

Address delivered by Congressman John E. Fogarty, 2nd Congressional District, Rhode Island, at the 48th Annual Convention of the Rhode Island State Branch of the American Federation of Labor at Carpenter's Hall, Providence, Rhode Island and broadcast over Station WEAN, 3:PM October 24, 1948.

There are two things which Americans desire above all else - Security and prosperity at home - and permanent peace abroad.

I am confident that America - with the help of God - can enjoy peace throughout the world - and security and prosperity at home. I am confident, too, that we can't have the one without the other.

It may have been possible - in years gone by - to devote all one's thoughts and energies to matters that were purely domestic; firm in the conviction that only the things we could see and feel were factors in our daily lives.

But, that was at a time when International affairs were considered beyond the understanding of the average man and woman. They were matters which should be, and which were, left in the hands of statesmen and diplomats.

Then, little people everywhere pursued their courses in life with little knowledge of the intrigues going on without their country's borders, and caring little about the efforts being expended to prevent or promote the periodic wars which seemed to be the inevitable curse of humanity.

But in more recent years all of us have become more familiar with what makes this battered old world tick. And because of our own participation in two terrible world wide wars, we are conscious of the fact that there is little that can happen anywhere - which is without some effect on every one of us.

With that realization has come an awakening to the real contribution which can be made by the working men and women of the United States to the peace and security of the world.

It is useless and sometimes stupid to engage in a lot of recriminations - blaming one group for every failure and praising another for whatever success has been achieved.

But all of us are conscious of the tragic results this nation experienced because the little people of the land were unable or unwilling to exert their strength at a similar juncture in our history.

After the first World War we know there was a serious effort to promote the security of the world through an international organization. The League of Nations may have had its faults - but it did constitute the noblest effort man had yet made - to demonstrate his belief that all mankind could live side by side in mutual understanding and respect.

The League of Nations was a genuine effort to prevent any selfish, arrogant despoiler of humanity from amassing sufficient strength to threaten peace-loving people.

International Affairs even then were considered beyond the understanding of most men. They were matters which were left in the hands of statesmen and diplomats. But, they fell into the hands of politicians who sought to serve only their own wilful purposes and political ends - and as a result the world became a pawn for their blindness and greed.

The destruction of the League's effectiveness was followed by other selfish conduct on the part of time-serving politicians which produced the idea that Americans could live in a vacuum - little knowing and little caring what tremors shook other areas of the earth.

We saw the great depression flow out of that type of thinking and we saw the cream of our youth drenched in a new blood-bath, when selfish, arrogant dictators felt they were strong enough to surge forth on the path of conquest.

It was then that the average man and woman of America threw off every thread of the idea that we could live alone - and all Americans braced themselves for the great drive that could only result in complete victory - and, as we thought then, a swift return to peace and stability.

It was then that men and women like you - and the thousands you represent - were called upon to make this great land the arsenal of democracy; the little people in the mills and the factories who turned out in ever increasing volume the things without which the war could not have been fought.

Labor in the United States responded to that call in a manner - the like of which the world had never seen. There was more and better of everything that the industrial skill of this nation could produce.

And all this was not a cold-blooded, unemotional production of instruments of war in a thirst for gain. It was the expression of a determination on the part of America's millions that everything must be sacrificed but liberty and freedom.

No man would dare to detract one iota from the great victory which was won by America's armed forces. To them we shall continue to pay every possible measure of respect and gratitude. But they know too, that their fathers and brothers - and mothers and sisters - who kept America's industrial machine in operation - did so with a prayer on their lips that never again need America's youth sail to foreign shores to put down any enemy.

Out of that great effort and the prayers which were our constant companions came the determination of all of us that the world can and will know peace and security. Out of that determination came the present efforts of your government to explore every possible avenue for winning the peace.

International Affairs are no longer considered the exclusive province of statesmen and diplomats. They are present still - but today are present not as the agents only of a powerful government or a political party - they are present now to carry out the will of the sovereign people of this Republic.

In the ranks of Labor there are many unsung heroes whose efforts out-shine those of trained and educated diplomats. From Labor's ranks came some of the first men and women to cross the seas again and direct a personal appeal to

the working men and women of France and Italy and all of Europe; begging that they refuse to be deceived by the blandishments and promises of communists who sought to bring all of Western Europe to its knees under the whip of overlords of the Kremlin.

While brave men had fought and heroes had died in the deadliest of all wars - the slinking minions of Moscow had been receiving their intensive training for the subjugation of all of Europe - and then the world.

With the end of hostilities they burrowed into unions, schools, churches and every other gathering place of decent men, and they undertook to sell their homelands - lock, stock and barrel - to the political creed which sees in the misery of others - only an opportunity to serve its own ends.

Statesmen and diplomats were unable to cope with this activity - but men and women like you - men and women from the ranks of your organizations - could and did go into those organizations to fight Communism. God blessed their efforts with tremendous success. Of that you can be proud.

From such great efforts you can take inspiration - for the struggle is far from being won.

The Governments of great Nations have come to realize - that policies, no matter how well intentioned, cannot hope for success unless they have the enthusiastic support of the little people - those who make the sacrifices and provide the sons who must die to defend those policies.

So it is evident - here and in lands beyond the seas - that peace cannot be won anywhere - security and prosperity cannot be achieved - unless there is confidence in the plans which the leaders of nations are charting.

