

# CPA Discussion Page

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## Opportunism in 'Victory & After'

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More than a year before the Teheran conference, the path toward opportunism began to be paved in the book *Victory—and After* (page 254).

There Brother Browder said:

"It is the extreme of unreason to assume that only the unlimited demand of war can bring forth the maximum of our economy. . . . It is true, precedent shows us no way in which this can be done without fundamental changes in our economy."

The "fundamental changes in our economy" are the changes from capitalism to socialism. Precedent shows us that the maximum of our economy can be brought forth only by socialism. The precedent is the Soviet Union.

Instead of showing that the contradictions of capitalism prevent the full use of our factories except in war time, Brother Browder adds on the same page:

"Unprecedented accomplishments in the war will teach us to do the unprecedented things that will be necessary in peace. Theories which 'prove' that necessary things are 'impossible' will have to be thrown into the discard."

In plainer words, the theories which prove that only socialism can finally keep our factories going all the time must be thrown into the ashcan. Therefore, new theories must be found to show that full employment is possible in peace time for generations under capitalism.

Therefore, Marx and Lenin must be written over again to fit new conditions!

At this time when *Victory—and After* was published, as far as I know, the question of changing our understanding on this point was never discussed by the National Committee, nor voted upon.

*Victory—and After* doesn't use the expressions "class struggle" and "capitalist class." The "working class" is hardly mentioned. Instead we found such terms as "privileged classes," "upper classes" and "idle classes." There seemed to be a studied effort to avoid mentioning class antagonisms.

The drift in our thinking then made it easier for us to accept this on page 74 of *Teheran*:

"There can be no effective national unity in America to secure

and unfold the program of Teheran that does not include big capitalists able to fight for and win at least a certain minimum of participation on the part of the whole group."

In simple words this means that certain big capitalists, whose names we do not know, are going to accept our program for the postwar period. Then these big capitalists must be able to get the WHOLE of the big capitalists to go along to a certain extent. How much that certain extent is we do not yet know!

The big job of putting this program of doubling wages, full employment and giving \$40,000,000,000 of credit every year in foreign trade, etc.—this big job falls on the worthy shoulders of the biggest monopolists of America!

At the time when the American working class is at least 10,000,000 larger than ever in its history and at the height of its organized trade union strength, we decide that this most powerful social force shall sit back waiting for leadership from the class which gave us two world wars and the greatest depression in history—all in 25 years.

What were we thinking of? Where were the "precise and indisputably proven facts" which Lenin taught us to look for as the basis of our policies?

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels pictured this opportunism for us in simple words: "A part of the capitalist class is desirous of redressing grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of capitalism."

They "want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. . . . They wish for a capitalist class without a working class. . . ."

"In requiring the working class to carry out such a system, and thereby to march straightway into the social New Jerusalem, it but requires in reality, that the working class should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the capitalist class. . . ."

"It is summed up in the phrase: the capitalist is a capitalist—for the benefit of the working class."

Nevertheless, when such a part of the capitalist class engages in action in a program against the most reactionary section of big busi-

ness on a world scale and includes military action in the program, the militant, working class can and must join in the struggle to carry out this program.

Marxists, beginning with Karl Marx himself, always sought the greatest possible support for every progressive program, including programs of capitalist groups against reaction.

Therefore, it is correct that the draft resolution should call for the strengthening of the "democratic unity of the nation . . . including all supporters of Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies."

But working within such a coalition, Communists reserve "the right to take up a critical position," to maintain independent activity, and to "represent and take care of the future" of the working class and the nation.

I hope that in the future we will never for a single instant cease to install into the working class the clearest possible understanding of the class struggle. In that way we will arm ourselves with the clarity needed to work with all other individuals and groups for a common cause. We will be able to make the greatest contributions to the finishing of the war against fascism and at the same time guard the present and future interests of the workers.

To this end I believe there should be a more thorough reading of the draft resolution. It is a real guide to action. We should see how the line of class subordination is eliminated and replaced by a course which enables the workers to take the initiative.

