

CPA Discussion Page

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

Sharper Attack Needed on Liquidationism

Far too many contributors to the discussion have shown a reluctance to accept Comrade Duclos' charge of liquidationism. In my opinion, the conciliatory attitude in reference to this basic question is encouraged by the resolution of the National Board. The resolution affirms that the change in the name of our organization "could not but strengthen certain dangerous tendencies toward liquidating the independent and vanguard role of the Communist movement." From this formulation it is easy to draw the conclusion that the dissolution was not an act of liquidation, but merely "strengthened certain . . . tendencies," etc. Nor does the resolution make it sufficiently clear that the dissolution of the party grew organically out of the whole revisionist system and theory of social development initiated by Browder. Another fundamental weakness of the resolution, on this score, is its failure to decisively deal with Browder's "tactical necessity" apology for liquidation, which, unfortunately, still influences, or at best confuses, a large section of the membership.

A study of the proceedings of the January, 1944, convention discloses that the question of tactical necessity was secondary and unimportant. The real emphasis was laid in Browder's repeated exhortations that we "must sacrifice our prejudices, our ideologies and our special interests." Only the politically naive can honestly claim that the dissolution of the party had no relation to Browder's frequent public assurances to monopoly capital that "we do not want disaster for America, even though it results in socialism."

It is clear that the whole perspective of the softening and elimination of the class struggle leaves no role, no function for the Marxist vanguard party, for the party of socialism. A "non-party educational association" is entirely adequate for an indefinite and prolonged period of class peace. A policy of prolonged collaboration with a "progressive" monopoly capital obviously requires an organization that is respectable and acceptable at least to the liberal bourgeoisie. How appropriate to our situation is the characterization of liquidationism by Lenin.

"Liquidationism is the attempts of a certain section of the party intelligentsia to liquidate (i.e., to dissolve, destroy, abolish, close down) the existing organization of the party and substitute for it an amorphous association within the limits of legality (. . . even if this . . . is attained at the price of an open renunciation of the program, tactics and traditions, i.e., the past experience of the party.)" Lenin Selected Works, Vol. IV.

The innocent tactical necessity also happens to be buttressed by the opportunist position on the two-party system. Much emphasis was laid by Browder on the so-called tradition of two parties. He even drew the astounding conclusion at the convention that no political progress was possible in America except through the traditional two-party system. What Lenin regarded as a specially pernicious system of

political monopoly and corruption, devised by big capital to maintain the working class in the position of tail to the political kite of the bourgeoisie, became for us the only traditional instrument for advancing the interests of the working class. What big capital conceived as its reactionary weapon to dissipate the class consciousness of the working class and frustrate its independent political development becomes for Browder the very vehicle for progressive development, leading to the abolition of classes. And it follows with beautiful consistency that if monopoly capital is capable of promoting the all-class national interest, then the parties of monopoly capital are entirely adequate to solve all the social problems of the working class.

The above does not in any way negate the crucial need for alliances and political coalitions, for electoral combinations and support of certain candidates of bourgeois parties on concrete issues. But what Communists can never afford to lose sight of is that the tactic of the united front must at all times aid to advance the political leadership of the working class and strengthen its independent political role.

What is unprecedented in our situation is that Earl Browder has so far removed the discussion from the sphere of Marxism-Leninism. He makes no attempt to justify his

position by the generalized experience of the world labor movement as systematized by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. There is nothing in Marxism-Leninism that applies to the present world situation, he insists. And he still emphasizes, "We did not make the unpardonable mistake of regarding Teheran as merely a diplomatic document." Is not Duclos a thousand times right when he deduces that the Teheran decisions are distorted by Browder? Lenin long ago warned the Bolshevik Party against getting lost in the maze and labyrinth of diplomacy. "The most profound roots of both the home and foreign policy of our state are determined by the economic interests, the economic position of the ruling classes in our state. This precept, which is the basis of the entire Marxist outlook, and which for us Russian revolutionaries have been confirmed by the great experience of the two Russian revolutions, must not be overlooked for a moment, if we are not to lose our way in the maze and labyrinth of diplomatic subtleties." [Emphasis mine—G. S.] (Lenin Collective Works, Vol. XXIII.)

