

DISCUSSION BULLETIN 1

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Browder's Position on the Resolution

By Earl Browder

I would like to speak on the Resolution as a whole. First of all I think that some questions that require an answer are not answered here. I will mention particularly one—the question of the dissolution of the Party and whether we were correct or whether we made a major mistake when we dissolved the Party and formed the Communist Political Association. This is the beginning and the end of the Duclos article and while some comrades seem to dismiss this as unessential to the evaluation of the article as a whole, I think that is taking the matter too lightly.

I think this question is bound up organically with the whole estimate of our course that was arrived at by Comrade Duclos. I think his whole course of reasoning on this question began and ended with this point just as the article did, and I can understand why very well.

I think Comrade Minor very excellently stated the case for considering that as a mistake, and that he was following very closely the reasoning of Comrade Duclos and grounding it in life. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that it created difficulties for the European parties. When we took the action, there was no doubt in my mind that it would create some difficulties, and only the most weighty reasons could justify the Communists of America taking any action which would place the slightest difficulty in front of the Communists in Europe who were conducting a life and death struggle with arms in their hands, and risking their lives every day, every moment. I think we had sufficient reason for making that decision even though we knew the difficulties that it would create. I think we had sufficient reason to believe and have confidence that the European parties would overcome those difficulties quickly, that they would in no way be permanent, that they would be temporary and superficial difficulties, quickly overcome; and I think that life has proved that that was the case; it has proved it.

On the other hand, what reason did we have for thinking this question was of sufficient importance that we could overrule considerations of their difficulties? In my opinion we had sufficient reason. That reason arose from the fact that America had become a decisive point in the world struggle, decisive not only for the American Communists, decisive not only for the people of America, but decisive for the whole course of world development. That judgment rests, of course, upon the judgment that the dissolution of the Party and the creation of the Communist Political Association in place of it, helped to win the election. If one believes that the election results were quite independent of this question, then of course one will reject my point of view, and then of course the dissolution was a grave error. My most considered opinion, however, is that that is a wrong estimate, grossly wrong, and to say that our action did not affect the election results is in my opinion to betray serious ignorance of the realities of American life.

When I say that it affected the results of the election, I am not even saying that the election would have been lost if we had done otherwise. I am saying that the election was so close, the balance of forces was so threateningly even, the danger of America being seized by reaction, which combined pro-Hitler forces in America in its heart, was so menacing, that 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.

I think probably, although this cannot be proved, that if we had decided otherwise Roosevelt would have lost. That cannot be proved, but it can be proved in my opinion that our action strengthened the Roosevelt forces. Whether that margin was sufficient to change the results of the elections could be debated. In my opinion it is beyond de-

*Remarks of Earl Browder in the meeting of the National Board, CPA, on June 2.

Foster On R In the

By William Z. F

In order to draw the resolution it is necessary through thorough theoretical clarity must uncover the roots of opportunism and revisionism against in my letter of

For this revisionism sibility. His recent writing been saturated with it an Party, coupled with a la has been able to press m

Comrade Browder's the same general direction The essence of Social De fundamentally progressiv

CPA DISCUSSION

on the resolution of the National Board, "The Present Situation and the Next Tasks," submitted June 2, 1945 as a draft for consideration by the National Committee and the membership.

The discussion in the press is open to all members of the Association. With the exception of this issue, in which Comrade Browder has an extended article, articles and letters should not exceed 1200 words. This rule will apply equally to members of the State Committee and to all other members of the Association.

bate that our actions strengthened the Roosevelt forces, and not knowing what the margin of victory would be, we would have been criminally guilty if we had failed to take the action that threw any measure of weight on the side of electoral success. Therefore, in my opinion, the dissolution of the Party and the formation of the Communist Political Association was correct.

I think it was further correct in that it gives us a more favorable approach to the general question of electoral struggles in the future. That was an incidental benefit that came out of it which alone would not have justified the decision. In this case it was justified only by its effect upon the elections. But since it was called for by the effect upon the elections, it is also important that we got further advantages out of it of a longer-time character.

I think it would be extremely unfortunate if the opinion were permitted to grow and dominate our membership that this was a mistake because such an opinion will inevitably mean that we will lose this longer-time advantage and we will have left, nothing but the disadvantages of the change.