As a member of the district committee of the Illinois-Indiana CPA, working in the steel producing region of Lake County, Indiana, I wish to say:

1. I swallowed the opportunistic line. I assume my share of responsibility for making the error and for correcting the error.

2. I worked hard to carry out the line. The line met with such a silent stone wall of rejection by most of the active Communist steelworkers and sympathizers. Rather than oppose the leadership, the rank and file listened but did not take part in open discussions.

3. From the discussions held thus far, I feel that our Party is going to correct its grave errors and will emerge stronger and larger than ever.

## Duclos Letter Is 'A Great Service'

Jacques Duclos has rendered a great service to the American working class. We must thank him for awakening us before the 11th hour. The events of the last few

months have proved our basic policy to be incorrect. The warning from our French brother came at the right time, that is why we understood the contents of his article and support the resolution of the National Board.

But how could the Communist movement in the United States, commit such a serious error? Perhaps it was because we were so enthusiastic about winning the war, so deeply buried in war work of all kinds, that we did not stop to seriously and critically examine the proposals of Earl Browder and the National Committee.

Earl Browder in his Bridgeport speech Dec. 12, 1943, said "That is why I can accept and support and believe in the Declaration of Teheran and make it the starting point for all my thinking about the problems of our country and the world."

This statement expressed a sharp deviation from Marxist theory and practice, yet few stopped to ponder over its meaning. How and when can the leader of the Communist Party make a diplomatic agreement between three states, the starting point of all his thinking about the problems of his country and the world.

The leader of the Communist movement in any country is not an ordinary Marxist but is regarded and looked upon as an authority on Marxism, fit to give guidance and leadership to the movement. He must make the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism the starting point for all his thinking about national and international problems.

When he departs from this practice he ceases to be a Marxist and enters the blind alley of speculation.

The key to the correct understanding of national and international problems, is the knowledge of classes and class relations. Only Marxism-Leninism gives us this clear insight.

The Teheran agreement did not change the economics of the signatory powers. It therefore could not and did not change class relations in the U. S. A. There was once a non-aggression pact signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, but that did not change the

economic system and class relations in the two countries. Only a social revolution can change basic class relations in a given country.

This does not mean that Teheran changed nothing, but it did not abolish the basic contradictions of capitalism from which class conflicts arise.

The capitalists will never agree to stop their struggle for the biggest profits, and for maintaining their rule over the workers and the colonial and dependent peoples.

They have done it during the whole period of the war, and are doing it now, they insist on maintaining the Little Steel formula, and keeping wages down, while jerking up the prices of commodities. If they were not willing to increase wages proportionately as needed during the war, will they do so when peace comes?

The Teheran accord did not bring liberation for the Negro people. Witness the struggle in Congress against the FEPC, and the anti-polltax bills, while Jimcrow conditions in the armed forces still ride high, and the rapists of Negro women go scot free.

Earl Browder further stated in the same Bridgeport speech that, "so far as the United States is concerned . . . all those who want to strengthen the coalition . . . must help to remove from the American ruling class the fear of a Socialist revolution in the United States in the postwar period."

That is asking a lot, why should the people be required to give the ruling class any such guarantee. They have no right to expect it. Revolution and civil strife will arise only as the result of the tyrannical rule of those who hold the reins of power.

Let them guarantee, to the people the rights and jobs, and better conditions, of life, and there would be no strife. That is their responsibility, will they carry it out?

On the other hand the Negro people and the workers, will not accept poverty and unemployment as their lot. They have lived through the bitter experiences of this war and they have learned a lot. They too know what they want, and they will fight for it if they get proper leadership. The Communists must not fail them. I am sure they won't.

Our Negro comrades in the National Committee share in the responsibility for the errors. Negro Communists have a special responsibility to the Negro people. Our knowledge of their sufferings should have kept us on guard, against accepting a program of compromise to last for many generations, as proposed by Earl Browder.

