

FOREWORD*

By William Z. Foster

Inasmuch as Comrade Dennis will make the main report and as I am scheduled to make the summary of this National Committee meeting, I shall, in these opening remarks, comment upon only one matter. This is the conclusive manner in which the course of economic and political events, here and abroad, and the strengthening of our contacts with the masses, have justified our Party's change of political line at its recent National Convention. Indeed, if we had not radically altered our policy, if we had continued to apply our former revisionist line, we would have by now found ourselves in a serious crisis in view of the present difficult national and international situation.

With the end of the war things have turned out altogether differently than Browder calculated in his revisionist system. He foresaw a postwar world in which the principles of Marxism-Leninism were no longer valid. Capitalism, suddenly rejuvenated and grown progressive, according to him, would work easily in peace and harmony with the Socialist sector of the world for the speedy healing of the wounds of the war. Imperialism would virtually liquidate itself and the great capitalist powers would automatically move towards the systematic liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The United States in particular, led, as Browder said, by a progressive bourgeoisie acting "intelligently in its own true class interest," would embark upon a world program of industrialization of backward countries that would bring prosperity and democracy to the peoples of these lands, and at the same time, would greatly advance the well-being of the whole American people. In our own country, Browder believed, a broad national unity would prevail, including the decisive sections of finance capital, within the scope of which unity the capitalists and workers would cooperate in

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harmony to raise mass living standards and to strengthen the whole national economy.

But none of these things are happening. The postwar period is developing quite otherwise than Browder painted in his idyllic utopian picture of capitalism. The world capitalist system is obviously much deeper in its general crisis than Browder had any idea of. Serious economic and political tensions and struggles are developing in many directions. Imperialism, far from being dead, is exhibiting a poisonous vitality. The United States and Great Britain, instead of leading the less developed peoples into an era of expanding freedom and prosperity, are busily trying to crush by economic pressures and force of arms, the unprecedented movements of the colonial peoples of the Far East for national liberation. And hardly had the war with Japan come to an end than the American and British governments deliberately developed a sharp tension with the U.S.S.R. that actually has in it the danger of war.

Especially is the United States not performing the beneficent world-role foreseen for it by Browder. Instead of the great trusts and monopolies of this country seeking to develop world peace and democracy through the United Nations, they are, with the Truman Administration at their head, shoving aside the U.N.O. and carrying on a policy aimed at establishing American imperialist domination of the world. This aggressive imperialist policy is manifest everywhere, in the Balkans, Palestine and the Far East, in Germany and Japan, in the shameless brandishing of the atomic bomb to terrorize the peoples of the world. And the heart of American imperialist aggression is the dangerous "get tough" policy toward the Soviet Union. If the Anglo-American powers are finally compelled to give the atom bomb secret to the U.S.S.R. it will be because they are afraid it has it already or soon will have.

The attempt of American imperialism to dictate to the U.S.S.R. shows how unrealistic were Browder's statements that America and Britain have once and for all abandoned the hope that one day the U.S.S.R. will cease to be a Socialist country. It exposes also the shallowness of his insistence, on

the eve of the San Francisco conference of the United Nations, that there is no important section of the American bourgeoisie nursing imperialist ambitions. And it tears to pieces his incredible statement at our recent National Convention that "American policy, whatever temporary vacillations may appear, is pressing toward the unity and democratization of China."

Browder's pronouncements on foreign policy sound very empty now in view of the world situation and very few there are in our Party who believe them. But Browder's line on foreign policy is no more empty than his analysis and slogans for the postwar situation within the United States itself. In consideration of the present belligerent attitude of the employers and of their reactionary stooges in Congress and in the light of the awakening militancy of the workers in the current huge wage movements, how absurd now appears Browder's support of the notion of a postwar no-strike pledge, his theories about the employers voluntarily doubling the workers' real wages, and his expectancy of such an easy collaboration between the capitalists and the workers as to signify virtually the liquidation of the class struggle.

Browder's bourgeois dream of the American capitalist class, with the British as minor partners, leading the world into a new era of peace, freedom and prosperity, a world in which the workers would have to dismiss all thought of socialism, has been rudely shattered upon the hard rocks of reality. In analyzing the world situation and in leading along the path of the peoples' progress, Marxism-Leninism has triumphed over Browderism, even as it triumphed earlier over the revisionism of the Bernsteins, Legiens, Gompers and Lovestones. Instead of casting aside the "old Marxian books and formulas," as Browder advised us, we will study them with renewed attention and diligence.

Our Party, in re-establishing its policy upon a Marxist-Leninist basis, has put itself in line with actual economic and political conditions. It is basing itself upon the firm conclusions that the capitalist system is not progressive but decadent; that imperialism is not dead but very much alive; that the class struggle remains decisive in capitalist society,

and that there is an indispensable need for a strong Communist Party to lead the struggle of the masses. Our Party realizes that the big bourgeoisie, especially of the United States, if given a free hand, as Browder proposed, would surely plunge the world again into economic chaos, fascism and war. And it understands that if the anti-fascist objectives of the war are to be realized in a long-enduring and democratic peace, the democratic forces of our country and the world will have to see to it themselves that the elementary programs of international collaboration laid down at Moscow, Teheran, Yalta and San Francisco are carried out.

The Party realizes further that these democratic forces are determined to do just that, what with the birth of the new democracy in Europe, the upsurge of the great national liberation movements in Asia, the democratic policies of the Soviet Union, the militant spirit of the American working class, etc.

Although the Party's turn in policy has already been fully justified by the course of political events, and by our improving ties with the masses, it would be a mistake to conclude therefrom that we have completed our turn in policy. This is by no means yet the case. It would be too much to expect that a Party which for many years was poisoned with Browder's opportunism would completely cleanse itself of this opportunism in just a few months' time. It is not strange, therefore, that there are still in our Party many hang-overs of the bureaucratic Browder regime — opportunistic methods of thinking and working that must be eliminated in order to put our Party on a sound Marxist-Leninist basis.

In this meeting of the National Committee, therefore, we must examine the work of our Party in a thoroughly self-critical and democratic spirit. We must systematically root out all vestiges of Browder's revisionism, and at the same time be on guard against the outcropping of Left sectarian trends. Only by proceeding in this way can we give our Party the clear policies, determined spirit, united leadership, and added mass strength which are indispensable if it is to play its full role in the great tasks that now loom ahead of our nation and the world.