

The Browderite Conception of History

by Gilbert Green

[We are pleased to publish the following article, written under the severe conditions imposed by his imprisonment in the Federal Detention House in New York City, by Comrade Gil Green, Chairman of the Communist Party in Illinois, member of the National Committee of the Party, and one of the defendants in the thought-control frame-up trial taking place at Foley Square.]

[Comrade Green, excerpts from whose courtroom testimony were published in the September issue of Political Affairs, is one of the four Communist leaders who, at this writing, are still victimized by an indeterminate jail sentence vindictively meted out by a class-prejudiced judge.—Editor.]

AS THE READERS of *Political Affairs* are aware, the government indictment against the 12 is hinged upon a single "overt act"—the act of rejecting Browder revisionism and reconstituting the Party on Marxist-Leninist principles. It is this which the Prosecution cites as the unforgivable "crime" and the great "conspiracy."

Finding myself one of the "premature" victims of this legal abomination, and compelled to give the government an advance payment on its pound of flesh, I decided to compound the "felony" by spending some of the "time" on my hands in a further exposure of Browderism, especially its most recent chicanery.

The importance of this task had

occurred to me many times, but I was made doubly aware of it as I sat in the courtroom listening to repeated assertions of both the Prosecution and the Court that Communism as such was not on trial, only the *specific* brand of Communism as advocated, taught and practiced by the defendants and their party. As for the Browder "type of communism" the government could find no fault whatsoever.

Thus, it became obvious that the self-same Truman Administration, which is striving with such sadistic fury to portray Communism as a sinister diabolical plot begot of the devil himself, is not averse, however, to differentiate between what it considers the "good" or Browder type of Communism (read: bourgeois

communism*) as against the "bad" or Foster type (read: Marxism-Leninism).

And in the international arena it is most anxious to clasp to its bosom every traitorous scoundrel or police agent, who can pass himself off as either a "converted" Communist, or a "national" brand of Communist. Thus, the working-class traitor and Communist-pretender Tito is hailed as a "great patriot" and a "new found ally" in Wall Street's economic, political and military "cold war" against Moscow. And when in the western zone of Germany, a tiny handful of police agents arrogantly proclaim themselves as a self-styled "Free Communist Party," this is treated as sensational front-page news, as if this unsavory stew had not been cooked-up in Washington's Pentagon Building in the first place.

In this scurrying to give support and approval to renegade "Communism," which of course is no Communism at all, the bourgeoisie is inadvertently paying a tribute to the great and growing influence that Communism enjoys throughout the world, especially in the ranks of the working class. Thus, in Yugoslavia, the great name of Communism is being used by Tito to fight against the real Communists and in the interests of imperialism, in the same way that the Nazis called themselves National-Socialists in order to try to destroy the movement for social-

ism and to plunge the world into war.

It is true, of course, that in the United States reaction does not have to cloak itself in socialist or communist phrases. This is because the masses here have not yet accepted socialism as the goal. But they do cherish democracy. That is why profascist reaction in this country cloaks itself in democratic slogans, while peddling the big lie that communism is anti-democratic. But from this it would be false to conclude that the Browder type of renegade Communism has no function to perform for the bourgeoisie.

At a time when the American people must learn the bitter truth that despite their own progressive desires, it is their country and none other which has become the new seat and center of world reaction, at a time when it must be patiently explained again and again that their main enemy is no longer abroad, but here at home, in the form and shape of Wall Street imperialism—at such a time, anyone who casts doubt on this cardinal truth, anyone who discovers a new "progressive" role for American imperialism, is nothing more than an apologist and lackey of Wall Street, whether he be conscious of it or not.

And when this is done in the name of Marxism, as does Browder, the crime is all the more reprehensible. Browder challenges the Communist analysis of the role of U.S. monopoly capital in the world today. For him,

* From Lenin's expression "bourgeois socialism."

the Wall Street man-eating tiger could be transformed into a mild, milk-sipping kitten, if only the American Communists would desist from goading the poor beast.

APOLOGETICS FOR WALL STREET AND THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

Browder's thesis, which he repeats *ad nauseam* in some nine separate pamphlets written in the past year, is essentially this:

1. That U.S. imperialism can still play a progressive role in world affairs. Instead of acting the parts of Shylock and Simon Legree, it can be gotten to play the role of the Good Samaritan.

2. That it would be playing that progressive role today, were it not for two tragic occurrences—first, the untimely death of Roosevelt, which deprived the bourgeoisie of "intelligent" leadership, and second, the ousting of Browder from his position in Communist ranks which deprived the working class of its "intelligent" leadership.

3. That even after the death of Roosevelt, Truman would have continued Roosevelt's progressive policies, had the American Marxists but followed the advice and leadership of Browder. Under such circumstances, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Military Arms Program and the whole "cold war" against the Soviet Union could and would have been avoided.

4. That the same failure of "in-

telligent" leadership in the Communist Party is responsible for the sharpened struggle within the labor movement, for the setbacks suffered by the Left in the trade unions, for the vitriolic Red-baiting and anti-Soviet attacks of top C.I.O. officials.

Thus we see a complete and shameless apologia for American imperialism, the Truman Administration and the labor bureaucrats. And all this, mind you, in the name of Marxism!

