

CPA Discussion Page

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

Supports Browder But Asks Clarity

Since I am in complete accord with Comrade Earl Browder's stated theory, it would be very gratifying to me if he would give a direct answer to Comrade Foster's accusations.

I am in agreement that even if there were only a chance of its contributing to FDR's reelection then it was correct to dissolve the CP. Also agreeing that the relationship of forces in the world today makes collaboration with the Soviet Union (in order to bring about a lasting peace and a rapid expansion of markets so necessary for full employment) advantageous to both the capitalist and the working classes.

The question, then, as it appears to me, is this:—Was it necessary, because of this coincidence of interest, for labor to practically relinquish its identity; tolerate, without fighting back, the abuses to local and national politics; and in general refrain from criticizing reaction instead of being the vanguard in fighting it.

S. K.
Member of Oigin Club, N. Y.

P. S. An answer to these questions by Comrade Browder would set many minds at ease.

Suggestions for Resolution

Dear Editor:

I want to express appreciation of the discussion letter from David Carpenter of Texas, and agreement with his statement that responsibility for accepting such a serious error rests upon all of us, in varying degrees, yes, but still upon all. A large reason for our acceptance, I should think, is the simple one of wish-fulfillment. Quite normally, we would much prefer friendly cooperation to struggle, so we allow ourselves to believe without too much argument, that an enemy to progress is really an ally. It's an interesting commentary, although deeply unfortunate, upon the aging tale that Communists desire "force and violence."

I want to make several suggestions for improvements I believe are needed in the National Board Resolution:

1—In Part I, where the resolution states that the "economic and social roots of fascism have not yet been fully destroyed, I feel that this is far from specific. What are those roots, and what is fascism, anyway? I'd like to see that resolution say outright that fascism is not a new economic system, but a form of capitalist rule different from our bourgeois democracy in expression, but not in essence.

2—Similarly, Item II in the program omits an essential sub-head, to my mind. Its heading is "Complete the destruction of fascism and build a durable peace." I agree with the resolution when it states that "the overwhelming majority of the American people, and in the first

place labor, are opposed to reaction and fascism." However, I do not feel at all confident that the nature of fascism is widely enough understood to prevent a neat face-lifting job from fooling a lot of those people about fascism enough to get them to accept it. Therefore I feel that a necessary sub-head to that part of the program must be a well planned and executed campaign to teach people the nature of fascism.

3—I believe that a basic statement such as this resolution should incorporate into it a Communist view of the state of world capitalism, of which U. S. capitalism is a part. I want to see it take note of the fact that the general crisis of capitalism has been accentuated, although veiled at the moment by a war economy, that capitalism has been weakened, not strengthened, by the events and development of the war. I want to see it take note of the special crisis of American capitalism, due to the tremendous increase in its capacity to produce surplus values, which it can't get rid of.

4—The passing reference to socialism that I find in the resolution is not nearly sufficient to explain our eventual aim and the reasons for that aim. Even while we state our immediate program under capitalism, there is no reason why our advocacy of that immediate program would be weakened by a short exposition of socialism and of its eventual necessity. On the contrary, that would state our reason for existence most clearly, and by defining us, make cooperation on the unity

program simpler and easier.

I want to enlarge a bit on that last suggestion. Practically all the party or association program that I remember pressed for immediate steps for the people's welfare, and spoke of the necessity for educating people on the need for socialism in the future.

In practice, for a long time, we have allowed ourselves to be rebaited out of more than a mere mention, if any, of socialism, for fear of jeopardizing the immediate steps. As a result, few who listen to us find out anything about socialism, and what it does to erase the base of those problems on whose amelioration we're working at the moment. Nor has there been any decrease in rebaiting for our restraint.

If we can give people a view past those immediate programs—under capitalism, ahead to socialism, such a view can release such sustained loyalty, such enthusiasm for work (even toward the immediate program) as surely nothing intermediate can.

With that in mind, I should like to propose as a program of education for the future, that when a statement of immediate necessary action is made, we add an explanation of how socialism can do away with that particular problem. That is not, I hasten to add, placing socialism on the order of the day. I am sorry to say that it is not that near. But who is to help people to learn about it, if not Communists?

