as the answer to all questions.

One and all, the leaders and ideologists of the Democratic and Republican parties alike forget one "little thing." They forget that armaments and soldiers are nothing but *instruments* of foreign policy, that *by themselves they answer no question whatever; that without an intelligent foreign policy armaments only multiply con-*

fusion and danger, that with a wrong-headed and dangerous foreign policy armaments only rush our country more quickly and deeply into disaster. And thus it is that every one in high places—and many in low—salves his conscience that he is doing everything needed to protect our country when he helps to pile one armaments appropriation upon another, when he votes for or agrees to register sixteen million young men for the draft, and when he roundly denounces any voice raising dissent, or calling for more fundamental consideration, as the voice of the unknown enemy, of the “Fifth Column.”

I speak against this madness of armaments. I would use the fortunate circumstance that we are in the midst of national elections, that public discussion is not yet under the ban but only under serious attack, to put forward a serious examination of foreign policy.

First of all, glance at various European countries which have been conquered by the Nazi invaders during the past year. Seriously ask yourself the question: were they destroyed by lack of armaments or by a foreign policy which went contrary to their national interests? There can be only one answer: armaments were adequate if there had been intelligent foreign policy, but armaments turned out to be useless because of distorted foreign policy.

Take the Polish Government of Colonel Beck and the aristocrats and landlords of that country. Its foreign policy had been built upon relentless hostility toward its Eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union, and, since 1933, upon reliance upon Hitler Germany and participation with Hitler in crushing and dismembering weaker neighbors. The domestic counterpart of this foreign policy was one of brutal oppression of national minorities within its own borders which included 40 per cent of its total population, not to speak of the terrible exploitation of Polish peasants and workers. It had inflicted injuries upon every neighbor, so that all looked upon it with suspicion or open hostility. Its own subject population hoped for its downfall. When Hitler suddenly turned upon it with his demands, the Beck Government had no recourse but the paper guar-

antees of Mr. Chamberlain, and its armaments collapsed in thirty days.

The outstanding example, however, is that of France. There was the classical land of “military preparedness.” Ever since the last war it had bankrupted itself with armaments, fortifications and militarization. Only seven years ago it was the undisputed mistress of the whole continent of Europe, west of the Soviet border. After Hitler’s rearmament of Germany, France even obtained a mutual defense pact with the Soviet Union. France was in an unconquerable position. But, following a disastrous foreign policy, the French Government itself destroyed its own defenses one by one. It helped Hitler and Mussolini destroy the Spanish Republic; it betrayed Ethiopia; it sold out its ally, Czechoslovakia, at Munich; it tore up its mutual defense pact with the Soviet Union. When finally, at the bidding of Britain, the French Government declared war against Germany, it had already by its own foreign policy placed itself in the most disadvantageous position. And after it declared war, it *made* war not against Germany but against its own people, outlawing the French Communist Party and crushing the labor movement. Its enormous military machine was never even mobilized for action against the invaders. Most of its tanks were captured by Hitler, not at the front, but in the interior of France where they had been kept for use against the French workers. Of what use were armaments to France, when it followed such a foreign policy?

THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF DISASTER

Turn now for a look at the foreign policy of Great Britain. Here is to be found the source and fountain-head of most of the disasters of Europe and Asia and Africa, which have now climaxed with a month of daily air bombardments of London itself, and the horrible irony of British retaliation striking chiefly upon the quivering body of her ally of a few months ago, France. British foreign policy deliberately brought Hitler into power in Germany, and gave the chief, the indispensable, help for the German armaments that now strike at the British Isles. It was British foreign policy which delib-

erately scuttled the League of Nations; which abandoned China to the Japanese invaders; which determined the betrayal of Ethiopia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain; which pressed France into tearing up its pact with the Soviet Union; which then pushed Poland, Norway, Holland and Belgium into a disastrous and hopeless war in which they quickly fell victims; which tried to create a desperate diversion in Finland; which led France to her collapse; which is now involving the United States in the general ruination. Of what use are armaments when they are in the service of such a foreign policy as that of Great Britain?

