

Text of Browder's Speech at Madison Square Garden Monday

Before a spirited, enthusiastic audience of 20,000, jammed into Madison Square Garden Monday night, Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, spoke on the fight for peace and the role of the Soviet Union in the present crisis. The following is the text of his speech:

Friends and Comrades:

The catastrophe of war has descended upon a large part of Europe, after ravaging Manchuria, Ethiopia, Spain and China. Additional tens of millions of men, women and children have been enveloped in the nightmare-atmosphere of modern imperialist war, in which science, the conquest of nature by man, is transformed into the instrument of the destruction of mankind and his culture.

Our first responsibility at this moment is to define clearly, in terms understandable by the broadest masses of the American people, the position of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. in regard to this conflict and its consequences to our country.

For this purpose, our Party, basing itself upon the unanimous decision of six hundred and fifty party leaders gathered in a Special National Conference at Chicago, September 1, 2 and 3, on the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Party's foundation, has today addressed an open letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, and to all members of Congress, setting forth our position on the most pressing issues of the moment in the minds of the people. I read to you the text of this letter:

September 11, 1939.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States
Members of Congress of the United States
Dear Mr. President and Congressmen:

In this hour of world crisis, when the most horrible catastrophe is descending upon tens of millions of men, women, and children in other lands, and is threatening our own country, American thought turns to the question of national unity, to the unity of the great majority of the American people, in protection of the national interests, in furthering the cause of peace, and in finding guarantees for American social and national security.

We address this letter to you, on behalf of the Communist Party of the U. S. A., which has spoken unanimously at a National Conference of six hundred and fifty of its representatives from all States, held in Chicago, September 1, 2, and 3, 1939. We place before those who are responsible for the welfare of our people and nation the firm solidarity of our Party with the hopes, aspirations and desires of the great majority of the American people, and the ardent wish of our Party and all its members to work harmoniously with this majority and its elected representatives for the common interest and common welfare.

This is all the more necessary since the Communist Party of the U. S. A., although a relatively small minority party, is the most stable and rapidly growing of such minorities, and exerts an influence upon public thought far beyond the confines of its membership. It is also made especially necessary by the persistent and highly-organized campaign of misrepresentation which tries to picture our Party as un-American, as an agency of some foreign principal directed against the interests and unity of the American people—misrepresentation which pictures our loyalty to the principles of socialism as disloyalty to our own country and people. These slanders are refuted by our political views and our work, and by our position in the present crisis.

We are Americans who love our country and would serve it by our best thought and most energetic action. As we understand the American tradition and Constitution, all persons, parties, and groups, have the responsibility and duty to make clear, beyond doubt, their firm and unconditional defense of American social and national security; with this established, we believe that all, including the Communists, have the full right to participate in the democratic public life of our nation and to participate in its common tasks, without discrimination on account of creed or political affiliation.

We wish to place on record our firm accord with the stand of the President of our country against American involvement in the war, or in the rivalries and antagonisms which have led much of Europe into chaos. We support the President's expressed determination to exert our country's influence against extension of the warfare, especially as it involves the Americas, and to bring it to the speediest possible end in a way to abolish forever the practice of violent settlement of disputes between nations.

At this moment the hope for firm national unity lies in rallying all Americans in support of this policy, and in support of the President who has best expressed the hearts and minds of the people.

We add our voices to the popular condemnation of all who are attempting to find personal profit or narrow partisan advantage in the conditions of world crisis which press upon our people; we pledge our Party to cooperation with those who subordinate their personal, partisan, or class interests in order to serve the interests of the nation—which can only be the interests of that vast majority of the people who labor, in whatever field, for the common good.

We call attention to the fact that our country, most powerful in the world, occupies a position toward the world menace of war, similar in most important respects to that occupied by the second most powerful nation, the Soviet Union. Both are neutral toward the rival imperialist ambitions and interests, both are deeply sympathetic to the peoples whose national independence is in jeopardy, both ardently desire and strive for an ordered and peaceful world, both wish to make the world safe for human culture, science, work, and happiness. This common attitude of the two greatest world powers, reflects profound common national interests which must, sooner or later, and preferably sooner, result in common policy and action, together with all like-minded peoples and governments, to banish the forces of destruction from the earth, to establish orderly international relations, to secure world peace.

