
THE FUTURE OF THE ANGLO-SOVIET-AMERICAN COALITION*

BY EARL BROWDER

WE HAVE been informed that the decisions taken at the Quebec Anglo-American conference will be revealed on the field of action. Authoritative information therefore awaits the turn of events. But it is not too soon for us to get clearly before us the fact that the world stands at a crossroad, and the next events will show which fork of the road our own country is taking.

It is the peculiarity of the present moment that, because great victories have been won by the United Nations against Hitler-Germany, the relations between our country, Britain, and the Soviet Union are undergoing a crisis. It is clear that decisive questions are placed on the order of the day for an answer. Either the leading coalition of the United Nations is going to be consolidated for victory and the post-war reorganization of the world, or it is going to deteriorate sharply and thus place dark question marks over both victory and the perspectives of the post-war world. The events which unfold from the Quebec decisions will

soon show us which way we have taken.

A military decision over Hitlerism in Europe is within our grasp this year. That is the great fact which emerges from the smashing of Hitler's summer offensive in the Soviet Union and the passing over to counter-offensive by the Red Army along the whole Eastern Front.

Before our country and Britain is raised the question: Do we want victory now, when it is clearly possible if we throw our military weight into the scales, or shall we wait longer, say until the Spring of 1944, in the hopes that victory then will be bought much more cheaply?

That was the most important question before the Quebec Conference. Upon the answer given to that question depends to no small extent the future of the world.

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A year ago we faced the same question. After the London and Washington conferences, participated in by Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov, had declared full agreement had been reached "on the ur-

* A speech delivered at Manhattan Center, New York City, September 2, 1943.

gent task of opening the second front in Europe in 1942," that decision was not carried out. A multitude of reasons were found why it was impossible or undesirable to execute that urgent task in 1942. Instead of the second front, Britain and the United States undertook to establish a number of secondary fronts, that is, to engage in peripheral warfare. We were told that it would require much time, at least until the Spring of 1943, before adequate preparations could be made to open the second front in Europe. And finally it was explained that the agreement of June, 1942, was only on the "urgency" of the second front, and not an agreement to open such a front. Now it is already September, 1943, and before the end of this month we should know whether Quebec finally decided to honor the agreement of June, 1942, or to repeat the reconsideration of 1942.

I wish I could give you positive assurance that the postponement of last year is not being repeated this year. It seems unthinkable, from every realistic point of view, that Quebec could have failed to seize the opportunity for victory this year in Europe, that it could have made any other decision but that of landing in full force in Western Europe before the Summer is ended. Since, however, it is impossible to give such an assurance, it has become unavoidably necessary to face and answer the question: What are the consequences that must flow from another postponement of the Second Front?

Unquestionably such an eventuality

would result in a profound deterioration of the relationships between Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The failure to realize the second front even during the beginning of the third year of coalition inevitably changes the relations between the leading powers, for, it poses the alternative: Either Britain and the United States are *unwilling* to carry any proportionate share of the fighting, or they are *unable* to do so. And either of these alternatives is fatal to the concept of full coalition between the three leading great powers. Coalition, partnership, is equally impossible in its full sense, whether the default of obligations arises from weakness or from bad faith.

The argument that the Anglo-American armed forces are too weak to open the second front is an insult to our soldiers, to our General Staff, and to the intelligence. America alone is producing more war material than Germany; we are delivering those materials *in England* in enormous quantities, and the British themselves are producing at least half as much as Germany; we have millions of soldiers in training for one or two years, who are *rusting* from lack of action; we have proved in Africa and Sicily our ability to solve all technical problems with brilliance; we have proved everywhere any fighting has taken place that our soldiers are second to none in the world; the U-boats have been mastered in the Atlantic so that there are no longer even serious losses of our overwhelming superiority of materials

—in short, it must be said that the last semblance of an excuse of *inability* to open the second front has disappeared. We are able to do it in overwhelming force any time our leaders give the word.

The *New York Times* has been conducting an intensive campaign to convince its readers—and perhaps itself also—that our country and the British, by peripheral warfare and by air-bombing carried to the vital centers of Germany, have found a full substitute for the second front, are carrying our proportionate share of the fighting, and are even mainly responsible for the victories of the Red Army. This argument has significance mainly as the product of an uneasy conscience. It collapses of its own weight the moment it faces the question of how to bring a victorious ending of the war *as quickly as possible*, the question of whether it is not *possible to shorten the war*. The moment the question of *time* is dealt with as a vital one, which means life for millions of the population of the occupied lands, not to mention our own costs of war, then it is no longer possible to argue against the second front. There is no substitute, there is no *ersatz* which is “cheaper and just as good.” Nothing ends Nazism except military occupation by fighting armies. All else is auxiliary, is peripheral warfare.

How little Britain and our own country have engaged in the fighting tasks of this war as yet is interestingly revealed, without any conclusion being drawn, by an editorial in the *Times* of August 28.