Did the British ruling class carry out this suicidal policy because they had deliberately decided to commit suicide? No, not at all. They were firmly convinced that it was a very, very clever policy which would end in giving them the world tied up in a nice bit of British red tape, without the necessity of firing a single British gun. The accumulated cunning and craft of centuries of rule, of the building of the empire upon which the sun never sets, went into the elaboration of that foreign policy. It was clever beyond description—far too clever, indeed, for it overreached itself.

There were two central thoughts dominating this clever British foreign policy: first, a Hitlerized Germany was to be encouraged and pushed into a war to destroy the Soviet Union, which would at the same time so weaken Germany as to remove her as a threat to Britain. Second, Britain's imperialist rivals were to be subordinated and made dependent upon Britain, in the case of France by the German threat, in the case of the United States by the threat of Japan, with perhaps warlike developments in each case in which Britain would act as the impartial judge and peacemaker. Thus would the blessings of the British Empire be spread over the face of the earth.

This super-clever foreign policy of Britain came to wreck on the rock of the Soviet Union. First, the Soviet Union had grown too strong and too consolidated to offer a tempting field for military adventures for a Hitler who likes to have his victories assured before he goes into action. Second, the leadership of the Soviet

Union was too wise and experienced to fall into the British trap. Both these factors are worthy of much more examination than we can take time for today, for the American people have been systematically taught, by newspapers and radio, to believe the Soviet Union to be very weak and its leadership to be stupid barbarians. Events of the past year should have been sufficient to dissolve such illusions!

Now, in the light of this analysis of British policy, turn to an examination of the foreign policy of the United States during the past ten years of world crisis. At every major point, American policy is found to be either an adaptation, or an outright copy, of the British "model." Limitation of time forbids the detailed listing of the well-known facts; but each of my listeners is fully capable of doing this for himself. The rulers of America have slavishly followed in the footsteps of their British cousins, with only such variations as were required by the special Anglo-American rivalries and antagonisms.

The foreign policy that has been developed by the United States Government over the past years, and which is now being pushed to its logical conclusions, has no promise for our country any better than that which it has already realized for the British. This policy is the common property of Roosevelt and Willkie, of the Democratic and Republican Parties, of nearly the whole American bourgeoisie. Only the Communist Party has proposed and consistently fought for a foreign policy of our country which could replace the disastrous policy now being followed.

A FOREIGN POLICY FOR PEACE

A clear-sighted and long-range foreign policy for the United States can only be developed upon the solid foundation of friendship and close collaboration between our country, China and the Soviet Union. That is now blocked by our shameful betrayal of China, through our supply to Japan, over the years, of the materials for her war of conquest, and by Washington's studied and artificial hostility toward the Soviet Union. Only when these features of our

present foreign policy are wiped out can we begin to move toward a foreign policy which can guarantee peace and security to America.

Such a constellation of powers, the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, moving along agreed-upon lines fully consistent with the needs of the three great peoples, would be very powerful indeed. It would be a stable combination, for these countries have no rivalries or conflicting interests. It would be strategically powerful, because it would immediately hold the keys to three continents; a Washington-Moscow-Chungking Axis, solidly welded with correct policies, would be unmatched in world politics. It would be physically strong, combining seven hundred to eight hundred millions of population, and the preponderance of the world's productive forces. It would be morally invincible, attracting the enthusiastic adherence of the suffering peoples all over the globe.

Some glimmerings of the bright light such a policy would bring to America and to the world shine through the remarks made in the House of Representatives in Washington by Congressman Sabath of Illinois on October 1. The key to Mr. Sabath's remarks can be seized in the following brief quotations. He said:

Yesterday's leading editorial in the *Washington Times-Herald* emphasizes a viewpoint concerning Russia that I have suggested and recommended on several occasions; the last time as recently as September 24. My query has been and still is today: Why should not the United States try to cultivate the good will of the Soviet Republics? It is realized now in many quarters that Great Britain made a serious if not well-nigh fatal mistake by not concluding and cementing friendly relations with Russia ahead of Germany. Should we repeat that error? . . .

