



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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Speech Delivered by MAX M. KAMPELMAN on May 27,
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RESISTERS LEAGUE held at Nola Studios, New York.

"The Future of Pacifism in the U.S.A."

Albert Einstein once told a newspaper reporter that he never thinks about the future. It comes soon enough.

Those words are very true if we think of the future and time in terms of scientific objectivity. Our concern for the future this morning, however, goes beyond the realm of scientific objectivity. We are frankly partisan, devoted to a cause of brotherhood, which like Garrison, shouts to the world "Our country is the world; our countrymen mankind"; and we are passionately interested in finding out not only whether there is a future for pacifism, but the sort of a future.

Pacifists are realists; and it is fortunate that is so, for it makes us realize that the very nature of our beliefs precludes hurried overnight success. We do not, therefore, become impatient of time when we consider the future.

We are something like the tailor who took 40 days to make a pair of pants. The irate customer complained: "It took God only 6 days to make the world. Why does it take you 40 days to make a pair of pants?" The tailor led the customer to a window and said: "Yes, but look at His world and then look at that pair of pants".

Well, let us look at His world.

We first see a world engulfed by fear and hatred, caught up by a total global war which seems to be a ghastly symbol of our reversion to barbarism as it drafts, trains, feeds and transports armies more tremendous than any ever conceived.

We see that the rulers of the battling nations send their peoples to war with no high idealism and no democratic aspirations.

We see the rulers of the battling nations pursuing a post-war foreign policy based on military alliances rather than peoples' alliances.

We see the U.S. plant the seeds of another war as it rushes into the thick of the imperialist scramble and adds the Middle East to its spheres of influence by underwriting the investments of private oil business interests in Saudi Arabia thus making the Mediterranean sea lanes and the South Atlantic and African air lanes our national lifelines to be protected by a 3 ocean navy.

We see that of the 3 leading nations on the side, we are told, of the Angels, one is a ruthless dictatorship whose peoples do not even know the meaning of the word "liberty"; the other proudly clings to a foreign policy based on Empire and has a domestic economy under which 80% of the private property of the country is owned by 7% of the population; and the third is characterized by a system governed more by a wrangle of pressure groups than by a voicing of the general will on the general welfare.

Looking more closely at details,

We see that the democratic leaders of 300 million Indians are in their second year of immoral and unlawful imprisonment and that Gandhi is released only because the British don't want him to die on their hands and become a martyr - shades of Pontius Pilate

We see that both here and in England the democratic rights of free labor are being crushed as collective bargaining virtually disappears and as strikes are outlawed under penalty of prison - prison for the workers who defend their human rights and not for those who provoke the strikes by underpaying their workers.

We see the power of government used to "hold the line" - hold the workers in line and allow industry to amass fabulous profits.

We see that the only part our masses play in gov't is to cast an occasional vote to elect a man they don't know placed before them by a powerful political machine and that even this part is denied millions of citizens by a vicious poll tax.

We see feverish preparation for a large standing army and for permanent conscription making more real the truth of the statement that this time the duration will last longer than the war.

We see no adequate program presented to cope with the horrors of mass peacetime unemployment; and we remember well the observation that hungry stomachs do not make good political advisers.

We see the people's own money being used by profit-swollen corporations to advertise to the people the need for returning after the war to the system which kept the workers in poverty and which made war inevitable.

We see American citizens and their families herded into concentration camps within their country and by their own gov't because of their ethnic affiliation; and their eyes slant the wrong way.

We see race prejudice against Negroes and Jews alarmingly increasing, with Negro segregation in our army spreading the virus to foreign lands.

And we see labor, still the democratic hope for millions, helplessly tied by a Messiah myth as it conceives of political action only as a palatable way of supporting a President who has in both action and speech abandoned the very New Deal for which they revere him.

Now, how does this present which we have just observed affect our future and the future of our movement?

The millions of common people who are doing the real sacrificing of their lives and human values in this war are doing so in the desperate hope that never again will there be war; that never again will brother stand up against brother. It is safe to say that this straw to which they grasp is the uppermost all-consuming desire within their bodies; the only apology for their irrational behavior which they can make to their souls.

That this is true can be seen from Kenneth DeCourcy, one of the best informed of British commentators who says concerning Europe that "there is growing a vast general anti-war sentiment. It consists of millions of millions of simple people who have no strong political feelings and don't much understand what is happening, but who are utterly and fearfully sick of the war and to whom the future prospect, if it long continues, is appalling. Every reliable report shows the intensity of this hatred of the war and all the savagery is immense." He concludes: "This may create quite new political forces sweeping away many a calculation".