The developing situation calls for a review of our position on the Negro question, and every assistance must be given in the future to help Negro comrades to become Marxist-Leninist leaders.

The Communists should restore the slogan of Socialism as an ultimate aim of the working class. We will not become sectarians if we do. Nor, will we be anymore persecuted then we are now.

Reestablish the independent Marxist political party of the working class, and build it into a lusty giant. Let us make Marxism-Leninism the daily guide to all our thinking and practical work and we will never go wrong.

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East Harlem Club.

## ASKS CORRECTION OF CPA PREAMBLE

By WALTER LOWENFELS

Philadelphia.

Action in support of the general position of the National Board resolution requires, I believe, changes in our Communist constitution. I cite two examples. Article II of the CPA Constitution states: "The purposes of the Association are to assure to its membership adequate information, education and organized participation in the political life of our country in cooperation with other Americans for the advancement and protection of the interests of the nation and its people."

Contrast this with the resolution which states: "The character of our Communist organization, whatever its electoral status, must be that of an independent Marxist party of the working class."

In line with the resolution, our central concept must be one of Marxist struggle. Through it we learn and teach how the struggle to extend capitalist democracy develops to its logical conclusion—the struggle for still higher forms of democracy, i.e., socialist democracy. Each democratic struggle of masses of people for their immediate objectives, (victory over fascism, jobs, houses, food, peace), is thus part of

the historic, socialist struggle of our epoch.

The phrase, "come the revolution," was always nonsense. Revolutionary struggle means that masses of people revolve around the central democratic issues of the time. Thus, the revolutionary struggle for more and more democracy is going on, at varying degrees, and in different forms, throughout our epoch. Labor's struggle against wartime strikes is a revolutionary struggle, and so is the struggle against fascism.

Let us emphasize. The concept of class struggle alone is pre-Marxist and is generally acceptable to non-communist workers and capitalists. It extends no further than trade union practice can go under present class relations. A communist is one who extends the acceptance of class struggles to the acceptance of socialism.

This does not, of course, mean that we raise as an immediate objective the establishment of socialism, no more than we did prior to the adoption of our present constitution.

It does mean, for one thing (and this is the second example of necessary constitutional changes), that we correct our preamble. In it the CPA "looks to the family of free

nations, led by the great coalition of democratic and socialist states, to inaugurate an era of world peace, expanding production and economic well-being, and the liberation and equality of all people regardless of race, creed, or color."

We shall certainly continue to struggle, as we always have, for world peace, for the equality of all peoples, for the preservation and extension of democratic rights under present capitalist forms. We shall also point out that these forms are not frozen, that the liberation struggle will itself develop whatever forms are necessary to achieve the equality of all people.

Certainly we want and will seek all possible allies for our program. We will do so with the realization that the workers as a class win allies in their struggles only by demonstrating their own strength, and the strength of its vanguard, the Communist organization. Furthermore, the Communist cause demands, not abstract, but concrete struggle against deviations. Therefore, our discussion needs to be accompanied by the action the National Board program calls for "in every factory and industry, in every community and state."

Space limits developing these

thoughts here. It must have occurred to many that Comrade Browder's position has certain resemblances to Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism." It has also certain differences due to many developments, the emergence of the Soviet Union as a major world power, the growing strength of the democratic peoples' movements in Europe and elsewhere, the weakening of world capitalism, and the coalition of the Big Three registered on the battlefields and at Teheran and Yalta. With these developments in mind, and without any mechanical transference, we can learn something from the voluminous analyses and critiques of Kautskyism by Lenin. Browder's position is a social product, the culmination of social pressures and contradictions, not just an overnight affair.

Lenin said of Kautsky and his followers: "They recognize in Marxism everything except revolutionary means of struggle, except the advocacy of, and the preparation for such struggle, and the education of the masses in this direction."

We have registered our deviation in our Constitution, and eliminated the basis for Marxist struggle as above.