

Describes Browder's Position As Liberal-Bourgeois

Dear Editors:

Earl Browder's speech to the National Board on June 2, appearing in Sunday's Worker, is truly amazing. It is the

most closely-reasoned and consistent presentation of the viewpoint of the liberal capitalists that I have ever read. The only trouble is that it was written by a man who has for many years been the leader of the most politically-conscious section of the American working class.

His whole reasoning is: what will, what must the capitalists do? And after, with supreme intelligence, he has drawn his conclusions, he tells the working class, in a couple of paragraphs at the end, what it should do to help out.

Our responsibility, as a Marxist-Leninist organization, is to begin our reasoning at the opposite end: what should, what must, what can the working class do? Joseph Stalin, writing in 1938 on "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" in the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, put it this way:

Hence we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force. (My emphasis). (The fact that Stalin wrote this during the "collective security period" is itself noteworthy.)

The remarkable thing about Browder's speech is that it cannot properly be called "Social-Democratic," rather it is Rooseveltian, liberal-bourgeois. In listing the five factors which are new in the world (which he did splendidly and with great precision), he omitted "just" one: the tremendously increased organization of labor in this coun-

try and Britain, a strength which will grow with the return of servicemen who, as he says, do not want to fight the Soviet Union. This strength will grow further as the inability of the capitalists to solve their postwar economic problems becomes increasingly evident, and labor takes the lead—if we Communists do our share.

The basic character of Browder's approach is evident if one place side by side this speech and his article in the January Political Affairs. In this speech he gives the capitalists the right to be as subjective as they please, choosing from three possible courses of development. But in the January article he tells the Communists and the working class that it has no right to choose, that the capitalists must continue in power until their system collapses, and if it doesn't there isn't anything in the world we can do about it. It's the old "productive forces" theory, which Stalin demolishes so completely in "Foundations of Leninism."

The danger in Browder's June 2 speech is that, except for its weak opening section on the CPA and the elections, it is extremely plausible. But its plausibility is that of a good ally in the ranks of a reactionary class—Roosevelt, and not that of a Marxist leader thinking first and foremost of the working class. As such, it serves the good purpose of showing us that we must not follow even a Roosevelt, or a Truman, who has made a good start so far, we must lead.

This brings up for reexamination another pet view of Browder's. In the last few years he has never tired of telling us how "modest" a portion of the American people we are, how little we affect the course

of events, therefore how foolish—he has told the capitalists—it is to believe that we can really bring about a change in this country. He called this "Bolshevik modesty," "realism." Actually, the facts are otherwise. When we had a fraction of our present strength, we organized demonstrations of hundreds of thousands for Sacco and Vanzetti during the prosperity period of 1927; we gave leadership to millions of unemployed on March 6, 1930, and thereafter; we won the bulk of the AFL membership to official support of unemployment insurance over the heads of the leadership.

To whom is America indebted for the fact that there is unemployment insurance; that there is legal protection for the right to organize; that there are mass industrial trade unions which are the core of progress in this country; that the Negro people learned its strength through the struggle to free the Scottsboro boys, and has gone on to partial equality and to become labor's staunchest ally, etc. To whom? To us alone? No. But to us primarily.

Roosevelt deserves full credit for having foreseen the disastrous alternatives for his class if it refused to make concessions. But there would have been no need to make any had there not been a clear-sighted Communist core in the working class which pointed the finger at the root of the trouble not "our" competitors abroad, which seems to be Browder's main worry nowadays, but American imperialism, "the bosses," as a class. Our history demonstrates that our Marxist-Leninist understanding and strength and Party organization has given us a power far beyond our numbers to influence the course of events. We must strengthen them.

A. B. C.
New York.

Seaman Proposes That Party Be Reestablished

Editors:

I am a merchant seaman. I returned to this country early in May and, after a few days here, I became alarmed and shocked at the obvious opportunist and reformist policy pursued by the CPA.

