

# CPA Discussion Page

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## On the Question of Revisionism

By EARL BROWDER,

The article of Jacques Duclos on the policy of the American Communists makes the judgment that "one is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters." Since Comrade Duclos did not, however, furnish us with even the smallest outline of his course of reasoning to this conclusion, since he quoted many passages from my writings without indicating which ones he took issue with (and obviously with some of them he agrees), it is impossible to polemize directly with Comrade Duclos. Since Comrade Duclos relied for argument to support his conclusion entirely upon quotations from Comrade Foster, then it is to be presumed that he identifies himself with Comrade Foster's position, and that in meeting the arguments of Comrade Foster one is simultaneously refuting the conclusions of Comrade Duclos.

### CAN WE BREAK THE POWER OF MONOPOLY CAPITAL IN THE UNITED STATES?

Comrade Foster admits that it is correct to say that socialism is not the issue in the war nor will it be the issue in the immediate postwar period, and "therefore to raise the issue now could only result in narrowing down the national unity necessary to win the war and to carry out generally the decisions of Teheran." Nevertheless, he insisted upon a program for the 1944 elections which included the demand for "drastic curbs on monopoly capital, leading toward the breaking of its power." (Article in *New Masses*, Dec. 14, 1943). This was the beginning of my head-on collision with Comrade Foster's policies. I rejected his formulation on practical and theoretical grounds. Practically, it was in my judgment impossible to rally a majority of the voters to the reelection of Roosevelt upon a program which proclaimed to break the power of monopoly capital; curbs upon monopoly capital were correct, in the sense of curbing those practices which endangered the life of the nation (connections with German cartels, etc.) or which are parasitic in nature (discriminating prices, rigging of markets, etc.) and to such proposals it would be possible to win the support or acquiescence of that section of the bourgeoisie whose inclusion in the democratic camp was essential to its success. But to raise the slogan to break the power of monopoly capital would automatically exclude the big bourgeoisie as a whole from the democratic camp. In my opinion the course of the election struggle fully confirmed this judgment; it was that section of the big bourgeoisie represented by the N. Y. Times, which swung over to Roosevelt in the final fortnight of the election campaign, together with the mass following which it commands that furnished the narrow margin of victory.

Theoretically I rejected Foster's formulation because it constituted a revision of Marxism. It assumed that it is possible and practical to set the goal of breaking the power of American monopoly capital without the conquest of power by the American working class based upon a program of transition to socialism. It is my firm conviction that to put forward such a possibility involves a fundamental rejection of the principles of Marxism, something that goes far beyond the finding of new strategic and tactical applications of Marxism to fit a new international situation.

American capitalism is, par excellence, the supreme example of capitalism in its monopolistic stage of development. This fact found a

dramatic expression in American war production, in which 10 giant corporations controlled an absolute preponderance and the 100 largest firms controlled more than 80 percent. The war years accentuated this dominance of the giant monopolies.

Marxism teaches us that all programs which hold out any perspectives of reversing this trend of the advanced capitalist countries are composed of nothing but the most vulgar petty-bourgeois illusions. There is no possible transition from the present stage of American economic development to anything else but socialism—unless one is also to speak of a possible fascist disintegration into chaos as a transition into something new. If one admits, as Foster does, that we are not to raise the immediate transition to socialism, and if our immediate program is designed to prevent the disintegration into the chaos of fascism, then it follows inescapably that we must accept the perspective of operating upon the basis of the present American monopoly capitalism until such time as we decide that it is possible and necessary to raise the question of the transition to socialism. If we try to find some other way to "break the power of monopoly capital," that can only signify that we have abandoned Marxism and gone over to petty-bourgeois idealism with all its illusions.

The draft resolution, in all four of its versions, adds nothing whatever to our former program of action in relation to the monopolies—except the demand: "Prosecute all violations of the anti-trust laws." Thus does all the furious outcry against the monopolies in the course of our current discussion come to the climax of—a return to the Sherman anti-trust law!! Did ever a revision of Marxism more quickly demonstrate its bankruptcy? But that is the logical culmination of Comrade Foster's peculiar brand of revisionism.

### CAN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM PEACEFULLY COLLABORATE?

Comrade Foster violently objected to my statement in December, 1943, that "Britain and the United States have closed the books finally and forever upon their old expectation that the Soviet Union as a socialist country is going to disappear some day." Comrade Duclos follows him in quoting me with disapproval to the effect that "at Teheran capitalism and socialism had begun to find the means to peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the framework of one and the same world."

