

Browder's "Coalition"—With Monopoly Capital

by Gilbert Green

[This is the continuation of the article by Comrade Green published in the October issue of Political Affairs. This second part, written, as was the first section, during Comrade Green's imprisonment, is necessarily incomplete because it was not possible for Political Affairs to obtain the balance of this installment after the conviction of the eleven leaders of the Communist Party. The article will be continued in an early issue of this publication.—Editor.]

IN THE October issue of *Political Affairs*, we showed how palpably false it is to believe, as does Earl Browder, that it is possible for U.S. imperialism to play anything but a reactionary role in the world of today. We also showed that any attempt to resurrect or reconstruct the class relations of the war period is like trying to restore the snows of yesterday—that the only way to continue Roosevelt's policies of U.S.-U.S.S.R. collaboration is by constructing a new coalition, based upon a new relationship of class forces, to meet the entirely new postwar world and national scenes.

But Browder is altogether incapable of visualizing a coalition that is not based on an alliance with monopoly capital. According to his reasoning, to reject such an alliance, is only to acknowledge the inevitability of a third world war. For without the working class being wedded to Wall Street, *i.e.*, its "intelligent" section, Browder sees no hope whatsoever for a lasting peace—only dismal disaster.

THE ESSENCE OF BROWDER'S "COALITION" POLICY

His argument on this score is relatively simple: To deny that there is a progressive potential inherent in American imperialism, is to declare "that there is no practical, effective obstacle to the march of American imperialism towards world conquest except 'the final conflict,' the proletarian socialist revolution in America" (*Where Do We Go From Here*, page 11). And Browder insists that this is precisely the position of our Party, which "has been given an immediate perspective of concentration camps, storm troopers march-

ing in the streets, a full-fledged American version of Hitlerism, against which it must fling words of defiance, but which can be defeated only when the American working class rises up to establish socialism" (*Ibid.*, p. 11). And whereas there is no immediate prospect of such a social revolution, the Communists, concludes Browder, have given up all hope of preventing fascism and a third world war.

Thus, Browder accuses the Party of defeatism and fatalism. He says that we have no real coalition policy and in effect are committed to a course of action which makes socialism the immediate issue, whether we admit this or not.

In order to "prove" his contentions about the potential progressivism of U.S. monopoly capital and the "dogmatism" and lack of coalition policy of the Communist Party, Browder takes us on an excursion around the globe. And the purpose of this sight-seeing voyage is to convince us that what the Communists in this country characterize and attack as Browder revisionism, is recognized and hailed as creative Marxism in the rest of the world (1). And if U.S. Communists cannot understand this, it is only because they fail to grasp that the difference in the character of World War II, as compared with that of World War I, has resulted in a completely different world Communist "strategy and tactics." In fact, he says, this is so

"fundamentally" different, "as to require a general re-examination and revaluation of all problems of strategy and tactics" (*World Communism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 2).

After setting for himself this rather ambitious task, Browder proceeds to give us a glimpse of what he is referring to. He is not referring to the deepened general crisis of world capitalism; to the process of rot and decay of which fascism and war are the most acute expressions; and to the need therefore of democratic unity on the broadest basis to check the forces of war and fascism. Nor is he referring to the fact that the struggle for the national independence of nations is no longer limited to the colonial and semi-colonial lands, but today even includes developed capitalist countries such as France. Had he dealt with these matters in a Marxist fashion, he would have found much that is new in the tactical approach of the Communists throughout the world, not only as a result of World War II, but even prior to it.

Such an examination would have led him to the only Marxist conclusion possible today, that after World War II, the main threat to the independence and freedom of nations, to the peace and democracy of the world, emanates from Wall Street, and that the main objective of the tactical line of all world Communist and democratic forces must be

to combat and defeat the aggressive expansionist designs and drive of U.S. imperialism.

But Browder draws other and far different conclusions. He contends that the big difference in world Communist strategy and tactics today, as compared with the period following World War I, is precisely its coalition policy, and that on this basic question the Communists of the United States are out of step with the Communists of other lands. "Of such far-reaching importance has the coalition form become," Browder tells us, "that it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the maturity and adequacy of Marxist leadership may be measured, from country to country, by the degree of success it displays in extending and stabilizing the democratic national coalition" (*Ibid.*, p. 27).