To me, therefore, the Duclos letter came like a breath of fresh air. Every American Communist owes a debt of gratitude to Duclos for his penetrating criticism.

As for the National Board Resolution, it is a great step forward from the previous CPA policy and is therefore to be welcomed.

However, the Resolution has a number of serious weaknesses. I should like to discuss one of them in this letter.

On the question of CPA as against CP, the resolution states "While a change in form or name of our Marxist organization is not in itself a question of principle. . . ." That is entirely incorrect. It is definitely a question of principle whether we have a "Political Association" or a "Party." We are supposed to be Marxists. Marxism teaches that a Party is a part of a class, its foremost part. A "Political Association" is merely the joining together of various individuals or groups to take up political matters.

Let's dispense with the name "Political Association"—the sooner the better. Let's go forward to build a united, powerful and disciplined Communist Party of the United States.

JOE AUSTIN.

Affirms Loyalty Despite Outcome

By DOLLY E. SEABOURNE

Pennsylvania.

Whatever may be the final decision as regards this poignant issue on the dissolution of the C.P.U.S.A., let none of us, for a moment, swerve from our loyalty to our organization.

Questions Method of Policy Making

Editor:

In presenting Duclos' article, Browder makes the point that this is the time for a review and inventory of CPA policy.

It is unfortunate, in my opinion, that Browder's foreword suggests that the inventory will be conducted by a small committee on top, while the rest of us, down below, should go on with whatever we are doing, our minds shut against speculation as to prospective changes, until the top committee completes its deliberations. This doesn't make sense: (1) the publication in full of Duclos' article must have been designed to stimulate wide discussion; (2) it would be absurd to suppose that the readers of the article are going to put it aside and wait patiently, with inert minds, for the National Committee to draw the necessary conclusions; and (3) the members and friends of the CPA have as much at stake in the correctness of CPA policy and as great an obligation to evaluate it as have Browder, Foster and the other members of the National Committee.

It strikes me at the outset that we would be very unwise to allow ourselves to be diverted from a rigorous process of self-criticism by the clamor with which Browder rightly anticipated the reactionary press will greet our deliberations. It would be very unfortunate if we were to pull our self-directed punches or were to discourage sharp criticisms by raising the specter of anti-Communist forces to whom we are bidden not to lend comfort.

No political inventory would be complete, in my estimation, which did not deal with the mechanics of our policy-making. We cannot sat-

isfy ourselves with the observation that there has always been an opportunity for all to present their disagreements and doubts in the customary channels of the Association. The fact is that many members don't think they have such an opportunity and they don't take it. The fear of stigmatization as a dissident, or, worse still, as a renegade, is a factor; so is the blind assumption in advance by the Association press that unanimity has already been achieved; so also is the yes-man role of the minor functionaries who, for most of us, are our only contact with the Association leadership.

Most important of all, I should say, is the factor of loyalty, the willingness to subordinate private misgivings to the need for consolidated support of the Association in the face of constant sniping and opposition.

Whatever the causes, the unwholesome effect is to perpetuate mistakes, to develop a gulf between leadership and membership, to drive honest criticism underground, to vulgarize the concept of democratic centralism.

To my mind we should not correct our mistakes unless we have learned how we made them and how they continued for so long. We must ask ourselves how it was possible that we should have been informed, two years after the event by the leader of the CP of another country, that the then chairman of the CPUSA did not agree with the policies advocated by its secretary, now president of the CPA. We shall have to ask ourselves what medium our organizational structure allowed Foster for the presentation to the membership of his dissent from the

National Committee's line. The issue, in short, is as to what part the membership plays in the determination of policy; how the mechanics for membership participation operate in practice; how dissent is to be registered.

It is only in the light of such an evaluation that we will begin to understand how our members, distinguished as a group for the sharpness of their critical faculties, could ostensibly have acquiesced in the casuistry by which Minor and others "proved" that our perspective of a capitalism without conflict was in accord with the Marxist analysis; that in fact any other conclusion was non- or anti-Marxist.