I must admit in all modesty the right of anyone and everyone to object to my particular formulations, and to put forth more exact ones. I never pretended that I was fixing these thoughts forever in their final forms, and that all persons must henceforth take them as given. But when criticism of these formulations is made the basis, not of more precisely defining the new relationship of world forces, but of a blanket condemnation of myself as a revisionist of Marxism, then the issue becomes something else entirely. It is no longer a question of whether I judged these concrete relationships correctly or defined them exactly. I stand accused of revisionism on the grounds that I judged it possible that Britain and the United States could conceivably abandon their program for the destruction of the Soviet Union, that it is possible that a long time stable peace between capitalism and socialism can actually be realized.

But the concept of a lasting peace

between capitalist and socialist countries is not revisionism—unless it is based upon the idea that the two systems are losing their distinctive characters, are merging, are obliterating their differences. It is not revisionism, when it is based upon an estimate of the new relationship of forces between the two systems which has made it obviously impossible for the capitalist countries to conduct a successful war against the Soviet Union, in which the capitalist countries can continue to exist and make capitalist profits only on condition of their more or less consistent development of collaboration with the Soviet Union, in which their profits will be more or less as their collaboration is more or less.

I submit that every word I have written about the collaboration between the capitalist and socialist countries, whether in the war or in the peace to follow has been consistently based upon the estimate of the bourgeoisie as motivated by one single factor, the search for the greatest profit. I have never held out the perspective that the bourgeoisie (aside from particular individuals, who depart from their general class basis) could be expected to follow any policy from general motives of "patriotism" or "democratic spirit." I have never hinted that a government dominated by the bourgeoisie, or particularly the American, the strongest, could ever follow a different motive than the class motive of the bourgeoisie. I have never proposed a policy that was to be realized through the existing bourgeois government without taking into account that unless the bourgeois profit motive is satisfied it is the purest of illusions to assume that such a government would or could carry out that policy. I have never failed to point out that even when the bourgeoisie as a class is convinced of the profitable character of a certain policy, still separate groups and individuals of the bourgeoisie from their own special interests will and do sabotage the execution of such policy, and that it requires a constant struggle to secure its execution. All these general considerations are accentuated in all matters of relations of the capitalist countries to the Soviet Union. It would be too tiresome to repeat the many and reiterated statements I have made on this question. They are all in my books and pamphlets, and available to all.

The draft resolution now before our organization, however, resolutely rejects this Marxist concept of the nature of bourgeois governments. It assumes that the Roosevelt administration was something apart from and opposed to the big bourgeoisie, that the Truman administration, which it pledges to support in its every effort to carry out the Roosevelt policies, is likewise motivated by general "patriotic" and "democratic" interests, separate from and opposed to the profit motives of the big bourgeoisie. It proposes a general offensive against the big bourgeoisie, monopoly capital and all its hangers-on, and at the same time support to and collaboration with the Truman administration to realize American Soviet collaboration and all the Roosevelt policies.

This is a caricature of Marxism. The Truman administration, like that of Roosevelt before it, is in essence the executive committee of the American bourgeoisie. True it represents a bourgeoisie sharply split over issues of policy and of ideology, it operates under increasing pressure from the growing and maturing labor movement, it must take into account the general rise of democratic activity and understanding among the people, it must operate under conditions of a growing multiplicity of difficulties and

problems; it therefore cannot follow an "ideal" policy, it cannot "freely" express the innate impulses of the bourgeoisie abstracted from the real world in which it finds itself. But whatever pressures it may work under, it remains a bourgeois government steadfast to the "golden rule" of capitalism, that whatever policy it follows it must find a profit for capital as its first essential, and it must find the biggest profit possible.

There is a real possibility of achieving the long-time stable peace in a world which includes both capitalist and socialist nations precisely because the capitalist nations can realize a profit through it, and because this profit is greater than they can hope to realize through any alternative policy.

That is the essence of the position which I have put forward, and that is the basis upon which I have been charged with revisionism. I submit that the revisionists are those who expect the capitalist nations to pursue a policy which goes contrary to their profit motive, or who foster illusions that "democratic pressures" can force a bourgeois government to violate this fundamental law of capitalist society. American-Soviet collaboration for peace is possible without a socialist revolution in America only because it is profitable to the American bourgeoisie.

