

## CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
AND NATIONAL UNITY

THE Socialist Party has long departed from the tradition of Debs and ceased to be a working class party of socialism; it is now a small sect with its main interest the dissemination of semi-Trotskyist, semi-pacifist ideas on all public questions, particularly on the war. It is the declared enemy of national unity for the war effort. In practice it has degenerated into an auxiliary of the Fifth Column.

Like most of its brothers of the Fifth Column, the Socialist Party has no forthrightness or frankness about it; rather, it prefers to wear an assortment of masks, which it changes from moment to moment according to the issue with which it deals.

On the war, for example, it looks for and finds a hundred diverse reasons for opposition, for sowing suspicion, for undermining civilian morale, for justifying the Axis and disseminating especially the Hitler "Antikomintern" poison—but it prudently abstained in its recent 1942 convention from putting its position down on paper in an official resolution. Instead, it resorted to "weasel words," which can be twisted in any direction and used to evade responsibility. It refused to "give its blessings to this war or any war, as the proper method for attaining social objectives."\* which means in practice to refuse to help crush Hitler and his Axis, but when sharply chal-

\* *The Call*, June 12, 1942.

lenged is interpreted as a harmless and meaningless platitude. Behind this unprincipled and cowardly attitude, every form of "sabotage of the mind" is propagated.

Typical of this ideological sabotage is Norman Thomas' double-edged manipulation of the issue of socialism. On the one hand, he insists that "socialist principles" make it impossible to support "any war"; on the other hand, he descends to the level of trying to frighten the American bourgeoisie away from the war with Hitler's propaganda that to oppose the Nazi conquest means to "surrender" the world, first of all England, to "Soviet imperialism." He persistently reiterates the cry that the only concrete socialism the world has ever known, the Soviet Union, is really the worst sort of despotism, the enemy of civilization. He slyly repeats stories ("for which I cannot vouch" is his way of evading responsibility), for example, that "none other than Lord Beaverbrook" has become an agent for Bolshevizing England. He "warns" the American advocates of empire that "sooner or later it [the U. S. empire] like the British today, must yield to a new contender." The "new contender" is, of course, the Soviet Union. "Theirs," solemnly warns Mr. Thomas, "will be the empire of the future." Mr. Thomas and his Socialist Party thus use their "socialist principles" in order to advance the basic thesis of the Munichmen; they adjust themselves like a glove to the hand of Herbert Hoover and Colonel Lindbergh, they echo the central slogans of Baron von Killinger and the American Fifth Column.

Mr. Thomas, representing the Socialist Party, is a most versatile man. He can out-Gandhi the Mahatma himself in mellifluous phrases of pacifism and good will to all men, and then the next moment assume the moth-eaten lion skin of a roaring revolutionist which he borrowed from Leon

Trotsky. It was from the Trotskyites that he and his party learned the technique of finding "revolutionary" reasons for doing the things Hitler wants done. But whatever his pose at a particular moment, there will always be found a peculiar consistency in Mr. Thomas; the effect of everything he does or says is consistently to oppose national unity and the United Nations, to sow controversial issues, cultivate suspicions, disrupt the national effort for victory.

The American followers of the late Leon Trotsky are a specialized subdivision of Mr. Thomas' party, sometimes operating inside it, and at other times breaking up into special organizations for "division of labor." Their general character is determined by their origin with Trotsky, the man who contracted with Hitler's first lieutenant, Hess, to build the Axis Fifth Column in the Soviet Union, preparing the German-Japanese conquest of that one-sixth of the world. Its special function is to penetrate the working class and intellectual circles, sympathetic to socialist ideas but unarmed against the subtle poison of cynicism, adventurism, phrasemongering, super-revolutionary bombast, and inflated egoism which it is the function of Trotskyism to cultivate. Thus Trotskyism serves a double purpose for Hitler; it provides a super-revolutionary ghost with which to stimulate the "red scare," and then enlists these "reds" themselves in his secret machinery of the Fifth Column.