Labor has been assigned vital roles in the United Nations and the European Recovery Plan. Your people are there and they deserve your support.

They are selling the American brand of Democracy abroad - You men and women and the thousands you represent must be alert every second to make sure the American Brand of Democracy does not become a mere figure of speech at home.

There is a very genuine and definite threat to world peace - as you well know. Communism will seize on whatever evidence is available to try and convince the working people of Europe that we are plentiful in promises but starving on performance.

You must remember that money and food and clothing shipped to Europe is not enough to sell democracy. These people have need of material help no doubt, but of even greater importance is their need for a spiritual uplift. They need the inspiring example of a prosperous and happy people in the United States to prove to them that the struggle they are making - under difficulties - can produce the results which we promise.

There cannot be one kind of Americanism advertised abroad - and another for sale at home.

We can't permit our country's representatives abroad to proclaim the advantages of private enterprise - while at home we permit representatives of private enterprise to endanger the security of our country.

Peace abroad and security at home go hand in hand.

To your members you owe a duty. They should be acquainted with all the many facets of international developments. You should bring to them the most intelligent minds available so that your people will know and appreciate the serious problems which confront all of us.

I have unbounded confidence in the American people. If they know what the issues are, I am certain they will find a just and honorable solution to whatever the problem may be.

You must also generate enthusiasm among your people so that the mantle of indifference and apathy can be cast aside.

That indifference constitutes a very definite threat to our security at home.

It wasn't so long ago that we who are members of labor organizations were branded as socialists and leftists of one shade or another - because we insisted on such things as unemployment compensation and social security. We insisted that the tremendous possibilities of this great republic must be developed for the benefit of all its citizens. We demanded decent working conditions - a plan for minimum wages, and an ending of sweat shops and child labor pens. We insisted that American Labor was contributing to the industrial life of the nation and should receive intelligent recognition of that contribution. We demanded that industry cease looking upon American labor as a handy whipping-boy to be blamed for all domestic ills - while at the same time it received only the crumbs which could be spared after generous profit-taking.

Because we raised our voices, we encouraged all Americans to strike out for a better place in the sun - and great gains were made.

But there is every evidence today that there is taking place a rebirth of the type of thinking which typified the era we had come to believe was dead and gone.

Labor again is a handy whipping-boy. Its efforts to improve the daily life of the man and woman in the mill, or at the machine, are branded as socialist and destructive of American economy.

But the man who can exploit an area - then leave it dead - because more profit is evident elsewhere - he is labeled a financial genius.

If labor strikes for higher wages to meet the rising cost of maintaining his family's table - he is a destructive influence.

But if a mill owner abandons thousands to the misery of unemployment, he is a forward-looking businessman.

Labor is again reminded daily, even hourly, of its responsibilities and its duties.

Gone is the day when Government talked about labor's rights.

Labor does have responsibilities to society - so too does Industry.

Labor is fastened tight to its responsibilities - it lives hourly with the people to whom they are owed. But Industry sees apparently a return to the day when they could abandon the skill and ability of industrial areas - and build new empires for profit - on the sweat of ignorant and uneducated slave-labor.

Legislators mark it a poor day when there is no blast at organized labor. Tax-payers are told labor is being curtailed for their good - while they are asked to shoulder additional thousands of dollars in federal expenditures for needless and stupid elections. Politicians talk about labor-management harmony - while hundreds of unresolved disputes pile up behind the barrier of inefficiency created by the Taft-Hartley Act. That insidious thing was labeled a cure-all for industrial disorders of every kind. It has created nothing but confusion, distrust, incompetence and indifference to the wishes of millions.

It stands as a symbol of reaction and it threatens, rather than helps, the cooperation which is absolutely essential if this nation of ours is to prosper.

Our statesmen can find fault with the systems which operate in other countries. But as long as the Taft-Hartley Act remains on the statute books of this Nation - then working people everywhere must regard their grand promises as hypocrisy.

We are in the midst of a great political campaign. Is there anyone naive enough to believe that the ordinary people of other lands are not interested in its outcome?

There is great talk of unity and going forward - and thousands remain bottled up in garrets and garages; living under difficulties which are unjust and indecent; lacking the homes which were promised them - to which they are entitled.

Hundreds of thousands work for sub-standard wages. Millions struggle to place decent meals before their families while prices sail blissfully aloft out of the average man's reach.

Profit is proclaimed the watch-word and statesmen fear that something might interfere with the present headstrong boom.

Is that the kind of Americanism we must accept while our statesmen sell the beauties of our system abroad?

To these things you men and women must direct your energies. Your people must be roused. They must be acquainted with all the facts. It is their responsibility to make a better America. It is your responsibility to lead them.

A great crusade - it was sarcastically referred to a few years ago - resulted in much progress. We have recently begun to rest on our oars. There is such progress to be made still. This country is great and all its citizens can benefit from its greatness. Vigilance and determination should be our watch-words - and if there is need for a new crusade - let it begin here and now.

It is absolutely imperative that we - the men and women who make up the great American public - prevent a return to the kind of thinking which destroyed the League of Nations - created a depression - starved thousands and permitted the growth of systems which naturally resulted in the last World War.

That can't be done by high-sounding resolutions and fancy speeches.

The time has come for action.