The working class of America, together with the broad democratic masses, desires and needs American-Soviet collaboration from quite different motives. It is not interested in capitalist profit for its own sake, which is the ruling motive of the bourgeoisie. Regardless of its attitude toward the issue of socialism for America (on which it is unclear and backward), it knows quite well that an America antagonistic to the Soviet Union becomes more and more reactionary and anti-labor, and that an America moving toward closer cooperation with the Soviet Union is a freer, a more democratic, a more "liberal" country, in which the working class is able to strengthen and consolidate its organizations and improve its conditions. It knows only Soviet-American cooperation can avert the horrors of a new world war, can bring a long-time stable peace. Therefore the working class consciously strives for this cooperation, and welcomes the fact that the bourgeoisie can also accept this policy by finding in it also the satisfaction of its own special class motive. Thereby the policy of American-Soviet cooperation becomes a joint policy of the two main classes, even though the working class motives are the only sound and reliable ones while the bourgeois motives are contradictory and therefore produce constant vacillations and inconsistencies.

This position can be branded as revisionism only if one understands Marxism as inexorably committed to the inevitability of the capitalist countries engaging in a suicidal military effort to destroy the Soviet Union. It is my firm opinion that any such theory of "inevitability" is itself revisionism.

### IS THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION ON THE AGENDA OF EUROPE?

Comrade Duclos quotes me disapprovingly as seeing no immediate socialist revolutions in Europe, and minimizing the threat of civil war after the international war. He infers that I interpret the Teheran agreement as the obstacle to the introduction of socialism, that I join in placing obstacles to socialism, and that therefore I have adopted a false concept of social evolution. But all this is a gross caricature of my position.

The best brief summary of my position is that given in my report

to the Convention. I said: "The policy of Teheran, thus sharply defined in actual political events, may be generalized as a process of giving to Europe a unified Anglo-Soviet-American leadership to dissolve the old contradictory orientations toward one or the other of the three great powers. It is a policy of releasing the democratic peoples' revolution, the sweeping away of absolutism and feudal remnants, the mobilization of the united peoples' forces for their own liberation. It includes the postponement of the final decisions on the economic and political systems for each country until after liberation, when each will be free to determine its own destiny without any outside intervention whatever. It requires support to groupings and leaders within each country entirely upon the basis of their effective contribution to war against the common enemy, and not at all upon ideological considerations or any desire to predetermine that country's post-war destiny. . . . A broad coalition of all democratic forces is required, within which the recourse to armed struggle to settle disputes is abolished . . . without any discrimination on the basis of conflicting ideologies or past prejudices."

I never declared that the Teheran agreement imposed these policies upon the working class of Europe and its Communist Parties. I said that the Teheran agreement was possible because the working class and Communists of Europe were following these policies.

Was this description of democratic and Communist policies in Europe correct? The facts are well known. The Communist Party of France took the lead in avoiding the threat of civil war between the Resistance Movement and the De Gaulle government, by proposing to accept the disarmament of the Resistance forces. It is now engaged in forging the unity of the majority of the French people, not upon a program of socialism now for France, but upon the basis of restoring French economy upon a capitalist basis—partly private capitalism and partly state capitalism. The Greek Communist Party had just recently adopted a resolution declaring its orientation in foreign affairs is not exclusively toward the Soviet Union, but also toward the United States and Britain, based upon the unity of the Big Three. The Polish Communists have declared their program envisages the reconstruction of their country upon the basis of private enterprise and private property, through a national unity of all who fought the Nazis, without distinction of ideologies and without any monopoly of political power by a single party. The German Communist Party has just announced its program for Germany, based upon free trade and private enterprise, and not of socialism or the Soviet system. In not one single country of Europe have the Communists placed the proletarian dictatorship upon the order of the day.

Is it not clear that I was not inventing a new program for the Communists of Europe, but that I was only describing the programs which they worked out for themselves and which they have been and are putting into action very successfully? If there is any revisionism in this respect, it originated in the European Communist Parties, but such a charge no one has dared to make except the Trotskyites.

### CAN THERE BE POSTWAR NATIONAL UNITY

At the CPA Convention I declared: "The most disturbing influence against our national unity for victory in the war is the expectation that peace between na-

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tions will be the signal for the outbreak of great class struggles within the nation. War needs, therefore, dictate that we shall already now begin to lay the foundations for postwar national unity, so that this disturbing influence may be checked and if possible eliminated. Our postwar plan is directed to achieve national unity for the realization of the perspectives laid down at Teheran."