I think it is a duty, a requirement, for the resolution before us to answer that question. I don't think you can possibly avoid it. I don't understand the reasoning that comes to the conclusion that one can be silent on this question. I cannot imagine anything more demoralizing to our Association than to fail to give a clear answer; and even a wrong answer is better than no answer at all.

About some other features of the resolution. As I said this morning, I could accept the program of

(Continued on Page 2)

Browder's Position on the Resolution

(Continued from Page 1)

action as a basis if the gap that I spoke of is filled in. And I place this as my first consideration in evaluating the resolution, because before us today is what effect our action is going to have upon life at the moment. I am very much afraid of a disintegration of programmatic approach to the questions of the day by our membership. And everything that can restate those issues, which are our ties to the masses, is good and must be preserved even at the cost of sacrificing other things for the time being. Other things can be remedied. In my opinion there is even no disaster in theoretical mistakes so long as our Association retains its ties with the masses which constitute our most precious possession next to our basic Marxian understanding, which is not fundamentally disturbed by any theoretical mistakes that may have occurred.

So I am glad, even with the gap that I would like to see remedied, I am very glad to see the slogans of action which on the whole preserve a sound core of our connection with the masses. But let's have no illusions that these slogans of action are not endangered by the present situation in our Association.

That brings me to the question then, which is the key question of the world—the relations between American and the Soviet Union. It is my opinion that this is not adequately dealt with in the resolution.

In the June issue of Political Affairs, I already gave a brief version of my estimate. I finished that article on this note:

"I wish to express my profound conviction that coincidence of interest between America and the Soviet Union (and not least, precisely, because it is the Socialist Soviet Union) will override and overrule the surface conflict of ideology and etiquette (to use Lippmann's phrase), and Britain when confronted with Soviet-American unity plus a joint desire to help Britain solve her problems will also rejoin that unity."

The grounds for such belief I stated in the following:

"There are only two alternatives to such a course. One is an Anglo-American war against the Soviet Union, which is military and political insanity. The other is an 'armed peace' directed against the Soviet Union, which is another name for diplomatic and economic war without drawing the military conclusions, and this condition, shattering the prospects of a stable peace even while refraining from war, would cancel all prospects for a rapid expansion of the world markets so vital for America's postwar economy. Either of these alternatives would be a disaster for America."

Now, I want to enlarge upon these considerations that I briefly stated in that article. The key to that judgment which I made is the statement that here is a coincidence of interest between America and the Soviet Union, which is the foundation for the preservation of a stable peace. I was happy to read yesterday morning a statement by Comrade Foster in his article (which I haven't seen before) in the same issue of Political Affairs, in which Comrade Foster recognized this coincidence of interest, because I had had the impression (perhaps wrongly) that Comrade Foster denied this—denied at least that the coincidence of interest extended to the bourgeoisie of America.

Comrade Foster wrote in his article: "By far not all American capitalists favor a policy of aggressive imperialist expansion. Large numbers of them follow the general Roosevelt line. These more farsighted elements among the capitalists, the Kaisers, Krugs, Nelsons, etc., realizing that their class interests dovetail with the nation's interests and understanding that any attempt of the United States to go it alone in the world would result in sure disaster, are accepting the general policies laid down at Teheran and Yalta."

I think that that idea expressed thus by Comrade Foster is essentially sound and its significance lies not in any attempt to evaluate the statistic composition of the bourgeoisie on this issue—how many are for and how many are against—but its significance lies in its recognition that however many there may be or however few there may be among the capitalists who see the necessity of the general policies laid down at Teheran and Yalta, these, whether they be few or many, are the farsighted ones who recognize the true interests of their own class and see that this dovetails with the national interest.

I wish this idea of Comrade Foster's article could be embodied in our draft resolution, because it

would give a certain different tone to it and a certain different foundation, because as it stands, its tendency, while not clearly and sharply defined, is to deny that and it creates the trend of thought which looks upon the American bourgeoisie as finding its true class interest in the policy of war or preparation for war against the Soviet Union. And this, I think, is profoundly wrong regardless of what opinion one might have as to the result of the struggle of tendencies in the imperialist bourgeoisie itself on the question of policy.