Lest the readers of *Political Affairs* accuse me of exaggeration, let me at this point refer them to but one example: Browder's pamphlet, *The Miracle of November* 2. In this pamphlet he analyzes the meaning of last November's election and gives his estimate of the Truman Administration. And let me quote rather copiously from this "profound" work, so that the reader may judge for himself to what depths of charlatanry this false miracle-maker has descended.

In this pamphlet, written about a month after the election, Browder is beside himself with joy at the Truman triumph. For him, "the main political result" of the election "transforms the author of the Truman Doctrine into a flaming angel of peace. . . ." (p. 4). "Truman," says Browder, "presented himself as a new Roosevelt whose program a liberal weekly has justly described as 'the most radical program presented by a major political party in our lifetime'" (p. 4).

To understand this "miracle," Browder takes us on a Cook's tour "behind the election campaign," to "review the record since the death of Roosevelt," and to "make a provisional estimate of Truman as a political personality, as revealed by this record" (p. 5).

At the outset, Browder rejects the charge that Truman ever intended to depart from Roosevelt's path. "Truman," says he, "took seriously his pledge to carry on Roosevelt's promises" (p. 6). "He conscientiously consulted with Roosevelt's closest advisers and associates [apparently that's why he replaced them with bankers and brass-hats in his Cabinet!—G.G.] . . . he studied Roosevelt's papers and memoranda . . . he sent Hopkins to Moscow and himself went to Potsdam . . . he confirmed all the important commitments which had been made by Roosevelt in the course of the war, laying the foundation for the peace settlement which Roosevelt had intended" (p. 6).

But even Browder must admit that these commitments were never lived up to. How does he explain this? Was it Truman's fault? Not on your life. These commitments were "sabotaged" by underlings. "Roosevelt," explains Browder, "had often experienced such sabotage and knew how to fight against and overcome it," but poor "Truman had not this ability" (p. 7).

However, Browder's miracle-man learned fast. He "learned that he

would have to fight on all fronts to maintain Roosevelt's course . . . against the Churchill crowd abroad, the Republicans at home and the Right wing within his own Democratic Party. He began to organize such a fight immediately after he had found himself ostensibly [ostensibly?] sponsoring Churchill's war-mongering speech at Fulton, Missouri, by appearing with him on the platform" (p. 7).

But fate was cruel to Honest Harry, the Battling People's Champion. Despite his best intentions he found it impossible to go through with his fight. In fact, unable to "fight 'em," in the best tradition of Missouri politics, he decided to "join 'em."

"Why did events take this suddenly disastrous Right turn?" asks Browder. "To find an answer," says he, "it is necessary to come to a definition and understanding of the political personality of Truman" (p. 9). And for this purpose, the versatile Browder lovingly stretches his boy Harry on a studio couch and proceeds to psychoanalyze him, substituting the materialist with the matress interpretation of history.

"We will make some progress in understanding the political man," we are told, "if, with strict objectivity, we simply ask ourselves if it is possible to locate amidst the bewildering contradictions and switches in his record as President, any single constant factor. If we can, this will probably give the key to under-

standing the real Truman" (p. 9).

Now, of course, there is such a constant factor. It is Truman's constant and consistent defense of the predatory interests of American monopoly-capital. But this is not the factor Browder is looking for; in fact, it is the one he seeks to conceal.

Delving into the dark, murky corners of Truman's subconscious mind, Dr. Browder finally locates what he is looking for—the factor of factors, which, when understood, "reduces all confusions to a certain sensible order" (p. 9). And this is "a very simple thing"—"even rather primitive," we are told, namely that "the guiding thought of President Harry Truman has been first, last and all the time, the ambition to be elected President in his own right" (p. 9).

"Once this factor is grasped as the central point, everything in the Truman record falls into place, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, and we have a coherent picture of the political man" (p. 10). A coherent picture, yes, but only of the political mind of Earl Browder!

How this "constant factor," together with the "wrong policies of the Communists" under Foster's leadership, changed the whole role of American imperialism in the world is the next stirring chapter described by Browder.

It seems that Truman needed allies in his fight to "defeat the Churchill camp, the Republicans and the Democratic Party Right wing."

Where could he get these? "Who could best help Truman to organize and lead this fight? . . ." (p. 1). Obviously only the Left. So, "Truman turned to Henry Wallace." "Wallace was to be his ground-breaker, to open up the way" (p. 8). He sent Wallace on a mission to Madison Square Garden to appeal to the Left for support. "The battle for Truman's election in 1948 was to open with that speech—that was its main significance for Truman" (p. 11).

But the Wallace speech did not bring about this rapprochement between Truman and the Left. It resulted in the very opposite, in "the miserable collapse of this great project," in "the Wallace expulsion from the cabinet," and "led directly to the announcement five months later of the ill-fated Truman Doctrine" (p. 8). Quite a flip-flop! And all because of one speech in Madison Square Garden!

But this is quite simple to understand, if one just bears in mind Browder's great psychiatric discovery of the "constant factor" that makes Harry tick. You see, according to Browder, "the Left-wing crowd" in Madison Square Garden "booed" certain Red-baiting passages in the otherwise noteworthy speech of Wallace. It was this heckling, believe it or not, that brought about the Truman switch and thus altered the immediate contours of history. Truman, Browder tells us—and who else so understands the Truman

mentality—then realized that “he had fallen between two stools,” that while “he had broken openly with the Right wing,” his overtures to the Left wing “had been rejected, with cat-calls.” “In the practical language of Jackson County politics, ‘there ain’t no percentage in that’” (p. 12).