To plan for the future we must be thoroughly candid about the past. Browder, for example, is not being candid when he says: "It has been clear at all times that the end of the war in Europe would require a fundamental review of all problems by American Marxists." The excerpts from his reports cited by Duclos demonstrate that it couldn't have been very clear to him (Browder).

Was the CPA leadership being candid when it explained the dissolution of the party as due to the addition of Americans to the two-party system or the abandonment of the socialist perspectives to the addition of Americans to "free enterprise"? Had Americans just developed these addictions or are we to believe that they had just come, for the first time, to Browder's attention?

Candor about our ultimate perspectives and our Marxist analysis of class forces would assure a continuity in our thought through whatever adjustments and changes. The adjustments and changes

themselves would be candidly described as such. We would not attribute them to "changes in objective conditions," as though objective conditions were not always changing and were not themselves affected (changed) by policy-changes. There would not be those "abrupt" turns which catch us with our ideological pants down; we depend at such times on "loyalty" and "faith" rather than on understanding. They are "flipflops" precisely because we fail to bear in mind and keep before the public the fundamentals of our point of view.

Each period's "line" is out of the blue; the slogans of the day are treated as though they were basic, and independent, concepts. Tactics are mistaken for strategy; strategy for policy. We ride our slogans to death and they all become "at all costs" propositions. What nonsense to speak of the perspective of any period as having to be worked for "at all costs." At the cost of defeating the peoples' movements in Europe; at the cost of wrecking an effective peace-keeping machinery? (Witness our shillyshallying position on the Chapultepec pact a few months ago when the possible implications should have been apparent.)

Though we can point to passages in our literature of the period which called for "vigilance," the fact is that the overall emphasis was one of lulling complacency. The fact is that we painted an idyllic picture of international negotiations which could never have corresponded with reality and which left people unprepared for the eventual burst into the open of pretty important disagreements.

An Association Member.

About the Truce Of 1920 to 1941

Dear Editors:

In The Worker's discussion section, W. M. remarks, in a letter titled "Duclos' article written before FDR's death," that the Teheran agreement "does not create a new world, but reestablishes the truce of 1920-1941 between capitalism and socialism."

This, it seems to me, is a static concept, in assuming that there can exist at this time such a relation of forces as to make possible a truce on the 1920 model. W. M. does not take into account the great facts of recent history: (a) The emergence of the Soviet Union as the greatest world power, with America. This includes the entire Soviet economic development through NEP and Five-Year Plans. (b) The successful conclusion of a coalition war which in no way resembles the 1914-1918 imperialist struggle.

I wish to point out also the significant fact, that the 1920-1941 truce was no more a truce than the Niemollers and company are anti-fascist. The seeming truce (truce only because war was not being waged against the Soviet Union), was in every respect, war. Does W. M. forget that from 1920-1941, world imperialism was conditioning those forces under its control for use against the Soviet Union? Can one disregard the economic blockade of the new-born Soviet Union, and the subsequent "minor" aggressions, which were no more than a feeding process for Hitlerism, i.e., the military "big stick" of reactionary capitalism, whose only purpose was clearly stated, but not clearly understood by the world.

If one evaluates correctly the present forces, collectively and individually, is it at all possible to believe that Teheran=1920-1941. This would be a grave injustice to the policy of Roosevelt, who saw in Teheran the causative factors for a prolonged and real peace, that which 1920-1941 was not.

M. W., New York.

: CPA : Discussion

The National Board of the Communist Political Association has made arrangements with the Daily Worker and The Worker to publish discussion material daily on the CPA resolution: *The Present Situation and the Next Tasks*.

To guarantee the broadest participation of the CPA membership in the discussion, and to ensure the publication of the maximum number of contributions, all articles should not exceed 1,200 words. This rule will apply equally to members of the National Committee and to all other members of the Association. The committee reserves the right to print excerpts from contributions exceeding this length so as to realize this objective.

Eugene Dennis
William Z. Foster
Robert Thompson