The Social-Democratic Federation (of New York) is a split-off section of Mr. Thomas' Socialist Party. It obtains its importance from its attachment to a powerful Jewish newspaper, the *Daily Forward*, which dominates a section of the needle trades unions, and provides a base for the "right wing" group of the American Labor Party. It professes unconditional support for the war, for the New Deal, and for President Roosevelt, but it demonstrates in prac-

tical life only one supreme loyalty—and that is to uncompromising hostility of the most hysterical type against the Soviet Union and against American Communists. Its definition of "communist" is narrower than the definition of Martin Dies and Hitler only because the latter include in that term even the Social-Democratic Federation and the whole American Labor Party. It has even participated in the Hitler-inspired campaign against the President, and against such typical liberals as Ralph Ingersoll and Marshall Field, who they charge are "tainted with communism." Two years ago, it was the most vociferous cheering section of Herbert Hoover's campaign for Baron Mannerheim, Hitler's Finnish ally. It has never retracted a word of its incitement for an anti-Soviet war. In its own field, it is one of the most pernicious influences working to break up the United Nations. Its paper, the *Daily Forward*, is an exaggerated imitation of the Hearst press.

There existed for several years another specialized group generally associated with the Socialist Party, the so-called "Lovestone group." But this has in late times scattered itself, renounced all open labels and special ideology, and its leading members have most of them entered into "special services," some of them for Martin Dies, others for big corporations as "labor experts," skilled in breaking up unions, and so forth. Ben Gitlow, for example, is reported to be in the service of Harry Bennett, Ford Motor Company's "personnel" manager. Lovestone had a hectic career directing the notorious Homer Martin when he, occupying the presidency of the Auto Workers Union, tried to break it up (Martin is now an open employee of Ford). He, Lovestone, is now reported to have entered into relations with John L. Lewis, since that gentleman has opened up a new career of disruption of the C.I.O. and its unity under

President Murray in support of President Roosevelt and the war. The political significance of the Lovestone types remain; they are the American version of the notorious Frenchman, Jacques Doriot, henchman of Laval.

All these muddy waters furnish ideal fishing grounds for the sinister forces of the Fifth Column, Hitler's secret weapon in the United States. None of them should be underestimated. The terrible experiences of all countries conquered by Hitler must teach America to be vigilant and on guard against all these breeding grounds of recruits for the Fifth Column in its widely ramified conspiracies against a victorious consummation of the war.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND NATIONAL UNITY

THE MAIN currents of public life in the United States continue to develop within the channels of the traditional two-party system, through the Republican and Democratic parties. There is no immediate prospect of a fundamental change in the formal aspects of this political system.

Beneath the surface appearance of two long-standing rival political parties representing conflicting programs for the country, however, the realities of life are not so static. On the contrary, most profound changes are taking place. The institutionalized party structure, preserved by tradition and habit, as well as by its being imbedded in statutory law, furnishes only the shell within which the political life of the country evolves. And within each major party struc-

ture all political currents and ideas find expression, some more, some less, without much apparent system or coherence. The apparent simplicity of American politics hides a complexity equal to that of any other country.

There is a certain arbitrariness, therefore, in dealing with our national politics by examining the Republican and Democratic parties separately. It is apparent to every student that the real political forces in our country, engaged in struggle to determine the policies of the nation, cut across all party lines; that in the political battles that take place, the party structure serves only as a sort of fixed fortification sometimes occupied by one side, sometimes by another; in some places by the one, in other places by the other. The structures themselves furnish no reliable guide to the battle lines.

This is especially true in relation to the problems of national unity and the policies required for victory. Party labels come to mean less and less. No firm attitude permeates either the Republican or the Democratic Party, whether they be examined nationally, regionally, by states, or locally, on any of the questions of the day.

Keeping this fact in mind, we will nevertheless find it convenient to examine political issues and relationships as they are expressed through these major political structures, the ossified forms of past political experience in which the living politics of the day must move and work.

The difficulties of this method appear the moment we begin to attempt a description of the Republican Party in relation to the problems of national unity. The titular head of the Republican Party is Wendell Willkie. Yet Mr. Willkie expresses an attitude toward these problems which is closer to that of President Roosevelt, head of the Democratic Party, than it is to the attitude of most leading