And so, “He quickly surrendered to Byrnes’ ultimatum,” “dismissed Wallace from the cabinet,” and decided “to abandon the fight for the time, and surrender to the reactionaries” (p. 13).

“And thus it came about,” concludes Browder, “that America turned into the path of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the ‘cold war’” (p. 14).

Was there ever written unadulterated hogwash greater than this? Imagine! We are asked to believe that the basic orientation and policy of the mightiest industrial nation and imperialist power in the world, had been determined by two rather insignificant facts: the frustrations of a little Missouri politician who wanted to be president “in his own right,” and some heckling at a Madison Square Garden meeting! Now it truly can be said that we have heard everything! Henceforth, who are we to challenge the claim of certain “historians” that the whole history of the human race would have been radically different had only Cleopatra’s nose been shorter; that France would have won the Seven Year’s War had only Louis XV not been so enamored of Madame Pom-

padour; that World War I would have been avoided had only a Duke not been assassinated at Sarajevo; and that World War II was caused because an Austrian paperhanger was a frustrated painter!

Browder’s November 2 “miracle” can be summed up as follows: The people sensed that the alliance between Truman and the reactionaries was not a marriage of love, but of convenience, and that Harry’s heart was really with the Left. Truman in turn sensed that the people wanted more and not less of Roosevelt’s policies. He therefore appealed to them on that basis and was elected. Thus a “miracle” took place and, “The author of the Truman Doctrine of 1947 became the bearer of the people’s peace mandate of 1948” (p. 13).

And, “Now that Truman is no longer an accidental President, but a real one, he has won for himself the opportunity to become a new man in other and more important ways” (p. 24). For the “combined reactionary camp has been dealt a heavy blow,” “the ‘tide’ is no longer running their way,” and “the prospect for progressive legislation is brighter than in many years” (p. 27).

Compare this Browderite trash with the crystal-clear analysis made by our Party and contained in an article by Eugene Dennis shortly after the elections. Dennis wrote*:

* “The Main Lessons of the 1948 Elections,” *Political Affairs*, December 1948, pp. 1052-1053.

"For one thing the Dewey-G.O.P. defeat undoubtedly creates some temporary illusions about Truman, the Democratic Party and the new congress. But while the Administration may make certain maneuvers and concessions to the people, particularly in regard to domestic questions . . . it will proceed with the North Atlantic-western union war alliance and with other key aspects of the imperialist bipartisan war program." And further, "We are not entering another New Deal 'era'. The Administration and the bipartisan congress are committed to an anti-Communist drive at home and abroad, to an aggressive imperialist war policy and a war economy."

Events since last November have certainly confirmed the correctness of our Party's analysis, which did not base itself on nonsensical psychotic "factor" theories, but on a Marxist analysis of the class relations on both a world and national scale.

THE CLASS NATURE AND ROOTS OF BROWDER- REVISIONISM

This pitiful hanging on to the coat-tails of Truman; this search for subjective factors to explain objective developments; this unprincipled attempt to pin responsibility for the disastrous course of the Truman Administration upon the most principled and consistent opponents of these policies—the Communists, is but the logical outcome of a com-

plete departure from, and betrayal of, Marxism.

Browder refuses to admit that U.S. monopoly capital is a reactionary force and that as the *dominant* imperialist power in the capitalist world, it cannot but play a reactionary aggressive role in world affairs. For him, there just *must* be a progressive role that U.S. imperialism can play, and if it does not, then the fault lies neither with it nor with Browder's analysis—but with the Communists and their policies(!).

And while no Marxists and few progressives would agree with Browder's shallow — nay, ludicrous, — explanation of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the whole reactionary course of the Truman Administration, and while Browder as an individual is bereft of influence, it must be said that there are more than a few well-intentioned people who share to one degree or another, some of the wishful thinking and illusions which underly the Browder position.

For Browderism is not an individual phenomenon, but an ideological expression of the imperialist bourgeoisie at this given juncture of history. Browderism's specific role is to feed the confusion, vacillation and conciliatory mood of the petty-bourgeoisie, which hopes to soften the contradictions of world capitalism at a time when these cannot but become sharper. It nurtures in particular the thinking of a certain section of the petty-bourgeoisie which was

strongly influenced by the Roosevelt era, but which never understood the concrete world and internal class relations that made that period possible. These petty-bourgeois liberal elements not only supported Roosevelt's policies but they literally worshipped him as an individual—as the hero who “single-handed” “tamed” the monster of monopoly capital and harnessed it for “progressive” social ends. Having no confidence in the people and their struggles, having no understanding of the leading role of the working class in the historic sense, these elements today find themselves in a blind alley. They seek a new Messiah who will save them—a new Roosevelt, preferably in Truman's flesh. They continue to harbor the illusion that if only Truman saw the light of day, if only he displayed a bit more firmness and courage, if only the Left humored him more and harassed him less, then, miracle of miracles, everything would be alright again and America would pick up exactly where it left off with Roosevelt.

