

CPA Discussion Page

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

Hopes Browder Will Return To Road of Socialism

Since the Duclos article appeared in the Worker, I have been very concerned and upset, wondering how Comrade Earl Browder would take Duclos and all the rest of the criticism that was suddenly levelled upon him.

It's a very good thing that the National Committee decided to reopen discussion re-evaluating the whole policy laid down at the National Convention held last May. I dare say that it is only the Communists who would dare bring their problems out in the open. Surely the Democrats and Republicans have plenty of problems, but they settle their disputes behind closed doors, because they lack the very necessary key to success—self-criticism, the very life blood that makes for a real democratic organization.

That is the difference between the ordinary run of organizations and that of the Communists which as a result of all this discussion will be more unified and stronger and will more ably lead the workers to the final goal of socialism.

After studying the resolution, I realize now that several very serious mistakes were committed by the misinterpretation of world and national events. This so-called "unprecedented" situation in the United States has proven itself to be nothing

short of just a wrong conception of our American capitalists, as is now so amply proven by the reactionary trends that are so evident.

But surely no one will deny that nobody, regardless of position—even a National Committee member, I dare say—is infallible.

However, most of our leaders have already accepted their share of the responsibility and are anxious to rectify their mistakes as soon as possible, but much to my regret no appreciable statement has been forthcoming from Comrade Browder—the statement I have been hoping for most.

It's true a lot of fire has been directed against Browder's policy and that tends to have a bad effect on one, but I'm certain that Comrade Browder is above that sort of thing and will emerge as a greater leader and Marxist yet.

In the light of the above, I hope that Comrade Browder will reconsider his faulty conclusions for the last year and a half and take up from there his rightful place of leadership in the American Communist movement and the American people towards the road for a better life and a more prosperous future, towards the road of socialism.

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Must Be Ever on Alert Against Opportunism, He Warns

The working class and the people of the whole world have learned the bitter lessons of the rise to power of fascism in most of the European countries, and especially in Germany. When the German workers were well organized, in their trade unions and their own working class party, the German capitalist class could not stop their advance. However, the capitalists were successful in getting some leaders of the working class movement to disarm, mislead and misdirect the workers into the arms of the bourgeoisie.

It is precisely the same type of revisionism of Marxism and of class collaboration that Browder has propounded. He says that capitalism is progressive; that under capitalism in the postwar period the people will enjoy peace and prosperity and that the working class is committed to capitalism. He calls upon the workers to help solve the economic problems of the capitalists. He tells them that the capitalists would voluntarily double the wages of the workers in order to create prosperity, and that socialism is something in the remote future. These theories develop a hopelessness in the power of the working class to struggle and lead us to rely upon the good-will of the capitalist class.

Browder's policy of calling upon the workers to help the capitalist class solve its economic problems at the expense of the workers; raising the slogan of a long period of class peace; urging the workers not to strike in the postwar period and calling upon the working class to sacrifice its ideology, interests and well-being, is the crassest form of opportunism.

In the trade unions this opportunism is manifested by directing the struggle for economic demands only, and only during the election period do the unions urge the workers to political support of liberalism, without setting themselves independent political tasks. In a number of our trade unions, some leaders were instrumental in the establishment of labor banking systems and developing a program of industrial planning, with grandiose schemes of helping to finance industry with the savings of the workers, advertising, and pooling the resources of the

unions with the manufacturers' for the sake of the industry, with serious consequences for the workers.

Such opportunistic policies could only weaken the trade union movement and rob the workers of its political power to improve their conditions. It is only through the politicalization of the trade unions and its membership that the workers can maintain the hard-won gains and to further improve their conditions and become a real political force in the country.

The liquidation of the working class party, the Communist Party did not begin with the dissolution of the Communist Party and the establishment of the CPA, thus robbing the working class of its political power and its own independent political action; but way back in 1938 attention was called to some members of the then Central Committee, and at conferences of the CP the weeding out of militant industrial workers from the party and catering more to the middle-class elements, thus robbing the working class party of its basic composition and devitalizing the working class.