What Browder means by "extending and stabilizing the democratic national coalition," we shall examine later. At this point suffice it to say that when Browder stresses the importance of coalition tactics and hurls his paper-maché lance at the imaginary opponents of coalition policies (the Communists), he is only tilting at windmills. But in so doing, he begs the real question, which is not coalition in the abstract, but what kind of coalition and in whose interests. For there are coalitions and coalitions, and the issue is not whether one is for or against some general abstract con-

cept of coalition, but the *concrete* coalition policy proposed for the given concrete objective situation.

ON THE CHARACTER OF WORLD WAR II

To provide theoretical justification for his policy of coalescing with finance-capital, Browder gives us his analysis of the specific character of World War II. He accuses the Party leadership of a failure to comprehend and hence draw the necessary tactical conclusions from the fact that while "World War I was an *imperialist war*" on both sides, that "World War II, on the contrary, was a war of *imperialist conquest* on the part of *Germany* and her Axis partners, but a peoples' war of *National Liberation* on the part of the victorious United Nations" (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

With reckless abandon he also charges that the Party leadership "disagrees" with Stalin's characterization that World War II assumed from the very outset "the nature of an anti-imperialist war of liberation."

And what is the purpose of this slander, if not to rewrite history, whether by hook or crook, so as to white-wash the role of the imperialist powers! To Browder, the mere fact that U.S. imperialism was a part of the "victorious United Nations" (what imperialist and class contradictions this neat phrase conceals!), is apparently sufficient to change its

reactionary character and to transform the imperialist eagle, from an avaricious bird of prey into a cooing dove of peace.

When Browder frivolously accuses the Party leadership of rejecting Stalin's estimate of the war, he only means that we unconditionally reject his own malicious distortions of Stalin's position. For Browder tries to sneak into Stalin's characterization that which is not there—his own apologies for imperialism. He seeks to foist upon us his own revisionist estimate, that American, British and French imperialism performed "just," "anti-fascist" and "liberating" missions "from the very outset" of the war. But this is absurd on the face of it!

When Stalin said that the war "from the very outset assumed the nature of an anti-fascist war of liberation," he was most certainly thinking of the heroic struggles of the peoples of Spain, China and Ethiopia, of the peoples of the various occupied countries, and of the threat which the Nazi Axis represented to all freedom-loving peoples. But he was just as certainly *not* referring to Munich, to the period of "phony" war, to the dastardly attempts of British, French and American imperialism, even as late as 1940, to turn the war into a united imperialist assault upon the Soviet Union.

Browder desires to hide the dynamic changes that occurred in the course of the war itself; changes

which for a period of time made the imperialist elements the dominant ones, but which in time *compelled* the imperialist ruling classes of Britain and the United States to enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union and to fight in the anti-fascist war of national liberation, even though they fought, not for liberating purposes, but to save their own imperialist skins.

ON COALITIONS IN THE POSTWAR STAGE

Having given us his own oversimplified and highly glorified (for imperialism) evaluation of World War II, Browder then proceeds to draw his conclusion: that the central problem of strategy and tactics today is precisely how to maintain the class unity that was created during the war and that expressed itself in the various war-time national coalitions. And it is in this respect that he tells us that the worth and maturity of Communist Parties throughout the world can be measured by the degree of success displayed in "extending and stabilizing" these war-time coalitions. Furthermore he asserts that this is precisely the course being pursued by the world Communist movement, with the single exception of the United States, where, according to Browder, it is the Communists who bear responsibility for the break-up of the war-time coalition which supported Roosevelt.

How gigantic a fraud is this pitting of the policies of the United States Communists against those of the rest of the world, we shall soon see. For we shall examine this matter more closely and concretely.

