
THE MOST PECULIAR ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC

BY EARL BROWDER

(This speech was delivered on September 8 by electrical transcription at the Olympic Auditorium, Los Angeles. This is the address which the Roosevelt Administration tried to stop through the action of Federal Judge Knox prohibiting Earl Browder, Presidential candidate of the Communist Party, from leaving New York State to conduct his campaign tour.)

FRIENDS and fellow Americans: Our country is supposed to be going through that supreme process of American democracy, the election of a President. But this is the most peculiar election campaign in the history of our republic. An illuminating aspect of this peculiar character is the nature of this, my speech, and its manner of delivery to you. I am forced to speak to you through a phonograph disc, because a Federal judge, Mr. Knox by name, granted the demand made by the representative of another candidate, Mr. Roosevelt by name, that I should be forbidden to travel over the country to make speeches for my own candidacy and party and against Mr. Roosevelt's candidacy and party. I was threatened with

immediate imprisonment if I should dare to come to the Pacific Coast to speak to you in this election campaign. Therefore I am forced to speak in this unusual fashion, which is unsatisfactory, but at least serves to point a moral.

Judge Knox, in granting Roosevelt an order to silence a rival candidate, used as an excuse that I have been convicted of a crime, in a case which is now before the Supreme Court. But neither he nor the newspapers will tell you, although it is a fact they well know, that the Roosevelt Administration was more than willing to forget that supposed crime, as the Hoover Administration had done in 1930, if I and my Party would only continue to support Roosevelt in 1940 as we had done in 1936, 1937 and 1938. They used the charge against me as political blackmail. They thought they could whip the Communist Party into line, in spite of their war policies, in spite of conscription, in spite of their Sherman Act prosecutions of the trade unions, in spite of the scuttling of the New Deal, in spite of their renewed alliance with the "economic royalists."

They thought they could handle

the Communist Party as they handle Tammany in New York, or the Kelley machine in Chicago, or the Hague machine in New Jersey. But they made two mistakes: first, they had no charges against the Communist Party or myself involving moral turpitude, or any damage to individuals or government, as they have been forced to admit officially, nothing in fact like the reeking record of the men who renominated Roosevelt in Chicago at the Democratic Convention, and nothing of which we are ashamed; and, secondly, the Communist Party cannot under any circumstances be blackmailed or coerced into the slightest support, direct or indirect, of policies or candidates against the interests of the working people who make up a great majority of America. Now, realizing its mistakes, the Roosevelt Administration is as viciously hostile to the Communist Party as formerly it was friendly and helpful to us when it needed and received our help. *But we are the same Party; it is not we who have changed, but rather the Roosevelt Administration.*

"America's First Dictator"

Roosevelt's agent, Knox, said the Government could not allow me to travel over the country because I had been convicted of a crime in traveling under my own name after I had, years ago, traveled under assumed names in Europe and Asia as a protective measure, for reasons of safety. But the same courts, and the same Roosevelt Administration, freely grant permission to travel

anywhere, to real criminals under appeal, such as Judge Manton who for years sold to the highest bidder the decisions of the Federal Courts of New York and elsewhere, such as Moe Annenberg, the multi-millionaire racketeer Republican whose financial connections with the Democratic machines of New Jersey and Chicago are matters of public gossip. In fact, it is a settled policy of the Government to permit free movement of persons under bail pending appeal; but in my case, the Roosevelt Administration openly excuses its unprecedented action by a political argument, saying it is because I and my Party "propose to change the form of government of the United States," and for this reason do not deserve the consideration given to common criminals.

But who is really changing the form of government of the United States? It is the Roosevelt Administration, under the direct leadership of the President himself. They have been deliberately violating the election laws and the Constitution itself, throwing the Communist Party and other minor parties off the ballot in state after state, in order to steal Communist votes they may need to win the elections, and in order more effectively to silence our voices. And it was the President himself who, on September 3, openly stepped outside the Constitution, assumed the powers of an unlimited military dictator, committed the United States to a military alliance with Great Britain and participation in the second imperialist war—all without even the formality of submitting the issue to Congress,

which under the Constitution alone holds the power of making alliances and deciding questions of war and peace. Even such a sober and conservative newspaper as the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* opened its editorial judgment on these steps with these words: "Mr. Roosevelt today committed an act of war. He also became America's first dictator."

