

CPA Discussion Page

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

Duclos Letter a Breath of Fresh Air to Her

Way out here in Nevada the receipt of the Duclos article and the National Board resolution came as a breath of fresh air. I support the resolution 100 percent.

This business of reasoning for the bourgeoisie is nothing new in the history of the movement for socialism. In England more than a century ago Robert Owen tried to convince the ruling class of England that reforms and socialism would be best for their own sake.

Before the First World War Karl Kautsky reasoned that the world imperialists would take the "alter-native" of amalgamating into one big international bourgeois class as it would be "insane" for them to indulge in imperialist wars that led to their ultimate destruction.

Such thinking for the Big Boys ultimately leads to the crowning absurdity of the Social-Democrats, to wit: that the bourgeoisie will be "intelligent" enough to give up their power and wealth for a price rather than face elimination should they resist by forceful means the establishment of socialism. (If I recall correctly, Browder implied as much in an interview with an Australian).

Comrade Browder's basic error is that he uses subjective thinking and forgets that capitalism and imperialism have laws that will function independently of subjective efforts to control or change them.

Just as the product controls the producer making capitalist crises inevitable, so the basic Leninist laws of imperialism persist in spite of attempts to turn their course. Analyses by the imperialists are always warped and constricted by many factors, not least among them is their inability to imagine the world in any other state except themselves as the sole and uncontested masters, thus eliminating thoughts of permanently sharing it with the USSR or the colonial peoples or the masses at home.

Secondly, their contempt for the masses is such that they always tend to underestimate them in formulating their plans.

Marxist-Leninist theory can only rely on the working class and their natural allies as the basic force playing a continuously progressive role, especially in the imperialist stage of capitalism.

But Comrade Browder claims to use Marxism-Leninism as the basis of his reasoning. Yet the only quote I recall used is the famous

one about Marxism not being a dogma, not a blue print but a guide to action. However, this quotation used alone and off balance can bring about a ridiculous situation whereby any and all theories can be promulgated. And should these theories be challenged as non-Marxian, then the proponent can defend them under the protective custody that "Marxism is not a blueprint, etc." Thus Marxism as a guide to action is actually eliminated.

Surely it is true that when a new objective situation develops, then new strategy and tactics have to be developed.

Lenin, in analyzing Imperialism showed how capitalism acts in its dying stages and how best to work to finish off the job. But Lenin never challenged the class nature of capitalism. But Browder feels that capitalism can be progressive in the very stage when it is dying.

Only unless there have been new objective developments showing that the laws of imperialism no longer exist or that they have undergone modifications can there be any justification for the Post War Dream World.

And Comrade Browder does give 5 points in his article that he says justifies a changed situation:

Points 1 and 2 say that the S.U. was an ally with Britain and the U.S.A. in the victorious struggle over Nazi Germany, and that the Soviet Union was the greatest con-

tributor. How does this change the reactionary role of finance capital?

Point 3 (that American production doubled during the war) only accentuates capitalist crisis and by no means guarantees that the imperialists will not try the reactionary way out.

Point 4 states that the main base of fascism has been wiped out in Europe. This seems to prove Comrade Foster's point that the danger of imperialist aggression has shifted to the U. S. A.

Finally, point 5 describes the very powerful liberation movement in the colonial world. But why should this movement mean that a reactionary attempt won't be started to crush it?

These points are all correct observations but they merely prove that the imperialist contradictions have been brought to a greater level of aggravation. The imperialists can be depended upon to make a desperate attempt to solve these problems in their historically reactionary way.

In conclusion, Comrade Browder is correct in saying that this is a "favorable" moment to stem the reactionary tide. That is why we are all so fortunate in having the National Board resolution at this time calling for reliance on the working class and all anti-fascists and true democrats to lead the struggle for the realization of the Teheran and Crimea decisions.

LILLIAN ABROMOWITZ
Reno, Nevada.

Foster Taught Writer a Lot

Dear Comrade Foster:

I wish first of all to say that one of your pamphlets about 12 years ago gave me an idea as to what was going on in this world. I wrote you at that time about it, and it seems you had the courtesy to answer me, advising me as to what books to read, etc., etc. Since that time I joined the party and have learned a "hell of a lot." Today I read an article by you in *The Worker*, "On the Question of Revisionism." I have learned a "hell of a lot more!"