Let us start with Britain. Is the coalition which existed during the war in effect today? But to ask this question is to answer it. The war-time coalition has ceased to exist because the British ruling class is no longer haunted by the fear that German imperialism will wrest its empire and world position from it. As for British Social-Democracy, it continues to curtsy before its royal British masters, doing their every bidding against the working class at home and the democratic peoples' movement throughout the world. Certainly, no one in his right mind would hold the British Communists responsible for this, or ask them to join with Churchill and Bevin in their plan to make Britain the junior partner in a Wall Street *über alles* world.

What about France? Is the coalition in France the same as during the resistance? Obviously not! Yesterday, the French Communist Party sought to unite with *all* who were opposed to Nazi occupation; today, it seeks to unite all who are opposed to Wall Street's attempt at the imposition of a more subtle form of financial, military and political occupation.

Against the Nazi occupation, not

only a Leon Blum, but even a De Gaulle were allies, although vacillating, unstable and temporary ones. Would even a Browder have the gall to ask for any alliance with a De Gaulle today? For with Nazi imperialism defeated, DeGaulle has united with the French Quislings of occupation days against his new *main* enemy, the working class and people of France and the world democratic movement headed by the U.S.S.R.

When Browder explains recent developments in France and Italy by pointing to the reactionary pressure emanating from the United States, he treats this as if it were some accidental occurrence that but temporarily upset his calculations. But this pressure was not some fortuitous occurrence. It was not the result of the whim of some individuals or group of individuals, whether in this country or in France, but an inevitable consequence of the fundamental change that took place in all world relations as a result of the war.

It is when Browder dwells on the new democracies of Eastern Europe, that he most fully exposes his pro-imperialist concept of coalition tactics. Browder sees no qualitative difference whatsoever between the coalition governments set up in Western Europe at the end of the war, and those set up in Eastern Europe. He sees no difference whatsoever in the *class* character of these governments. In fact, he glibly tells us that "the

universal type of government for European countries that emerged from the defeat of the Axis was the coalition of all parties and groups that had united in the liberation movement, including the Communists." And that "the perspective announced by the Big Three at Teheran and Yalta of a long-term peace, organized in the United Nations, had as one of its foundation stones this system of *coalition governments*, supporting programs transitional toward socialism with nationalization of key industries as a central feature" (*Ibid.*, p. 14).

So, Churchill and Roosevelt both favored coalition governments with programs "transitional toward socialism"! How ducky! But why were we led to believe that Roosevelt "was first, last and all the time" an imperialist? And Churchill certainly no less a one? Why also were we told that the difference between Roosevelt, Churchill and Hitler lay not in their class objectives? Are we now to revise this estimate that all three of them made the preservation of the imperialist system "the key to all their detailed policies?"* Or, were Churchill and Roosevelt "imperialist socialists" perchance?

There is no need to spend time or space demolishing this stupid conclusion that Churchill and Roosevelt favored coalition governments that

would be transitional to socialism. Sure, both of them favored coalition governments and helped set them up in Western Europe. But what a world of difference between these and the coalition governments set up in Eastern Europe! In Eastern Europe the coalition governments that were set up were based in the first place on the working class and the common people, and the liberating Red Army enabled the revolutionary, anti-fascist upsurge of the masses to sweep the accumulated filth of imperialist and feudal exploitation and oppression into the rubbish heap of history. In Western Europe, in contrast, the liberating armies of the United States and Great Britain held back the revolutionary sweep of the anti-fascist masses, disarmed the heroic resistance fighters and made sure that the coalition governments that were set up would be first, last and all the time obedient to imperialism. No difference, Mr. Browder? Only the differences between working-class rule and bourgeois rule!

In his attempt to sprout wings on Roosevelt, Browder reminds us that it was F.D.R. who intervened with both Churchill and De Gaulle to obtain Communist representation in the French Resistance Government when it was set up at Algiers. But he conveniently forgets to remind us that the same Roosevelt also recognized Petain and did business with Darlan. Or, when he tells us that

* These quotations from Browder, in the context of his thesis anent the "progressive" character of imperialism, were dealt with in the first installment of this article.

