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COMMUNISM

“A NATIONAL FRONT FOR VICTORY”

Under the above title the Communist Party has issued a pamphlet that replaces all previously issued propaganda relating to the world war and, therefore, is of outstanding importance to Canadian Authorities in directing present and formulating future policies relating to our social security. The pamphlet is signed by Tim Buck and carries the following announcement:

“The Report printed herein was adopted by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Canada on August 28, 1941. It is the official statement of the Party’s estimation of the war and the tasks it brings forward and the policy to be followed by the Party in the present period. It replaces and supersedes all materials issued previous to its adoption.”

The “National Front” advocated would appear to be as broad as the Dominion and to include all people who oppose Nazism. Accepted on its face value it constitutes a document of Communist aims and aspirations that should receive the whole-hearted endorsement of every loyal Canadian and cause him to reverse his whole attitude toward these former revolutionists. To quote from the “Introduction”:

Every Canadian who follows events recognizes the transformation that has come over the war and its significance to democracy since Hitler’s attack upon the U.S.S.R. The changed character of the war, with the changed alignment of forces and belligerent aims signal-

ized most clearly by the British-Soviet Pact and the Roosevelt-Churchill declarations has transformed the tasks and responsibilities of the working class and the general progressive movement. For the people of Canada this decisive change means that the issue of continued national security of their country, which depends on the victorious outcome of the world struggle to defeat Hitlerism, assumes dramatic proportions. The victory of the democratic peoples and governments over Hitler, with their continued independence, is within grasp—providing that a supreme effort is made to win the war.[1]

The task of the labour-progressive movement today, therefore, is to direct all its energies to the positive task of mobilizing public opinion in support of a united national effort to implement all the plans and pledges, stated and implied, in the British-Soviet pact and the Roosevelt-Churchill declarations. With the King government associated with the governments of Britain and the Soviet Union in the British-Soviet pact, it becomes necessary that the labour-progressive movement direct its main blows against the open and secret friends of Hitler, and not against the King government.

To play its full role in the strengthening of Canada's contribution to the defeat of Hitlerism, it becomes necessary that the labour-progressive movement unite its forces and close its ranks in support of a broad united national effort to win the war.

The Communist Party of Canada which, as a result of the developments indicated above, has changed its estimation of the character of the war and the tasks it brings forward, stands for the broadest national unity of the Canadian people in the fight against the Nazi threat.

The Communist Party urges, and will work consistently to bring about, a united effort of the trade union movement and all the forces of the labour-progressive movement, farm organizations, the Canadian Legion, Liberals, Conservatives, and non-political organizations, English and French-Canadians of all classes and parties, in support of the prosecution of the war to defeat Hitler. Such a movement will constitute, in fact, a National Front. Such a movement will give loyal support to every measure of the King government making for increased support to and co-operation with Britain and the United States and for effective aid to the Soviet Union.

A Just War

Tim Buck takes pains to explain this sudden change of complexion from an "Imperialist War" to a "Just War", asserting:[2]

It is clear from the foregoing that it would be incorrect now to characterize Britain's and Canada's war against Hitler as imperialist. It would be wrong, not only because it would bring grist to the

mill of the appeasers, the Munichers and fifth columnists, but because it would contradict the basic fact that a fundamental change has taken place in the character of the war and the international situation.

The Communist Party of Canada, party of the Canadian working class, emphasizing the fundamental, historic change that has taken place in the world situation, frankly re-examines its work, its policies and slogans, and its immediate tasks. In the light of the changed character of the war and the situation characterized by the British-Soviet Pact, the Communist Party of Canada changed its attitude towards the war and called upon all its members and sympathizers to exert all efforts to defeat Hitler. The change thus brought about in our work must now be carried further it must be made complete...

The conflict cuts across class lines. The issue is "For or Against Hitler and Hitlerism". The dominant sections of the British ruling class, under the leadership of Churchill, have realized the implications of the Nazi attack upon the U.S.S.R. and have entered into full collaboration with the Soviet government to bring about Hitler's defeat. *There need be no illusions as to their reasons for this. It does not denote any change in the basic attitude of the British ruling class towards the Socialist state. Indeed, Churchill emphasized this fact quite frankly in his historic broadcast of June 22nd. What it denotes is that the Churchill government, supported by the United British people, realizes that the decisive issue confronting it today is the defeat of the Nazi armies. That is the fundamental fact which determines their present policy. The working class must, with ever-increasing efforts and will to self-sacrifice, take up and lead the support of this policy, and ensure: "that complete victory without which our efforts and sacrifices would be wasted. (The Roosevelt-Churchill letter to Premier Stalin.).....[3]*

National Front

By the term "National Front" we mean a common front, expressed in identity of aims, of all sections and groups of Canada's people who are for the defeat of Hitler: workers, farmers, business and professional people, including sections of the bourgeoisie, of French, English and other origins, and of Communist, Socialist, Social Credit, Liberal and Tory political opinions.

