

CPA Discussion Page

Open to All CPA Members—Send Your Contributions to Communist Political Association, 35 E. 12 St., N. Y. C.

Policy Denied Character of Capitalism

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I want to express my approval of the National Board Resolution.

First, it must be emphasized that the responsibility for our errors does not rest with Comrade Browder alone. All of us must share in that responsibility, else the conception of collective leadership is meaningless.

Secondly, how is it that practically our whole organization could be guilty of Marxist distortions and opportunist errors? We are not living in a vacuum, we live in a capitalist society. The whole environment in which we lived and are still living, the fact that the bourgeoisie was coining huge profits from the war and could thus encourage the development of a labor aristocracy, fostered opportunist illusions. History has shown that opportunism, the accommodation to the class ideology of the bourgeoisie, can infect the broadest sections of a working class political movement. The bureaucracy which chains a whole movement to ideas alien to working class theory springs from and is only another form of opportunism.

Thirdly, the Duclos letter emphasizes the significance of internationalism to the working class movement. The internationalism of our movement constantly reinforces the idea that world economy and politics must be viewed as a whole. It is the negation of the theory of exceptionalism.

Finally, it must be emphasized that our organization will prove invincible precisely because of the scalpel of self-criticism to which we are subjecting our errors and mistakes.

Now, as to my reasons for agreement with the resolution. It seems to me that the starting point of our confusion is in having accepted without critical analysis the concept that Teheran denoted something unprecedented and unparalleled. On this basis, we could throw Marxism overboard; we could quote Marx and Lenin when they fitted in

with our preconceived ideas, demolish Marx and Lenin when they clashed with those views. When certain contradictions forced themselves upon our attention and made us uneasy, the world "unfortunately" served to dispel our uneasiness. "Unfortunately" became a substitute for a class analysis of contradictions in this peoples war of national liberation.

In what sense was Teheran unprecedented? In the sense that it represented a new relationship of forces but within the framework of a world situation in which the capitalist and socialist sectors exist side by side. Teheran is thus a change based on a new relationship of forces. But just as the imperialist war of 1914 produced a new relationship of forces and undermined the base of imperialism, so this people's war undermined the base of imperialism still further. The utopian dreams envisaged in the book "Teheran" flows from a denial of the basic character of capitalism and imperialism which by its inexorable laws of development generates reaction, oppression and fascism.

Beginning with this, one is led, step by step, to "soften" all the contradictions of imperialism. The views expressed in "Teheran" approximates the theory of "ultra-imperialism," a theory which holds that the bourgeoisie have only to "prefer" a progressive policy in order to dissolve capitalist, imperialist contradictions.

In his discussion on the resolution Comrade Browder ascribes to the factors comprising the new relationship of forces an inherent quality which makes not for an accentuation but for an elimination of these contradictions. He comes to the conclusions that the bourgeoisie, acting on the basis of its own class interests, has no other alternative but to work for the realization of peace with the Soviet Union and the Teheran perspective. Therefore, only "insanity" and "loss of intelligence" could make the bourgeoisie act against its alleged class interests. This view is grounded neither in fact nor in theory.

Firstly, the cause of war is not

due either to the "evil" genius or master "intelligence" of the capitalist. It is due to the class structure of capitalist society. Secondly, if the great majority of the bourgeoisie today adheres to the carrot and club policy, is it because it is merely waiting to be convinced by an even more forcible spokesman for the Communists than Comrade Browder has proved to be? Is it because they are waiting for a final "warning" from the Communists that their policies lead to inevitable disaster for themselves? Finally, this is not the first time when the class interests of the bourgeoisie "coincided" to some degree with the class interests of the working class. Certainly, neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class "wants" cyclical crises of capitalism. But it is precisely such a crisis and the war that followed that gave birth to the Soviet Union, something not exactly relished by the bourgeoisie. And it isn't as if the bourgeoisie were not warned in ample time.

Around this whole question of the "common interests" of the bourgeoisie and the working class, there has occurred a Marxist distortion. This was glaringly revealed in our vulgarized approach to Roosevelt and his administration.