Roosevelt "never wavered" in his attitude toward the Soviet Union and always "acted consistently" in the knowledge that "a long term peace" could be secured only "by acceptance of the Soviet Union as an equal," he is again permitting his memory to lapse about the period in 1940 when Roosevelt called for assistance to "brave little Finland," just a year before this same "democratic" Finland publicly proclaimed her alliance with Hitler Germany.

As we had occasion to note in our article last month, Roosevelt's role in history was that of a highly intelligent representative of his class, but to canonize him and to ignore the class policies that he represented, is to participate in a gross distortion and vulgarization of history!

How little Browder understands of the class character of the coalition governments that sprang up in the new democracies can be seen in his stress that these governments unite *all* those opposed to the Hitler occupation, irrespective of class. This was to a certain extent true during the war itself, but even then only to a certain extent; for in Poland, for example, two "resistance" governments came into being, even though one of them resided in London and resisted the liberation forces of the people far more than the Nazis.

But when the war ended, in fact as soon as victory became apparent, a new class relationship developed

in each of these countries. With national independence won, the masses in these countries faced a new problem—either to move forward toward the bright sun of socialism, or be thrust backward into the darkness of feudal and imperialist obscurantism. On this issue, the class relations were not and could not be similar to those in the previous period of struggle against Nazi occupation. Thus, here too, a regrouping took place, and individuals and class groups that were "progressive" in the sense of being opposed to the main enemy represented by the Hitler occupation forces, ceased to be "progressive" in face of the most progressive force of all—the social revolution. That this new struggle, necessitated a new form of coalition strategy and a new class alliance, can today be seen by all.

Nor has the transition been "peaceful," in the sense of capitulation on the part of the capitalist and kulak elements. These have practiced and continue to practice violence and to conspire against the legally established authority of the gigantic majority of the people headed by the working class. This sharpening of the class struggle in the new democracies does not fit into Browder's conception of nebulous, amorphous, all-class coalitions, that move toward socialism even with the blessing of the imperialist powers. Browder even devotes a full chapter of his booklet, *World Communism and*

U.S. Foreign Policy, to opine that the dictatorship of the proletariat is now "obsolete" for all "non-Soviet lands." "In none of the countries of the new democracy," writes Browder, "has the dictatorship of the proletariat been put forward as an immediate goal" (p. 23).

The events of the past year, since this was written, have given the lie to this assertion. These have amply made plain that the Communist leaders of the new democracies understand full well that there is and can be no other transition from capitalist society to Communist society, except by the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The form of this dictatorship may differ from country to country, but in basic class content, it must remain essentially the same. Only in Yugoslavia has there been an abandonment of this cardinal principle as part of the Tito renegade betrayal of Socialism.

BROWDER'S CHINESE "LESSONS"

Not content with teaching us the lessons of Europe, Browder also wrote a special pamphlet on the "Chinese Lessons for American Marxists." Browder tells us that the Chinese Communists, too, have pursued a coalition policy from which we can learn. He reminds us that in 1937, the Chinese Communists intervened to save the life of Chiang Kai-shek when he was taken prisoner

in Sian by the rebel General Chang Hsueh-liang, and that history has confirmed the correctness of this policy, for it helped make possible the national front against Japanese imperialism. Browder asks: "Can American Marxists imagine . . . their own present leader, Foster, adopting the wise and far-seeing attitude of the Chinese Communists?" And in agent-provocateur fashion, Browder sneers: "Of course not! . . . Foster's main slogan of action is 'off with their heads,' applied indiscriminately to enemies, potential enemies, [and] long established friends . . ." (pp. 28-29). This brazen lie, mind you, being made on January 17, 1949, the very day of days upon which the trial of William Z. Foster and his comrades began at Foley Square! Truly a gratuitous assist from Browder to McGohey!

As for the lessons of China, we admit that we have much to learn, as from Communist experience in Europe and elsewhere. But not what Browder thinks. Certainly, the Chinese Communists had one position toward Chiang Kai-shek in 1937, when unity, even with scoundrels such as he, had to be sought to save China from Japanese enslavement. But the Chinese Communists did not make a virtue of this necessity, they did not glorify Chiang Kai-shek, they had no illusions as to who he was and what he represented. Nor did they lower their guard or give

up their independent class positions because of this unity.

