

People's Front and People's Democracy

by William Z. Foster

DURING THE FOLEY SQUARE TRIAL of our Party and its leaders we were confronted with the charge of having conspired to teach and advocate the overthrow of the United States Government by force and violence. To make proper reply to this false charge, we not only had to develop many general principles of Marxism-Leninism, and to make an outline history of our Party, but we also had to indicate the main line of the struggle for Socialism in this and other countries. In its defense, which was basically an attack upon capitalism, our Party developed a correct Marxist-Leninist line. Specifically, we placed the responsibility for violence in the class struggle where it belongs, upon the shoulders of the capitalist class and its Government.

Among the materials presented to the Court was my pamphlet entitled *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*. This was unanimously endorsed by the National Committee as Party policy in the trial. In this pamphlet, in meeting the imperative needs of the defense, I undertook, in addition to dealing with Communist policy in general, to outline, in both a theoretical and

practical sense, the world Communist experience with the united-front policy since the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935. In doing this, I analyzed the anti-fascist people's front policy of the prewar years, the national unity policy of the war years and the anti-imperialist people's front policy and People's Democracy policies of the postwar years.

The pamphlet, therefore, covered a tremendous scope of theory and tactics. It dealt with a whole maze of complexities, covering the past 15 years of vital world struggle. To make the task more difficult, much of the territory traversed was quite new. In the main, the fundamental analysis developed in the pamphlet is correct. Naturally, however, in view of the immensity, complexity and newness of the subject matter, as well as the brief manner in which it was dealt with, certain errors and shortcomings could and did creep into it. Of course, as we all know, many European Communist leaders have also made errors in pioneering an analysis on various parts of this general experience. In my opinion the most serious shortcoming of my

pamphlet is that in the last section, in dealing with the policy of the American Communist Party, a number of important propositions regarding the people's front tactic and the new People's Democracy states, while in themselves fundamentally correct, are stated much too briefly and without clear and adequate elaboration. This leaves them open to misunderstanding and distortion and makes it necessary that the implications of all the matters be fully gone into by us. This is all the more needful for, as Comrade Dennis correctly pointed out in the March 1950 meeting of the National Committee, there have been some tendencies in the Party to misunderstand or to distort the Party's correct line in the trial. Therefore, I am writing this article with the special purpose of clarifying and elaborating upon a number of questions dealt with during the trial, particularly in my pamphlet.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FASCISM

At the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, Comrade Dimitrov, sweeping aside the current Social-Democratic drivel to the effect that fascism was "a revolt of the middle classes," correctly characterized fascism as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." Dimi-

trov also stated that fascism "appears as the result of the decline of the capitalist system." As the general crisis of capitalism becomes deeper, the path toward fascism becomes the inevitable course of monopoly capital in its desperate attempt to prevent the victory of the working class. This is a reality that we must keep firmly in mind in our work. Obviously the big capitalists, who have become aware, from practical if not from theoretical reasons, that their social system is in grave crisis, do not intend to stand about idly while it falls to pieces. Fascism, therefore, with its organized attempt to destroy democracy and Socialism through policies of civil war and world war, is basically the effort of finance capital to overcome the general crisis of capitalism and at the same time to gain for itself (concretely, Wall Street) complete domination of the nations of the world.

Fascism has definite roots reaching back into the very beginnings of the general crisis of capitalism. They were clearly to be seen in the ruthless attempts of reaction to crush the Russian Revolution at its inception and also to put down the post-World War I revolutionary struggles of the workers in Central Europe. Fascism was established as a method of rule, first however, in 1922, with Mussolini's seizure of Italy. It finally became a world threat in 1933, when Hitler seized Germany in the midst of the great world economic crisis.

During this general period, the big capitalists of France, Great Britain, the United States and other capitalist countries had also become infected with fascist conceptions. Fascism, therefore, was by no means simply a German-Italian-Japanese phenomenon, although for specific reasons, it came to power only in the Axis countries. It represented the general trend of the world's biggest capitalists in the face of the deepening crisis of capitalism and the growth of Socialism. The big finance capitalists in the Axis capitalist countries were dreaming of some sort of a fascist world, dominated by themselves, to be initiated by an all-out attack against the U.S.S.R. But the democratic resistance of the peoples, the strength of the Soviet Union and the violent contradictions among the big capitalist powers, prevented the carrying through of this contemplated drive by the Axis powers for a fascist world built upon the ruins of world democracy and Socialism. Experience demonstrates that fascism, instead of liquidating the imperialist antagonisms, sharpens them.