Very truly yours,

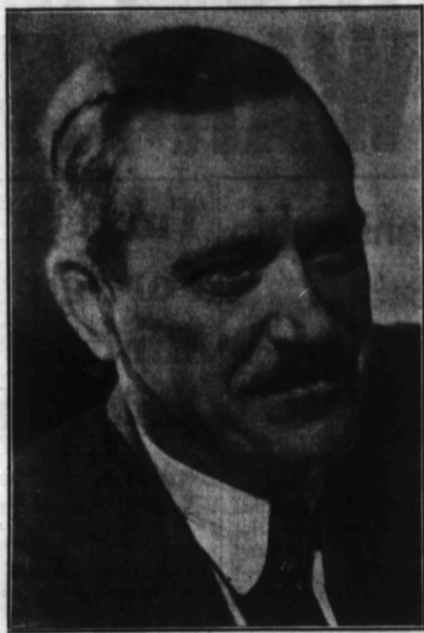
For the National Committee,
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U. S. A.
WM. Z. FOSTER, EARL BROWDER,
Chairman. General Secretary.

Upon the basis of the position here set forth, [in the letter to President Roosevelt] we have the task to under-

stand, and to help the masses of the people to understand, how and why this catastrophe has come upon the world, and how the American people and humanity in general can mitigate its consequences and emerge from its chaos.

The immediate instigators and perpetrators of war are notorious and well-identified before the world. They are the bloody fascist dictatorships of Germany, Japan and Italy, which conducted the opening stages of the new imperialist world war in concert, under the flag of the "Anti-Comintern Axis." These powers represent monopoly capital, in its most predatory and parasitic stage of development, which has destroyed the democratic organizations of the people, and rules over them with naked club and bayonet through its reactionary class-supporters, professional militarists, and the criminal underworld recruited from the de-classed debris of the rotting and broken-down capitalist system. It has long been clear that the fascist dictatorships can be halted in their march toward world domination only by superior force.

We Communists have long been hammering this point home, and proposing insistently the world-unity of the



EARL BROWDER

working class, as the force which could create a world democratic peace front, composed of all peoples and governments which for whatever reason desire world peace, which alone could confront the fascist powers with such superior force that their defeat would be obvious and guaranteed from the outset, thereby restraining them to keep the peace.

This project has not been realized in time to prevent the spread of the imperialist war to a large portion of Europe, Asia, Africa, and also America—since Canada is now involved.

What prevented the realization of a peace front sufficiently strong to hold off this long-threatening catastrophe?

Three major factors must be recognized. They are:

First, the split in the working class forces, internationally and in various countries; only a part of the working class could be mobilized to fight for the peace front, while the other part remained under the leadership and control of those, like the parties of the Second International, who took orders from Chamberlain to follow the surrenders and retreats masked under the names of "appeasement" and "non-intervention."

Second, the failure of the so-called democratic governments to rise above their conflicting imperialist ambitions, their sabotage and scuttling of the League of Nations, their betrayal of Spain, Ethiopia, Austria, China, and Czechoslovakia, in the illusory hope that thereby they could divert the Axis aggressions exclusively against the land of socialism, the Soviet Union; that is, the dominance of the Chamberlain orientation among the great and most of the small democratic powers.

Third, the absence of the United States as a leading force for building the peace front, due to the Tory Coalition in Congress which blocked the policies and efforts of President Roosevelt in this direction.

As the world entered the fateful days of August, it became clear that the Soviet Union stood alone among the great powers in pressing the formation of a solid peace front. Chamberlain and Daladier had dragged out their conversations with Moscow since April, were farther from agreement than when they started, and were willfully drifting into war without any agreement, a fact which they were hiding from the world.

Poland was the object of the immediate threats of aggression. Chamberlain and Daladier had given formal guarantees of Polish independence—but had done nothing whatever to back this up with material guarantees, the mobilization of forces sufficient to throw back an aggression. The Soviet Union offered the material guarantee of its armed forces, in return for reciprocal guarantees of its own borders. But the Polish Government declared, in agreement with Chamberlain, that it did not want and would not accept the military assistance of the Soviet Union.

