

Speeches in Discussion On the Draft Resolution of the National Board at the Plenary Meeting of the National Committee, C.P.A., June 18-20, 1945

SPEECH BY GILBERT GREEN

THE FACT that the National Board has separated itself from the false position occupied by Comrade Browder, in no way relieves it of responsibility for the grave errors committed. Not only Comrade Browder, but every member of the Board, with the exception of Comrade Foster, must bear a share of the responsibility, although not all of equal magnitude. My own share of responsibility I consider particularly great. I did not follow blindly—I was firmly convinced that the main line was correct. Whatever differences I had were on secondary and subordinate questions. In fact, in seeking theoretical justification for our policies, I was one of those who contributed to the further revision of our basic body of Marxist-Leninist principles. Unable to make the line fit the theory, I began to reshape the theory to fit the line. Such

errors cannot be considered as small ones; they could have led to the most dangerous consequences, and our organization has the duty of drawing the fullest political and organizational conclusions from them.

I agree with those who say that our organization would have come around to a fundamental correction of its policies even without the withering lash of Comrade Duclos' criticism. But I disagree with those who believe that we were on the verge of such a basic re-examination of our position when the Duclos article arrived. That is not true. It is true that for some weeks prior to the arrival of the article we had sharpened up our criticism; that we were deeply disturbed at the increasing signs of tension in the ranks of the coalition; and that we did recognize that a certain shift in class forces was taking place with

In Comrade Browder's remarks rejecting the resolution of the National Board, he makes much of the point that there is a "coincidence of interests" between capitalist America and the Soviet Union. This is undeniably true. But apparently what Comrade Browder does not also see, is that side by side with this coincidence of interest there also exists a basic antagonism. Both of these—the coincidence of interest and the antagonism—have been and continue to be reflected in the foreign policy of our government, and which is uppermost at any given moment is determined, not alone by the class interests of the bourgeoisie, but by the class struggle—by the struggle of the overwhelming majority of the American people against the most reactionary, predatory and chauvinist elements of finance capital.

Comrade Browder in his June 2 statement says that the only alternatives that the American bourgeoisie has to collaboration with the Soviet Union is either that of immediate war, or that of a period of armed peace including features of diplomatic and economic warfare. These alternatives Comrade Browder characterizes as suicidal for the bourgeoisie, thereby leaving the course of collaboration as the only tenable one open for it.

I'm afraid the actual picture is far more complicated than this. The fact remains that the foreign policy of London and Washington has not been and is not today a pure policy

that can fit into one or the other of Comrade Browder's neatly constructed compartments. This policy reflects both the coincidence of interests as well as antagonism, which means it includes both the elements of collaboration as well as those of the carrot and club policy. The fact that Comrade Browder, and we with him, failed to see this two-sided character of British and American policy explains the many gyrations in our own estimates—one week, Vandenberg had taken over the American delegation at San Francisco; the next week, Hull had it back under control again; the third week things generally were going to the devil, and the fourth, everything was well again.

Had we seen the two-fold character of American foreign policy, even under Roosevelt, it would have helped us to fight more consistently against vacillations, hesitations and even double-bookkeeping. The two-fold character of our foreign policy is best illustrated in the personage and actions of Stettinius, who flew directly from Yalta to Mexico City and there organized the conspiracy to undermine the Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta agreements on the world security organization as well as to seat fascist Argentina. Certainly there was no shift of class forces that took place during the flight from Yalta to Chapultepec; it was only the same actor playing his double role—and, remember, with the agreement and

conomic perspectives I showed that postwar production levels must be higher than prewar ones if catastrophe is to be avoided. I pointed to the possibility of achieving such higher levels for the years immediately following the reconversion period, as well as for a considerable period after, through an expansion of foreign trade and through the struggle to raise living standards in the United States. But there is one cold, stark fact that I evaded in all my writings and that cannot be dodged, for it is the nub of the whole question—namely, that even if postwar production were to remain at wartime peak (something highly improbable), even if there were to be the wildest expansion of foreign trade, another cyclical economic crisis is inevitable. In fact, the tremendous expansion of productive plant in the country during the war and the creation of a number of new industries, only intensifies the problem of finding postwar markets large enough to keep our industries operating at anything like maximum capacity. Aggravating the problem even further is the fact that during the war there has taken place a tremendous increase in labor productivity which has brought about a marked increase in the rate of exploitation. Also, even if the country were to achieve foreign markets on a scale unheard of before, this could not eliminate crisis; it could only postpone the ultimate day of reckoning, guar-

anteeing that when it finally came the crash would shake the entire capitalist world and American society to its very depth.

As long as we have capitalism we shall have cyclical economic crises. This was even true of American capitalism in the nineteenth century when it was young and virile and still had a whole continent to develop. It certainly is even more true of capitalism today in the period of its general crisis. In fact, under conditions of this general crisis, there is bound to be considerable chronic unemployment even in the years of relative prosperity. This does not of course mean that the fight for full employment is a utopian one. This fight, the fight for the right to work, is going to be one of the most bitterly fought battles in American history. The bourgeoisie is going to fight with every weapon at its command to keep this right from being written into the laws of the land and realized.

If American capitalism is going to face a sharpening of the contradiction between its increased productive powers and its diminishing market possibilities, then it is quite obvious that over the years, especially after the first postwar years, we are going to witness a sharpening of all the inner and outer contradictions of American capitalism: an intensification of the class conflict at home; a growing scramble between Britain and the U.S.A. for each other's markets and sources of

last November that Roosevelt had failed to solve the problems of unemployment and that only the war had solved this for him.

The next years ahead will be decisive for the whole future of our country and the world. If the masses are not organized and united around a militant program in defense of their interests, then there is a grave danger that this country may take the path toward fascism and war, replacing Nazi Germany as the threat to the peace and freedom of the world. That is what must be avoided at all costs. This cannot be achieved by a narrow sectarian policy, but only by the

broadest mass policy. This does not mean that we should refuse to work together with liberal bourgeois forces. It only means that we must constantly remember that the program of even the liberal bourgeoisie cannot offer the way out, that the bourgeoisie cannot be relied upon, that the working class must learn to think as a class, must depend in the first place upon its own strength and upon its unity with its natural allies, and that above all, that there must be a Communist vanguard which firmly, without vacillation and without illusions, points the way to victory over reaction and fascism.