Deploring the high accident rate in our country, the *Times* compares it with our war casualties and concludes: “In a period of greatly reduced operation of motor vehicles, traffic accidents in a single year cost 9,000 more lives than action on the fighting fronts in a year and a half of war.” In other words the kind of warfare we are making is safer than the highways of the United States, it is peripheral war, the war of limited commitments, the type of war that is not directed to crushing the enemy in the shortest possible time.

There is no real economy of life and blood in this type of war, and the appearance of it is illusory. It is illusion of the same type as that of the Munich betrayal which Chamberlain boasted had brought “peace in our time.” We cannot shift the burdens of this war to other shoulders, and any attempt to do so can only bring misfortune to our own country.

Dark and sinister forces in our country find freedom for their work in the atmosphere of this type of war in which we avoid the fighting of the decisive front. They reveal what they aim at, when they accuse the Soviet Union of preparing a separate and negotiated peace with Hitlerite Germany. They accuse others of what they have in mind to do themselves. Particularly odious is this accusation against the Soviet Union at the moment her Red Army is killing millions of the enemy, at enormous cost to herself, while American casualties are still less than our traffic accidents!

As far as the actual struggle for

possession of Europe is concerned, the Yugoslav Partisan Army has engaged in greater direct military struggle against the Hitler hordes than the combined millions of America and Britain have so far done. On the other side, the Finland of the fascist Mannerheim has thrown more armed forces directly onto the side of Hitler than the great Anglo-Saxon powers have thrown against him.

It is humiliating for an American to face these facts and to admit them. But they are facts, they are inescapable, and the sooner we recognize them and draw the necessary conclusions, the closer we will be to victory.

The facts are bad enough. But the talk of most of our newspapers and public commentators is much worse than the facts! It seems calculated to convince the rest of the world that Americans are either irresponsible fools or hopeless rogues! For example, there is all this chatter, in the attempt to cover up the glaring absence of the second front, about the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh fronts. Behind this nonsense there is either complete ignorance of the nature of war, or there is a malicious attempt to cover up the real issue at stake. The second front is made to appear the special invention and interest of the Soviet Union. In fact, of course, as every intelligent and informed person must know, the very basis of all strategy directed toward victory in a great war has been, for over a hundred years, based upon the concept of the second front—the engagement

of the main forces of the enemy from two directions. No one knows this better than the British and the American General Staffs, and if they do not act upon this knowledge it can only be because as military experts they have been overruled by themselves in the capacity of politicians subject to reactionary influence. It is insulting to the intelligence to be asked to listen respectfully to the nonsense of the many fronts as the explanation why the second front, in the classical sense of military strategy, has not been opened.

Without the second front in Western Europe that will engage a considerable fraction of Hitler's total armed forces, there does not exist serious coalition warfare.

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If the Anglo-American coalition does not conduct serious coalition warfare, what is left of the coalition?

There is left the enormous fact that the three great powers are still at war against a common enemy. And I think it is safe to declare that never again, in the foreseeable future, will the United States and Britain be as close to joining a war against the Soviet Union as our nations were in the Winter of 1939-40, when our country financed Mannerheim and when Chamberlain and Daladier were feverishly organizing a military expedition to go to Mannerheim's rescue. The fact that Rudolph Hess failed in his mission, and that no new Hess can come upon the scene with greater prospects of success, leaves a cer-

tain solid substance, even if the form is negative, to the coalition even after it has failed to develop fully in active form of coalition warfare.

It will be a coalition, however, in which the relationships between the great powers are regulated on the "principle" advocated by William C. Bullitt of the "carrot and the club." We should have no illusions that Mr. Bullitt's "principle" can be adopted by our country and Britain in dealing with the Soviet Union without that country taking measures to protect itself. And we should have no illusions that we can leave the Red Army to destroy Hitler practically alone in the field, while we, the Anglo-Saxon powers, come into the finish with our strength unimpaired, dictating the peace to all and sundry including the victorious Soviet Union. That may be a beautiful Tory dream, but it simply does not correspond to the cold realities of the modern world. Mr. Bullitt's "carrot and club" may turn out to be something different than it was conceived, something resembling a two-edged sword.

Such a relationship within the coalition would be unfortunate for all concerned, for all humanity. It would delay victory and enormously increase its cost. It would cast a deep shadow over the post-war world. It is a relationship that is tolerable only as something not so bad as the complete dissolution of the coalition.

I submit, however, the serious suggestion that the unfortunate consequences of such a deterioration of the coalition would injure most

of all the United States. Only a shallow and vulgar conception of American national interest can ignore the supreme interest which the United States has in orderly world relationships which depend, in the last analysis, upon close friendship and collaboration between the two most powerful countries in the world, our own country and the Soviet Union. Both countries have a common positive interest in friendship and cooperation—but the United States is much less prepared to solve its problems in the absence of a close alliance with the Soviet Union than is that country. We should finally understand that we must meet the Soviet Union halfway, as equals, if we want such a close and enduring alliance. We should understand that words carry weight in international relationships only to the degree that they are backed up by deeds. If it is not clear from the well-known facts revealed by the war that the United States has the most to lose from a weakening of the coalition, that fact will be beyond doubt in the further developments of events.