When I questioned one comrade in regard to "Browder's" books where he practically spoke of a capitalist Utopia in the postwar world, she answered: "Just read the book;

it explains everything." Well, to me it sounded just like asking a question about science and religion and some one answering: "Just read the Bible; it explains everything." The facts are that the capitalist class in America during this war have had a field day, and I can see that, while they may be divided on certain issues, they are united in their efforts to defeat the workers. I am very happy to see that this abscess was opened by surgery and not allowed to go along infecting the entire body.

WILBUR RANKIN, JR.

P.S.—Which proves that what Lenin said was correct: We won't get any concessions—unless we fight!

Says Browder Glosses Over Dissolution of CP

To say that the dissolution of the Communist Party was primarily motivated by the desire to remove all obstacles in the election of President Roosevelt and check reaction,

is, in my opinion, a superficial glossing over the basic errors which were correctly characterized by Comrade Duclos as a "notorious revision of Marxism." I believe that the incorrect estimation of the "Teheran Accord" led to the dissolution of the C. P. It is part of the reasoning which transformed the Teheran Accord into an "instrument for a political platform for class peace and class collaboration in the post war period."

It is bound up with the system of thinking which prescribed to monopoly capitalism a "progressive role." It flows from the source which envisioned monopoly capitalism—"in a program of national and international expansion for the well-being of all"—(Teheran p 73). It is a part of a thinking claiming "common interest of labor and capital working today for peace and prosperity, orderly progress." (*How To Win America's Decisive Battle—N. Y. State Com. C. P. A. Bulletin*) The dissolution of CP is the natural result of the thinking which led Comrade Gil Green, with a stroke of a pen to wipe out the epoch of imperialism and substitute a New Epoch of progressive state monopoly. (*Worker*, April 8, 1945).

As "all obstacles" to the progressive role of monopoly capitalism must be removed, "all ideologies sacrificed" What can be a greater obstacle and threat to the very existence of monopoly capitalism than a "new type" of working class party—a Marxist-Leninist Party.

It has often been repeated that Marxism never clings to old formulas. An examination of history will show that it formulates its propositions according to given new conditions. To ascribe a "progressive role" not only negates the very foundation, the basic law of Marxian analysis of the role of monopoly capitalism; it supersedes the Marxian theory of the role of the working class, as the most progressive force in modern society.

When it is claimed that monopoly capitalism is "progressive" it is

given a new role; thereafter, it is called to assume the leadership in the march towards progress. While the organized labor movement trails along as an appendage to the monopolists, it is called upon to perform the function of rallying the rest of the masses behind the leadership of "progressive, intelligent monopolists." As a result, we witnessed a tendency of the Communist organization to surrender the leadership to the bourgeoisie, to relegate our role as mere recorders and not molders of events. We note this particularly in our attitude to the Roosevelt administration, even rallying support to acts which were concessions to reaction.

From past experiences and in the light of the present situation, we can clearly see that it would inevitably leave the working class helpless and disoriented.

If our leadership followed scientific Marxism, then our party would have arrived at different conclusion of the meaning of Teheran. It is a fact that although the historic decisions of Teheran were formulated by the participation of representatives of two most powerful capitalist governments, yet the democratic decisions arrived at Teheran did not represent the class interest of the ruling class, and thus it did not change the class character and relationship of the dominant class in the respective capitalist countries. Teheran was motivated: (a) by the strengthened position of the land of Socialism in the world relationship, (b) by the democratic interests and aspirations of the broad masses in all capitalist countries, (c) by the world setting at the time Teheran took place. This served temporarily to diminish the aggressive opposition of monopoly capitalism.

If anything, Teheran should have served as a medium of gathering the broad democratic forces in exposing all resistance tendencies and acts of the monopolists, not only in connection with foreign relationships but also on the domestic scene.

The question arises how was it possible for the entire leadership and the overwhelming majority of our membership to sway from the victorious theory of Marxism-Leninism and accept in substance a system of reformist thinking and acting. In passing it can be said that lack of inner-party democracy, the relationship of leaders to the membership, and the composition of the cadres from top to bottom, played no small part in allowing the Party to stray from the path of Marxism. For some time, we noticed a pronounced tendency to stifle the Marxian approach to criticism, substituting an opportunist approach, resulting in the "yes-man" attitude on the part of many of our cadres. For instance, it is a fact that there were a number of comrades who had reservations about the "new course"; yet, they were complacent about raising and discussing it.