Comrade Duclos approvingly quotes Foster's attack against this whole conception, in which he declared: "Starting from a notoriously erroneous conception, that U. S. monopoly capitalism can play a progressive role Comrade Browder looks askance at all suggestions tending to subdue the monopolies, whereas the C.P. can accept only one policy, that of tending to master these big capitalists now and after the war. In calling for the collaboration of classes, Browder sows wrong illusions of 'tailism' in the minds of trade union members. Whereas the job of trade unions is to elaborate their policy and dictate it to the big employers." Comrade Duclos sums up his approval of Foster's position by condemning Browder's as "the concept of a long-term class peace . . . of the possibility of suppressing the class struggle in the postwar period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital."

Of course, it is false that I ever spoke of "suppressing the class struggle" or of "harmony between labor and capital." I spoke of avoiding great class battles, something which the French Communists have successfully done. I spoke of the establishment of certain common policies between labor and capital, reached not through "harmony" but through hard-headed understanding that the alternative would be harmful to both classes, on the same principle that trade unions and employers agree upon a contract that eliminates strikes for a certain period, but applied on a much larger scale and carried out through governmental institutions and policies.

But Comrade Duclos, perhaps unwittingly, has committed himself to Foster's gross revision of Marxism when he approves the concept that the trade unions should set the task to "dictate" to American monopoly capital, as the alternative to a national unity in which certain common policies are agreed upon between labor and capital. When the time comes to "dictate" to American monopoly capital, there can of course be no slogan of "national unity," but neither can there be any talk of the trade unions being the instrument of "dictation." That is a job which Marxism teaches us can only be performed by the dictatorship of the proletariat, acting through the instrumentality of state power. That is a job which is undertaken when the working class places socialism on the order of the day. Foster wants to postpone socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but in the meantime he wants to give the trade unions the job of "dictating" to American monopoly capital. This is anarcho-syndicalism but it has in it nothing of Marxism.

As a matter of fact, Foster has never said or written a single phrase which shows that he has the slightest conception of the task of achieving national unity, that is, the unity of the democratic majority of the nation which alone can keep America off the path of fascist development.

Foster's thinking on this issue is dominated by a formula which he has recently repeated on many occasions as his supreme guide: He says that throughout all his experience in the labor movement he always found that he never went wrong so long as he remembered this infallible rule—"What is good for the boss is bad for the worker." Of course, such a concept is incompatible with any concept of national unity except under socialism when the bosses are abolished. But it is also true that this is the negation

of Marxism, this is the purest anarcho-syndicalism, it is not even good practical trade unionism, and any union leadership that operated on that basis today would find itself bankrupt within six months.

National unity involving antagonistic class interests is, of course, attained only through struggle, and this struggle is essentially political. But a struggle that starts out with the program of denying in principle that such unity can be attained, is a blind struggle, and will result only in breaking up the anti-fascist camp and delivering America into the hands of our Herbert Hoovers and Virgil Jordans.

## THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT CHARTER

Just before our publication of the Duclos article, while it was being translated, I had the opportunity, together with Comrade Foster, of discussing it with a leading trade unionist. I expressed the opinion that the line of Duclos, if accepted, would require us to abandon our support to the Labor-Management Charter. Comrade Foster vehemently denied this conclusion, and reiterated his support of the Charter. Thereafter, the first, second and third versions of the draft resolution (adopted respectively by the subcommittee of the Board, by the Board itself, and by the National Committee) contained declarations of support to the Charter. But after the adoption of the Resolution by the National Committee, the editing committee there appointed proceeded to delete this item from the program of action. There was no discussion or action in any other body than the editing committee, but the logic of the Duclos article proved more powerful than the commitment of Foster, or the action of the Board and of the National Committee, and the Labor-Management Charter by action of an editing committee went into the discard as far as the American Communists are concerned.