Hence they utterly fail to grasp the great and decisive changes in world relations that have taken place consequent upon World War II. They fail to comprehend that the old Roosevelt period can no more be resurrected than Roosevelt the man, and that in the new world situation of today the broad coalition against the monopolies, fascism and war has to go forward with a qualitatively new class content and class

alliance. Anything else is idle day-dreaming, wishful thinking, or outright deception, as we shall prove in the course of these articles.

Much of the petty-bourgeois dream of a softening or disappearance of the class struggle, of the development of a new “progressive” imperialism, represent the false ideological baggage of yesterday, carried over into the present. Harmful and wrong then, they are doubly harmful today. If they continue to persist in the thinking of masses, even in the working class, this is to be explained by the fact that the material conditions which made these possible (full employment, relative “prosperity”), continued into the postwar period and even strengthened certain illusions about a “new” “progressive” capitalism. But with the drop in the production index, with the rapid rise in unemployment, with the return to the conditions of chronic crisis in agriculture, mining and textile, and with increasing signs of the maturing economic crisis all about us, the material economic foundation for these illusions is already being badly shaken and will soon be shattered.

But that does not mean that opportunism will disappear of itself. In fact, the very sharpening of the class struggle will give rise to new expressions of this on the part of some individuals. This is already to be seen in tendencies among some people to recoil from the struggle, to desert the fight, to give way to

moods of pessimism or despair—in other words, to run for cover from the intense ideological and often physical assault of reaction.

And let us make no mistake: never have the American people been subjected to so powerful a form of intimidation; never has monopoly capital so insisted that everyone stand up and be counted. Today, anyone who even mildly dares to question, let alone criticize, U.S. foreign policy is accused of treason to the nation and of being an “agent of Moscow.”

In face of this withering barrage we sometimes witness tendencies even among honest progressives to “prove” their patriotism by indulging in “a little bit” of Red-baiting and anti-Soviet baiting on their own—a practice which, if persisted in, inevitably lands such practitioners four-square in the camp of the imperialists and the war-makers. Here and there, this tendency expresses itself in “looking for” or exaggerating differences with the Communists so as to avoid being labelled “fellow traveler”; or, of deluding oneself that there is some “middle ground” from which vantage point one can safely avoid taking sides in the struggle between the forces of peace and progress and those of atomic war and a new fascism.

While the Communists do not ask progressives and liberals to give up their own independent positions and outlooks in order to join in common struggle, we do expose the fal-

lacy of those who believe that they can find sanctuary on some non-existent middle-ground. And it is none other than Earl Browder who has set himself up as the ideologist for this “third force” theory.

In his pamphlet, *Where Do We Go From Here?* Browder tells us where he would like the progressive movement in this country to go—it is in the direction of an American form of the European “third force.” He mercilessly castigates the Party leadership for its failure to recognize that “in Europe the ‘third force’ is reactionary, while in America it still had the potentiality of playing a progressive role” (p. 47). And our refusal to grant this, he declares, only proves our inability creatively to apply Marxism to American conditions!

Why does Browder make this distinction between the United States and Europe? Because, he tells us, “the important fact” is “that the ‘third force’ in Europe is reactionary because there the task is the immediate transition to socialism, which the ‘third force’ opposes. But in America the ‘third force’ still has progressive potentialities because the chief immediate tasks still remain those of such character that they can be accomplished within the framework of capitalism” (p. 47). Thus, the “sharp difference” is but “a reflection of the different respective stages of the class struggle on the two continents” (p. 47). Furthermore, adds Browder, the Com-

munists are guilty of cultivating "opportunistic illusions" [sic] by masking the "true nature of the Wallace new party as, in program, composition, and leadership, the American counterpart of the 'third force' parties in Europe" (p. 47).

Thus to Browder, the Social-Democratic "third force" of Western Europe, set up at the direct orders of the U.S. State Department, is to be equated with the third party movement in this country which has as its objective the struggle against the predatory bipartisan program of Wall Street imperialism! Only a man gone completely mad, or one who has degenerated so swiftly that he cannot even recognize the pro-imperialist Social-Democratic swamp into which he has fallen, can compare the "third force" with the third party. It is like comparing a horse chestnut with a chestnut horse!

One would expect that having shown us the "progressive potentiality" of the "third force" in the United States, and also having characterized the Wallace third party movement as an American expression of this, that Browder would embrace and support the Wallace movement even on the basis of his own tortured logic. But oh no, Browder's heart belongs to Truman, even though he is more than generous in his advice as to where the Wallace movement ought to go.

Browder exposes his full political depravity when he glibly tells us that the "third force" in Europe is not an

inherently reactionary development; but only reactionary in a relative sense—in the sense that the immediate task "is the transition to socialism." But this is arrant nonsense! In the first place the reactionary character of the European "third force" has nothing at all to do with whether the immediate issue is or is not that of the transition to socialism. A movement such as the "third force," which came into being precisely in order to split the unity of the working class, to cloak the aggressive designs of American imperialism with pseudo-socialist and democratic phrases, to chain these countries to Wall Street's anti-Soviet war chariot — such a movement would be reactionary under all circumstances, and under *no circumstances whatsoever* could it be conceived of as "progressive." Not in Europe! Not in America! Not even in Shangri La!

