

# CPA Discussion Page

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

## Tells Leaders To Get Closer To the Masses

I agree that our postwar analysis of peaceful collaboration for a long period between capitalists and workers was a most serious error, for which we will have to pay, but which we must overcome as quickly as possible.

The point I wish to make is that we must be honestly self-critical in analyzing the reasons for our wrong estimate of Teheran, else we will not successfully overcome tendencies toward demoralization in one direction and leftism in the other direction.

Most of our leaders so far have avoided making such an analysis, merely stating what has become a platitude already that they "accept full responsibility" for the errors of the past. Bob Thompson is an honorable exception. His letter greatly helped me understand how I came to accept the analysis formulated by President Browder.

Contrast this with the common "explanation" especially that of Comrade Foster's, who simply states that it was due to Comrade Browder's great prestige. Of course that was a factor, else the principle of leadership is meaningless, but it was the prestige of over a decade of brilliant leadership, not the "prestige" of a Dubinsky who certainly could never command the respect of Communists. This tendency to make a scapegoat of Earl Browder has two definite dangers. It worsens leftist tendencies by stimulating a counter-reaction to everything that Earl Browder gave leadership in formulating, such as the need for greater study of the American scene and history.

Some of our leaders give me the feeling that they are afraid to make a self-critical analysis, on the basis that this is a personal matter not lending itself to objective criticism, or on the ground that this would demoralize the rank and file. This attitude toward the rank and file is what led to the suppression of the critical differences that Comrade Foster had with the rest of the National Committee when they discussed Earl Browder's proposals for dissolving the Communist Party. And I think that it is this lack of knowing the rank and file, of both the Communist movement and the workers in general, that is the greatest weakness in the American Communist movement.

Too much of our leadership's time and thinking is given to bringing clarity to the masses instead of getting clarity from the masses. This results in a literature and educational material and talks that is all too often dull, general, showing no knowledge or feeling for the intimate details that go into a worker's life and work. Even when we recognize such weaknesses, we are prone to be satisfied with our wisdom in pointing out the weakness instead of taking the time to give active leadership in correcting it.

Comrade Donchin, leader of the CPA in the Philadelphia District, gave a three-word analysis of how he fell into "I forgot Lenin." First of all, I don't think Comrade Donchin could forget Lenin, because he was certainly a well-versed scholar and student of Lenin. And if it was as plain as forgetting Lenin, what is there to prove that Lenin could not be "forgotten" again. I am not looking for the lurid details. I am looking for leadership in a cleansing process that will make us come out of it prepared to work together in comradely fashion to build a movement, with its foundations in the hearts and thoughts of the workers and people of America guided by the science of Marx and Lenin.

J. E. W. S., Olney Club, Phila.

## Says 'Vanguard Role' Was Lost

By WILLIAM LAWRENCE

Let me say at the outset, that I had no reservations to what may be termed the "Teheran line." I was convinced of the correctness of that position and to the best of my

abilities advocated the same. It is not my intention, because of Browder's failure to accept the Resolution of the National Committee and the need of concentrating political fire against his refusal to do so, to gloss over my own weaknesses. Nor do I intend to use the slogan "Don't let's beat our breasts" as an excuse to abandon the powerful weapon of Bolshevik self-criticism. At times I had difficulties in reconciling the written word of Marx and Lenin to my own outlines in classrooms, and also in its practical day to day application. I attributed that to two factors: First, this being an unprecedented situation (and to a great extent it is), therefore it was not possible to find all the answers in the classroom. Secondly, to my own limitations of the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism.

On the question of the dissolution of the Party, I refer not so much to the change in name as to the change in content and character of the CPA. As I look back now, it becomes clear to me that the dissolution of the CP was not solely an act reflecting conditions peculiar to our electoral system. Rather, it was a reflection of our general policy in relation to the whole perspective for the future. I didn't realize at the time that the dissolution of the CP was in essence a negation of the class struggle, and a denial of the decisive role of the proletariat in the struggle to realize the perspective of Teheran in America. In fact, the failure on our part to stimulate the labor movement to play an independent role, also seriously hindered the development of a correct domestic policy in the interests of the people.