Comrade Foster's article on revisionism in the CPA correctly lays the fundamental base for a thorough analysis of revisionism in the CPA, and especially must we study his third paragraph of his article in order to effectively carry on a struggle against revisionism, opportunism and the liquidators.

While the resolution of the National Board of the CPA makes an attempt to extricate the working class movement from the revisionist and opportunist policies of Browder, yet one cannot but feel the weakness and the liberal attitude of the resolution toward the working class as the political and dynamic force who, together with its allies, will direct and lead the people of this country in the fight against fascism. We must not be afraid of raising the slogan of socialism as the future objective (while not an immediate objective), for it is the hope and the desires of the people of the world.

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Seminars Evaded Realities

By MARGARET COWL

For the past year and a half I participated in a CPA seminar for instructors in NYC. The purpose of the seminar was to deepen the Marxian-Leninist understanding of a corp of instructors whose job it was to conduct club classes, where students were to learn how Marxian science helps to arrive at correct theoretical and political conclusions. The writings of Comrade Browder were the basis for all studies in the seminar. It is now clear that in the seminar the Marxist-Leninist classics were distorted to rationalize our opportunist policy.

While leaders of the seminar were responsible for the content and method of our theoretical teaching, I feel that the instructors, and I was one of them, are not blameless especially for the uncritical acceptance at least of some of the most flagrant violations of Marxist-Leninist theory in the work of the seminar.

An impermissible method used was to select from the Marxian-Leninist classics excerpts out of their content, to justify Comrade Browder's revisionist policies. Justification for the above was given by referring to pages 355 and 356 in the History of the CPSU on the role of Lenin, where it was shown Lenin advanced the Marxian theory by enriching it with new experiences. From this we took the idea that Comrade Browder was advancing the Marxist theory by new experiences from American conditions.

From the accepted premise of "generations of class-collaboration" we were told that we cannot now find answers in the classics. We were told, that because of an unprecedented situation that "new theoretical" conclusions had to be arrived at. For instance, regarding the policy that called for a long period of collaboration between monopoly capital and the workers, our attention was not directed to the warning of an outstanding Marxist, George Dimitrov, who stated that "Fascism is the power of finance capital itself," even when this report was assigned to reading. An absurdity in the "thinking" that was presented to the seminar was that while finance capital remains finance capital, it will be controlled through the intervention of the people who are buying war bonds and by the government in cooperation with whom finance capital is producing weapons for the war, and that a decisive part of monopoly capital would develop progressive features which decreases some of the features of decay of monopoly capital.

Another instance was when we were taught that the political role of the working class matures in the process of peaceful class relations, when from Chapter Four on Marxian dialectics in the History of the CPSU (which was assigned reading) we should have learned that the political maturity of the working class and its independent role grows in the struggle against fascist reaction, against monopoly capitalism for the defense of the day to day interests of the working class.

The height of the "new theoretical" conclusions was reached when the instructors were presented with some finished thinking, namely, that certain features of imperialism as presented in Lenin's definition of imperialism no longer hold. This involved the first and fifth features of imperialism on the characterization of monopoly capital, when it was inferred that monopoly capitalism no longer played the decisive role in the economic life, and the fifth feature wherein Lenin says that the "Territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed."

We were then told that we were entering a new epoch and therefore

the epoch of imperialism had come to an end. These "new theoretical" conclusions were raised but not discussed in the seminar. The idea that the epoch of imperialism was ended was presented at a faculty meeting where there was too little discussion on this. The "new theoretical" conclusions were embodied in a guide for the instructors to use in their classes. A mistake on the part of those who disagreed with the concept that the imperialist epoch had ended was that we discussed this with those leading comrades who projected it, but were not persistent in having it come before the seminar for discussion.

In the seminar it was correctly estimated that socialism is not an immediate slogan of action for the United States. But, what Lenin taught on the relationship of the struggle for democracy with socialism, that the struggle for democracy strengthens the workers organizationally and raises their class consciousness and prepares the workers for their final objective, was omitted.