I know there are critics of Russia and its policies. Investigation will reveal, I sincerely believe, that a whole lot of the criticism of Russia is due to Nazi and fascist propaganda. That is one of the subtle tricks of the leaders of these two "isms." They conduct all kinds of subversive activities and then try to escape detection and blame by pointing their fingers at the Communists. . . .

Regardless of what the Nazi, fascist, or capitalistic groups in the United States may say about Russia, I reiterate that the best interests of the United States will be served not by criticizing and assailing Russia

but by taking just the opposite course and seeking her friendly cooperation. The latter course will inure to the benefit of America, and it is the welfare and safety of America that in these critical days should be our sole objective.

Those remarks contain a profound wisdom which Americans, regardless of their opinion about socialism, would do well to ponder.

We Communists have been urging such a course upon our Government for many years. But our words were dismissed as the special pleading of a small minority who were interested mainly in getting the United States to help the Soviet Union. Only now is the true situation becoming clear to large numbers that the Soviet Union is fully able to take care of herself without any outside help, that it is the United States that needs such a friend as can be found only in the Soviet Union.

A word of warning is, however, in place at this point. It will be worse than useless for the United States to approach the Soviet Union in the hopes of finding an ally in a war, the aims of which are to redistribute the colonies and subject peoples among the great powers. The Soviet Union will never participate in such a war. It will be equally futile and harmful for the United States to indulge in such tricky maneuvering as Chamberlain carried on in Moscow from June to August last year. And it will not be conducive to success of any attempt at rapprochement with the Soviet Union if it is conducted by a government which is stamping out democracy at home and establishing an American version of Hitlerism, for such a government would have no moral advantage over a Hitler Germany and would be under a great geographical handicap.

I am no spokesman for the Soviet Union, and can make no promises on her behalf. I am the spokesman for a growing body of American workers and farmers, who see friendship and collaboration with the Soviet Union and China as the prerequisite for a sound foreign policy for our country. We would wish to join our efforts with all those of like mind to lead our country along such a road as would make that not only possible but inevitable.

Only along such a road of foreign policy for America can our country win through, for itself and for the world, out of the present dangers and bloody chaos, into a new world of peace, order, and well being for all peoples in all lands.

SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

THERE have been several requests that I deal with comments of the capitalist press on my Boston speech of October 6, and to develop further some of the points of that speech. I do this the more readily, since many persons have misinterpreted that speech to obscure one of its main points, which needs constant re-emphasis. I said:

It will be worse than useless for the United States to approach the Soviet Union in the hopes of finding an ally in a war, the aims of which are to redistribute the colonies and subject peoples among the great powers. The Soviet Union will never participate in such a war.

That would seem to be clear and definite. Yet for the capitalist press and commentators, another phrase was taken from the speech, and interpreted to mean just the opposite; namely, that I was advocating that the United States should seek to obtain the Soviet Union as an ally in the imperialist war. I must emphatically repudiate such a suggestion.

It is necessary for me, however, to admit that I carelessly helped these falsifiers, when I gave them the quotable and ambiguous formulation of a "Washington-Moscow-Chungking Axis" as a possible description of what would result from a correct people's policy for peace on the part of the United States. That made it too easy for gentlemen like Mr. Sokolsky and others to distort the whole question and obscure the real issues. Therefore I must disclaim this formulation of "Axis," and make this the occasion for deepening the whole question.

One of the chief features of the international situation, and the

decisive factor for the United States, is the fact that the United States Government is pursuing a policy of feverish intervention in the imperialist war. It has embarked upon a gigantic and intense drive for building the greatest empire the world has ever seen, with the instrument of an overwhelming military machine. In this course it is expressing the will of the united American bourgeoisie. The policy and aspirations of Washington may be summed up in two headlines from *The United States News*—"Unofficial Merger of Britain and U. S." (Oct. 4, 1940), and "America to be Enriched by Vast British Holdings" (Nov. 29, 1940). For these aims American youth is conscripted, the masses are loaded with the burdens of enormous armaments, social and labor legislation is being dismantled, civil liberties are curtailed and swiftly being extinguished, and standards of living are driven down. For the masses the slogans are "national defense" and "democracy," but among the ruling classes it is frankly and outspokenly for "enrichment," for empire.