In the second place, "the transition to socialism" is not the immediate issue in all of Europe, in the first place! The transition to, and the actual construction of, socialism are the issues in the new People's Democracies of Eastern Europe. But then again the "third force" is no force in these countries. Only in Western Europe, precisely in the Marshall Plan countries, do we witness this "third force" in operation. But in these countries the *immediate* issue is not the transition to socialism, but the struggle for peace—the struggle to keep these countries from becom-

ing economically and politically enslaved to Wall Street, from becoming transformed into *places d'armes* for World War III. And in the resolving of this immediate issue, the "third force" is only the Social-Democratic wing of the "second force"—the force of American imperialism and its native Quislings and lackeys, directed against the *only* other force possible, that of the working class and common people.

And in the United States, too, despite all differences in the "respective stages of the class struggle," the issue today is that between two forces, not three—between Wall Street, its parties and lackeys on the one hand, and the great mass of the American people who want peace and democracy on the other hand.

Of course, neither force is fixed or frozen. We are living in a period of great movement, flux and change. Many of those who today adhere to the camp of imperialism only do so unwittingly, because their eyes are still closed to the real issues. When their eyes begin to open they will be on the other side—the *only* other side. As for the third party, it is "third" only in the sense of an electoral party, not in the sense of class or political alignment. There are, and can be, only two camps today—that of peace and democracy and that of war and imperialist reaction! Anyone who says that between these two camps there can be an independent "third force" is

either a fool or a knave, and Browder is no fool.

BROWDER'S "INTELLIGENT" EVALUATION OF THE ROOSEVELT ERA

As has been previously stated, Browder's whole revisionist system of thought (and it is a system) revolves around the central thesis that it is possible for U.S. imperialism to play a progressive role in the world of today. Even his mental gymnastics resorted to in explaining why Truman did as he did were but the contortions of a man refusing to face the facts, refusing to see American monopoly-capital as the ultra-reactionary force that it is.

In his pamphlet, *World Communism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Browder sets out to establish theoretical justification for his position. With cynical scorn he refers to the Party's analysis of monopoly capital as a "new dogmatism," in which "to speak of anything progressive coming out of American imperialism is the 'crime against the Holy Ghost,' is the 'original sin' of 'revisionism,' it is the unspeakable word which puts the man who utters it outside the pale, to be shunned like a leper" (p. 32).

It is no accident that Browder makes this insulting comparison between the Party's adherence to the principles of scientific Marxism, and the blind fanaticism of religious superstition. Such invidious comparisons have been made before, always

by the enemies of Marxism, and not infrequently by those who, like Browder, plead for "tolerance" and the "right" to emasculate Marxism.

Browder's line of argument runs like this: If Truman's policies are to be called "imperialist," what about Roosevelt's policies? Was Roosevelt not also a spokesman for American capitalism in its monopoly or imperialist stage of development, and were not his policies therefore also "imperialist"? Further, if this be true, then is it not also self-evident that the designation "imperialist" means nothing, for it only evades the key question: Are these imperialist policies "progressive" or "reactionary"? For, says Browder, Roosevelt was a progressive, and at the same time he "was first, last and all the time an American imperialist" (p. 33). Hence, to make the word "imperialist" synonymous with the word "reactionary" is false. That is why "Marxists, sworn enemies of imperialism on a world scale, found in imperialist America, under the Roosevelt type of leadership, the still existing capacity for a progressive role, sufficiently important in its world effects to demand the open and direct support of the Marxists" (p. 32).

Yes, it is undoubtedly true that Roosevelt, too, represented the interests of American capitalism (monopoly capital). It is an historic fact that notwithstanding his tirades against the "economic royalists," and their tirades against him, that pre-

cisely during the period of his leadership, the monopolists greatly accelerated the process of concentration of capital into their own hands, tremendously expanded their productive machinery and laid the groundwork for a domination over the world's markets and territories undreamed of before.

In what sense then, can one speak of the Roosevelt period as "progressive"? Only in a *relative* sense: only in the sense that a new, more immediately sinister reactionary force had arisen in the world—Nazi Germany. This rise of German fascism constituted the *main danger, the main enemy of world mankind, the main threat to the peace and democracy of the world and to the independence of nations*. It was in relation to this more immediate fascist imperialist threat that American imperialism receded into a less reactionary, a less menacing position.

Furthermore, the rise of fascist Germany constituted a threat, not only to the democratic peoples everywhere, but also to the world positions of U.S. and British imperialism. And this threat grew in direct proportion to the success of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan in conquering weaker nations and peoples.

Thus, for a certain historic period, two normally antagonistic forces—the working class and the mass of the common people on the one hand, and an important section of monopoly capital on the other, found themselves temporarily confronted

with a common foe. For both of them, this foe constituted the main enemy at the moment, although for entirely different class reasons. To the working class and the anti-fascist peoples generally, the defeat of Nazi Germany was necessary for the defense of their national independence and their democratic liberties. To the American bourgeoisie, the defeat of Nazi Germany was necessary in order to destroy its most virulent and most aggressively dangerous imperialist rival and to enhance thereby its own imperialist world position.

The course and the role of Roosevelt were directed toward this objective. In this role, despite many vacillations and concessions on his part, he was frequently compelled to give battle to the most reactionary pro-fascist circles of monopoly capital whose intense class hatred for socialism and democracy blinded them to the danger that Nazi Germany represented to their own imperialist interests. These circles preferred not only to come to terms with Hitler, but also to follow his example within the United States.