Yesterday Lloyd George made a declaration of the greatest historical importance. I am quoting not a Communist but the man who headed the British Empire during the World War:

"One must not conceal from ourselves the enormous difference it would have made to our chances if at this hour the great air fleet of Germany, which is so appreciably facilitating the chances of her armies in Poland, were confronted by an equally powerful fleet of Russia—and if two powerful Russian armies were advancing one upon East Prussia and the other on Cracow.

... that was the plan placed before our military mission by Voroshilov. The tragic story of the rejection of this plan has yet to be told and the

responsibility for the stupidities that lost us Russia's powerful support justly affixed and sternly dealt with."

In short, Chamberlain was trying to trick the Soviet Union into the position of drifting into war, not on its own account or for its own interests, not even in support of any system of collective security, not even with the right to fight in that war, but solely for aims to be decided by Chamberlain, at a time decided by Chamberlain, and in a manner decided by Chamberlain.

If the Soviet Union had permitted Chamberlain's trickery to succeed, it would have betrayed its own people and its own national interests, it would have terribly weakened the 400 million Chinese people in their fight for independence, it would have harmed the interests of the United States, it would have broken the remaining bases of struggle for world peace.

Fortunately for the world, the Soviet Union was not tricked. Stalin issued a sharp warning to the world on March 18th, while stating the Soviet Union's basic policy for world peace, that all ideas of making the Soviet Union a catapaw to rake British chestnuts out of the fire would have to be abandoned. Another sharp warning was given in the resignation of Litvinov. A further warning was given in the article by Andre Zhdanov, head of the Supreme Soviet's foreign policy committee. Other warnings were given from week to week. But the Chamberlain course continued undeviatingly to its final debacle.

The Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, demonstrating to the world that if there is to be no collective security, the Soviet Union still has the ability to protect itself fully, that it decides its own policy, and that it retains its strategic position of leadership in the struggle for world peace.

Chamberlainites all over the world, not least in the U. S., were shocked to learn that Chamberlain could not order the Soviet Union into war for his own aims and on his own terms. They burst into rage against the Soviet Union, when it declared that it was not obligated to go to war either on the side of Germany or of Great Britain, that it was neutral, that it would not be drawn into others' quarrels which could not be related either to organizing the world for peace, nor to any interest of the Soviet Union itself.

Chamberlain's rage can be understood as that of the thwarted conspirator. But why should American newspapers so spiritedly come to his support, while they completely ignore American national interests and how they are affected?

The American people have no interest in insulting a great and friendly power, merely because it has declared its neutrality in a war toward which the United States has also declared its own neutrality! The Soviet Union, after actively leading the fight for collective security, but finding itself alone and all its efforts thwarted, perforce retired to the safe position from which the United States has never stirred for many years. And for this, people who call themselves Americans throw the most vile slanders against the Soviet Union.

Is it possible to demand of the Soviet Union to enter this war, without agreeing that the United States is under the same obligation? And yet the same newspapers who slander the Soviet Union, are unanimously agreed that the United States should stay out of it. The most vicious slanderers, the Trotskyites, the Lovestonites, the Norman Thomas Socialists, one and all were in the forefront of the fight against collective security, denounced it as a war policy, condemned even economic sanctions as a war measure, did everything in their power to keep America isolated from any peace efforts, demand that America keep out of war at any price—but with one voice they demand that the Soviet Union should enter the war under any conditions and at any cost.

If these gentlemen think the war must be extended at all costs, why do they not advocate America's entry? Or why do they not enlist themselves, and show their own military prowess?

But all such gentlemen who specialize in slander and confusion, will never apply to the United States the standards and demands they raise for the Soviet Union. In a backhanded and distorted way, they thereby give a tremendous tribute to the Soviet Union—they are speculating upon the instinctive belief of the masses that their main hope of salvation lies in the Soviet Union and its new socialist system.

But the Soviet Union has always specifically repudiated the idea that it settle all the problems of the world; it is setting an example for the world by its marvelous economic advancement, its cultural victories, its unquarable defenses, and its offer to cooperate for world peace on the basis of equality. We cannot demand more from one country, even from the second greatest power, even from the land of socialism, especially when we do not yet demand a fraction as much from our own country.

All the enemies of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. have rushed into print to announce that our Party is dead as a doornail as a result of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. Doubtless the wish is father to the thought, although many honest liberals have merely been trapped into an anti-Soviet position by their traditional muddle-headedness and lack of a firm backbone in critical moments of history.