We cannot be indifferent as to who administers the state at any given moment, whether it be those who seek to carry out their class tasks on the basis of bourgeois democracy or fascism. The question is whether the liberal bourgeoisie can be expected to take and maintain a consistent position for the destruction of fascism or to side with the working class to defend bourgeois democracy against fascism to the end. The experiences with the liberal bourgeoisie in Germany, France and Italy certainly does not warrant such an expectation. The liberal bourgeoisie is bound by inseparable bonds with the most reactionary elements of its class and finance capital.

This raises the question whether, nevertheless, Teheran is realizable? It can be realized, to the same degree that self-determination of nations is realizable under capital-

ism. Its realization depends on the strength of the Soviet Union, whose policies in no way conflict with the Teheran perspective. It depends on the struggle of the colonial masses supported by the working class and its natural allies in all countries. It depends on the working class and its allies constituted in a democratic coalition including those capitalists whose interest will, for a limited time and for limited objectives coincide with the interests of the working class.

This will not be the bulk of the bourgeoisie. Teheran will not be realized by making the working class a tail to the bourgeois kite.

A few words on the dissolution of the Communist Party. Comrade Browder justifies the dissolution on the grounds that it was necessary to guarantee the reelection of Roosevelt and thus "we would not have been justified in neglecting any single factor which could throw an ounce of strength on the side of the democratic coalition." Such a viewpoint negates the essential meaning of national unity in the interests of the nation and the essential role of the Communists in welding this national unity. It means, as certain liberals are so fond of repeatedly pointing out, that in the struggle against reaction and fascism, the Communist organization serves only to "embarrass" the labor and people's movements. It means, in short, to negate the vanguard role of the Communist organization.

If the dissolution of the Communist Party can be justified on the grounds of accommodation to the liberal bourgeoisie and the pacification of the fright of the liberal bourgeoisie, then with equal justification we must add, in all logic, that we neglected, the "strongest" single factor that would have thoroughly pleased the bourgeoisie, namely, not only the dissolution of the Communist Party but the liquidation of the Communist movement itself. And these were actually the tendencies inherent in the dissolution of the Communist Party.

(Excerpts from remarks to National Committee, June 18-20.)

Lauds Browder As a Leader

Let's not fail to estimate correctly the situation we Communists face. The consequences could be tragic to our movement and our country. I have heard many say, "I feel better after reading the draft resolution of the National Board. After all, the situation is not so serious. The slogans are the ones we worked out in the past period and were in the process of working out when the Duclos article descended upon us." These people ask, "Where's all the fuss?"

Comrade Earl Browder voted against this resolution. Not Dennis, Not Green. Not any other member of the National Board. But Browder, the man who before all of us must be credited with developing the program which he votes against in this draft resolution; must be credited with having welded together out of the bitter factional days of some 15 years ago a party capable of executing this program.

Why did Browder vote against this resolution? Why, Comrades? The answer to that question will disclose, I believe, that the American Communist movement is faced with a crisis of the greatest seriousness. If this crisis is as serious as I believe it is, our need is, "No club decisions, no county decisions, no state decisions, no National Committee decisions until the membership is given a chance to become fully aware of just what is involved."

I asked the question why Earl Browder voted against a draft resolution containing in essence a program he was instrumental in devising. I am sure he will answer that question himself. But there are things he cannot say in making his answer. These things we from the ranks MUST say, and I for one say it with great pride.

Earl Browder is the greatest leader our American movement has developed. He is the tried and proven son of the working class who has led us to great achievements. We love him as the Russian workers loved and love their two greatest leaders, Lenin and Stalin. Like these other two, he has shown himself capable of rising to the most difficult and critical decision in the world's history. Has he made mistakes in his years of service to us? What Communist from Marx until today has not?

And yet we are asked to reject him. Why? We are told that we have become revisionists and opportunists and that Browder led us into these errors. Is this true, comrades? To put the question is to answer it, in my opinion. It is erroneous. I believe the National Board was led to this error by the following mistakes:

1. Comrade Foster was incorrect in not publicly stating his position at the time when he took issue with our Teheran decisions.

2. It was not to the service of the American Communist movement that a highly controversial document should be placed at the disposal of Comrade Jacques Duclos before the rank and file of our movement was informed that a controversy existed.

It was not to the service of the American Communist movement that our National Board submit to the membership a decision representing a right-about-face as a basis for our present discussion in the clubs. To me, the draft resolution is very bare of alternatives to the policy we have been following to date. It prejudices the discussion. It invites the membership to make the same mistake.