Such a front, cutting across the lines of class and party interests, will not be defined by rigid organizational forms or agreements it will not even necessitate formal political agreements or pacts. Support for the measures advocated by the various sections and groupings constituting such a Front will not necessitate membership in any particular political party or other organization and will not necessitate leaving or joining any special or-

ganization. While committees, etc., might be set up under its auspices, the unity of such a Front — the National Front itself in fact — will be achieved and maintained as a result of the identity of interest between its various sections and supporters in bringing about the defeat of Hitler and the destruction of Hitlerism. Its unity in action will be expressed, in the main, in the unity of its support, through the activities of its supporters and the organizations of which they are members, to those central measures which are essential to victory. The sole essential requisite for such a National Front, therefore, is the common objective: Defeat Hitler! Win the War!....

War Policies

Not only must the people get behind the King Government's war efforts but they must do all in their power to step up these efforts promising "they will welcome and support every measure taken by the Government towards ensuring that defeat (Hitler's). The people of Canada want full and adequate supplies of everything necessary provided for our forces overseas and a steady increase in Canada's aid to her allies. The Communist Party of Canada unreservedly supports that position."....

But the Party intends to go further than just give support, and describes what it considers essentials to a total war:[4]

A. Full collaboration, to the very limit of Canada's resources and capacity, with her allies associated in the British-Soviet alliance, and with the governments and people of the U.S.A., China and all other countries who stand with us in the struggle against Hitler.

B. All necessary measures to expand Canada's war production and to increase her military and naval effectiveness.

To make these measures even more effective the party declares the following changes in present government domestic policy are highly desirable, and the subject of demands by large sections of the population:

1. Restore democratic rights to the masses of the people.
2. Full rights for the trade unions, on the principles of collective bargaining, to enforce a living wage, and equal participation of the workers in the organization of the war effort.
3. Parity prices to farmers, and the production of food-stuffs to aid victory over Hitler; participation of the farm organizations in all government farm boards.
4. The Dominion government should take firm action against pro-fascist appeasers of Hitler, who strive to weaken Canada's war effort by any means, wherever they may be found.

Summary

Governmental policies which embrace the measures indicated above will unite the great mass of Canada's people in an all-out effort to win the war. The Communist Party pledges itself to support that effort with all its strength, and does not place the adoption of its own program for victory

as the condition for its support. Under all conditions, it will maintain its independence of thought and action as a workers' party pledged to the defeat of Hitlerism and the defense of democratic rights and the national interests of Canada. It places the above program for victory before the Canadian people as its considered opinion as to how best and most quickly the war can be won.[5]

It is self-evident that the measures indicated above go considerably further than the policies so far followed by the King Government. This is so because the King Government is not as yet doing "everything necessary to win the war". Its active war policy falls short, by far, of Mr. King's London pledge. The King Government has not acted to encourage the development of democratic initiative in aiding the nation's war effort. It has failed to recognize the changed character of the support which the history-making Churchill policy and the Roosevelt-Churchill Eight Point Program and Pledge have rallied. It failed lamentably to take advantage of the visit of the Soviet Military Mission; it has, as yet, taken no action against the widespread anti-Soviet slanders, which are also contrary to Britain's interests, and which are being used to confuse people concerning the issues and thereby weaken our war effort. The main force of its repressive activities is still directed against the anti-fascists. Mackenzie King has not even attempted to correct the anti-Soviet and anti-British effect of his being quoted as himself expressing the hope that Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R. would "destroy each other".

These things are obvious proof that much more can be done, and must be done, to make Canada's war effort effective. It will be the task of the democratic people of Canada to press the King Government to make our national effort complete.