Thus, the Roosevelt period was "progressive" and those of his policies were "progressive" to the extent that they reflected the progressive interests of the working class and the nation; even if some of these temporarily coincided with the far-from-progressive interests of the bourgeoisie. And if Browder wants to know why the policies of Truman are called "imperialist," and why this

characterization does have meaning, it is precisely because these policies in no wise reflect the progressive interests of the American working class and nation, but only the sordid, ultra-reactionary interests of Wall Street imperialism.

The role that Roosevelt, as the representative of the bourgeoisie, played in World War II cannot, however, be explained solely on the basis of the interests of U.S. imperialism. It was not inevitable that the U.S. should have found itself in alliance with the U.S.S.R. in the anti-Hitler coalition. In fact, as we know there were strong capitalist circles that wanted to pursue a different course. These circles which found expression through the Hearsts, McCormicks and Lindberghs, through the Vandenberg, Tafts and Wheelers, believed that the interests of U.S. imperialism could best be advanced by reliance upon, and even an alliance with, Hitler.

A basic factor that helped determine the course of the U.S. in World War II was the mood and struggle of the people, and of the labor movement in the first place. In those struggles the Communist Party played an increasingly significant role. Without this basic force Roosevelt could not and would not have pursued the course he did. This was even more clear in the progressive measures adopted under Roosevelt on the domestic front. Here it is obvious that it was the

struggle of the unemployed, the strike struggles, the beginnings of a people's coalition led by labor that won such reforms as the Wagner Act and social insurance. In the course of these struggles, both before and after the election of Roosevelt following the big crisis that began in 1929, labor also began to act at least in some measure as an independent political force. It was this new position of labor and the people's struggles that in turn helped shape the Roosevelt foreign policy.

Those who start out from the premise that American imperialism is, or can be made "progressive," or who seek a new common foe that can once again "unite" capital and labor, can only end up in joining the imperialists in their unholy crusade against the most progressive force in the world—the Soviet Union and the world camp of democracy headed by it. Thus, this attempt mechanically to repeat history, to try to "go back" to the "honeymoon" period of yesterday, can only give aid to the imperialist war mongers. For these, too, seek to propagate the false notion of a postwar "equivalent," in which the Socialist Soviet Union has replaced fascist Germany as the national foe.

But if Browder understands nothing at all about this, neither does he understand why it was that German imperialism originally took the path of fascism and world conquest, while American imperialism, hard-

hit by the same world-wide economic crisis, took another path. And yet this must be understood if one is to grasp why it is that under the new world conditions of today American imperialism has embarked on the same ignominious and suicidal course trod but yesterday by German imperialism.

Browder does compare the rise of Hitler in Germany with that of Roosevelt in the United States. He shows that both of them came to power at approximately the same time. "Both were swept to power by the effects of capitalist crisis, and their immediate measures to meet the crisis bore more than a superficial resemblance" (p. 8). "But," adds Browder, "both paths [that of Roosevelt and Hitler] had something more deeply in common than their surface aspects already noted. Both accepted the existing capitalist system (imperialism), and both made its preservation the key to all their detailed policies. The goal of preserving imperialism they held in common; the means of reaching this goal (that is, their policies) became completely different, so different that Roosevelt led America into war against Hitler, and into alliance with the U.S.S.R., the country of a rival system, of socialism. But Roosevelt never abandoned his goal of preservation of the American system (imperialism). Roosevelt's *policy* proved more successful than Hitler's" (p. 31).

This is undoubtedly true. But what is the explanation for the two

completely different policies adopted by Hitler and Roosevelt? The essence of Browder's answer to this question is revealed when, in the same pamphlet, he also compares Roosevelt with Churchill. In doing so, he asks: How is it "that the strongest imperialism [U.S. imperialism] played the more progressive role?" And he answers that "this apparent paradox . . . is to be explained within the terms of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of imperialism, which by no means excludes the influence of *intelligence* upon the course of history. Roosevelt's greater progressivism, in comparison with Churchill, arose from his *more intelligent understanding* of the realities of the war, and not from a less single-minded devotion to the preservation of capitalism" (p. 35).

So, "intelligence" becomes the determining factor between the policies of a Hitler, a Churchill and a Roosevelt! And once again we are back to the typical Browderite subjective interpretation of history!

Of course, we neither wish to deny nor deny the role of intelligence. Nor do we wish to detract in the slightest from the credit due Roosevelt as a highly intelligent representative of his class, especially as compared with the muddle-head, Truman. But to explain the whole course of contemporary world history by the personal qualities and mental attributes of single "great" individuals, is not Marxism, but a mockery of Marxism.

Great men do leave their mark on history. No one would deny that, least of all Marxists. But Marxists know, as George Plekhanov made clear more than a half-century ago, that "influential individuals can change the *individual features of events and some of their particular consequences*, but they cannot change their general *trend*, which is determined by other forces." And furthermore, that "talented individuals . . . are themselves the product of this trend; were it not for that trend they would never have crossed the threshold that divides the potential from the real."*

What were the general and particular causes that brought about an objective trend in Germany that catapulted the madman Hitler and fascism into power, while in the United States it caused the trend of which the bourgeois-democrat Roosevelt was the "intelligent" spokesman?