But the Communist Party has never been so firm, so united, so unshakable, or upon such firm political and strategical ground, as it is today. History will prove that it is precisely in these days that the Communist Party has struck its deepest roots among the American people.

Those who slander the Communist Party are shouting that we were demanding that America make war, but we apologize for the Soviet Union when it refuses to make war. Allow me to remind all such slanderers, that they always misrepresented us when they said we were for a war policy. But we always based our proposals for an American peace policy squarely upon protection of American interests, and always as a road to prevent war, never as a policy of going to war. Allow me to remind you of the clear and unequivocal statement that I made from this same platform, in Madison Square Garden, May 4, 1938, in debate with Mr. Frederick J. Libby. Answering Mr. Libby's charge that I advocated American entrance into war, I declared:

"But what do we actually propose? We pro-

pose to make peace profitable and war unprofitable. We do not propose war or any steps that would lead to 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."

Those thoughts permeate all our utterances on American peace policy through the past years. If the proposals of the Soviet Union, if the proposals of American Communists, which were supported by a broad mass opinion and influential leaders touching all classes and camps, especially in Britain and France, to halt the fascist offensive by concerted action before it was too late, have so far come to naught, that is not our fault, for we did everything within our power to have them accepted and acted upon.

Now we have a new world situation. The catastrophe of war has been inflicted upon new territories and peoples, in the heart of Europe. But thanks to the active peace policy of the Soviet Union, thanks to the vigilance of its leadership, the situation is by no means hopeless. Many distinct improvements may be noted in the world situation. Allow me to cite a few of the more favorable developments:

1. The United States and the Soviet Union, the two greatest and most peaceful powers, find themselves in a much improved situation; immediate threat of war against the Soviet Union has been lifted, the area of war circumscribed; while the U. S. finds the Far Eastern door opening up again, after it had been closed tight against us, and the fascist threat against Latin-America lifting. This is the immediate result of the breaking of the fascist Axis. What nonsense to think that what helps America and the Soviet Union can be bad for the world as a whole!

2. China has been enormously encouraged and strengthened in her fight for national liberation, by the smashing of the Axis. This is the biggest help that China has received in years from anywhere. Who would be so bold as to say that the fate of China's 400 millions is not of importance to America and to the world? This helps to lift the greatest potential threat against the future of the United States in the Pacific.

3. Not only was the Axis broken, which had been the main source of fascist successes in world politics, but the barbarous Nazi ideology, which held the German people hypnotized, has been irretrievably undermined and cracked. The preconditions have been created for a successful democratic revolution of the German people, which alone can remove the threat of fascism from Europe and the world, and which Chamberlain fears equally as deeply as Hitler does, but which the peoples of the world will welcome with the greatest enthusiasm and joy.

Yes, the position of the United States has been improved in world affairs. But that does not mean that our problems are solved, or that they will solve themselves automatically. No, our problems become more complicated, and the inner threat of reaction and fascism is rising more menacingly than ever under the atmosphere of war.

Let us speak in the most concrete terms. The Tory Coalition of Republicans and Anti-New Deal Democrats is shouting phrases about national unity. Unity of the people of our nation is indeed a pressing need, felt by all. But what do the Tories mean when they speak of national unity? They obligingly tell us, that they demand a "coalition cabinet," to control the President and all national policy, in which the Tory coalition shall have a majority voice. They say this is the only way to have national unity.

But this is clearly and openly a threat against national unity. What the Tories are saying is, in effect, that the power of government must be placed in their hands, despite their rejection at the polls, or else they will not permit any unity of the nation, they will go into opposition to discredit and destroy the leadership of the nation. They refuse to accept the leadership chosen by the overwhelming majority of the people.

The Tories are not quarrelling about the distribution of honors to individuals. If they demand, as they do, a drastic change in the leadership of the nation in their favor, as the price of national unity, they do so with the determination to smash and eliminate all those policies known as the New Deal, against which they have fought, which they never accepted, and which they are now determined to destroy. Every measure to give social security and more democratic rights to the American people they are determined to wipe out. And this frontal attack against the interests of the people, they call a means toward "national unity."