Thus it was possible for them, once the war against Japan was over, to take with them the great mass of the Chinese people and to isolate Chiang Kai-shek and his imperialist and feudal lords. They were able to forge a *new* people's coalition to meet the new historic stage of struggle for Chinese independence and social progress.

Is this the lesson Browder is speaking of? Hardly! He thinks the following is the big lesson of China:

The basic principles of this [Chinese Communist] tactical system, although developed in a special Chinese form, are adaptable everywhere in situations where the Marxists face an enemy of superior immediate forces, in the political as well as the military struggle.

The central idea of this tactical system is, in the words quoted by Miss Strong [Anna Louise Strong], as follows:

"We shall fight only when conditions are favorable to us. Every such battle must be short and decisive, we must win every battle."

These are the guerrilla tactics Browder wants us to apply to the United States!—for, says he, "this tactical system is adaptable to the current problems of American Marxists. Its application during the past three years could have enabled the American movement to avoid almost every defeat and setback which it has suffered" (pp. 33-34).

Now we have it! The answer to all our problems! We are not to fight unless we can "win every battle," and each such battle "must be short and decisive." Thus, if the Marshall Plan and the bi-partisan foreign policy of Wall Street cannot be won in a short decisive encounter, why fight it at all? Apparently, then, we'll avoid defeat!! If the battle against Jim-Crow can't be won immediately, let's not engage in it either! Truly a remarkable formula—for complete capitulation! All defeats and setbacks can be avoided by the simple expedient of not fighting! It's amazing that this brilliant solution never occurred to us before!

Is this the lesson from China? A thousand times, no! Certainly, it is necessary to know when and how to fight. Certainly, it is necessary, when confronted with a foe of superior strength, to decide on what ground and over what issues to fight. And, certainly, China can teach us much in this respect.

But to elevate this into the great lesson of lessons, is like telling a prize fighter that all he needs to know is how to roll with the punches, and when hit, how to stretch out for the count. No, Mr. Browder, in order to FIGHT and in order to WIN, there are other lessons as well: 1) Never indulge in marijuana illusions that your enemy has suddenly become your friend! 2) Never capitulate to cowardly rationalizations that by deserting the fight

today, you'll live to fight another day!

These too are very important lessons from China. Three years ago when the Chinese Communists were forced either to make an irrevocable break with the Chiang Kai-shek imperialist forces or to face capitulation, they decided on the former, even though it meant giving up their ten-year old capital of Yenan and suffering other temporary "setbacks." But had they bemoaned their fate and whined over the break-up of the old coalition (which was inevitable!), where would they be today?

Flexibility of tactics is of paramount importance, and we undoubtedly have very much to learn in this respect, but it must be the flexibility of a steel-band not a rubber-band. For all the flexibility in the world cannot help where there is not the will to struggle.

AN OLD TRICK

Thus, Browder's political excursion around the globe has not proved his contention that the national coalitions forged in wartime have been kept intact everywhere but in the United States. The evidence has

proved the very opposite—that everywhere the wartime coalitions had to give way to new coalitions, basing themselves on a realistic appraisal of the *new* class relations internally, and the new main threat to the peace and democracy of the world emanating from Wall Street.

All that Browder has accomplished, by trying to don the mantle of spokesman for world Communist policy, is to remind us of the prophetic words of Lenin, used against a Russian bourgeois apologist of his day, by the name of Struve. Lenin wrote, "the liberal bourgeoisie *always and everywhere* uses the strategy of persuading its adherents in a given country to believe that the Social-Democrats [read: Communists] of that country are the most unreasonable, whereas their comrades in the neighboring country are 'good boys,' . . . but," exclaimed Lenin, "this is an old trick, Mr. Struve! You will only catch children and ignoramuses with that bait" (*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*, p. 54). Yes, Mr. Browder, by this time it is indeed an old trick! Today the bait can catch nobody!

[To be continued.]