There is a growing wishful thinking too that even if the abolition of war does not come about because of a new idealism, it must come out of sheer necessity.

In a recent article, Maj. Alexander de Seversky, who describes himself as an aeronautical engineer now devoted to the science of destruction, warns desperately that the nations of the world hold in their hands scientific forces capable of blowing all civilization to bits. In less than 4 years, between the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Germany average bombs grew from a ton to six tons; ten ton blockbusters are being developed; land mines of twice that size, geared to bury themselves in the ground and explode with the force of minor earthquakes are being explored

"Every layman takes it for granted" he continues,

"that 'the next war' will be more terrible than this one. All through history that has been true... but now there are new dimensions of horror... I dare predict that the next war will not merely bring more destruction than this one, but destruction of a new kind, applied on an unprecedented scale and against every living thing on earth."

He concludes, and millions anxiously nod in hopeful expectation, that we must act so that the world never sees another war. We add the thought as pacifists "remember the Caribs", who were the most advanced military tribe the Indians have ever produced. They knew the art of camouflage. They invented ear-phones to hear distant signals. They developed a lance which was later copied in Europe. They even threw pottery balls which released a lethal gas. The Carib is now extinct.

But the late Secretary of Navy Knox after returning from a London conference of military leaders tells the world "I am not one of those foolish enough to believe that we can abolish war".

And his chief, President of the United States, tells the world after the Churchill-Stalin-Roosevelt Teheran Conference that "the Allied conferees were motivated by the general thought that they did not want another war in the lifetime of the present generation", which leads the Christian Century to comment that "peace for a generation is just another long armistice. Mankind demands something better than that."

And the Foreign Policy which we pursue leads so conservative a spokesman as former Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles to protest that it can lead only to the indefinite piling up of armaments and their "inevitable adjunct" stark imperialism and World War III for "History" he says "does not

record any example of a military alliance between great nations which has endured for more than a short while. Ther results of such alliances have invariably been that during their continuance the parties have jockeyed for individual influence and for selfish purposes."

We are faced with the hard fact therefore that our predictions as pacifists are unfortunately coming true. War cannot bring peace. Instead like a weed it firmly takes root and spreads seeds for future wars. It becomes our painful duty therefore - duty, mind you, - to tell the peoples of the world that their efforts to abolish war are again in vain; that they are sacrificing for naught - for war cannot bring peace. It is our duty to tell ~~them~~ that if they want peace then they must refuse to participate in war; that every day the war continues makes it more difficult to ultimately remove it from our body politic. And that they must say like the Catholic Youth Peace Action of Holland and Belgium said in 1939 that " we will never take part in war. When they tell us that it is for our country we shall not believe it because we know that we cannot serve our country by destroying that of others; not for our honor because modern warfare is the lowest of dishonorable things; nor for our women and children because we shall long remember the women and children of Ethiopia, Spain, China (and now, Greece, Belgium, Germany and France); nor for our democracy because war involves an absolute military dictatorship; nor against communism; (or fascism or nazism) because a movement for the spirit cannot be destroyed by force and because the sword has never converted anyone. And above all when they tell us that it is for God we shall not believe it because we know that God is Love and that in war every means is used but love."

It is our duty to do so as we remember the immortal words of Eugene Victor Debs when in his Canton speech on June 16th, 1918, he told his fellow Socialists, " Do not worry over the charge of treason to our masters, but be concerned about the treason which involves yourself."

The ancient Hebrew sages used to say that were it not for the darkness we could not appreciate the light. There is hope and encouragement for us in that wisdom as we see its truth throughout the ages.

Throughout the ages there has been a constant struggle between good and evil in man, between the forces which advance civilization and those which retard it, between the spirit of humanity and the forces which seek to destroy that spirit. This constant struggle makes clear to us that there are two ways of recounting history. The first ~~is~~ in terms of battles won and the fall and rise of governments. The other is in the more significant perspective which looks at the discovery of the mind and the contributions in human development, for every now and then the human mind stretched with new ideas and never shrinks back to its former dimensions.

I take you back to the world in the Sixth Century B.C. Darius is leading 500,000 Persians against the Greeks. 250,000 Persians are slaughtered in the battle and 250,000 young Greeks are needlessly and brutally killed.

But in the very same day there lives Guatama Buddha who preaches the doctrine of tenderness towards all who suffer and who says that war should be waged against only three things: the maladies of the body, the ignorance of the mind and the evil passions of the spirit.

Do we remember the battles of that day and the issues which brought the battles on or do we remember that the teachings of Buddha give hope and encouragement today to more than a billion human beings?