I said I was going to make a criticism of Comrade Foster's article as well as an approving statement. The criticism which it is necessary to make is that Comrade Foster's article sees American imperialism expressed only in the policy of aggression and aggrandizement, whereas the true understanding of American imperialism and American imperialist policy is that it is represented not only in Vandenberg and du Pont, but is equally represented in the Kaisers, Krugs and Nelsons, and that the Kaisers, Krugs and Nelsons are the true representatives of the interests of their class, and that the Vandenberg and du Ponts fail to see the true interests of their own class. (Foster: Just like Chamberlain did not see it.)

Exactly the same thing. I am not trying to give you news, Comrade Foster; I am trying to give you analysis and I am trying to bring together all these things we all know into a coherent picture of the situation of the world, the relation of forces in the world, which must be the foundation from which we build our line.

Now I want to examine a little more this relation of forces in the world which makes it to the class interest of the American bourgeoisie, which is an imperialist bourgeoisie, to take the course of Teheran and Yalta. My remarks are not very well organized, I had to work on them in a very fragmentary fashion, but you will have to excuse that; I promise to put them into more systematic and extended form as I gain time to do it.

Victory in Europe has not ended the war, and this is something we are somewhat inclined to forget. The war is still on and the war in the Far East vitally affects the course of events everywhere in the world. We are inclined to forget this because, while we face the continued problems of war in the Pacific, we are at the same time facing the beginnings of the problems of reconversion. The problems of postwar push themselves upon our attention before the war is over and we find ourselves unavoidably engaged in the fundamental discussion of the postwar period before it has fully arrived.

However, the release of our forces from military engagement in Europe enables America and Britain to throw them fully against the Japanese in the Pacific and thus assures that the postwar world will be minus the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis; the Fascist powers will have disappeared from the scene. There will exist only two great powers in the world capable of pursuing an entirely independent policy—America and the Soviet Union. Britain, greatly weakened by the war, remains a first class power only in combination with America and the Soviet Union, or if these two are divided by playing the balance of power game between them. The chief problem of the postwar world, therefore, will be the relations between America and the Soviet Union.

At Teheran Roosevelt and Stalin agreed to tell the world that as to the peace "we are sure that our concord will make it an enduring peace, one that will banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations." Churchill, perforce, had to sign it also regardless of what reservations he may have had. The Teheran concord was a document of a diplomatic character, that is, it was an agreement between governments, but it would be the grossest error not to understand that it was something much more than that. In the words I have quoted, Teheran was a political platform for gathering and organizing all the forces in the world that can make for an enduring peace. It was a declaration that this goal was not a utopia, that it is realizable. It became the central point in the Roosevelt platform for the 1944 elections, and unquestionably was one of the principal factors in his reelection to a fourth term. It expresses the deepest aspirations of the peoples of the whole world.

If an enduring peace for many generations is possible, we must be able to understand fully what makes it possible. It has never before been possible for Marxists to declare that there is such a possibility short of the time when socialism will replace capitalism in at least the major nations of

the world. Yet we now speak of this possibility in the absence of the general spread of socialism to the decisive powers who decide peace and war. If we cannot define the objective factors which create this possibility then we are departing from Marxism. Any perspective that admits of the possibility of a durable peace without defining the change in the relation of world forces that makes it possible, can be nothing but harmful utopianism or arrant opportunism.

Is there such a change in the world relation of forces? I think there is such a change, and it is not a change in the class character of the bourgeoisie or in the imperialist nature of the capitalist system of the United States; that remains the same, as I have emphasized time and again in every major document that I wrote.

I would define this change, in its bare outlines, somewhat in the following fashion, and I admit in advance inadequacy of formulation; I hope merely to get across the bare bones of the idea to you.

The first factor in this changed world relation of forces is the emergence of the Soviet Union in alliance with America and Britain as the victors in the greatest of all wars.

Second, is the fact that the Soviet Union was the greatest contributor to the common victory not only in relation to all other factors taken singly, but also in relation to all other factors taken collectively.