True, like many others, I kept on repeating that the Association was the vanguard of the working class, but in practice we emphasized, (a) its purely educational character, (b) relegated the initiative and independent activities to non-Party organizations, and (c) sought national unity through the medium of the "good will intelligent" behaviour of the bourgeoisie, instead of working to make the labor movement become the dynamic and decisive factor in achieving successful national unity.

In dissolving the CP as we did, predicated on a new conception of our relationship to the bourgeoisie, we failed to remember a single les-

son from the struggle against liquidationism conducted by Lenin against the Mensheviks. I do not mean to compare mechanically different periods in different countries. However, there are some fundamental laws of social science which apply universally and at all times to the capitalist world, for example, the basic feature of imperialism, which at all times tends in the direction of "reaction and violence."

Without attempting to negate specific features of America imperialism, or deny the possibility of a division within the bourgeoisie (which incidentally, in my opinion, the Resolution of the National Board does not sufficiently indicate). We obviously and erroneously believed that the imperialists, in the interests of trade, will indifferently sit by and watch the development of social forces in Europe and elsewhere which tend to curb their imperialist powers and eventually may threaten their very existence. That is why, when the developments in Greece took place, instead of interpreting them as a continuation of British imperialist policy for control of the Mediterranean through armed intervention, we, in effect, came to the defense of the British imperialists by blaming America's failure to provide an economic way out for Britain. We called for the condemnation of Churchill for shedding the blood of the Greek people, but also we told the comrades in the clubs not to worry, because Teheran would take care of the situation.

In the whole policy we pursued, there was hardly a distinction between us and any other progressive organization. We ceased to be the vanguard of the working class. We had forgotten the most elementary, yet fundamental, concepts of Leninist Party organization, namely, the need of independent Marxist activity by a Marxist organization entrenched in the basic sections of the working class.

Surrendering to the influence of non-Marxist ideology, we reached a point where some actually questioned the need of a Communist organization. We were both conscious of and troubled by such problems as attendance at club meetings, complete lack of discipline within the organization, the serious weakening of the proletarian core within the CPA, and the fact that independently we hardly played any role

at all. But given our bureaucratic methods of work it was impossible to draw the conclusion from the difficulties that perhaps the political line itself was at fault. We attributed those difficulties to problems of organization, forms, etc. I do not mean to imply that everything was bad. On the contrary, as the Resolution of the National Board points out, we made a number of very vital contributions to the war effort, the field of production, etc., etc. The basic weakness, however, stands unrefuted. It is my conviction that we could have found the ways of influencing the results of the 1944 elections, as we have done in past elections, without dissolving the Party of the working class.

In his first article in the discussion, Comrade Browder raises the question of the relation between America and the Soviet Union as the key to a lasting peace and world prosperity. I can agree that it is an important and a key question. The question posed in my mind is how to realize that. Comrade Browder believes that from the point of view of its own class interests, the American bourgeoisie will seek peaceful collaboration with the Soviet Union.

But can we depend on the good will or "good sense" of the bourgeoisie to eralize Soviet-American cooperation? Granted that certain sections of the bourgeoisie will seek such cooperation, the question is: Will the decisive force of monopoly capitalism allow the interests of the nation to supersede the narrow interests of their class? It seems to me that to adhere to a policy of depending on the good will of the bourgeoisie, as Comrade Browder asks us to, we shall again be committing the error of denying the basic contradictions that drive American monopoly capitalism in a direction opposite to the program of Crimea. The element that will force them in the Crimean direction can only be the independent activity of the working class, stimulated by a strong Communist organization, in coalition with the farmers, the middle class and the liberal sections of the bourgeoisie.

Comrade Browder, while taking note of the necessity "of a powerful labor movement at the head of the democratic masses as the decisive force for realizing a lasting peace," does not treat this basic principle as the core of our policy, as was demonstrated by the fact that for the past two years this principle has been relegated to a secondary role, theoretically, programmatically, and in our practical day to day work.

## Wants Study of Third Party Role in Elections

It seems to me that many members would find it helpful if someone would write a short analysis of "Third Parties" in general elections. My understanding is that at the time of its dissolution, the CP, U. S. A., was a "Third Party" and the more votes it would get for President and Vice-President in the General Elections the more it would split the liberal vote and aid reaction; just as the Socialists in Connecticut split the liberal vote and elected the Republican Clare Boothe Luce.