The Bullitt school of thought says we must not open the second front until after we have defeated Japan in the Far East, that the victories of the Red Army therefore are a menace to us, since we "need" Hitler as a "club" to force the Soviet Union to give us a "second front" against Japan. Let us examine that thought a little more closely in the light of cold reality. It is a product of twisted minds like those which conceived Munich.

A decisive factor of Japan's strength in the Far East is the rise

of Hitlerism in Europe. Now that Hitler's back is being broken by the Red Army, Japan is losing that factor in her favor—except to the degree that this is offset by the loosening of the anti-Hitler alliance. If Hitler would be finished off this year, which is quite possible, by the concerted blows of the entire coalition, that would shatter the very basis of Japan's position in the Far East. Therefore, the postponement of the second front in Europe is at the same time postponement of the heaviest blow that could be delivered against Japan's strategic position in the world; the weakening of the anti-Hitler coalition is a strengthening of Japan's position.

The assumption that we can "trade" a second front in Europe to the Soviet Union for the *quid pro quo* of a second front against Japan, is such an imbecility that it is a shame it must be answered. Yet this thought operates in American politics, and must be dealt with openly. It amounts, in substance, to an effort to get the Soviet Union to fight the war for us in both Asia and Europe. If the Soviet leaders could conceivably be influenced by such cheap politics they would be incapable of leading a great nation, and would be poor allies for us. It ignores the facts, that the Soviet Union long protected our American interests in the Far East without our assistance and even against our hostile attitude, and still is, as a neutral, our greatest support in Asia. It forgets that such a cynical attitude toward the Soviet Union has the effect of driving her further away from the

United States, not to bring any kind of closer collaboration. And above all, it forgets the long-time problem of reconstruction of order in the Far East, in which Soviet collaboration can be secured if and when we adopt a clear line of policy which is also democratic enough to be consistent with Soviet interests.

Our relations with the Soviet Union are intimately tied up with Anglo-American relations. It is an illusion to think that we can come closer to Britain by weakening our relations with the Soviet Union. The opposite is true. The weakening of one part of the Anglo-Soviet-American alliance weakens the whole structure; the strengthening of one part of it helps to strengthen the other. When we take a course which tends to separate us from the Soviet ally, we are at the same time destroying the foundations for all world order, we are taking the path of a new isolationism. Those are harsh and unpleasant facts, but it is better that we face them in all their nakedness.

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I have projected only a few illustrative lines of the probable consequences of a failure to open the second front in Europe this year. It is not necessary to attempt now to complete the picture. Our task now is limited to getting some clear idea of the possible *directions* which are being chosen at this critical moment in world history. Since there is a mounting volume of evidence which points to the possibility of another postponement of the second front, it has been our unavoidable

duty to point out the general character of the unfortunate consequences for our own country which must flow from such a course.

It is certainly not too late for decisive steps to seal the coalition which can bring a victorious peace to the world. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that tomorrow or the next day we may receive the news of this great event. Above all we should understand *we are all taking part in this decision*—by what we do and say, or by our passively leaving the decision to others.

It is in the nature of a moment of crisis that it contains within itself the potentialities of a great turn for the better or a decisive turn for the worse. We can be certain of only one thing, that the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition is going to be much more consolidated soon, or it is going to deteriorate most seriously, that it cannot drift along as at present, and that each one of us has a duty to perform in participating in that decision.

A big effort is being made by the reactionary camp to saddle responsibility upon President Roosevelt for all the waverings and retreats that mar our war policy, both at the battle front and the home front. In this they are being joined by too many liberals who confuse liberalism with instability. It would indeed be a catastrophic situation for our country if our Commander-in-Chief had surrendered to the reactionaries. But it is my considered judgment that this is not the case. It is my opinion that the President is fighting for a correct policy, and that he is fighting much better than

most of his liberal critics who are so ready to cry out that he is betraying them. He is fighting in his own way, of course, and it is not the way of the Communists, nor is it the way of Labor as a whole. The greatest weaknesses displayed in his leadership are weaknesses that could be remedied by more solid and consistent and energetic support from Labor and all who put victory above all. Now as so many times in the past it is fatal to demand that the President must defeat the reactionaries single-handed, without participation of the masses in the fight, and to make the President responsible for failures which are really the shortcomings of his necessary support. We are in this war to the end with the present Commander-in-Chief, we have no prospect of getting a better one, but could easily get a worse one. The sooner we adjust ourselves to this reality the better it will be for the prospects of victory.

Now more than ever it is necessary to hold the home front firm, to defeat all the diversionists and fifth columnists, to speed production and improve the organization of our economic life, and to combat all panic-mongers and political jitter-bugs. And it is necessary for all men of good will to speak up, on this foundation, with the loud and unequivocal demand for the immediate opening of the long-awaited major invasion of Western Europe, the second front, and the smashing of Hitlerism finally and forever in the next months ahead. This is the only possible road to victory and a tolerable post-war world.