The American bourgeoisie is united behind this policy. But it is not fully united on *how to realize it*. One important difference is that one trend says, in the words of another headline in *The United States News*, that it would be wise to consider "Russia and China—New Allies for the U. S." (Oct. 11, 1940); or in the words of Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen in a recent issue of *Look* magazine, "the U. S. and Russia are natural allies"; or to quote the *New York Daily News*, "We should hold our nose and make a deal with Stalin." Another trend says, in the words of George Sokolsky:

It is preferable to go down to defeat than to be victorious as the little ally of the Russian Brute. It is preferable to suffer the agonies of a prolonged world war than to accept peace as a bounty from Stalin. (*New York Sun*, Oct. 9, 1940.)

Now both these trends are part of the one war camp of the bourgeoisie. Both consider relations with the Soviet Union purely from the angle of whether the United States can or cannot use the Soviet Union as a catspaw for its own imperialist purposes. The first says it is possible and should be tried; the second says it is im-

possible and that to try it would be dangerous. Both are war policies, against the interests of the American working class and equally against the interests of the Soviet Union.

The American people, the real nation, are truly the "natural allies" of the Soviet Union and its peoples; but "Washington," that is, the present imperialist, war-making regime, is a natural enemy of the Soviet Union and of its policies of peace, of neutrality toward the imperialist war, of limiting the war and stopping it at the earliest possible moment. Washington, Roosevelt and the American bourgeoisie see in the Soviet Union the most powerful obstacle to the realization of their grandiose dreams of a far-flung American empire.

The approach of Washington and our ruling classes toward China is purely imperialistic. For years the United States complacently furnished the Japanese militarists with the materials for their war of conquest in China. Only now, when the Japanese threaten to seize the whole Far-Eastern colonial empire, including the rubber, tin, and oil of Indonesia, does the United States, still niggardly and half-heartedly, grant some credits to China and *threaten* to cut off supplies from Japan.

Clearly, under present circumstances, to speak of any alliance or even collaboration between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, except as the result of the reversal or defeat of the present policies of Washington, only means to pour water on the mill of the imperialist war-makers.

Does this mean, however, that we shall not urge the American people to demand a correct policy toward both China and the Soviet Union, a policy that would truly be in the interests of the people of all three countries, a policy of peace? Of course, it means that we *shall* urge and fight for such a policy. But we must always point out that the people's interests clash with those of Wall Street, and the Wall Street-dominated government, and that such a policy must be imposed by the people.

Does this mean that the United States Government must inevitably, so long as it remains an imperialist, capitalist government,

further follow up its hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union? Not necessarily, for even Nazi Germany found it advisable to replace its hostility with a formally correct attitude toward the Soviet Union. At least as much may be demanded, and gained, from the Government of the United States by an informed and alert working class.

Clearly, all phases of a correct people's policy of peace—neutrality toward the imperialist war, friendship with the Soviet Union, real help to China, the denial of aid to the Japanese invaders of China, limitation of the spread of the war, and its earliest end—all these things must be continuously demanded from whatever administration holds power in the country. They may be achieved in part by a sufficiently energetic struggle of the masses, against the will of the bourgeoisie, before imperialism is thrown out of power.

But they will be achieved only by struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its policies, and never by falling under any illusions of collaboration between the working class and this imperialist bourgeoisie.

These considerations were the foundation of and were implicit in my Boston speech of October 6. Any contrary implications drawn from the "Axis" formulation are false and dangerous; and the use of that formulation is wrong as giving color to such implications.

The Soviet Union is the stronghold of peace for the workers and oppressed peoples of the world. It is fully capable of defending itself from any attacks, especially since it has the warm sympathy, love, and support of the toiling masses over the whole world. It is steadfastly holding its peoples outside the area of the imperialist war, giving an example thereby of how the interests of the American masses could best be protected. It is a beacon light showing us and the whole world the way out of capitalist oppression, starvation and war, to a new world of socialist freedom, plenty and peace.

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