Third, the enormous expansion of American economy in the war and as a direct result of the war, the consequent relegation of Britain to a secondary position in the world relation of forces, leaving only America and the Soviet Union in the position of great powers in the fullest sense of the word, and having the additional feature of presenting world economy with a sudden doubling of the productive forces of the greatest power in the world.

Fourth, the wiping out of the main bases of reactionary, anti-democratic power in Europe and the consequent rise of broadly based democratic governments of the people as the main and decisive characteristic of the continent from the Soviet borders to the Atlantic Ocean.

Fifth, a deep-going impetus given by the experiences of the war to the national liberation movement of the colonies and semi-colonies, a movement now gaining such strength that if resisted by the imperialist powers in the old way, will inevitably soon break out in a series of major national liberation wars. I refer to India, Indonesia and Indo-China, but the same process is to be observed in the Near East, in Africa and in Latin America which is largely semi-colonial in character.

These are the main features of the new relation of forces in the world and certainly they have radically changed from anything that existed before. Within this radically changed world constellation of forces the decisive factor determining whether or not a stable peace for generations will be realized, is the relationship between America and the Soviet Union. If these two powers can agree upon a basis of collaboration to that end and can maintain that collaboration then a stable peace can be realized. If not, then the vision of a stable peace is a dangerous illusion and utopian. Thus the question becomes—whether it is possible for the greatest capitalist, imperialist power—America—America the land of the highest degree of concentration and centralization of capital, that is, of monopoly capitalism—capitalism in its imperialist stage of development—is it possible for such a country to find the way of peaceful coexistence and collaboration with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics within one frame-work, within a single world order of nations which they jointly sustain.

I know that there is a widely spread negative opinion among Marxists and among leading Marxists, among men whose opinions we must respect, who hold that this possibility is theoretically excluded and that to admit this possibility as a factor in our thinking in itself constitutes revision of Marxism. And it is true that heretofore, up until this war, while it has always been not only possible but necessary for all Marxists to understand that the Soviet Union, from the time of its appearance on the stage of history, could and did honestly proclaim to the world its wish to coexist and collaborate peacefully to realize this hope; yet the Marxist analysis always concluded that the insuperable obstacle to the realization of this goal came from the capitalist world, which by its very nature is incapable of reconciling itself to any

(Continued on Page 3)

Browder's Position on the Resolution

(Continued from Page 2)

long-term collaboration with the strong and expanding Socialist sector of the world. It must be acknowledged that this preestablished Marxian view, established on the basis of a previous relation of forces, is very firmly buttressed not only in theory, but in the facts of life as they were experienced throughout the past decade by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. I have myself published hundreds of pages tracing and analyzing the course of events in which the chief capitalist powers, dominated by their innate and long-standing hostility to the Soviet Union, plunged the world into this catastrophic war and risked their own extinction rather than come to any long-term basis of agreement with the Soviet Union. It requires weighty factors now to enable one to conclude that what proved impossible in the past has now become possible. Such weighty factors cannot be found in the general coincidence of interest on the part of the peoples of America and Soviet Union; that coincidence existed in the past yet it could not impose itself effectively upon the bourgeois class which dominates America and determines its policy, the class which has an innate hostility to the Soviet Union, and a class which came to the war-coalition only under the stress of direct necessity. The existence of a general American national interest demanding long-term collaboration with the Soviet Union is not by itself sufficient to justify the conclusion that it has become possible for this national interest to be realized through the instrumentality of the existing state which is dominated by the bourgeoisie.

Only if the bourgeoisie has a class interest which coincides to some degree with the national interest does the possibility exist that the policy of long-term collaboration with the Soviet Union can be realized without a basic change in the class structure of state power in America.

What reason, what considerations can be found in the world of reality to sustain the idea that the American bourgeoisie can find in the postwar world such an incentive in its own class interest to collaboration with the Soviet Union, as effective as the incentive it found in war necessity to bring about the war-time coalition after long refusal and hesitation? Just as the bourgeoisie of Britain and America came to the war-time policy of coalition only along a tortuous path, through collapse and failure of every other alternative policy, so also may we expect that they will move along the postwar path indicated at Teheran and Yalta only to the degree that all other alternative proposals are found to be closed to them, impractical to them, impossible of working.