In doing so, however, we shall not direct our main efforts against the King Government; on the contrary, we shall welcome and give energetic support to every step it takes in the direction of more effective prosecution of the national war effort. Our main blows will be directed against the appeasers and Quislings who, by doubts, pretenses, clinging to the policies of yesterday, and spreading confusion as to issues and needs, strive to delay or slow down the government's war activity and to weaken or disrupt Canada's effort to make victory sure....

Conclusion

Official authorization of the C.P. of C. to collaborate to the full with the Government throughout the duration of the war, may seem just a little "too good to be true", and it certainly calls for practical evidence of sincerity before it can be accepted. In the meantime, the following questions arise:[6]

1. Will Communists refrain from labour organizing in order to incite strikes?
2. Will they enlist for active service and encourage others to enlist?

3. Will they call off their secret and illegal propoganda campaign?
4. Are they prepared to discipline their own insurgents who continue to make trouble?

If they will do these things then the Party has become an asset instead of a liability and one of our many problems has been solved — at least for the time being.[7]

IS "VICTORY" ALIAS FOR REVOLUTION?

Communist leaders claim to be engaged in an all-out effort to win "the war". In recent months they have launched half-a-dozen movements and scores of committees in the name of Victory and bearing such fine slogans as "Defend Democracy in Canada", "Defeat Fascism", "All Aid to Soviet Russia". Most of these "loyal" organizations have been "explained" in the "Bulletin". They include (among others) the "National Council for Democratic Rights", the "Anti-Fascist Mobilization Committee for Aid to the Soviet Union", the "Youth 'V'-for-Victory Campaign", the Ukrainian People's Anti-Fascist Committee" and the "Peoples Victory Committee"—all of which are Communist "fronts".

The last-named (and the newest) is particularly strong in the West, where for the time being it is to supersede the People's Movement Committee as a medium of appeal to the public at large to rally to the defence of our threatened democracy — threatened (it is asserted) by Quislings in Government and Big Business.

The following report from "K" Division, R.C.M.P., (Edmonton, Alberta), gives a fair glimpse of the subtle methods employed by the People's Victory Committee in promulgating their radical views behind a "front" of well-meaning citizens and in the name of Victory for the Allies:

Mrs. Dorise Nielsen, M.P., addressed a meeting in Calgary on the 21st September, held under the auspices of the People's Victory Committee. Among those who were on the platform was Dewar Ferguson, Acting President of the Canadian Seamen's Union. The chairman of the meeting was Arnold Robertson [deletion: 2 lines]

In opening the meeting Mr. Robertson quoted the following as being the planks of the People's Victory Committee:

1. Effective prosecution of the War.
2. All-out aid to Great Britain and her Allies.
3. All-out aid to the Soviet Union.
4. *Maintain the standard of living of the armed forces and the working people.*
 - 4a. To build a true anti-Hitler morale among the workers.
 - 4b. To show that working people are not unpatriotic in asking for a decent standard of living.
5. Prepare for a better world after the war, in order that all may retain

their civil liberties and freedom of speech.[8]

Dewar Ferguson was the first speaker. He expressed himself as being whole-heartedly anti-Fascist and that he endorsed the program of the People's Victory Committee. He was critical of the Dominion Government labour policy and contended that the higher profits of the larger manufacturers were responsible for the increase in the cost of living. He appealed to those present to try to effect the release from detention of Pat Sullivan, the former president of the C.S.U.

Mrs. Dorise Nielsen dealt with the war situation and blamed the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Right Honourable Neville Chamberlain, and the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler, for the present world chaos. She claimed that we in Canada are doing little more than following a policy of appeasement. Regarding the labour situation in Canada, she claimed that all the strikes were due to the low wages paid and that the employers of labour were really responsible for the strike and that if anyone were unpatriotic, they were. Dealing with industrial production she stated that a General Motors Corporation plant at Oshawa had to close down because there were not enough tools to make army trucks due to the tool makers making tools for a 1942 motor car to be produced in the U.S.A. She said that the assembly lines were being used for the production of the cars for domestic use right up to the eve of the visit of the Duke of Kent, but on the day when the Duke of Kent inspected the factory, army trucks had mysteriously replaced the domestic cars on the assembly line. She demanded that the Vichy representative in Canada be recalled immediately and that a Russian minister be accredited to Ottawa in his place. Mrs. Nielsen stated that the pay and allowances of soldiers and their dependents should be increased.