One of the most basic things we have to understand from all this is, therefore, that the drive toward war and fascism was not and is not a passing phenomenon among the big bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it is their fundamental orientation (particularly in the case of American imperialism), their attempt to

overcome the general crisis of capitalism. This explains why the monopoly capitalists of all countries, under the aggressive lead of Wall Street, are so busily trying everywhere to re-organize the fascist groups and movements that were shattered during World War II. Fascism was defeated in the war; but the trend toward fascism of the imperialist bourgeoisie continues. It is still full of virulence. It would be a grave error, indeed, to underestimate the danger of fascism.

Another thing of importance that we must understand about fascism is that it gives the monopoly capitalists a much more highly conscious counter-revolutionary perspective, however impossible, for saving their social system in the face of the deepening general crisis of capitalism. At the Seventh Congress Dimitroff had the following to say in this general respect: "The ruling bourgeoisie is more and more seeking salvation in fascism, with the object of instituting exceptional predatory measures against the toilers, preparing for an imperialist war of plunder, attacking the Soviet Union, enslaving and partitioning China, and, by all these means, preventing revolution."

Prior to the development of the general crisis of capitalism, with its resultant growth of Socialism on the one hand, and the more advanced decay of capitalist institutions on the other, the capitalists and their theoreticians were not confronted

with an acute threat to their social system. But the development of the general crisis of capitalism and the challenge of world Socialism rudely shook the monopoly capitalists. They realized with a shock that their system was in danger. Hence their conscious acceptance of a fascist perspective, however much they may now mask this perspective in order to avert mass opposition. This, of course, does not provide the chaotic capitalist system, as such, with a definite perspective. Nor does it prevent the heaviest collisions among the imperialist powers; indeed, fascism accentuates these collisions. This conscious policy of driving to fascism gives it double malignancy and menace, and we must always keep it clearly in mind.

THE ANTI-FASCIST, ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

Fascist rule is a ruthless attack upon the living standards, traditional liberties, democratic organizations, national independence and even the very lives of the various peoples of the world. Inevitably, therefore, its growth in the pre-war years evoked a very broad and militant mass movement of democratic resistance. This wide movement drew within its scope workers, peasants, Negroes, intellectuals and small business men; it also largely bridged over ideological differences between Catholics, Social-Democrats,

Liberals, Communists, and non-party elements—a vast array of democratic forces. Never before had these democratic strata and groupings been so united. They were animated with a determination to resist and defeat the new social plague, fascism—to prevent this terroristic rule from becoming instituted and from plunging the world into war.

Two basic characteristics of this great pre-war anti-fascist, anti-war movement were to be remarked. First, there was a large element of the defensive in it. That is, it was directed to preserve cherished democratic liberties and organizations from the assaults of fascism; but at the same time the movement contained great potentialities for the counter-offensive—potentialities which in the war and postwar periods were to result in major victories for the democratic peoples. The second basic characteristic of the anti-fascist, anti-war movement was its tremendous political breadth. As already stated, the people's front policy utilized the existing possibilities for workers of various ideological groupings, as well as various middle-class forces, to stand shoulder to shoulder, although not without many difficulties, against the common fascist enemy.

The most important thing in this general respect for us to keep in mind clearly now is that if war and fascism are a threat in the present

world situation, and surely they are, then so also must the peoples develop a broad united front to fight for peace and against fascism. With the crushing defeat of fascism during the war, there was a tendency, in view also of the democratic developments in the postwar period, to feel that the fascist danger no longer existed and that, therefore, the need for the anti-fascist, anti-war broad people's front had expired. Two major forces cultivated and took advantage of this mass illusion. First, American imperialism, in its drive for world conquest, above all had to break up the broad anti-fascist coalition of democratic forces that had won the war. Second, the Right Social-Democrats, loyal servitors of capitalism, carried out this splitting policy in order to combat the prevalent revolutionary moods of the working class. So these two forces, of course with the help of the Vatican, deliberately split the anti-fascist coalition, including the trade-union movement, in the capitalist world, and created the so-called "third force" movement. This movement, as the sequel clearly shows, is but an adjunct to American imperialism and paves the way to extreme reaction and fascism.