I take you back to the world in the Third Century B.C. The wounds are still not healed from the terrible Peloponnesian Wars which lasted twenty-seven years and ended in the disintegration of what was the great civilization of Athens. Alexander is founding an empire upon the dead bodies of the best of Grecian manhood.

But in the very same day there lives Socrates with the vision to pronounce that he is not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world.

Do we remember the battles of that day and the issues that brought those battles on or do we remember that Socrates still lives and that his life gives hope and encouragement today that his ideals will never die.

I take you back to the world in the early years of the common era. Caesar, the general, is building a mighty Roman Empire and he ruthlessly destroys civilizations in the process.

But in the very same year there lives Jesus who is first in teaching human brotherhood and principles of democracy and who tells us that all men are created equal in the eyes of God and that there is no discrimination among them for there is no limit to God's bounty.

Do we remember the battles of Caesar and the ruins of his Empire or do we remember that the message Jesus as he

recites the parable of the Good Samaritan in order to express his scorn for those who would minimize the righteousness of other creeds or races, still gives hope and encouragement today to hundreds of millions and raises visions in our mind as we realize the truth of the statement that Christianity has not been tried and found wanting but that it has been found difficult and therefore not tried.

I take you back to the world in the year 1348. A terrible war between England and France, destined to last 100 years, has now been raging for 10 years. Suddenly, as if war between man and man isn't enough, people all over Europe begin to drop dead like flies all over the streets of Europe. The most appalling material calamity that has ever befallen Europe - the Black Plague - is on the way. People are saying that the end of the world has come.

But in the very same period there lives St. Francis of Assisi, who devotes his life to leading a bloodless crusade for human love and assistance.

Do we remember the battles and tragedies of that day, which did not signify the end of the world but the end of the Dark Ages, or do we remember St. Francis of Assisi whose spirit gives us hope and encouragement today that forces for life and humanitarianism cannot be extinguished.

I take you back to the world in the year 1800. The ideals of the French Revolution are lost in the offspring of its violence and Napoleon, the warrior, in order to satisfy an inordinate appetite for power is decimating the population of Europe.

recites the parable of the "Good Samaritan" in order to express

But in the very same day, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Montaigne and Tom Paine keep writing and teaching that men can be free while Goethe sings for "more light".

Do we remember the military victories of Napoleon which collapsed into nothingness, or do we remember the democratic philosophers of that day who ~~will~~ give us hope and encouragement today as we share their deep abiding faith in democracy and the brotherhood of man.

I take you back finally to the world in the years 1914-1918. 13 million men are needlessly extirpated. The seven leading belligerent nations are spending \$186 billion to commit this slaughter.

But in the very same day there grows a virile international movement of men which says "War is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive for the removal of all the causes of war". And out of that movement comes a figure in the East who teaches his people and the world a method by which to renounce violence.

History will demonstrate that the world will quickly forget the horrible details of that world war and of this one and that future centuries will look at the pacifist movement of today and at Gandhi and his non-violent direct action which it produced as the most hopeful, encouraging and lasting phenomenon of our day.

In the light of this historical perspective which gives us strength, we answer the pessimists who have lost hope and lament that the human race is destined to destroy itself and its

civilization by saying that there are no hopeless situations, there are only men who have grown hopeless about them.

We answer the defeatists who proclaim that wars will always be, always have been because the forces of good in man are too weak against the forces of evil, by saying with Victor Hugo that there is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world and that is an idea whose time has come - and we know the pacifist idea, our idea, is coming.

We answer the lesser of two evilites and the fair weather friends who have chosen sides and throw themselves, often to drown their consciences, with high cries and protestations of patriotism and intolerance into the battle by saying that our small pacifist movement is devoted in this day to human brotherhood like Buddah, Socrates, Christ, St. Francis of Assisi and the democratic philosophers and pamphleteers ~~if~~ were devoted in their day to human brotherhood and we say that our contribution will be lasting just as theirs was lasting - for there is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of our small candle.

With that dedication, even as the lamps of democracy seem to go out all over the world, our very presence, small as we are, is felt and our testimony is heard above and beyond the din of warplanes, the burst of bombs, the sizzling roars of smoking villages and devastated cities, the cry of the maimed and the dying that rends the air.

For ours is that same voice in the wilderness which says that cooperation and not empire, democracy and not domination peace and not war must be the binding ties of a free world.

Nevertheless, in spite of the righteousness of our cause, it would be a tragic mistake for us to believe that cooperation ,

democracy and peace can and will naturally come through the course of human events. Let no one suppose that the laws of evolution will exempt us from our struggles. It is well to note the comment of the devil as he said with a chuckle: "You forget that I have been evolving too".