And concludes that:

"And all this is done in utmost contempt of democratic processes and of the Constitution of the United States.

"If this secretly negotiated deal goes through, the fat is in the fire and we all may as well get ready for a full-dress participation in the European war.

"If Roosevelt gets away with this, we may as well say good-bye to our liberties and make up our mind that henceforth we live under a dictatorship.

"If Congress and the people do not rise in solemn wrath to stop Roosevelt now—at this moment—then the country deserves the stupendous tragedy that looms right around the corner."

This is the Roosevelt whose agents cry about the Communist Party, that it must be denied electoral rights, and even outlawed, because forsooth "it proposes to change the form of government of the United States!"

With a Congress which permits, and even invites, such a peremptory shearing of its constitutional powers, which cannot even protest when on the question of war it is placed in the position of a Hitler Reichstag, we must not be surprised that the

new Roosevelt dictatorship proceeds roughly and crudely to deprive individuals and minority parties of all political rights. The suppression of the Communist Party is a necessary and important part of the gigantic conspiracy effectively to disfranchise the majority of the American people. Last October, when Roosevelt, speaking to the newspapers through a "close friend," threatened me with legal action to stop my public speaking, most people thought we exaggerated when we said that threat opened a drive into war and military dictatorship for America. Now the facts are clear for everyone. Every nation that has lost its liberties started on the downward path with the act of suppressing the Communists. Roosevelt is following the Hitler formula with scientific exactitude.

It is not only the Communists who are being disfranchised in 1940. The New Deal masses and the labor movement are left politically homeless. The Republicans are worse off than we, for they have not even a candidate to fight for; they must either vote for a Democrat, or turn to the Communists. The leading and natural candidate of the Republican Party was Robert A. Taft. But he was defeated in the Philadelphia Convention, and the *pro-war, big business, renegade Democrat Wendell Willkie, was nominated by a conspiratorial junta, organized by Thomas W. Lamont of the firm of J. P. Morgan, working in direct agreement with Roosevelt, and engineered by Walter Lippmann. Willkie was chosen for the Republican Party by Roosevelt and La-*

mont, after an agreement had been reached as to fundamental policy to which all would adhere, the same policy revealed in the President's sensational coup of September 3.

Willkie's nomination was the guarantee which Roosevelt required before he dared to launch his coup d'état. The masses, the majority of the voters, had to be disarmed, denied every opportunity of effective protest, before the President dared to proclaim the joining of the United States into the British Empire. Even now, with the elections effectively blocked off from the people, Roosevelt dares not submit his secretly matured plans to a vote of Congress, but must act by proclamation, by edict, by a coup d'état.

In its cunning trickery, in its cynical betrayals, in the personal character of its leading participants, the Roosevelt coup d'état is in the historical tradition of Louis Napoleon; in its social significance for today, it is a flagrant adaptation of the technique of Adolf Hitler; in its consequences for the American people it is a catastrophe expressing the most profound and violent crisis of the capitalist world.

Imagine, for one moment, what would be the reactions of the great body of American voters to the Roosevelt coup, if the Republican Party had nominated as its candidate Senator Robert A. Taft, that old-fashioned conservative Republican who voted against the Conscription Law! Can anyone doubt that the result would have been such a Republican landslide that it would have wrecked the Democratic Party for all time? In that comparison,

you get the full significance of the Willkie candidacy, which can be understood only as preparation for the Roosevelt coup. Even with this set-up, Willkie is hard-pressed with the danger that the masses may transform his formal opposition to Roosevelt into a channel for expression of their deep abhorrence of the war and conscription, their deep disgust with Roosevelt's machinations, and to prevent this he is reducing his campaign to a hollow mockery, which only with difficulty can win a headline in the newspapers pledged to his election.

This is the political set-up for the 1940 Presidential elections, which brings the decisive leaders and controlling forces of both Democratic and Republican parties to look upon the Communist Party, despite its small numbers and meagre resources, as a major danger to their joint aims; this is what unites them in the vicious efforts to drive the Communist Party off the ballot and to suppress its activities, to silence its voice. With both major parties united in thwarting the will of the vast majority of the people, they sense the danger and the possibility that millions of voters could, given the opportunity, cast votes of protest for the only party that clearly denounces their conspiracy of war and reaction, and which gives practical alternative policies—the Communist Party.