We declare that this Tory attack is the greatest danger to national unity. The unity of the people can be formed, not around Hoover, Vanderberg, Glass, Garner, & Co., but at this moment especially it is possible only around the man who was chosen by a ten million majority, who promised the people that he would never let them down, that he had just begun to fight, who has tried to make good his promises sufficiently to earn the hatred of all the worst enemies of the people—President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

We declare that unity of labor, unity of the working class, unity of the trade union movement, must be the backbone of any really effective unity of the people. Workers of the AFL and CIO, who agree in the great majority on all the most crucial issues of the day, must find the way to act together as they already think together, to defeat all enemies of unity, and to make labor a great power in the life of our country, above all in these days of danger and emergency.

The Communist Party, commemorating its Twentieth Anniversary, dedicates itself unconditionally to the struggle for the interests of the working class, of all the American people who serve the common welfare, for the interests of the nation.

It is testimony to the strength of our Party among the masses, and to the effectiveness of our work, that Tory reaction and all its slimy agents concentrate all the force of their attacks at this moment against us.

The Dies Committee has just staged a particularly arrogant and brutal assault against our Party, by giving a forum for tirades by professional enemies of our Party to charge us with every crime on the calendar, without

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the slightest effort to check on truth and falsity. Mr. Gitlow has taken the place of Matthews as an "expert" witness on the Communist Party, while Matthews has risen from a mere witness to a regular employee. And what are Mr. Gitlow's credentials? The fact that ten years ago the Communist Party unconditionally expelled him from its ranks as a dangerous, unprincipled, unreliable person, and that it has been combatting his influence and that of all his kind unremittingly since that time.

It is shame enough for us, that we were ever associated in the past with the Gitlows, Lovestones, Trotskyites, and all their slimy trail of stool-pigeons and agents of reaction. But we have been busily cleansing ourselves of all such associations, and all their consequences, just as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the Communist International, were busy cleansing themselves of Gitlow's friends, the Bukharins, Trozskys, Zinovievs, and all their ilk.

From what we know of their crimes, we are sure they cannot paint themselves too black, but our ten years struggle against them and everything they stood for throws back all attempt to scatter their mud upon the clothes of the Communist Party.

For the honor of our Party's early history, let us here repudiate specifically the lie spread upon the Dies Committee record, that Gitlow was a General Secretary of our Party from 1922 to 1929. Ruthenberg was our secretary until his death in 1927, and a bulwark against the Gitlows. Only for a year and a half was Gitlow's pal, Lovestone, the secretary, until the Party found him out in his true character and drove him from its ranks. And it was only when we were finally freed from all these vermin, who crawl to the service of Tory reaction in the Dies Committee, that our Party began to grow, found unity in its ranks, won friends and influence among the masses, and emerged as an important factor in American life.

Our Party and its members are working shoulder to shoulder with those wide circles of Polish-Americans who are doing everything possible to help their brothers in the old country defend its independence. We join with every move which promises to help maintain the national independence of Poland. We respond to every expression of warmest sympathy with the Polish people.

But we warn the American people not to place their trust in Chamberlain & Co., who pose as the "friends of Poland," who even claim to be fighting for Poland, but who are the very ones who prepared all the conditions for the destruction of Poland in the interests of their own imperialistic conspiracies. Britain is playing the same game with Poland in 1939 which she played with Belgium in 1914.

Inside the United States our economic royalists are already busily at work with profiteering on the grand scale, such as they reached during the last war only in its final stages. Monopoly capital is already putting the screws on the American people. This will be accompanied with another intensified drive against the Bill of Rights, against the foreign-born population, against all civil liberties, and they will put enormous pressure upon the liberal administration in Washington to break down the safeguards which have been raised during the past few years.

The pressure of the Tory coalition camp upon Washington must be offset by the pressure of the organized labor and progressive forces to maintain the Constitution in full force.

Don't believe everything you read in the papers or hear on the radio. Keep cool. Use your head. Refuse to listen to rumors or to repeat them. Combat all tendencies to civil disorder, which will be stirred by all sorts of provocateurs. Don't engage in hot arguments, but keep your discussions cool and friendly, even when you run up against those who want to provoke quarrels.

Above all, build your unions stronger than ever, and keep them solid and united. Build your fraternal societies, and all democratic organizations of the people. And build ever stronger that organization which is the indispensable center for all the most intelligent, sane, loyal, energetic, and self-sacrificing workers and their allies, the most steady light of intelligence in a world darkened with the "blackout of peace," the Party of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin—The Communist Party.