Confused ideas were developed on the Party. In the same breath we talked about the vanguard role of the CPA and said that the CPA is a nonpartisan political organization. It was not until April, 1945, that the study of social democracy was included in the curriculum for the classes. There was no basic discussion on the Negro question. Furthermore there was an underestimation of some of the correct questions put by the students in the club classes, such as "how can American monopoly capital be trusted," because these were never raised in the seminar or the faculty meeting.

Instructors were repeatedly warned not to use Marxian science as a dogma. But that is exactly what was done in the seminar.

No doubt had there been a greater number of workers from industry in the seminar, there would have been a more persistent critical attitude toward these distortions of our theory. It is my opinion that too little was done to get these workers and those active in mass work as instructors and on the working committees.

We rushed through too many subjects without proper discussion. The corps of instructors worked diligently. In the past the plans, curriculum gently. There were serious, successful attempts to draw them into various activities such as in the

preparation of materials in the organizing of club classes, etc. However, I feel that the seminar could not fulfill its purpose. It was not a seminar. It was a class on a somewhat higher level than a club class. In my opinion a seminar should be a sort of laboratory of science where theoretical workers can get guidance on how Marxian-Leninist principles support our activities. For instance a basic discussion around the subject of reconversion and the 60,000,000 jobs. The method used by Ernst Fischer in the pamphlet What Is Socialism? especially on his chapter dealing with the "Rise of the Personality," could be copied. His style is adopted for popular consumption. But he deals with the subjects very basically.

The training of instructors is too much centralized in the hands of a few individuals. The counties should be involved in this work too. Clubs should be involved in the working out of curricula for club classes. Check-ups on the work of our instructors should be done together with the instructors and with the cooperation of the clubs. Conferences of the instructors with representatives from the clubs will help to make more democratic our methods of work and improve the content of our theoretical teaching. In the past the plans, curriculum for club classes, outlines for instructors were worked out in final form by top committees and individuals. Solving of theoretical problems as these arose in the club classes, exchange of experiences by instructors, check-up on instructors' outlines was not done collectively. It is my opinion that a bold criticism, such as made here, appraising our work in the method and content of our theoretical teaching will help to avoid similar mistakes for the future and will contribute to a better organization of the study of Marxism-Leninism by our entire membership.

CPA Members

ALL MEMBERS of the CPA are urged to attend their meetings and participate in the discussion and vote on the Draft Resolution and on delegates to the State Conventions.

We call upon all members to immediately pay up their dues through the second quarter and convention assessment.

Wants Convention Postponed

The Bethune Club of the Communist Political Association, Berkeley, Calif., has carried on several discussions with regard to the questions concerning the re-evaluation of our recent policy and the dissolution of the Communist Party.

We are thus far in agreement on several points, namely:

1. We could not have made a greater contribution to national unity as a political party than we were able to make in our present form of organization;

2. Our policy during the 1944 elections was correctly taken and produced valuable results;

3. Two main weaknesses in our work in the period under review were: (a) the loosening of membership requirements to admit individuals who were committed to a progressive win-the-war program and who understood the importance of national unity but were not necessarily convinced of the essential eventuality of socialism; and (b) dilution of our educational work by the virtual exclusion of theoretical education in many clubs;

4. William Z. Foster and the National Board are to be criticized for their failure to inform the membership of Comrade Foster's opposition to the Teheran policy.

However, our membership is of the opinion that there has not been sufficient time for a restudy of the theoretical foundations of the Teheran perspectives nor for analysis searching enough to form the basis for a drastic realignment of policy at this time. For these reasons, we believe that the calling of a national convention for July 26 is premature regardless of the practical considerations which have been advanced as justification for doing so. Even though it may not be possible to hold a convention later, means of communication will still exist, and a referendum technique of ascertaining the will of the membership is not impossible.

We believe it will be unwise to take precipitous action in changing our basic policy, form of organization or leadership without affording time for more searching analysis and more thorough discussion by the rank and file of our membership. For this reason we ask that the national convention be postponed until January, 1946. This request has also been transmitted to the county and state bodies of our Association.

of the people of the world, and we see it as a living and powerful reality.