To put the matter simply and fundamentally: Did the Teheran agreements change the production relations in America and Britain? Did the collaboration with the socialist USSR in the anti-Hitler war eliminate the monopoly of the means of production in capitalist America and Britain? Did Teheran abolish the paralyzing grip of the

monopolies?

The revisionist system of Browder, which establishes a new anti-Marxist theory of social development for America, in the final analysis, rests upon what he calls "the intelligence and class interest" of monopoly capital. But the application of this "intelligence and class interest" by monopoly capital in the present situation, at home and abroad, does not appear to be consistent with the Teheran agreements. Hence, Browder is compelled to seek refuge for his line by blaming Churchill and British imperialism for undermining Teheran.

Why should the British bourgeoisie have "to be driven" to the course that American monopoly will arrive at through its intelligence and class interest? The answer clearly lies in prostration before American technical development, the productivity of American labor, and American industrial expansion. It is a new and more fully developed version of the Lovestonian "American exceptionalism."

While exceptionalism seems to be historically a typical expression of American opportunist revisionism, its theoretical roots transcend national boundaries. In truth, exceptionalism has as its very basis the Kautsky, Hilferding, Bucharin fiction that monopoly eliminates the contradictions of capitalism and makes possible an organized, planned capitalism.

The economic Utopias flowing from the distortion of Teheran are based upon the supposition that the

intelligence and class interest of monopoly capital are the compulsions for their desire to avert a post-war economic crisis. To avert a crisis they must maintain full employment and full production. To maintain full production, argues Browder, they must provide effective purchasing power adequate to consume the products of full production. Hence, the intelligence and self-interest of big capital will compel them to double wages and income, to industrialize the colonies and undeveloped regions, to raise living standards of the hundreds of millions over the globe.

But Marx proved long ago that it is precisely these two elements—increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class and super-exploitation of the colonies and semi-colonies—that are the principal brakes on the tendency to the progressive decline of the rate of profit. Remove these two brakes and capitalism cannot survive. Or, to put it differently, a social system that bases its economy upon progressively and voluntarily raising the living standards of the masses cannot be capitalist. This fundamental Marxist precept is given clear and unmistakable expression in Lenin's "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It." If monopoly, says Lenin, should use its power to improve the lot of the people, "THEN IT WILL BY THAT TOKEN CEASE TO BE CAPITALIST MONOPOLY."

—G. S., New York.

Postwar Illusion Weakened CPA Leadership

It seems to me that our policy in regards to the postwar world during the past period was disproven in the hard facts of life itself. For instance, many of us who worked in the aircraft industry have been faced with the problems of lay-offs for some time. In the plant which I worked — Bell Aircraft — they have been systematically laying off for the past six months.

Being faced with lay-offs as we were, the discussion in the plant naturally was around what was going to happen to us after we were laid off, and what sort of postwar world we were going to live in. For months I stood there and told everyone who would listen that in the postwar world our purchasing power would be greatly increased, that the capitalists would voluntarily pay us more money because they wanted to have a prosperous postwar world. I may say in passing that many either wouldn't listen, or having listened, laughed.

Then reports began coming back that those people who had already been laid off were taking a 30 to 40 cent an hour wage cut, and some were having difficulty finding jobs at all.

I finally decided to pay some attention to facts, and became alarmed. I then began to raise with my organization, the CPA, the fact that we should begin to do something about wage cuts and unemployment, but they were so hypnotized with thoughts of a sure post

war prosperity, just as I had been, that I could not get anyone to seriously pay attention to me.

It is not pleasant to remember that during much of the period prior to the time I was laid off myself, not only did I not play a vanguard role in raising the problems of the workers and pointing out solutions based on struggle, but when my shopmates raised their problems to me, I did my best to disarm them. I keenly feel the responsibility for this.

It seems to me that the type of democracy we are able to develop will be the key to how we come through this struggle, and if we will be able to utilize it to become stronger than ever before.

I raise it sharply because, if you believe, as I do, that Duclos is basically right in his criticism, then you must also believe that you belong to an organization that was traveling on the road to social democracy, and that our leadership was active in heading us on this path.