To understand what took place, it is not enough to recognize, as does Browder, the general feature common to both; namely, the world-wide economic crisis that severely paralyzed the economic life of both the United States and Germany. It is also necessary to note that which was different: that while U.S. capital still had considerable reserves and maneuvering room at its command, German imperialism had neither. This can be seen in the fact that while American imperialism had

* *The Role of the Individual in History*, International Publishers, New York, 1940, pp. 48 and 52.

emerged from World War I as the main, if not the only, victor, for the first time a creditor nation and world power; German imperialism emerged prostrate, shorn of its pre-war markets and colonies, its territory and population reduced and its economy greatly weakened and over-burdened by reparations and debts.

Thus, while the American bourgeoisie could "bend" to the gale of the mass pressure for work or bread, for an alleviation of the mass hunger and suffering, this path of concessions and reform was closed to the German bourgeoisie. Faced with a growing ferment among the masses, with a political crisis that could well have led to a revolutionary upheaval, the German bourgeoisie left the path of "intelligence" and decided to "shoot-the-works"—to plunge headlong into the mad gamble of counter-revolutionary fascism and a new war of revenge, not only to recoup the humiliating defeat of 1918, but to conquer the world. And in this "win-all lose-all" game, the sharper Hitler held but one lone card—his anti-Communism. And if for a number of years this single card was sufficient to trump the much higher economic and military hands of British, French and American capital, this was only possible because the Western imperialist powers recognized Hitler-Germany as the counter-revolutionary force that would crush the Soviet Union and not as their own deadly imperialist rival.

But the important point to note is this: if the German bourgeoisie did take what history has proved was a suicidal course, this was not due to any lack of "intelligence." Finding itself in a blind alley, it turned to desperation as a policy. Nor could it stop its imperialist gorging half-way. Its whole empire built on sand, its economy geared only to war, it had to continue its mad gallop to destruction.

If the American bourgeoisie did not pursue the path of military adventures in the '30's, the reason is also to be found in particular objective causes. First, it still could obtain a larger share of the world market by methods of so-called "peaceful" penetration and competition. With its more efficient industrial machine it could undersell its world competitors even in their own markets. That is why it placed such great emphasis on the Hull reciprocal trade agreements which sought to reduce and where possible eliminate all tariff walls and to win for U.S. capital "favored nation" treatment even within the British empire orbit.

Secondly, American imperialism desired peace and the maintenance of the status quo, not because it was "peace loving," but because it was ill prepared from a military point of view to enter an armed struggle for the redivision of the world.

Historically, the United States had never been a military power. This was so because the United States had developed as a great continental

empire with a huge internal market and with few direct colonies. A large military force was necessary neither for internal security reasons nor for purposes of defense. It could only prove to be a heavy financial burden. Thus, American imperialism, even though it had already entered upon the path of larger armaments, was in no position to seek a military redivision of the world—nor was this as pressing for her as for German imperialism.

It was this objective fact which was referred to by Ercoli (Togliatti) in his Report at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935. After tracing the profound antagonisms between British and American capital which manifest themselves around the globe, Ercoli pointed out that "the military power of the United States and its strategic position in the Pacific Ocean do not yet correspond to its strength and its economic development, in spite of the tremendous growth of its armaments during the past few years."

"Thus," continued Ercoli, "we are confronted here by an imperialist state which does not set itself *immediate* goals of conquest, I emphasize—*immediate goals of conquest*, and which is interested in gaining time, in postponing an armed conflict as long as possible, and in employing the time thus gained to strengthen its own position."*

THE POSTWAR POSITION AND ROLE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

How different is the situation today? No longer does American military power lag behind its economic development. The United States is now armed to the teeth. Its military expenditures have multiplied more than ten-fold as compared to the pre-war period. The one-ocean Navy has now been expanded into a two-ocean one, and the U.S. has supplanted Great Britain as the foremost sea power in the world. For the first time in American history there is now peace-time military conscription. Scores of new military bases dot the five continents and the seven seas, so that it can now be said without exaggeration that "the sun never sets" on the American "empire." And to top it off, there is the constantly growing stockpile of atom bombs. Truly a far cry from the picture at the time of Ercoli's Report!

And this profound difference in military power is only a reflection of the equally profound changes that have occurred in U.S. imperialism's world position. By a combination of circumstances, American imperialism has emerged from World War II as the single dominant power in the capitalist world. With its German and Japanese rivals vanquished, and its British and French allies weakened and even enfeebled by the war, U.S. monopoly capital occupies a monopolistic position, one from

* *The Fight For Peace*, Workers Library Publishers, New York, 1935, p. 31.

which it strives to keep the rest of the capitalist world on rations.

Thus, there is an immense difference between the world position of U.S. imperialism before the war and now. And there is obviously also a considerable difference between the present world position of American imperialism and that of Germany at the time of its plunge toward fascism. For one, the U.S. is neither a militarily defeated nor a "have not" power, as was Germany. Nor is the ruling class in this country confronted by an immediate internal political crisis and the imminent danger of a revolutionary upheaval. And yet the law of the uneven development of capitalism operates in such a way as to propel American imperialism—the power that gained the most loot and booty from the last war—to the path of new military adventures and world conquest.