But the "third force," backed though it is by the United States and other capitalist governments, by the Vatican and by Right Social-Democracy, and also considering that many workers are caught in the trap

of the anti-Soviet Red-baiting and imperialist illusions — nevertheless can only be temporary in character. The growth of the new danger of war and fascism which is now rapidly in progress in the world, must result in these democratic masses who are now under Social-Democratic and other reactionary leadership breaking with the whole conception of the "third force" and joining with the Left forces in developing a strong anti-war, anti-fascist movement essentially along the lines of the people's front, although this will not take place automatically. Indeed, there are already strong signs of the cracking of the "third force." These signs were exemplified by the recent strikes in France and Belgium when Catholic, Socialist and Communist workers stood shoulder to shoulder against their "third force" governments and the Social-Democratic and Vatican leaders. The major lesson from this is that the slogan for the people's front still remains valid, although in the present new world situation the main content of this slogan must be anti-imperialist and anti-war, and we must be very flexible in sloganizing its many possible forms and variations.

THE POLICY OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

It was a tremendous theoretical and practical political achievement

when the Communist International, at its Seventh Congress in 1935, under the leadership of Stalin and Dimitrov, grasped the significance of the new world situation caused by the rise of Nazi Germany, and developed the people's front policy to fight the menace of fascism and war. The proposed mobilization of all democratic strata for a joint fight against enslavement and a new world war involved certain important changes in policy and action. These changes were frankly and boldly undertaken. Dimitrov, in his celebrated report, underlined the changes, declaring that "Ours has been a Congress of a new tactical orientation of the Communist International."

The substance of the new tactical orientation of the Comintern was twofold: (a) to provide an anti-fascist, anti-war program and organizational form broad enough to encompass the mighty democratic masses that had been set in motion politically by the capitalist crisis and the fascist war threat; and (b) to make provisions for the Communists, under specific conditions, to participate in people's front governments that could develop out of the anti-fascist, anti-war struggle. These new tactical concepts, needless to reiterate, were in full harmony with the whole body of Marxist-Leninist principles.

Political strategy and tactics, as Marx, Lenin and Stalin have taught

us, are not permanent, all-enduring but must evolve to meet changing circumstances. It is not surprising, therefore, that the tactics laid down at the Seventh Congress, while continuing to be fundamentally correct, have, in the ensuing fifteen stormy years, undergone a certain change, growth and development, with the fundamental change in the world situation. It would be absurd to think that it could possibly be otherwise. Among the later developments may be mentioned: the line of national and international unity followed during the war, the new policies used in the establishment of the postwar People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, Communist participation in the coalition governments of France and Italy and the victorious developments of the great Chinese Revolution, the main line of which was stated by Stalin as much as 24 years back. And no doubt other important tactical developments will take place in Communist policy as the world struggle for Socialism proceeds. It is important to note here that all the tactical, and sometimes strategical, changes that have taken place during the past 15 years are in accord with the solid Marxist-Leninist line of the famous Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

This brings me to the question of the so-called "new route to Socialism" that has been so much talked about since the postwar rise of the People's Democracies in Eastern

Europe. There were for a time a number of unclaritys in developing the theoretical analysis of these vital situations, shared in by many of the Communist leaders of the People's Democracies. Such inadequacies of analysis found expression in our Party (including my own writings).

In using the at the time current phrase "new route to Socialism," which has since been rejected by the Parties in the People's Democracies, I, in the pamphlet *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, was speaking in the tactical sense.

Of course, it is a matter of simple, ascertainable fact that, tactically speaking, the workers of the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe and of the Chinese People's Republic are not proceeding toward the achievement of Socialism with the identical tactics used by the Russian working class. And it could not be otherwise. They would not be Marxist-Leninists but political fools who would try to apply rigid, uniform tactics to all these widely ranging situations. These tactical variations are extremely important. Good or bad tactics in a given situation can make the difference between victory and defeat. But, regardless of tactical variations that may be necessary as the class struggle proceeds, the road to Socialism remains the same—through the defeat of the capitalist class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

SPONTANEITY AND UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Let me here interject a few remarks about the question of "spontaneity" and "uneven development" in the class struggle. In my pamphlet, *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, I took occasion to remark that the great Communist movements of the world are "spontaneous" in that they are rooted in the specific national conditions of their respective countries. I cited this obvious fact in refutation of the charge of the Government that these Parties and the great people's movements which they lead are artificial creations, the work of "Soviet fifth columns"—when along comes Mr. Browder, Marxist-in-chief of the National Association of Manufacturers, and lectures me to the effect that Communist Parties cannot be spontaneous but must have the benefit of Marxist-Leninist teachings.