And who, once they found out about it, could help liking the idea,
R. M. J.
(Four Freedoms Club, N. Y.)

Not Guilty of Revisionism or Opportunism

In his recent critique, Comrade Duclos chose what seems to be an undialectical approach to the policy of the American Communists, since he based his arguments more on formulae than on any apparent search into the objective factors upon which our policy was based. It was, therefore, all the more startling to see our National Board propose a Resolution which embraced both an admission and a call for implementing practically the same slogans that had formed the platform for the policy in dispute.

As to the question of opportunism, I find such positive expression more than a little alarming, coming so abruptly from leading comrades who took no small pains to carry our policies to their present ends. In our search for justification of whatever stand we finally take, let us not forget that the clock of history moves only forward. Let us remember that we cannot find the literal solution for all of our problems in the writings of Lenin, any more than he could find them in the writings of Marx. The genius of both of these men lay in their ability to think with and not behind their times.

Let us also remember that in Comrade Browder we have a leader who, in the words of Comrade Minor at our last convention, has shown "political courage . . . inseparable from his great clarity of mind in theory and practice . . . that seeks out and finds a similar courage in the people."

Whether or not, we decided that it was a mistake to make the Declaration of Teheran the key to all of our thinking, to all of our actions, its spirit has been deeply imbedded in the consciousness of the American people, and we can be forever proud of our contributions to that cause.

According to the Feb. 15 issue of *The War and The Working Class*, the Soviet people are unanimous in their evaluation of the agreements reached at the Crimea Conference, as representing an historic development in world relations and as being of deep political significance.

Were we premature? Were we finding meanings before those meanings existed? Perhaps our orthodoxy has been given a dangerous wrench, but I cannot see where it has hurt our nation, our movement, or the aspirations of the "common man" throughout the world.

Rather, I believe we made positive and decisive contributions to the war effort, to the election of President Roosevelt, toward strengthening the aspirations and prestige of the labor movement and toward increasing the understanding of the American people to the need for a durable peace, based upon the solid foundation of friendly postwar collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union. We also acquired invaluable experience in thinking on our own, and thinking in terms that the America working class can understand.

As to our "opportunistic error" of ignoring the fundamental nature of capital, are we seriously prepared to state, and stand by such statement, that American capital, which has been and remains the decisive section of world capital, will reject the perspectives of Teheran, will reject peaceful collaboration with the Soviet Union, but will rather choose some variation of the Hitler pattern for insuring its own destruction?

JOHN HARVEY, Brooklyn

Seaman Writes About Browder's Stand

Our organization and the working class of America is beginning a political discussion, the likes of which we have never had. And let me stress that it is only the beginning. This is important because all those who at the start think they have all the answers and who arrive at new positions so easily, will at the finish end up asking all the questions. This is so because people who arrive at and adopt new lines so easily and so quickly prove that they never had much conviction and belief in any line. And we are having one of those rare moments in the history of our movement when all the "impurities" rise to the surface and when, as the saying goes, "The sheep get separated from the goats."

I came all the way from Cumberland, Md. to New York to see Earl Browder. I saw and spoke to Browder and this whole article is only a story about me and I think, of Browder, and of what I told him.

"I come as a student of yours, as a student who wants to meet his teacher. But more important at this moment I want the teacher to meet his student and to listen to his student."

"I am a veteran of this war, a seaman who twice has been on ships that were torpedoed and sunk. I've been through all the ordeal and excruciating tension that goes with air raids, invasions, waiting to be hit, that goes with being in war. I was finally released from the merchant marine due to nervous condition. Now where did that nervous shock come from? It came in the main from anxiety—fear. Everytime I got on a ship I saw myself getting sunk, being bombed over and over again a thousand times. In my sleep, while I was eating, all day long. When I came home each time for a rest, I lived through each raid, every detail of the sinking or death of my friends and myself. Fear.