Out of these facts can easily arise a distrust in our leadership and in our policies. An independent mind that results in doing your own thinking is healthy, but distrust that leaves the feeling, however un-

expressed, "Why be active in carrying out this or that policy, we were wrong once we can be wrong again, maybe I'll be doing more harm than good," can paralyze us.

I am not foolish enough to imagine I have the answer to this problem in my vest pocket, but it would seem to me that we would all feel better and easier if we were sure that democracy in our organization really worked—that certain guaran-

tees were established that all vital information or opinions were available to the membership, that all possible efforts were being made to aid us in studying and making us able and capable of aiding in formulating our policy, giving us the right to be heard as well as the right to speak, and not only the right to participate in formulating policy, but to give life to this right. FREDA WERB, Buffalo, N. Y.

Asks Analysis of U.S. Changes

Although I have not yet had adequate opportunity to study the amended resolution of the National Committee, I feel that in general it provides the guidance necessary to correct our mistakes and execute the present tasks which face us.

However, I would immediately like to comment on what I consider a serious weakness. The resolution begins with an evaluation of the gains of the European peoples in the war against German fascism. It does not specifically state, except by inference, what the Americans achieved in this war for national liberation.

The American people, by and large, supported the war to defend their own country from enslavement. As American Communists, we must use this as our starting point, drawing lessons in the most skillful and concrete manner from the fact that the liberation of the European peoples from fascism was a prerequisite for the maintenance of our own freedom.

If we fail to make this our starting point, we will, from a leftist direction, reach the same road of dereliction in our international obligations as our right opportunist errors would have led toward; for we will fail to win the American people for principles of internationalism unless it is clear beyond any doubt that this stems from their own self-interest.

In throwing off that which was rotten in our past, it is necessary to be most painstaking in separating

the chaff from the wheat. It is not the examination of specific American characteristics which was wrong. This was and is imperative. If this resulted in ideas which are akin to American "exceptionalism," it was because the examination was based on wrong theory. We can succeed in our present and future tasks only if we prove our ability to rid ourselves of opportunism, while at the same time heeding closely the sound advice of Lenin "to investigate, study, seek out, divine, grasp that which is specifically national in the concrete manner in which each country approaches the fulfillment of the single international task."

Perhaps I am bulding a mountain out of a molehill and reading more danger into what appears to me an omission than is warranted. Nevertheless, I cannot help recalling at this moment that the German Communist Party made the costly error of failing to apply Marxism to the specific German national differences. If they, with a strength of six million votes, were unable to prevent the fascists from seizing power, we cannot give this too much serious thought.

I raise this not to detract from our correct emphasis on rooting out right opportunist. It simply reflects my concern that we shall not pay for our opportunist sins with a period of left sectarianism. If we succumb to either danger, we will cripple our ability to play any significant role in helping to determine the course America will follow. ALICE GORDON, Boston, Mass.

New Interest in CPA Results in Worker Sub

Am enclosing a money order for \$2.50 for a year's sub to The Worker.

Confidentially, I believe the resolution in the June 10 issue is responsible for this sub. This party has not attended a meeting for about a year, but, when she faced, with the rest of us, a critical thing such as what the resolution brought forth, she really became concerned and she attended her meeting last night, subscribed for the Worker also for The New World and paid her dues through the third quarter. We all love Comrade Browder

very much and sincerely hope he will not become disheartened because of this issue. As a good Communist, he will see the error and will help in his politically intelligent way, to right it. Because of this program of collaboration, some of our members haven't attended a meeting since January '45. Of course that should never be an excuse, we realize, but they definitely did not like the apparent sway away from Leninism-Marxism. Some, in our club, thought the membership should vote on such a change in

policy while others of us felt that our national leaders knew better than we why the sudden turn toward capitalist cooperation and collaboration instead of continuing the struggle for socialism.

We have had two meetings for discussion on the resolution and last night we voted unanimously in the affirmative.

The Worker is a grand little paper and I will try to get more subs for it.

ETHEL HAYDEN,
Raymond, Wash.