Likewise, on the question of the so-called uneven development of the struggle for Socialism, the renegade Browder, who, with Tito-like agility and unscrupulousness, supports American imperialism with pseudo-Marxist arguments, tries to teach me some A.B.C.'s of Marxism. In my pamphlet, in fighting against the contentions of the prosecution that our Party is working on the basis of a blueprint of the Russian Revolution, I indicated the fact, expressed by Lenin in his law of the uneven

development of capitalism, that the many capitalist countries of the world are at different stages of growth and are developing at different tempos. I also pointed out the obvious fact that these different conditions invariably affect the development of the movement for Socialism in the various countries, determining their structure, strategy and tactics. Nowhere did I state, imply or even hint that the differing degrees and tempos of industrial development in these countries determined the respective order or periods of their revolutions. Indeed, I cited the Russian Revolution to prove, on the contrary, that merely the industrial development achieved by a given country does not determine the revolutionary maturity of the country. What I had to say was Marxist-Leninist and quite correct.

THE QUESTION OF A PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

At the outset, in discussing the matter of the people's front government in this country, we must realize that we are not dealing here with a state form which will necessarily have to be established by the American workers as their way to Socialism. We are dealing, instead, with a general political tactic. Already, at the Seventh Congress, Dimitrov handled this question. He warned us that "It would be wrong

to imagine that the United Front government is an indispensable stage on the road to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The truth of this statement is graphically illustrated, of course, by the fact that there was no people's front government in Russia before the workers took power there. And who can say positively that the American working class will not also take this course? Besides, there is also the possibility that fascism might develop in this country before the workers and their allies could succeed in establishing a people's front government.

Nevertheless, and this must be solidly emphasized, our orientation is for a people's front government stated in terms adapted to American conditions. We do not have an "either or" policy, nor do we indulge in vague political speculation on this matter. Dimitrov also made this very clear at the Seventh Congress when, while not laying down the people's front as an *indispensable stage*, he at the same time placed every possible stress upon the burning need for an all-out fight for the people's front. This clear policy is in its basic essentials valid for us now.

A second major thing that we must keep in mind in advocating the people's front is that we can only conditionally presuppose the election of such a government by the democratic masses of the people. That is, it will be possible to elect a people's

front government in the United States only if the workers can maintain sufficient democracy in the country to carry through such an election. In view of the drive of American imperialism toward fascism and war, however, it is by no means certain that they can do this. If the reactionaries should succeed in breaking down the democratic system and in establishing fascism in the meantime, then, of course, the possibility of electing a people's front government would be gone, and the whole class struggle, even over the simplest of demands, would become an open, violent struggle.

In my brief remarks on this general subject in my pamphlet, *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, I pointed out that the "election of such a [people's front] government could be brought about only in face of a violent opposition from organized reaction." I said (page 92): "The whole history of the American class struggle, which is full of employers' violence in strikes and in other struggles of the people, teaches this lesson with unmistakable clarity." Obviously, therefore, a people's front movement would have to be able to smash through this capitalist violence, which, as I pointed out, was inevitable, and force through an election in spite of it.

Now let us examine briefly under what conditions a people's front government might come into existence

in the United States. Undoubtedly, it would have to take place in the setting of a very critical political situation. The aroused democratic masses, heading toward a people's front government, would have to face the world's most powerful bourgeoisie, resolved upon war and already rapidly adopting violent, fascist methods of rulership. The people's front movement, therefore, colliding head-on with the capitalists' main policies of war and fascism, would surely have to confront the full force of their opposition. One would need to be naive to speak of a peaceful election under such circumstances of sharp political struggle. It would be equally silly in the face of the organized violence of the big capitalists to think that it would be simply a parliamentary election struggle. Obviously, and this is a major lesson taught by people's front movements in France, Spain and elsewhere, the trade unions and every other organization of the workers and their allies would have to throw their whole strength into the struggle of the people's front.