Let no one interpret this as a call for compromise on Marxist-Leninist principle. It is call for clarity, for unity, that we can proceed with the job of smashing the forces of fascism.—Pat, Village Club.

What KIND of Collaboration Is Important

Dear Comrades:

Marx's analysis of the nature of Capitalist society is the basis of all Marxist thought. Let us remember that Marx did not invent the laws of motion and development that are inherent in our economic system. He discovered them through the scientific method of Dialectical Materialism. The theory of the class struggle is a fundamental concept of Marxism. Any deviation from this premise is revisionism.

Does this mean that collaboration with the bourgeoisie is incorrect at certain periods in history? Of course not. However, collaboration does not mean sacrificing the independent role of the working class, and its most advanced section of The Communist Party. Unity and collaboration are correct only when they further the interest of the proletariat; so that it can become stronger, develop its political maturity, and fulfill its historic task, which is the establishment of Socialism.

This is the essence of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. Of course, the bourgeoisie, too, follows its own class interests, and at no period during this war did they sacrifice any of their profits or political and economic influences. On the contrary, when these were threatened, they fought against the people as brutally as ever. (Greece, Italy, the Polish issue, San Francisco, etc., etc.). To accept Lenin's analysis of Imperialism (as Comrade Browder says he does) and yet to envision this dying class, still

having enough "progressivism" left to provide full employment, high wages, and even industrialization of colonial countries with the benefits of self-government—surely this is so illogical that it becomes very absurd or naive. As a matter of fact, the entire period from January, 1944 (and even long before that) until the present was weird.

How did it happen that our entire National Committee (except Comrade Foster) could have made the same errors? How is it that the various Marxist theoreticians in this country did not say a single dissenting word? Publicly, at least. Of course, I believe that one of the main reasons for the static thinking displayed by the leadership and membership, in recent years, was lack of contact with the people in the shops, on the farms, and in the armed forces. We were so busy trying to win acceptance by the bourgeoisie, that our thinking lost some of its vitality and clarity. Undemocratic action was the result.

Following the discussion in The Daily Worker, I noted that there is a strong tendency to forgive these "errors." The attitude seems to be "let's forgive, forget, and go on to the future." In my opinion, such smugness is incorrect. Every member of the National Committee should issue a statement on how and why he found himself thinking in such an un-Marxian manner. A complete educational program should be planned so that every CPA member becomes aware of the nature, causes and dangers of re-

visionism.

I would like to make the following proposals:

1. Reform the Communist Party. Although this will seem inconsistent, we cannot avoid the responsibility for our act in dissolving the Party. A strong Party will best serve the interest of the Nation in the immediate future.

2. Re-establish the industrial branches so that contact with the workers in industry may be resumed. Only by reaching these workers, will we be able to reflect their real needs and sentiments.

3. Replace all persons in local state or national leadership who remain unclear or vacillating.

4. Explain the nature of our mistakes to the people. Lenin always

urged such action. Let us take the initiative in such explanations so that our enemies will not gain further from our weakness. Furthermore, as we bring the issues of the day before the people, we will have to confess that we had an incorrect approach to certain problems (for example Stettinius' appointment).

If we can overcome our inhibitions and speak up freely during this discussion period, then we will undoubtedly strengthen our party organization and the labor movement generally. Once, and for all, let us not hurry to retreat and efface ourselves, when our enemies yell "red." Let us not underestimate the level of political maturity, both of the American people and the CPA membership.

C. F., N. Y.

Says Entire Leadership to Blame

I would like to express my opinion on the resolution of June 2 issued by our National Board.

I agree with Foster from the very beginning, and I regret very much that I was, as most of the membership was, not aware of Comrade Foster's views before this change took place. However, I disagree with Comrade Foster for placing the blame on Comrade Browder. I also disagree with Comrade Carpenter from Texas for placing the blame on the entire membership.

My reason for placing the guilt thus is; that the membership did not hear the views of Foster; they were only given a chance to vote

YES or NO on Browder's views. The fact remains that the National Committee had the chance to hear both views and make a decision thereby.

Foster stresses the fact that the fault is Browder's because of his influence and prestige among the membership. While it is true, that Browder is influential, if they had had the chance to hear Foster's views there is no doubt that they would have influenced many of our people. Therefore the blame still rests with the National Committee for withholding Foster's views from the membership.

BENJAMIN CHESKIS, Chicago.