The first question, then, in estimating the class interest of the American bourgeoisie, is to examine, what are these alternatives from which they might choose. These all boil down to two: one is the immediate transition of the war against Germany and Japan into a new war against the Soviet Union; the other is an armed peace within which the main policy would be diplomatic and economic war against the Soviet Union, with military hostilities postponed to some indefinite future time, with American-Soviet relations being adjusted from moment to moment and from issue to issue, upon a purely empirical basis, without long-time policy, according to the notorious carrot-and-club thesis of Mr. Bullitt.

Now let us examine carefully each of these alternatives and see if either of them can possibly be accepted by the American bourgeoisie as expressing its class interests, or, if they did accept either of these alternatives, whether it would not immediately be impressed upon them by events that they do not protect their class interests.

First, there is the road of immediate transition to war against the Soviet Union. What are the chief gains and losses this would bring to the bourgeoisie?

On the profit side of the balance sheet of such a war, the American bourgeoisie could place first, a spiritual satisfaction of acting according to its own innate impulses, its established ideologies and prejudices. That is a factor that would influence the bourgeoisie to the course of war. Second, the immediate economic and political advantages that flow from a continuing war market, thus postponing the day of reckoning with a peace market of equal size, which must be realized as the only escape from economic collapse; and one must admit that this is a powerful factor impelling the American bourgeoisie towards war with the Soviet Union; to that degree to which they fail to

see a perspective of successful reconversion, their impulse is to continue the war, and find a new war as this war ends. Third, there is their hope that such a war if victorious for American arms would make the American bourgeoisie the masters of the world, that it would realize the American Century.

On the loss side of the balance sheet, there would be: first, America would, perforce, carry the military and economic burden of such a war which would be 10 to 20-fold heavier than that which America has borne in the present war. Every report which I have from our forces in Europe contains this item—the talk among the American soldiers is, regardless of their political opinions, the one thing we don't want is to tangle with the Red Army. Second, on the loss side—the economic system as at present organized would break down, inevitably, requiring more drastic reorganization than anything envisaged as necessary for a long time peace; while politically, the bourgeoisie would soon be faced with rebellious masses at home and abroad and mounting difficulties all over the world. And third, the virtual certainty that such a war would, in the most favorable case for the American bourgeoisie, end in a military stalemate followed by Socialist revolutions all over the world and, if not in America, then at least the complete isolation of American capitalist society which under those conditions could only be an American fascism.

This course is obviously suicidal, so utterly divorced from any sane estimate of the forces in the world, so completely unreal, that only nitwits of the type of Claire Boothe Luce and Colonel McCormick and Hearst even continue to play with the idea. It is a fact that the most conservative and reactionary (in the general sense) circles of the American bourgeoisie are overwhelmingly of the opinion that they could not possibly win a war with the Soviet Union. The bulk of the American bourgeoisie, unless it suddenly goes as insane as Hitler or suddenly for some reason abandoned its intelligence, will reject this path.

I know that it is not excluded that such a thing can happen. The bourgeoisie, because it is in the historical position of a dying class, is subject to fits of madness, and it could fall into this mad panic that would lead it into a military attempt against the Soviet Union. But clearly and obviously, this is contrary to its class interest; it would be suicidal madness, and while it would create tremendous destruction in the world, it lost its last slim chance to win in such an adventure when it failed to save and take over the armies of Hitler.

Second, there is the road of the armed peace, the carrot and club policy. Superficially considered, this is much more realistic than the first course, and undoubtedly today it has the adherence of the great majority of the American bourgeoisie. But let us ask ourselves: how long will it work? What is the nature of this policy in terms of practical application in reality? This policy is merely a hypocritical and masked form of the first course, the path of war, and more dangerous because it creates the conditions and the atmosphere in which its innate tendencies could lead the American bourgeoisie into the path of war without a conscious decision based on cold calculation. It is a policy which merely postpones the war while moving in every field to prepare for it. It has none of the profits of the immediate war of course, for the bourgeoisie. Especially, taking this course, the American bourgeoisie will face a world with a great void in the place of markets. This course destroys the possibility of market expansion, while it does not fill the gap with a war market. It could not expand the pre-war peace market; it could not even restore the pre-war peace market, not to speak of expanding it, to utilize the expanded productive capacity in America that emerged from the war.