A victorious fight to establish a people's front government in the United States would also involve defeating the heavily entrenched labor leaders and the establishment of a solid united front of the working class. And above all, it would require that the Communist Party be far more powerful than it is now—to be able to give strong leader-

ship in the people's front combination. These seem like strong requirements, in view of the difficult situation for the workers now prevailing in the United States. But it may well be that the people's front movement in this country will develop at a very rapid speed. This rapidity could be brought about by a swift spread of peace sentiment among the masses due to dangerous war moves by Wall Street, through a sharpened danger of fascism, through the development of a deep economic crisis, or, as would be most probable, through the joint operation of all these factors.

In my pamphlet, I stated our Party's conditional placing of the question of the election of a people's front government as follows:

Our Party's political line is based upon the assumption that it is possible in the United States, in a crucial economic and political situation, for the broad masses of the people, militantly led by the trade unions and a strong mass political party, to elect a coalition, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist government. Whether this possibility will last in the face of the dangerous fascist trends in this country, however, is problematical.

This is the approved line of our Party and it is a correct one. To take the position that it is impossible to elect a people's front government in the United States (under its specific American forms) would mean to say that fascism is inevitable in this

country and is, indeed, almost upon us. This our Party cannot say, and did not say in the trial. We do not recognize the inevitability of fascism, even as we do not recognize the inevitability of a third world war, and for the same basic reasons.

PARTY POLICY TOWARD A PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT

Here we come to one of the more complex theoretical problems—what we consider would be the attitude of the Communist Party toward a people's front government, if it is established in the United States.

The first thing we have to understand about a people's front government in the United States—assuming that the allied democratic forces can beat back the forces of fascism and eventually establish such a government—is that this government would from the very beginning find itself under the heaviest possible fire from the reactionaries. This situation would be inevitable, for such a government, if it at all corresponded to the qualities of a people's front, would place itself directly athwart the war program and world-domination plans of Wall Street Big Business. It would be stupid, therefore, to expect anything else than that this government should, in consequence, be the object of violent assault from the combined forces of reaction; for Wall Street

big capital would never abandon its world-conquest program without a last-ditch struggle.

As I have pointed out, all too briefly, in my pamphlet (page 90) such a people's front government, confronted by the violent attacks of the bourgeoisie, would have to orientate to the Left or it would be destroyed. That is, the people's front would be compelled to pass over from a defensive position to one of counter-offensive. It could not merely stand as a barrier against fascism and war; but in order to accomplish these ends and to enforce its program generally it would be compelled to begin to attack the monopolists in their economic, military and political spheres. It would face death if it failed to do this.

Securing a majority in Congress for a people's front government would not give that majority the control of the capitalist state—Marxist-Leninists require no instruction in this elementary truth. In such a situation, the very foundations of the state—the army, police, industries, courts, banks, government bureaucracy, schools, etc.—would still be within the control of the big bourgeoisie, who would (with the help of their Social-Democratic leaders) use all these institutions against the new people's front government. We may accept it as a practical certainty, therefore, that any democratic coalition government in this country that would

fight the Wall Street program of fascism and war would find itself, as a life-and-death necessity, compelled to attack the monopolists as above stated. It would have to pass over from a defensive program, from one of merely seeking to halt the warmakers—to one of beginning to orientate toward the nationalization of banks and industries, break-up of big landholdings, beginning of a planned economy, elimination of reactionaries from all state institutions, etc., or it would pass from history.

Of course, a Leftward orientation of a people's front government could be achieved only in the face of the stiffest resistance of the capitalist class, including that of its Right Social-Democratic agents within the people's front government itself. It would also require clear leadership from a powerful Communist Party and the active support of the trade unions and all other people's organizations.

The Communists would defend such a government so long as it continues to be a barrier to war and fascism, would defend it against reactionary efforts to overthrow it. The Communists would point out that such a government could not long continue to block war and fascism unless new measures striking at the roots of monopoly power were taken. Whether in the course of defending this government against an armed revolt by reaction these revo-

lutionary changes would take place, or whether such a government would refuse to take such measures and be supplanted by a new government of the working class as a result of a great mass struggles cannot of course be predicted now.