"For two weeks, up to last Sunday, the time of our State Committee meeting, I supported your and my own position. I say this because I came to all of your conclusions (and more that you haven't even

said yet) before your article was in the *Worker*. I came to these conclusions because of the kind of reasoning and line of ideas I already had in common with you. I was leading myself with my own mind to your conclusions, not because you said it or projected it, but because I wanted to arrive at those conclusions, because I was afraid to accept any other. I wanted to accept an easy path not so much because it was a possibility but because above all else I wanted that easy path. I was afraid to leave 'Teheranism,' and walk off into that 'void' of chaos and new catastrophes and wars.

"So I came to our State Committee meeting against the National Board's Resolution and preped to give my views. Before the meeting began, some of the members and me discussed the whole question and this discussion raised some questions in my mind. However, that was not so decisive to me at the time. It was an hour before the meeting that an incident happened that really kicked me in my political 'stomach.' One of our old time members who has been through the 'wars' for 30 years met me. Now that guy loves me and feels like a father to me. He asked, 'Where do you stand in this business?' I answered, 'Well, I'm still with Teheran.' He said, 'Listen, if you get up at that meeting and take Browder's position, I'll throw you out of the hall.'

"To me, that was a symbol. I didn't take it literally. No. That was the working class saying it would reject and discard me and the working class was and will, because of its class instinct, reject us and our organization for following Teheranism.

"Well, the rest of that day and night, I almost died politically before I gave up the ghost, the 'vision of Teheran.' I had, it is true, to have intellectual and political sense, but more than that I had to have something you taught me yourself. Moral courage—guts.

"You know for a whole day and night, I was like a gambler who out

of \$50 in wages, has already lost \$40 in a poker game and doesn't know whether to go home and tell his wife and kids, or with the remaining \$10 try to win back the whole pay check.

"Browder, I want to draw a parallel where it may apply in my story and yours. You are a veteran, like I and thousands of others are. You are a veteran, though, not only of this war but of years of war a hundred times as difficult and complex—class war. You've been torpedoed and sunk. You've been through air raids of a kind. You've been jailed. You've been smacked around in every imaginable way. You've taken defeats of all kinds and been through all struggles, intellectual, political, even physical.

"Browder, you are suffering from political nervous shock. Fear of America's great capitalism and its potential reactionary strength, of coming possible greater wars, depressions and catastrophes. Fear of that 'void' of world chaos and destruction that one would have to face if we depart from Teheran, that you so often feel and speak of. Browder, you still believe in that 'vision of Teheran' not because it's an easy possibility (accent on possibility). You believe in it because you think it's an easy possibility (accent on easy in this case).

"Browder, you have to change your position like I did. Because I, an ordinary rank and filer and a simple worker tell you at this time, 'Forget your formulations, systems of ideas and thinking. Forget your theories, and listen to my feeling—listen to the working class' instincts. You have to have, like me and the rest of us, and the National Board, moral courage—guts. In that road lies your continued greatness.

"I want to finish by telling you that it is because I am a student of yours, because I am precisely only a rank and file member, to listen to me and think over what I say."

So ended my meeting with Browder, the first I've ever had.

One last word. There is a lot of

irresponsible chatter and reckless charges and talk going on in some places. Did you see that poster of a man holding a finger to his lips, saying, "Sh, the enemy is listening." Well, try to remember this. Because in my opinion, it is in that very process of admitting a terrible mistake that our national leadership and all of us already are showing its greatest strength and quality as a leadership that it ever had.

WHITEY GOODFRIEND, Md.

Meetings Alive Again

Thoroughly in accord with the national board's resolution, I would like to point up just a few issues."

Critics of Comrade Duclos who are saying he does not understand the situation in the U. S. should be referred to a discussion of "American exceptionalism" made in Moscow about 1929 by Joseph Stalin. I believe it could be reprinted with profit during this period.

While no self-criticism should be spared our national leadership for the past, it is most important that it grasps the significant meaning of this current discussion in the organization. Meetings are alive again. Interest and attendance is at an all-time high. The reason for all this, I believe, is that true democracy works wonders. We should have more of it with more real contact with the lower levels by the top.

Having once reached our final decision, it is definitely in order to get down to the basic roots of Marxism-Leninism. While New York branches have wide opportunities for study, it would be most beneficial if the national office would prepare a series of graded study outlines for groups of various stages of development. These should be available to all.

Newsman, Washington.