The future, as Dr. Einstein said, comes soon enough. But what sort of a future? The answer to that question depends on us and on our activities. Whether the masses, who do the fighting and the suffering come to realize that war is the enemy depends on our energies and how we use them, for all of our energies must be directed toward removing war and its causes. We must concern ourselves more vigorously with that portion of our pledge ~~which~~ and to strive for the removal of all the causes of war" for ~~peace~~ to desire peace is more than to be spared war, for the absence of war is not the same as peace.

Pacifism must shift from defense to offense, from mere self-expressionism to an active participation in the struggle for the goals that we desire passionately and expect to attain.

We will be in a favorable position for such efforts, for small as we are in numbers, we were the ones who refused to participate in the evil, who saw through the fog of artificial hysteria and kept our heads. We refused to be tied to nationalism. We remained true to internationalism. And here lies our strength.

For such activity, we must recognize our solidarity and unity of interest with those men and women, liberals and radicals who are not now pacifists but who join with us in our ultimate aims. Together we must strive for the realization of a goal where human welfare is our good, reason our torch, justice

our dogma, humanity our religion and love our faith.

We must identify ourselves with the struggles of the laboring masses for bread, security, dignity. Like Gene Debs we must say that while there is a lower class we are in it. While there is a criminal class we are in it. While there is a soul in prison, we are not free.

This recognition of our kinship with all human beings, our belief that all peoples are parts of a common body and members of a common family, which has led us to renounce war must also lead us to the realization that an economic system based on ruthless competition between men for bread, which puts a premium on how well one can succeed at the expense of others and which thus causes war - such a system of economics can hardly be expected to contribute to a security which encourages ethical behavior and peace.

Identifying ourselves, therefore, with the cause of world liberalism and the laboring masses for bread, security, dignity, means that we must strive for a cooperative democratic economy, which lends itself naturally to human brotherhood. And under such an economy there can be no place for unrestrained private profit capitalism.

The way to achieve such an economy, which we may call economic democracy or Brotherhood Economics, is not an easy one. Nor do any of us have the answer.

But it is clear that the organized movement of the masses through a sound democratic labor movement is an essential prerequisite if a system of brotherhood economics is to be evolved. For the labor movement is not only one of the most important forces in the contemporary world for the meeting of physical and economic needs, - the dynamic energies

flowing from free labor insure that great reservoir of spiritual power ~~is~~ necessary for social transformation. Those of us who have watched "wage slaves" grab union leaflets in fright for fear that they might be seen and then have observed the transformation which has occurred once their union is established, know well the meaning of the statement that the labor movement has given the laboring man dignity as well as bread.

Pacifists and the pacifist movement can give much to labor. We can first give it and the radical movement too an "ethic", the realization that moral standards are not the exclusive province of theological religion. We can give it the understanding that its successful labor techniques of the past have been based, unwittingly or no, upon the pacifist revolutionary method and doctrine of non-violent direct action and that where labor techniques have failed, those failures can be traced to those instances where its activities have succumbed to the violence of employers by retaliation in kind. We can then give it the conviction that violence must be renounced as a method both principally and practically because its use blinds those who use it to their original objective. - Then, and only then, may we, dare we, ever hope to convince the laboring masses that violence in international relations - war - must be principally and practically renounced.

Such a task friends is not a task for our leisure moments. It is a task that demands enrattentón in every relationship of our daily living. For if pacifism is to have a future, then accepting the term pacifist is not enough, if we fail to implement it with a theory of social

action and ~~xxxxxx~~ social action itself. We must realize that as pacifists committed to human brotherhood, we cannot escape the responsibility, the tremendous personal responsibility which falls on each of us, for we who have the vision for human brotherhood must give ourselves to its realization, if it is ever to be realized.

Those of us, therefore, in CPS, in prison, elsewhere - must begin to think in terms of becoming parts, integral parts of the labor movement. The pacifist movement must be ready to make use of its available resources to give practical training in non-violent direct action as applied to labor disputes and organization.

But becoming part, integral part of the labor movement does not only or necessarily mean that we are all to become paid union organizers. It means that many must be ready to work in the factory and in the field and earn our way into trade union activity and leadership.

It means that our teachers and social workers must join their local unions and not be content with mere membership, but with active membership. It means that those same teachers and social workers must investigate the possibilities, with the help of a virile pacifist movement, of giving their spare time, perhaps gratis to workers adult education in the union and family welfare.