In any case, a people's front government as such cannot bring final victory, and completely eliminate the danger of fascist counter-revolution. This can only be done by the Socialist revolution.

What we have to bear in mind is what I emphasized in my pamphlet: namely, that a people's front government would be compelled to orientate toward a positive, fighting policy, or it would die. The capitalists would destroy it, either through the treachery of a Blum on the inside, or through the counter-revolutionary violence of a Franco from the outside, or, most probably, through a combination of both. This is a basic lesson taught by people's front experiences in France, Spain and other countries.

Communists could not possibly look with indifference upon the defeat or overthrow of a people's front government in the United States. We would be compelled to try with every means in our power to have the workers use such a government as a means of positive struggle. To do anything else would signify surrendering the people's front to the Right Social-Democrats and to eventual crushing defeat. What such

a defeat would entail we may forecast by recalling the acute political situation in which it would only be possible to establish a people's front government in the first place. The crushing of such a government by the combined assaults of the capitalists and their Social-Democratic tools in a situation of political crisis might well have such disorganizing consequences upon the fighting forces of the proletariat as to enable big capital to launch its projected third world war and/or to establish fascism in the United States. We would find, therefore, we may be sure, that the fate of the people's front government would be a matter of profound political significance. Communists cannot participate in the people's front government on the basis that the government must finally come to a disastrous defeat. We must have a victory perspective throughout.

Communists have not always clearly understood the necessity of fighting solidly for a Left orientation when they have participated in coalition, or people's front, governments. This weakness was exhibited by some of the Communist Parties of Europe in the postwar coalition governments. And even as early as the Seventh Congress, Dimitrov warned sharply against this type of Right mistake by criticizing the actions of the Communist members of the united-front government of Saxony, Germany, in 1923. He pointed

out that "they behaved generally like ordinary parliamentary ministers within the framework of bourgeois democracy" instead of fighting for the revolutionary measures imperatively demanded by the situation. Although the establishment of a people's front or democratic coalition government is not yet upon the immediate political agenda in the United States, nevertheless, as Marxist-Leninists, we can already profitably understand our general tasks in such an eventuality.

THE QUESTION OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

The nature and role of a People's Democracy is another question that did not receive as rounded-out a treatment from us as its complex character warranted. Further elaboration of the question is, therefore, in order for the full clarification of our Party on this question.

There are four general aspects of the People's Democracy that we especially need to be clear about. The first of these is on the question of the use of the slogan itself—for a People's Democracy—in this country. Under present American conditions, it can be agreed that the slogan for a People's Democracy is not one of action, or even of active agitation. Nevertheless, it represents a possible development, although not inevitable, and it is in this respect that we should use it.

The second important thing about the People's Democracy to bear carefully in mind is that between the People's Democracy and the people's front there is a qualitative difference. This basic difference is that a people's front government operates within the framework of a bourgeois state, whereas the People's Democracy is a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The people's front curbs the power of the monopolists and warmakers; the People's Democracy smashes their power altogether and sets out upon the road to Socialism. In my pamphlet *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, I pointed out (page 85) that the People's Democracies are forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But generally the basic distinction between the two forms was not made sharp and clear enough to avoid all possible misinterpretations. We must, of course, as Comrade Dennis indicated at our recent National Committee meeting, be careful not to allow our Party line to be distorted into a seeming equation of the people's front with the People's Democracy, or a simple evolution of one into the other.

A third phase of the general question of the People's Democracy that we must also understand clearly is that before a People's Democracy can be established in a given country the bourgeoisie must be finally and decisively defeated. This implies that the Communist Party

is in the leading position among the working class. In my pamphlet (page 48) in describing the general political situation in which the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe had come into existence, I said: "Thus, the shattering of the capitalist state machinery, which Marx, Lenin and Stalin had long before laid down as a condition for the successful revolution, had been largely accomplished by the people during the course of the great anti-fascist war." In smashing the Hitler machine, as well as in preventing European counter-revolution from attacking the new People's Democracies, the Soviet Army played the decisive role.