This course of the armed peace, of the carrot-and-club, if it should be followed would inevitably lead, within a very few years to such an economic crisis that would dwarf any previously known in the history of capitalism, and such an economic crisis would then force a decision, under much more unfavorable circumstances of the basic choice between war and a long-term peace of collaboration which had been postponed by this policy. The postponement could not be for very long. While this second course of the armed peace is superficially much more attractive to the bourgeoisie than immediate war, the first serious analysis of where this course leads, the first serious effort of thoughtful examination, inevitably reveals it as just as unprofitable and just as dangerous not only to the peoples, but to the bourgeoisie themselves.

Is there any serious basis for conceiving that it is possible for the bourgeoisie, the American ruling class, to have within itself enough intelligence to avoid the dangerous course of the armed peace, preparation for future anti-Soviet war and that they may therefore turn to the third course of policy, Teheran and Yalta, seriously, from a real long-term point of view? I am firmly of the opinion that this possibility is not excluded, that to conceive of this possibility is not a departure from Marxism. In fact, it is my opinion that a clear Marxian analysis of the terms of the problem, which are the terms of a new world relationship of forces produced by the war, where the central fact is the power of the Soviet Union, and the second fact is the power of democracy and the peoples of the democratic countries, the power of the labor movement, the power of the national liberation movements—all of these require us, from a Marxian approach, to judge the course of Teheran and Yalta is possible, that the American bourgeoisie from its own class interests under this relation of forces may take this path.

In the nine decades of Marxism before this war, it was impossible to conclude that the bourgeoisie of any country of developed capitalism could participate in the organization of a long-term peace. It was theoretically excluded. But today the new world relation of forces no longer permits us to exclude it from theoretical considerations.

The next question that we have to answer is whether, since it is possible, we should not make this possibility the basis of a serious effort to mobilize to realize it, and form a bloc, an alliance, with that section of the bourgeoisie which sees its true class interests, fighting together with them for its realization and throwing the power of the labor and democratic mass movement to bear upon the more backward and reluctant sections of the bourgeoisie thereby reinforcing the convictions of the more far-sighted leaders of the bourgeoisie.

It is of course, understood in all this argument, that the decisive force for realizing a lasting peace is a powerful labor movement with a clear policy at the head of all the democratic masses. We are discussing whether such a labor movement marches in alliance with the most far-sighted bourgeoisie, or against the bourgeoisie as a class.

I think that, of course, we must say there is no automatic guarantee of achieving this goal, even though it is possible, and even though we set ourselves the task to realize that possibility. Especially we must emphasize that there is not much time in which these forces can be effectively crystallized to bring it about, because if we get well on the road of an armed peace, an empirical settlement of relations from point to point and issue to issue, this is going to create the atmosphere of war and stimulate and crystallize all of the war forces within the bourgeoisie against the Soviet Union. We should take advantage of the favorable moment presented by the fact that we are just now emerging from a war with Germany, as allies of the Soviet Union, that the American people are accustomed to the thought of comradeship in great undertakings with the Soviet Union, when all of the political conditions are most favorable—that is the moment when these forces must be crystallized for the long-term course of the peace, else we run a serious danger of a pattern of war being fashioned again, step by step and slowly over a period of a few years, to one of fixed hostility to the Soviet Union, leading when the economic crisis comes, as it will inevitably soon come under such world conditions, to the probable solution of the difficulties of the bourgeoisie at that time through their engaging in a wild and adventurous war against the Soviet Union.

Therefore I must emphasize that the favorable conditions that now exist will not all be present a year or two or three from now. And that it is therefore of the essence of the Teheran policy that we make every effort to crystallize it as the accepted policy, the accepted approach, the accepted atmosphere of all strata of Americans, and as quickly as possible. I consider that anything and everything which would tend to block or hinder, to obstruct or fail to contribute to the realization of this possibility is a mistake—and is a mistake which is doubly unforgivable when it is made by Marxists who should know better.

It is my feeling that this resolution and the Duclos article which inspired it has failed to take these considerations into account, and by thus failing, has missed the supreme issue of the world at this moment. And I cannot give my approval to such a development.