Now let us remind ourselves what is the Labor-Management Charter. It is simply a "code of principles" which the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL and CIO, agree among themselves shall serve to guide their relations in facing and solving problems of mutual interest. These principles are merely a restatement of the central points in the Roosevelt foreign and domestic program. The Resolution before the CPA still retains the declaration for "the broadest national coalition of all anti-fascist forces, including all supporters of Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies," inclusive of "those capitalist groupings" who support such policies. But the concrete example of the application of such a policy in the Labor-Management Charter is scrapped, while the general principle is retained. But what is a general principle worth if its practical application is rejected? Are we not entitled to assume that the general principle will also soon be "edited out" of the resolution, as it is already being done in our practice?

A little further thought on the question will also reveal that, if the Labor-Management Charter is something that comes under the condemnation of revisionism, the reason for this must find its base in the contents of the Charter. Then we will begin to "edit out" the Roosevelt program itself. Already there is distinctly noticeable in the discussion (and no one refutes it) the rising demand that we abandon the "illusions" of full employment, and that we "deflate" the "Roosevelt myth."

We may be certain that there is one group which is filled with joy at this development of Communist policy. This group is the Dupon-General Motors group in the National Association of Manufacturers. They will find much easier now their task of bringing back their "erring class brothers" to the "old reliable policy of class struggle"

embodied in their open-shop program. But since when did it become the task of the Communists to facilitate the unification of the bourgeoisie around the leadership of its most reactionary sector?

Meanwhile, the American Communists, in the name of vanguardism, will be carrying out a break with the political program of the organized labor movement, which is the program of Roosevelt and the Labor-Management Charter. Not content with helping unite the bourgeoisie, we will be preparing a political schism within labor's political movement. But such is the logic of every violent resurgence of ultra-left sectarianism such as the American movement is undergoing at this time.

## REVISIONISM AND THE PROBLEM OF MARKETS

Neither Duclos nor Foster formulated any definite position toward America's problem of markets. But the resolution before us speaks of "erroneous conclusions, such as the utopian economic perspectives and the possibility of achieving national liberation of the colonial and dependent countries through arrangements between the great powers." This can only mean the rejection of my whole argument regarding the necessity (and possibility, even though it is an extremely difficult problem) of finding and creating new markets for America's expanded productive plant if there is to be any serious talk of full employment or stable peace.

If Duclos and Foster have refrained from fixing their position on this question, however, others have not been so prudent. . . . Thus, a statement in *Italy Today* of June 2, defining the grounds for rejecting my position, wrote:

"As concerns the economic reconstruction of the 'backward and devastated areas,' the European Communists (except in Germany where there are problems of a special nature), have often declared that they and the people must solve this problem through their own energies, without the aid of any foreign intervention. . . . The so-called backward areas and those destroyed by the war in Europe (among which is Italy) will overcome their economic difficulties through their own forces, because, among other things, they are incomparably more advanced politically than the United States. . . . Therefore they can depend upon the inexhaustible popular energies in the respective countries which shall reconstruct in short order the country's economy, without the need of the intervention of the 'giant Anglo-American association'."

At the June 2 meeting of our Board, I told the comrades that I would be prepared to vote for the resolution as a basis if the program of action should be broadened to include proposals for realizing markets for full production. The violence with which this proposal was rejected convinced me that the comrades had fully accepted the *Italy Today* thesis, although they were afraid to write it into the resolution. Since I consider that thesis practically and theoretically wrong, practically disarming the Communists in many countries before their reactionary opposition and cutting the ground from under any American program of full employment, and theoretically constituting a repudiation of one of our richest legacies from Lenin, I pressed the issue with energy but with no success whatever. I was met with the flat assertion that markets are not the key to full employment; that a program for markets would be only an effort to help capitalism solve its contradictions, and this is not permissible; it was stated that anyone who expects full employment is a damn fool, that we must raise the demand but have not the slightest illusion that it can be realized under capitalism; that a program for markets to that end is revisionism per se.

Therefore I was forced to raise this *Italy Today* thesis in the National Committee and denounce it;

I characterized it as a "policy of exclusion of America from participation in economic reconstruction of the backward and devastated areas" which is nothing but "semi-Trotskyist phrase-mongering . . . only windy boasting which, if it was really adopted by the Communist Parties as this thesis falsely claims, would only disarm the peoples involved in dealing with their inevitable economic relationships with America. It negates the powerful position occupied by the peoples' democratic forces of (those) lands which enables them to lay down the conditions" under which America can realize those markets.