The "Fifth Column" Camouflage

To cover up their real fears of the workers, of the majority of the people, the Democratic-Republican

coalition justifies its persecution of the Communist Party by a wild newspaper campaign branding us as part of a "Fifth Column" of the enemies of the country. That also has the aim to hide the operations of the real Fifth Column, which in every country has been proved to have its head and motive force in the upper classes, and among the workers has only degenerated Socialist leaders, Trotskyites, and such-like riff-raff. Such real Fifth Column elements are flooding into the United States now; they seem to have little difficulty in obtaining visas or in operating freely when here. We even see U. S. naval vessels bringing their choicest specimens to our shores. We are entitled to begin asking some questions about this real Fifth Column in America, and to inquire what sort of new surprises they are hatching up for the American people in collaboration with our native reactionaries.

For example, rumor has it that the United States is now host to a certain distinguished Frenchman, a big industrialist and close personal friend of Marshal Petain, head of the French government of capitulation to Hitler. This visitor to our shores is head of a great French trust which up until June of this year was furnishing Germany with essential materials for her airplane production, the supply never ceasing, for in June the Germans came in and took direct possession. This distinguished Frenchman was considered important enough to receive the personal attention of a select group of big bankers, and a special

visit from Mr. Stettinius, after which, rumor has it, he is on a tour of inspection of American armaments and armament industries. Many newspaper men are wondering why they received strict instructions not to report or comment upon this gentleman's arrival in this country, or his activities since his arrival. He is evidently a person of mysteriously great importance. His presence here doubtless indicates some possible new surprises in the unpredictable international situation, which may not be altogether agreeable to the American people. The President has called upon the public to report the activities of suspicious persons, possibly Fifth Columnists; may we presume to suggest that the mystery that surrounds this peculiar visitor should be dispelled for the general public? Not to mention, in this connection, the horde of British agents, of whom only Sir George Paish received dishonorable mention in the Senate.

Wall Street's Real Aim

The mystery that surrounds these high-placed Fifth Columnist visitors is equalled by the mystery of aims that guide the White House. Where is our country being headed? Roosevelt has been less than frank with the country, ever since he proclaimed neutrality last September and then systematically proceeded to break down that neutrality. But not all high sources are so evasive about the future perspective. Allow me to quote some little known declarations from those "in the know."

The *Army and Navy Journal*, of August 24, declares:

"The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from these developments is that the United States has moved to the point where it is committed to assist the British Empire in the war against Germany. . . . Only the blind can fail to see that the United States is rapidly moving toward participation in the world struggle . . . [for] an Empire greater than any which history has ever known."

That is the bald and unadorned truth underlying the sickening propaganda about the defense of democracy and civilization. Wall Street is on the march toward "an Empire greater than any which history has ever known."

Roosevelt is leading the march, and scattering the wreck of even the limited democracy of the American Constitution along the way. Willkie is his first assistant in the conspiracy against the well being and very lives of the common people.

Of all organized political bodies in the United States, only the Communist Party exposes and combats this gigantic imperialist counter-revolution. That is why Roosevelt and Willkie, and all their helpers, are determined to crush the Communist Party first of all. That is why Oscar Wheeler, a West Virginia farmer, was sent to prison for fifteen years for the crime of soliciting signatures to put the Communist Party on the ballot. That is why the Communist candidate for President was sentenced to prison on an an-

cient and trumped-up technical charge, and is now refused the right to travel to address your meeting, although the case is before the Supreme Court. That is why the hysteria against the foreign born workers, and against the labor movement which opposes conscription, is being whipped up to a typical fascist fury. But that is also why the great majority of the American people, regardless of their opinions about a future socialism or communism for America, must rally to the defense of the Communist Party as the only way they can fight for their own rights and aspirations in 1940. Only the Communist Party provides the opportunity in the 1940 elections to register the sentiments of the people against the imperialist conspiracies, against the war policies, against the black reaction that has risen to power in the Roosevelt dictatorship.

The economic royalists and their servants are riding high, and gleefully congratulate themselves that the masses have been hog-tied, that nothing can now spoil their plans for a great imperialist speculation with the blood and lives of the American people. But the fight is only begun. Notwithstanding all difficulties and hardships, the American people cannot forever be tricked, bulldozed and suppressed. They are fighting back with increasing numbers, energy, intelligence and determination. And the final victory will belong to the people.