If we conclude that it was correct to dissolve the Party, then we must give Comrade Browder sole credit (since he has received full blame) for being right on that one point when all of the rest of the Central Committee, the National Board and Comrade Duclos were wrong.

It also seems to me that the Association's full potential value for political action has not been discussed. As an Association we could have nominating conventions and nominate at least one independent candidate in the Republican and Democratic Primaries in each city where we are strong enough to

conduct a "write-in" campaign. Those chosen by the convention to run in the Republican primary would change their registration to Republican, candidates for the Democratic primaries would of course register Democrat. These candidates would run as independents which is the privilege of every voter who can qualify for the office he seeks. The literature for the "write-in" campaigns for both Republican and Democratic primaries would be identical in respect to platforms and would emphasize that the candidate is a member of the CPA. This would not be entering those parties and the Association could carry out its role of the vanguard of the proletariat and engage in political activity to the fullest extent without acting as a third party.

The Party has always had the best platforms so the CPA would get votes from those who liked its platforms and candidates and also it would be the most effective channel for "protest" votes. Registered Republicans and Democrats could vote for Communists without endangering the general elections. If defeated in the primaries the CPA

candidates could be eliminated from the general election. Only a hopeless defeatist would say we could never win in the primaries, but when we win, an opposition candidate, either Republican or Democratic, would be eliminated in the general election and we would get some votes from the other party and eventually elect our candidates. That might be the time to dissolve the Association and reform the Party.

Comrade Browder's critics would be more convincing if, in addition to quoting his statements, they would write what he should have said at that time. If they charge that his statements on unity, national or Allied, were Utopian, then they could change his statement by adding, "Of course complete success would be Utopian," but they must do it in such a way that it would not strengthen the chorus of defeatists who said, "It can't succeed."

I never felt that his "revisionist" statements were a change in ideology; I felt that they were tactics, like the Soviet Union non-aggression pacts with Germany and Japan.

G. PAXTON, Philadelphia.

## Finds Browder Twists Duclos' Basic Truths

I have read and reread Browder's position on the resolution, and I cannot see the logic of his arguments. For one thing, Comrade Browder places the main emphasis of Duclos' criticism on the change of name of the CP, and this seems to me to be only a twist of the truth expressed by Duclos. Duclos associates the departure from the name of Communist Party with the departure from a correct Communist position. And is it not true that these departures were not separate from each other? Browder's argument that, without changing the name of the CP, we would endanger the election of F. D. R., in my opinion, does not hold water. If Comrade Browder would say that if the Communists in the USA had not wholeheartedly and tirelessly worked for the re-election of Roosevelt, that they would have detracted from the possibility of victory for progress in the election, then we would all agree with him.

Comrade Duclos did not criticize us for supporting F. D. R. And it still holds good that the name of our organization need not have been changed in order to have the Communists work for progress in the election.

It should not be difficult for a Marxist to find the heart of Duclos' criticism. Comrade Browder evidently found it easily. When we read his major theses, we find it to be the relation between capitalism and socialism in the postwar period. Here Comrade Browder returns to his analysis of Teheran, as well as to the postwar relationship of forces in the world, where he holds to his conviction that the American capitalist class will follow its true interest, namely, the coincidence of interests between America and the Soviet Union. But is this not a coincidence of interest that can be based only upon an America that moves in the direction of progress, that rather defeats or at least temporarily arrests the natural ambitions of its imperialistic bourgeoisie? Or is it as Browder states in words borrowed from Lippmann, only a matter of "overcoming the surface conflict of ideology and etiquette" to bring about a common interest between the US and the USSR? No one can seriously ascribe the whole attitude of the American delegation in San Francisco, the Polish question, Argentina, and maneuverings for imperialistic position as a matter of "ideology and etiquette."

In conclusion, a few words about Teheran, "the decisive turn in history." In the discussion period before our last convention I wrote short statement in the Illinois special discussion bulletin of the CP signed JK, in which I said that precisely because history made decisive turn, it is necessary to carefully trace the road ahead; that the road is not straight, and that history will also make other turns in quick succession for which we must be prepared and which we must foresee.

I am glad that Comrade Robert Minor voted for the resolution of the National Board, as Minor was the most outspoken theorizer of the revisionist position, doing his very best to convince us that that was true Marxism. However, I believe it would be good for all of us if Minor would retrace his arguments and really show where his errors came in.

JACK KARSON,

California.