Mrs. Nielsen concluded her address by stating that she wanted to co-operate with all groups in Canada and co-ordinate them into one great people's movement. Approximately 3,000 persons attended this meeting and Mrs. Dorise Nielsen's speech was enthusiastically received. It is very significant that the Free French and the Danish Consul, who had been asked to attend, were not present.

Two days later the first organization meeting of the People's Victory Committee was held in Calgary with Gordon Wray acting secretary. About 50 persons were present, including representatives of various churches in Calgary, and a number of persons who have been to varying degrees associated with the Communist Party in the past.[9]

During discussion it was announced that the People's Victory

Committee would supersede the People's Movement Committee — the former being closely identified with the Canadian war effort, especially in connection with aid to Soviet Russia, while the latter will confine itself to domestic affairs in Canada.

A membership committee for Calgary was appointed as follows: Mrs. Maude V. Butler, George Taylor, Mrs. H. Kazima, William Wray. [deletion: 3 lines][10]

ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE VERY ACTIVE (Edmonton, Alberta)

The principal mass organization work being done by the Communist Party is through the medium of the "Anti-Fascist Mobilization Committee for Aid to the Soviet Union". Meetings have been held in all the principal centres of Alberta, at which ex-members of the Communist Party have been the chief speakers. Fairly large sums of money have been raised at these meetings and resolutions have been unanimously passed calling for all-out aid to Russia, the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations with the U.S.S.R., and for a complete statement by the Canadian Government of their full support of the democratic war effort. The present Government of Canada has been subjected to criticism at these meetings for allegedly allowing industrial concerns to amass large fortunes and for placing the burden of war expenditure upon the working people. They maintain that certain financial interests in Canada are Fascist at heart and that an all-out war effort cannot be expected until these interests are removed.[11]

DISSENSION AMONG QUEBEC COMMUNISTS (Montreal)

During the past month the Communist Party in the Province of Quebec intensified their campaign along the lines of the new Party policy of "All aid to the Soviet Union". The Party also continued its activities aimed at bringing about the release of the interned Communist Party members who are now being much publicized as "Anti-Fascists". To further their activities they have formed a branch of the National Council for Democratic Rights, composed largely of the wives of interned C.P. members.

The Young Communist League is becoming increasingly active and are organizing meetings under the "All aid to the Soviet Union" front. Various sections of the league are at present in the process of reorganization and activities; are directed by unit leaders who are asked to use their own discretion on matters of policy not covered by the new Party line, until new directives are received.

C.P. propaganda continues to be circulated, but has decreased considerably since the invasion of Russia. Two pamphlets worthy of note

were distributed during the month of September. These are entitled "A National Front for Victory" by Tim Buck, and "The Red Army in Action" by Fred Rose.

Rumours reaching the office indicate a considerable degree of dissatisfaction in the C.P. It is felt that the Party has followed an inconsistent and wavering line during the past few years and that instead of keeping the issues clear cut they have befogged the Party line. Apart from the dissatisfaction with the general direction of the Party, there is considerable local dissatisfaction with the Quebec leadership.

A circular of an anti-Communist nature was distributed by mail to many Communist members and fellow passengers during the month. Opinion in the C.P. is divided, one group believing that the anti-Communist circular emanates from the Trotskyites, while another faction believe that the Co-operative Commonwealth movement is responsible. Whatever the origin of the anti-Communist propaganda may be, it has in any event raised a great deal of concern among Party leaders and served to emphasize the present unrest and dissension.[12][Page 13 is missing.]

STRIKERS APPRECIATE POLICE METHODS

(St. Catharines, Ont.)

When 4,000 employees of McKinnon Industries (engaged almost entirely in war production) went on strike on September 11 for higher wages it was decided, under authority of Order-in-Council No. 5830, to place a strong detachment of the R.C.M. Police at the plant to prevent mass picketing and to ensure opportunity and protection for those who desired to work.

On Sept. 14 the Officer Commanding "0" Division, Toronto, four Inspectors and 133 other ranks, arrived at St. Catharines. The effects appear to have been all that could have been desired by all parties concerned, including the strikers. The situation was not only orderly throughout but, due partly to calling strike leaders into conference before plans were put into operation, there existed a feeling of mutual understanding and goodwill as between the members of the Force on the one side and the Company Officials, the workers and the general public on the other. By the time the strike had terminated on Sept. 27, no less than six strikers had made enquiries as to joining the Force, while a number called around to say goodbye when the Detachment were leaving.[14]