I had the astounding experience of being interrupted in the midst of this argument by Foster with the declaration that he had never heard of those who wrote that statement. At the close of the sessions, two days later, Foster repeated this, saying: "I don't know whether anybody else ever heard of these people, but certainly I didn't." This can only be interpreted as a diplomatic way of refusing to come out against the false theories of the *Italy Today* thesis, which have been widely circulated among our membership. But one cannot dispose of such issues by shutting one's eyes and declaring: "I cannot see the men who raised the issues, and therefore I doubt if they exist." It is an unfortunate fact that the thesis is today the dominant thought among American Communists on the whole problem of markets for full employment and its relation to stable peace. It will remain dominant among our membership until our leadership specifically repudiates it and puts forward a sound program on the question. Today semi-Trotskyist formulations on this question have been granted full freedom of circulation in our ranks and among our leadership.

## ON THE EXPANSION OF THE DOMESTIC MARKET

Comrade Foster has broadcasted the fantastic caricature of my analysis of the domestic market problem which exhibits me as foreseeing the capitalist employers voluntarily doubling their workers' wages, the class struggle disappearing, the capitalist economy itself ceasing to move in the cycle described by Marx, that progress will be made "automatically." This Fosterian "criticism" is taken over whole by Duclos and given his approval.

A caricature is not an argument, however, and by knocking over straw men it is not possible to dispose of real problems.

Where Foster-Duclos misrepresent me as seeing "the disappearance of the inner contradictions of capitalism, what I am really putting forth is an analysis of the extreme and hitherto unexampled depths of these contradictions. The central contradiction is that between productive capacity and the market; and this contradiction has been enormously increased by the expansion of America's plant by more than 100 percent during the war. I placed this contradiction in the sharpest terms in my book *Teheran* (p. 84), when I summed up:

"Over a long period, then, the problem of the replacement of the war market becomes entirely a problem of finding ways and means whereby the American people can themselves consume the equivalent of the whole product of our national economy. In the final analysis the American people cannot produce any more than they are able to consume. We have such tremendous productive power that for some years it was clogging our national gullet and threatening to choke the nation. The war temporarily saved us from suffocation under our surplus, and further expanded our productive powers. Our postwar economic problem is in the last analysis simply this: to expand the gullet of American consumption to the size of its productive capacity. We must accomplish this, or else—"

And then I filled in the "or else

—" with a quotation from a bourgeois source:

"private business enterprise will be supplanted by some other arrangement for the production and distribution of goods and services."

Repeatedly, I have emphasized nothing can save America from unprecedented economic crisis except new and unprecedented policies enforced by governmental power.

The resolution before us now ignores this problem altogether, except to reject my views. It says nothing on it at all. The report of Dennis to the National Committee even foresees an economic boom, lasting up to five years, without any new policies, but relying entirely upon taking over the German and Japanese markets, and intensifying the traditional methods of foreign trade, but without any serious expansion of the domestic market. Obviously, it is Dennis, and Foster for whom he speaks, who are relying upon the "automatic" processes of capitalism, and not myself. I wrote the opposite of this last year, when I said (p. 76): "We cannot begin to approach a problem of this unprecedented size by merely stepping up the intensity of our nation's prewar approach to the problem of markets. It is obvious that to realize such extraordinary markets we will of necessity have to resort to extraordinary methods and forms." Further (p. 82): "There remains no way by which American economy can possibly continue to function, unless it finds a way to distribute its products more generally and generously among the masses of producers."

As to how that can be accomplished, I wrote: "This goal, approximately to double the purchasing power of that part of the population which would use the power, cannot be achieved through the normal operations of 'free enterprise,' that is, through the accumulated decisions of individual private enterprises. It would be unprofitable for any private enterprise to work on that basis, unless and until all enterprises did the same. It is profitable only on a general, social scale, but is distinctly unprofitable to a single enterprise in competition with others which do not follow the same policy. It can be realized, therefore, only to the degree that it can be enforced generally as a public policy, with the powers of government behind it. It can be accomplished within the forms of 'free enterprise,' but not by reliance upon the initiative of the private enterpriser." That is the complete answer to the crude caricature put forward by Foster as my position, alleging that I am relying upon the humanitarian impulses of the good capitalists.