The reason for this is to be found in the fact that American capitalism's tremendous industrial expansion brought on by the war has far outstripped its market possibilities. Even its newly won world positions cannot save it from the consequences of a new economic crisis and from the downward pull of the ever-deepening general crisis of the world capitalist system.

With more than 60 percent of world capitalist production concentrated in the United States, the disparity between productive capacity and market possibilities (the basic contradiction of capitalism), is much

more pronounced than it was even before the war, and is in the long run more acute for American imperialism than for any in the world. Thus her imperialistic appetite for new markets, for new investment fields and for ever-greater monopolistic control of the world, is far from satiated.

But just at the time in world history when the concentration of capital into huge international cartels and trusts has reached a point of development where one imperialist state has the preponderance of economic and military strength in the capitalist world, and where no other single imperialist power or combination of such powers can today challenge this hegemony, a new world force has arisen which blocks the path of American imperialism toward complete world mastery. This force is that of the great world democratic movement, which has been given a mighty impetus by the anti-fascist victory in the war. At the head of this world-wide people's force stands a great world power, the *only* other *decisive* power in the world today. This power is not an imperialist state, but an anti-imperialist one, a socialist state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. And alongside this great socialist state there have arisen a number of other new democratic, anti-imperialist, and Communist-led states in Eastern Europe and in China.

Thus, the world of imperialism is daily shrinking, while the world of

anti-imperialism is growing. The capitalist world is no longer divided into fascist imperialist states on the one hand and "democratic" imperialist states on the other. The *main* division in the world of today is between the camp of predatory, aggressive imperialism, dominated by U.S. capital, and the camp of peace, democracy and socialism, headed by the Soviet Union.

In the light of this entirely new postwar world situation, to contend as does Browder, that American imperialism can be either coaxed or coddled into playing a progressive role, is simply "out-of-this-world." It was the change in the world relationship of forces that brought the change in the U.S. foreign policy, and not the other way around. And while the active intervention of certain individuals had much to do with the execution of this shift away from Roosevelt's policies of American-Soviet friendship, this was not its *basic* cause. Had a radical alteration not taken place in the world relationship of forces and in the world position of American imperialism, no single individual, not even a Truman as President, could so drastically have brought about an alteration in foreign policy and commitments in so short a period.

Of course, the untimely death of Roosevelt, coming as it did just as the war was ending, left its mark on the subsequent course of events. But it would be naive nonsense to believe, as Browder would have us

do, that if Roosevelt had remained alive nothing would have changed.

It is worse than idle folly to speculate today as to what course Roosevelt would have pursued had he survived the war, just as it is futile to debate what course Lincoln would have pursued had he survived the Civil War. Both of these men must be judged historically by what they did do, and not by conjectures as to what they would have done under entirely different circumstances.

One thing is however certain. In both instances, the ending of the war brought with it a shift in class forces that could not but be reflected in class and political alignments. With the military defeat of the Southern slave-owning class in the Civil War, it was not long before the victorious industrial bourgeoisie of the North began to fear the democratic consequences of its own bourgeois-democratic victory, began to compromise and betray its war-time pledges and to come to terms with its former foe.

So, in this war, too. As soon as victory over Hitler was assured, in fact before it was actually assured and won, monopoly capital began to fear the world-wide democratic consequences of this victory. It especially feared the new influence and strength of the Soviet Union and the great surge of the colonial and other peoples for complete freedom from every form of imperialist exploitation and oppression. It was this *new force*, the democratic mass movement which became the new main enemy

for monopoly capital.

Thus, to try to perpetuate the class alliances of yesterday into the entirely different conditions of today is to create a monstrosity. The continuation of Roosevelt's policies of U.S.-U.S.S.R. collaboration requires for the postwar a new type of people's coalition—one uniting all anti-monopoly and non-monopoly forces of the people against the main enemy of today, U.S. monopoly capital.

And if our Party during the war had based itself on a Marxist-Leninist evaluation of the situation as constantly demanded by Comrade Foster, we would have realized then the inevitable change in class relations that was bound to occur when the war was over. Thus, we would have been more conscious of the need to leave a "class imprint" on the anti-fascist struggle. This would have further enhanced our indeed great contribution to the war effort, while at the same time making it more difficult for the monopolists and their lackeys to betray the fight for a lasting peace and for democracy when the war was over.

When all this is shown by our Party, Browder retorts that this only proves that we have no perspective

short of Socialism. He accuses us of fatalism, of believing that it is impossible to have the co-existence of the world of Socialism and the world of capitalism without an inevitable third world war. But this, too, is only because Browder himself has no perspective except that of an alliance with monopoly capital.

It is of course possible to preserve the peace and prevent a third world war. It is possible to achieve the fulfillment of the agreements made at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. It is possible to prevent fascism in the United States.

But this brings us to a new aspect of the subject, one which we shall cover in a second article on Browderism to appear in next month's *Political Affairs*. In this second article we shall deal with: Browder's coalition theories versus the Party's coalition policy; Browder's position on whether fascism in the U.S. and a third world war can be prevented; who is responsible for labor disunity and why some of the Left-wing setbacks; Browder's economic theories and his new panacea for avoiding an economic crisis; and the relationship that Browderism bears to Titoism.

[To be continued]