A fourth important consideration that we should bear in mind in relation to the People's Democracy is that it is an evolving form of the proletarian dictatorship. The People's Democracies of Eastern Europe did not come full-fledged into existence as did Minerva from the brow of Jove. While they were forms of the proletarian dictatorship from the outset they grew and consolidated themselves in revolutionary struggle against capitalist reaction. At first the governments of the People's Democracies were made up of broad coalitions of all the parties that generally had combatted fascism during the war. These coalitions included Socialist Parties, Social-Democratic Parties, peasant parties, Catholic Parties and even parties of the

smaller capitalists. The strong leaders of the coalition governments were the powerful Communist Parties. Under the double pressure, on the one hand, of the advancing Socialist-minded workers and the peasantry, and on the other, of counter-revolutionary American and domestic reaction, the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, with the assistance of the U.S.S.R., all went through a rapid process of strengthening and consolidating themselves. The Communist Parties grew tremendously and finally brought about an amalgamation with the Social-Democratic parties. The trade unions expanded swiftly and enormously increased their strength. The several coalition governments systematically purged the armies, police forces, state bureaus, schools, industries, etc., of reactionary leadership. The bourgeois elements were forced out of the governments and their parties were largely dismantled. The program for the nationalization of industry, the break-up of the big estates, etc., was pushed with great vigor. This was no mere automatic consolidation of the People's Democracies. It was the sharpest form of class struggle, reaching the point of civil war in some countries—Poland, for example. At times the fight against domestic reaction stimulated by American imperialism was so intense as to threaten the very existence of the young revolutionary governments.

ON THE QUESTION OF SOCIALIST "ENCIRCLEMENT"

The substance of this so-called encirclement proposition is two-fold: (a) Socialism is rapidly expanding in the world as capitalism sinks deeper into general crisis, and (b) the more world Socialism expands, the more it weakens the position of American imperialism. And should American imperialism try to revise this inevitable process by a resort to war, the armed effort would only serve to hasten it, to speed the breakdown of capitalism and the growth of Socialism.

It would, of course, be a grave error to conclude that because the advances of world Socialism weaken the position of American imperialism, therefore the American capitalists would find themselves in a position where they would feel unable to fight. On the contrary, their increasing desperation, bred of the weakening world position of capitalism and the failure of the American foreign policies, renders these capitalists all the more disposed to reckless war adventures, as the present dangerous war campaign clearly illustrates. This principle has long been clear to our Party, and we have stated it many times in our analysis of the war danger. And as Comrade Suslov, paraphrasing Lenin, recently said:

Historical experience teaches that the more hopeless the position of im-

perialist reaction, the more it rages: the more danger of military adventures on its part. (*For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy!* December 2, 1949.)

This whole conception is directly opposite to the one which Browder once tried to fasten upon our Party. With his theory of American exceptionalism and glorification of American imperialism, his idea was that American capitalism had become so powerful as to make it impossible for other important sections of the world to become Socialist—Europe, Latin America, Canada, etc. In this respect we need only recall his infamous letter to the Australian Communist Party, criticizing these comrades as "Leftists" because they had put forward a Socialist perspective for their country. Browder argued with them that Australia was so tied in economically with the United States that it could not adopt Socialism without the permission of Wall Street. Browder's was a policy for the defeat of world Socialism and the permanence of world capitalism, dominated by American imperialism.

The responsibility for establishing Socialism in the United States, of course, rests squarely upon the shoulders of the American working class and its political allies. They will also get powerful and increasing support from advancing world Socialism. It would be silly, of course, were anyone to conclude

from this that all the American workers have to do is to sit still and let the Socialist workers of other countries solve their problems for them. No working class would ever arrive at such a stupid decision. On the contrary, the American working class in its daily struggle and in its eventual fight for Socialism will be greatly strengthened, not weakened, both in understanding and action, by the knowledge that the advance of world Socialism weakens the position of American imperialism, which tries to make the American people and the world believe that it is all-powerful and invincible.

ON FORCE AND VIOLENCE

In the trial, on the whole, we presented correctly the complex questions of force and violence in the class struggle. In this matter we specifically met the direct indictment against us. The substance of our position was that, as Marx long ago pointed out, no ruling class in history has ever yielded up its position to a rising revolutionary class, short of using every weapon in its power to maintain itself; and secondly, that the working class and its allies, with the Communist Party at their head, will be strong enough to defeat all such ruling-class violence that will be encountered on the road to Socialism.