Foster is using against my position the same method of argument which Samuel Gompers used against the Marxian program of limiting hours of labor by law, in the early years of the labor movement. Gompers ridiculed the shorter-hours laws proposed by the Marxians of all countries, he pointed to the greed of the capitalists and said it was possible to check it only by the direct force of the working class, that it was folly to think that what the individual capitalists would not do could be enforced upon them by a government which they controlled, etc., etc. But it is nevertheless a fact of history that the rising labor and democratic movement not only achieved the limitation of hours by law, much more than by direct action, but that the movement even swept into its support sections of the bourgeoisie, which in time became decisive sections. Experience has been the same with all social and labor legislation, notably unemployment insurance in America, which as late as Roosevelt's administration was opposed even by the leadership of the American Federation of Labor, in the true Gompers' tradition.

Foster is reviving in but slightly changed form the theoretical armament of Gompers against the Marx-

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ians, which are theories of anarcho-syndicalist character.

## CAN ECONOMIC CRISIS BE AVOIDED?

Capitalism operates through certain laws of motion, which Marx described as the cycle running through prosperity - crisis - depression-recovery, repeating itself over and over so long as capitalism lasts. As regards this general cyclical process, it cannot be abolished except through the abolition of capitalism. In this sense, crisis is inevitable. It is inherent in capitalism.

But it is not inevitable that the coming cyclical crisis of capitalism should represent the full consequences of American productive capacity, which we could fix at the index of 400, suddenly with the end of the war being thrown back upon markets of the prewar size, represented by the index of about 100. Such a crisis, if and when it comes, will be a stupendous crash of our economic and social system out of which nothing can emerge except fascism or socialism. But it is not inevitable. It can be avoided by wise, energetic, unified leadership which gathers all the available forces for the enforcement of correct policies. If nevertheless the crisis comes, it can be charged directly to the criminal stupidity, greed, and irresponsibility of the capitalists who refused to carry out such policies. The responsibility for such a disaster will also be shared by all in the labor movement who insisted upon the doctrine of "inevitability" and who excused the capitalists in advance for their crimes by proclaiming that all such policies were "utopian" anyway, who insist that crises are produced by impersonal forces and not by men who could avoid the crisis by different policies.

I had a preview of this present discussion on economic crises with Comrade Foster in 1937, when I raised the slogan that the economic crisis that set in during that year was the result of a "sitdown strike of capital." Comrade Foster bitterly opposed the use of this slogan, on the grounds that it departed from the Marxian law of the inevitability of crises. . . . Comrade Foster insists upon absolving the capitalists from their responsibility; he insists that they couldn't do anything else, and that the final responsibility rests not with them, but with the inscrutable power of the Marxian law.

## ON THE QUESTION OF LIQUIDATIONISM

Every Communist organization operating within a capitalist society must conduct a ceaseless struggle against the tendencies that arise from the environment toward its liquidation, which also find expression within the ranks of the Communists.

Never in our history before, however, did we ever experience such an attack of liquidationism as that which is now rising under the banner of struggle against liquidationism. The publication of the resolution before us was the signal for the release of every liquidation tendency which had been hitherto repressed by the Party and Association.

This arises from the nature of the resolution. It is an "omnibus" document, designed to provide a seat for all sorts of opinions and tendencies to ride on together. It has something for everyone; those who wish to cling to the old policy are given the program of action, which is "almost the same"; those who want changes, of all kinds, are encouraged to look upon this resolution as the "transition" to their particular ideas; the resolution is a platform of unity for all discontented and frustrated persons, whatever their ideas. But it is a false unity, it is not Marxian unity,

it is the promotion of all tendencies to liquidate our Communist Association

It is entirely false to find the source of liquidation tendencies in the change from "Party" to "Association." In the Marxist sense we remained just as much a Party after May, 1944, as before, and strengthened our role in the political life of the country. That strengthened role is now threatened, not by the status of "Association," but by the repudiation of our whole course during the past years.

A sadly typical example of the newly-risen liquidation tendency may be found in the speech of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Our dearly beloved Comrade Flynn is now happy for the first time since she entered the Communist organization, she feels free and equal. Why? Because the resolution has reassured her that everything she learned in her 30 years in the IWW is now acceptable in the Communist organization, whereas before she had to leave some of her old baggage in storage. Because now she can make peace with her Fenian ancestors who had turned over in their graves when Elizabeth had mistakenly followed Browder into making common cause with the hated British oppressors. Because now one opinion is as good as another, and all persons are equal, and therefore Elizabeth doesn't need to watch her step any more, she can freely speak anything that comes into her mind, with the comforting knowledge that Comrade Browder will not dare rebuke her any more for mistakes.