The Resolution of the National Board in the main is an attempt of a fundamental correction of the errors. However I am inclined to agree with Comrade Krumbin's article in *The Worker*, June 17 that it should include a section dealing with socialism as an ultimate objective, and the role of the Soviet Union as a country of Socialism. Thus it would not only give an incentive and generate enthusiasm among our own membership but it would also undermine the poisonous slander and confusion being spread that the Soviet Union is abandoning Socialism.

Membership Is Responsible for Line

Many comrades have discussed some of the reasons why such an opportunistic policy was accepted by a "vanguard group" for 18 long months. It is on this latter point that I would like to comment briefly the subject has been by no means exhausted; nor have adequate proposals been made to correct the falsity of our reasoning then.

1. Democratic centralism requires participation by all in the formation of policy and the acceptance by all of majority decisions. The first requisite was not followed in January, 1944, as the membership did not have an opportunity to hear Foster's opposition, he second requisite has been followed with a vengeance. This has been brought out by many letters explicitly when members have complained that their legitimate questions or discussion was not taken seriously by their club but rather their club attempted to "straighten them out." I feel also that this criticism has been implicit in every letter which said "we owe a great debt to Duclos because this discussion will clarify and strengthen our position." Why did we need the Duclos letter to strengthen and clarify our position? There were signs which many recognized—opposition to many individual policies (the Stettinius appointment) yet no real Marxian discussion resulted. As many letters have suggested, poor

attendance at meetings can be traced to some extent to the paucity of true discussion at meetings. Almost invariably meetings have been used to "straighten out" or to "explain" the line. Never did this mean analysis of the line in light of present day conditions to assume its correctness.

2. The quick and easy acceptance by many members of the Resolutions points more clearly to this problem. Personally I know many members and leaders who thought Duclos was all wet and then on reading the National Board's decision, that he was all right. Their decisions were not based on analysis obviously. The voting on the Resolution, Browder standing alone, seemed to prejudice the question for them. And those same people in club discussion later gave reasons for their support—reasons which were really rationalizations.

3. As Marxists we must examine all criticism. The most common charges against the CP and CPA by sympathetic "Marxians," "liberals," idealists, etc., are those of dogmatism, lightning quick policy changes and rationalization. In all fairness after objective analysis we must recognize the element of truth in these assertions. Surely Minor's columns on the new line were nothing but rationalization!

4. Democratic centralism by its

very nature brings on the possibility of certain evils. When the essentials of it are misunderstood or misapplied (as in the past 18 months), policy errors become almost inevitable. We have the organizational means with which to eliminate these dangers. Here are some of the things I feel we must eliminate.

a. Important decisions made only at the top level without mass membership participation.

b. The tendency of the press to comment on new developments in such a positive, assured tone as to discourage the membership's critical analysis of these developments.

c. The leadership's concept of education as a process of convincing everyone of the one truth—the present line—and substituting a concept which stands for critical evaluation and sound Marxian analysis.

d. The tendency in CPA literature to rationalize on the basis of assumptions which are not clearly stated. J. S. Allen's pamphlet was hardly an analysis of Brettin Woods. It was a logical rationalization of the necessity for Brettin Woods if the Teheran line was correct.

5. If the CPA (or a reformed CP) is to be a party of the working class, a vanguard party, these evils must be eliminated. We must have true democratic centralism and a line which is truly understood by the

membership. We must not be forced to make lightning quick policy changes. Marxism teaches us that the relative strength of forces (dominantly economic) determines the course of history. We must learn to really use this tool—the Marxist method. Recent events show us that the majority of the membership and leadership do not do this. We must not, as in the past, see only one side of the picture—one group of forces at work. We must look squarely at all sides and forces—then and only then—can we make correct evaluations.

6. Education and especially emphasis upon basic Marxist-Leninist classics will help us do this essential task.

But it must be the job of the entire membership and leadership to see that the line is "understood," not just "supported." Then we will not make revisionist errors. Then we will become a true vanguard party.

I hope this forms some contribution to the present discussion. Most of what is being printed is invaluable, because of the frankness with which complaints, criticisms and questions are being aired.

I am certain that we shall emerge stronger and more capable of meeting the tasks ahead.

D. K.

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