It means that our ~~xxxxxx~~ actors, artists, engineers ^{also} must not only join and become active members of their own labor organizations, but that they too should be ready to give their spare time to other labor unions with assistance in cultural activities for members and giving technical advice in industrial engineering to those unions ready for it.

It means that our ministers must publicly and openly from their pulpits and elsewhere use their influence on behalf of the working man in his struggles against economic oppression and for economic justice. They must, when the occasion calls for it, go down from their pulpits and join the picket lines where they may preach and act in a temple which knows no money changers and where they will find religion in the heart though perhaps not in the knee.

And it means that as citizens we owe it to ourselves and to our principles to interpret the labor movement, its democratic ideals and aspirations to our neighbors and to our community. And we owe it to them and to ourselves to point out the evils of the present economic system with its injustices, for contented slaves are the most dangerous foes of liberty.

That job, I again repeat, will not be an easy one. We will meet opposition from the newspaper-conditioned, citizen who opposes labor unions and we will meet opposition from within labor itself. We must become sufficiently hardened to meet that opposition, to strive relentlessly towards our goal, for unless we do all that we can, we do less than we ought.. But it can be accomplished by those who really feel that all men are brothers.

Brotherhood economics, however, ~~the~~ is not enough in itself. The principle of brotherhood must be extended to political and social areas. Our program for the future must include the promotion of an independent politically democratic movement, based somewhat on the pattern of the CIO. Such a

political organization must have real farmer-labor representation and leadership in it together with the active co-membership of all people devoted to real economic political and social democracy. We would hope and work for the realization that the principle of outright and brazen pacifism be placed alongside democratic ownership of the instrumentalities of production and their democratic control as the 3rd of a great trinity in the platform of such a party.

In the post-war America, we will be faced with the serious problem of racial prejudice. The problem of the Negro will be paramount in importance, not only because of the probable rise of racial tension as many men trained in the use of violence compete for few jobs, but because the present generation of Negroes is becoming impatient and restless and cannot be expected to remain quietly as it is insulted by an arrogant white race. It is here that the pacifist may find the first crisis situation calling for his attention. Those of us who are pale in complexion and those of us who are more colorful must as individuals and in groups lose no opportunity to oppose and break the evil Jim Crow and other forms discrimination. We must refuse to cooperate with it. And we must as a pacifist movement convince our Negro friends that violence cannot achieve justice for them. The MOW, already dedicated as a mass organization of Negroes to non-violent direct action deserves our support and encouragement.

For we know that so long as a Negro, Jew, Catholic or any human being of any color or nationality is the victim of intolerance and hatred and bondage of any

kind then none of us is secure from tyranny.

In appraisal, therefore, it is evident that if pacifism is to have a real future, then our energies now and in the post-war period, will be severely taxed. And like a gas stove, which will asphyxiate us if any of its jets remain unlighted, whatever energy we allow to go unused - to escape dark and cold - is poison. We must hence put all our abilities to good use. We must light every jet.

Winning our world. Attaining our ideals. Reaching our goals can come only after long struggles. Perhaps our Utopia lies forever beyond the hills. But we have the light that brings us ever nearer it. And if that light is to live, men must be free.

There will be some who will say that such a society for which we aim is one for Gods and not for men and can be achieved only by Gods and not by men. And yet, let us remember that though winning such a world is perhaps worthy of a Race of Gods, in the winning men develop God-like attributes.

Hand and hand, therefore, with the struggle for the realization of our goals, will come, must come, the development within ourselves of what our great friend and teacher, Frank Olmstead, calls a "quality factor" in man, as much above mind as mind is above body. For it is true that man has within himself the seeds of a larger life ~~which xxxxxx growth to the realization~~ And it is true that with the growth process through which we mount a step higher in what Frank calls the life stream's evolution, and with the development of those seeds within us, artificial

differences which now divide us as pacifists - political, religious, ethical - all will divide into nothingness - and our basic unity will remain which will permit us as a pacifist movement in spite of all obstacles to face for and to go forward.

• With the poet, we know:

That cause can never be lost nor sayed
Which takes the course of what God hath made;
And is not trusting in walls and towers,
But slowly growing from seed to flowers.-
Each noble service that men have wrought
"as first conceived as a fruitful thought;
Each worthy cause with a future glorious
By quietly growing becomes victorious.-
Thereby itself like a tree it shows;
That high it reaches as deep it grows;
And when the storms are its branches shaking,
It deeper roots in the soil is taking.-
Be then no more of a storm dismayed,
For by it the full grown seeds are laid;
And tho the tree by its might it shatters,
What then, if thousands of seeds it scatters".