It was not enough, however, for us simply to repeat the necessity and

certainty of the workers to defeat the employers' violence by their own superior strength. The whole matter of the use of force in the class struggle had to be examined from a tactical standpoint in the light of the present, recently greatly altered relationship of class forces, and the state of the general crisis of capitalism, on both the world and domestic scales.

When we say that the world forces of democracy and Socialism are today stronger than those of war-making capitalist reaction, this formulation carries with it vitally important implications both nationally and internationally, particularly with regard to the capitalists' power to use violence and the workers' attitude toward that violence. That is to say, the forces of democracy, by the mobilization of their potentially superior strength, now face the necessity and possibility of sapping the ability of the bourgeoisie to employ violence against the people.

In my pamphlet I pointed out that immediately after the end of the war there was a widespread relatively peaceful and orderly advance toward Socialism in the People's Democracies. This was a fact, and the only reason why such a situation could exist, even temporarily, was because, on the one hand, the bourgeois state machinery was smashed by the war and by the historic, liberating role of the Soviet Army, whereas, on the other, those of de-

mocracy and Socialism had been greatly strengthened by this historic anti-Hitler victory. Reaction, in this early postwar period, was simply unable to fight the European workers effectively on a general scale, although it tried to do so to the best of its ability—creating civil war in Greece, uprisings in Poland, putsches in Romania, etc. Now, however, the situation is vastly altered. Under the aggressive leadership of American imperialism, European reaction has been able somewhat to pull its weakened forces together again, with the result that virtual potential civil-war conditions have been created in France, Italy, Germany and other countries of Central and Western Europe.

A classic example of the working out of the new relationship of class forces, under the leadership of a strong Communist Party, was that given by Czechoslovakia. There, of course, the situation was highly favorable for the workers. Capitalism had been greatly weakened by the war and was overthrown, the Communist Party was powerful, the workers were in a revolutionary mood and in power, and, above all, there was the near presence of the Soviet Union. The workers and their allied forces, consequently, were so strong and well-organized that when the forces of reaction, stimulated by American imperialism, made their well-prepared counter-revolutionary attack in February 1948—they

wanted to turn Czechoslovakia into another Greece—the powerful democratic Socialist forces, led by the Communist Party, strangled the movement at its inception, prevented the contemplated civil war and passed on swiftly to a decisive strengthening of the People's Democracy and its Socialist program. Other countries, of course, will not be as favorably situated as Czechoslovakia, and will have to collide much more heavily with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. But the general principle applies, nevertheless, of weakening the fighting capacity of the bourgeoisie beforehand so that it may be the more readily defeated when it does use violence against the people.

The supreme example of capitalist violence is, of course, expressed in imperialist war, in counter-revolutionary world war. Here, by virtue of the greater potential strength of the forces of democracy and Socialism, the effort is to prevent the warlike bourgeoisie from plunging the world into a new war, or to defeat them if they do. No Marxist-Leninist can doubt but that the big capitalists will launch a third world war, *if they are able to do so*. It is the historic task of the democratic-Socialist forces to make it impossible for them to unleash this catastrophe. If we can say that world war is not inevitable this is only because the people's peace forces are now potentially strong enough to prevent such

a war if they will but act vigorously and together. International peace will be guaranteed in the world, with its rotting capitalist system and rampant imperialist reaction, only when the democratic-Socialist forces, nationally and internationally, resolutely undertake to maintain that peace.

In conclusion: As for the main line followed by our Party in the big trial, it was politically sound and correct. What we have to do now is to defend that line militantly, while fully developing all its theoretical formulations and implications. Today the supreme menace that our people and the world face is the danger of war. All the other reactionary political trends in capitalist society—the many fascist tendencies,

the attacks upon the Negro people, the assaults upon the trade unions, the attempts to jail our leadership and to outlaw the Communist Party—all combine and culminate in making more threatening and acute the great menace of these times: the danger of another world war in the pursuance of American imperialism's insane attempt to destroy international Socialism and to rule the world. To do our full part in combatting this grave threat to civilization and progress, let us never forget that the supreme necessity of the working class and the people is for a powerful mass Communist Party, firmly united and solidly grounded in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. A strong Communist Party is the key to every success.