Elizabeth's newly-found happiness and freedom, unfortunately, comes only from the removal of the restraining influence of a definite party line, which has not been replaced with another. I assure Elizabeth will resent the restraints of a wrong line just as much as she did of a correct line. She is impartial on this issue. What she wishes for her happiness is freedom of individual expression, that is, freedom from the party line. This is the essence of liquidationism.

In her column, July 15, Elizabeth gives us more revelations. "How I hate that 'sister' stuff—sounds like the Salvation Army to me!" she exclaims, to show how happy she is that we will all call one another "comrade" again. Our dear Elizabeth should get out among the many hundreds of thousands of women in the ranks of the trade unions—she would find that the standard address among them is "brothers and sisters," and even if she hates it she would do well not to attempt to change their form to "comrade." This whole business of raising forms of address to the level of Marxian principle is one of the most pronounced manifestations of sectarianism.

Elizabeth rejoices that the Communists will no longer "do everybody else's work to the neglect of our own political house, till it was nearly at the point of falling down around our heads." That reflects a very broadly-held concept that liquidationism comes from doing too much work in the mass organizations, and that now our job is to concentrate all activities in the clubs (or branches, they are already called, and doubtless soon they will be "nuclei" again). That concept of "ourselves alone" may be good Fenianism, and it is certainly pure sectarianism, but it is the abandonment of the Marxian concept of the party. Our house was in no danger of falling, but Elizabeth had joined in a very rough dismantling expedition.

The new resolution has also made Mike Gold "happy and free." Gold has long chafed under the "bureaucratic suppression" of the free expression of his bohemian anarchistic soul. Now he is free to reveal it fully to the world in the columns of the Daily Worker. And it is a particularly odious spectacle. I never expected to live to see the day

# Asks Militant

In following the discussion in recent weeks on mistakes made by our Association, I have at no time seen any articles or speeches specifically evaluating our policy in working with the American farmer. It is painfully apparent that we Communists have neither in the past nor at present, any clear concept of our role in regard to mobilizing farmers, whether for present tasks or to prepare them for the future advent of socialism, which for farmers as for labor, is the only possible solution to their problems.

Through educational work in co-operatives and other farm organizations, farm comrades endeavored to demonstrate the need for cooperative effort, for mass action at the lowest level, by the producer of food.

In recent years, an organizing drive has been made by the National Farmers Union, whose program is progressive, militant, and specifically aimed at benefitting the "working" farmer, as opposed to other farm organizations controlled by the upper third in agriculture: the banker-owners, insurance companies and "factories in the field," who compose the Farm Bloc, whose policy has been and STILL IS to squeeze the small farm owner off the land and into tenancy or into factories.

From the time the Communist Political Association was set up, and accepted with such astounding, unthinking faith by almost our entire membership, work in farm areas has, in my opinion, suffered immeasurably by the very slogans which were the core of CPA policy. Instead of continuing to direct all our energies toward those forces who were already somewhat prepared, through their acceptance of cooperatives and the Farmers Union program, we began to dissipate our strength, both of cadres and of concentrated energy, for the all-important concept of unity, spelled with a capital U.

Though it was admittedly known that Communist cadres in farm areas were quite inadequate, our

when the Daily Worker would say: "Maybe the old IWW theory of rotation in office would help—elect officers to serve only a year, and to be subject to recall at all times." IWWism is thus officially tolerated (not adopted, of course, oh, no, only tolerated) in the Daily Worker. And this is only the beginning. The worst is yet to come.

## CONCLUSION

It will be necessary to completely re-write the resolution, so as to preserve the program with which we have armed the working class, which is a program for the nation, a coherent program of completion of the war to victory, of reconversion to peacetime production, of the organization of markets, foreign and domestic, which will make possible full production and employment, of the extension of American democracy to wipe out all racial discriminations, and of full American participation in the realization of a stable peace in a more and more prosperous world and the complete eradication of fascism from the earth. This program must maintain the clear goal of the unity of all persons, without distinction of ideologies or class, who are ready to cooperate in the realization of such a program, to maintain a progressive democratic majority in control of the government. Only a working class resolutely holding on to such a program can realize its historic role as the backbone and leader of the nation, as the bearer of historical progress.

## NOTE

Tomorrow's Daily Worker will print an article by Wm. Z. Foster answering the propositions raised in the article of Earl Browder.

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