

THE ROOTS OF BROWDERISM

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THE ROOTS OF BROWDERISM

I. Introduction

Browderism is the term applied to the blatant revisionism in the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) during the Second World War and in the immediate post-war period. Here we shall examine the origins and development of Browderism.

Earl Browder was the General Secretary of the CPUSA from 1930 to July 1945. Thus the ideas expressed in his speeches and writings which will be referred to in this paper generally reflect the line of the CPUSA during that time. We shall examine Browder's ideas from the viewpoint that a leader represents the prevailing tendency in a political organization, as opposed to the view that the prevailing tendency in a political organization is a creation of the leader imposed on the organization.

Browderism and its origins occurred in the context of world-wide class struggle, anti-imperialist struggle, anti-fascist struggle and the defense of socialist strongholds (the USSR and the Chinese Soviets). It occurred in the context of the strategic reorientation of the world Communist movement from 1934. The US Party, as a section of the Comintern, as a part of the world Communist movement, was assumed to be adhering to the policies of that movement.

The phenomenon of Browderism is linked closely to the concept of American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism is the tenet that US capitalism, because of its exceptionally strong position, is not subject to the problems and crises that beset other capitalisms. Right opportunists, such as Browder, said that because US capitalism was an exceptional capitalism, the principles of Marxism-Leninism would have to be "modified" to meet those exceptional conditions. What they meant, of course, was that the principles of Marxism Leninism were not applicable to the US.

True, because of its strength, US capitalism had a greater ability to bribe sectors of its working class than did other capitalisms. One of the sources of that strength was the superprofits derived from intense national oppression throughout the US, but particularly in the Black Belt South. This is why the most blatant revisionism, Browderism, first manifested itself in the US. But the same features of what is called Browderism existed in the Communist Parties in other capitalist countries. And those features had their origins in the weak and/or opportunist formulations that came out of the Seventh Comintern Congress, July-August 1935, and serious weaknesses within the Comintern itself.

II. A Feature of Browderism--Subordination of the Communist Party to the Bourgeois State

In this section, we maintain that:

1. Browder's subordination of the CPUSA, which found its fullest expression during the Second World War, had precedent in its support for the Roosevelt administration from 1935 until August 1939.
2. The CPUSA's support for the Roosevelt administration, 1935-39, came out of the strategic change in Comintern policy caused by the growing fascist menace.
3. There was no imminent danger of fascism in the US in the 1935-39 period.
4. There was a serious economic crisis in the US in that period, and, consequently, there was little confidence in the capitalist system. At the same time, there was little revolutionary consciousness. A "revolutionary situation" did not exist.
5. The Seventh Comintern Congress' failure to distinguish between those capitalist countries where there was an imminent fascist danger and those countries where there was not led the US Party to support a (non-fascist) bourgeois government when it was wrong to have done so.
6. The fact that the defense of the Soviet Union had--wrongly--become the primary task of the Comintern led to the policy cited in (5) above, and, similarly, led the Communist Parties to--wrongly--denigrate the danger of fascism anywhere when the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in August 1939.

Browder, in his book Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace, written in April 1944, clearly expressed the fully-developed tenets of what was to be called Browderism. Browder thought that the anti-fascist role played by both US monopoly capital and its government would, after the end of the war, be "progressive" and "democratic." The role of Communists would be to support the "progressive" capitalists and their government. But not as a Party. That is another feature of Browderism that will be discussed later in this paper. Thus in Teheran he writes:

Whatever may be the situation in other lands, in the United States the consequences of Teheran (a military/political agreement between the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain made December 1943) means a perspective in the immediate post-war period and for a long term of years, of expanded production and employment and the strengthening of democracy within the framework of the present system--and not a perspective of the transition to socialism.

That is the only possible foundation for a program of national unity in America for the war and post-war period.

Therefore, the policy for Marxists and all adherents of socialism in the United States is to face with all its consequences the perspective of a capitalist United States in the period of post-war reconstruction of the world, to evaluate all plans on that basis, and to collaborate actively with the most democratic and progressive majority in the country in a national unity sufficiently broad and effective to realize the policies of Teheran.

The American national unity which we have under examination of necessity includes, and must include, a decisive part of the big capitalists, that is, the men who exercise immediate and effective control of the national economy. This fact predetermines many features of the program under which it will operate. (p. 69)

The Seventh Comintern Congress, August 1935, presented to the world Communist movement its formal strategic reorientation based on the growing menace of fascism. In our opinion, weaknesses in Dimitrov's formulation of the United Front against Fascism presented at the Seventh Comintern Congress allowed Browder the opportunity to develop a line which would subordinate the US Party to the bourgeoisie state. As demonstrated in the paper "The Seventh Congress of the Comintern on War and Revolution," a significant weakness in the Program of that Congress was its failure to distinguish the tasks that faced the parties in those capitalist countries under an immediate danger from fascist invasion (p. 227) or internal fascist takeover (p. 227) from those in countries that were not in such danger. Thus the US Party could support the Roosevelt government because it was "anti-fascist" although there was no immediate danger of fascism in the United States. In that it was a bourgeois alternative to fascism, and in that it did, for its own imperialist reasons, oppose the expansionism of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan, the Roosevelt government could be said to be anti-fascist. But if we mean by "anti-fascist" that the struggle against fascism was at the head of its agenda, that anti-fascism was the raison d'etre for its policies, foreign and domestic, then we cannot say that the Roosevelt Administration in the 1930s was "anti-fascist."

In order to demonstrate that there was little confidence in the capitalist system among US workers and farmers, as stated in point 4, we present the following account of the year 1934 from W. E. Leuchtenburg's Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Milwaukee streetcar workers brought their employers to terms after an uprising in which, aided by a socialist organization of unemployed, they assaulted car barns, pulled off trolley poles, and crippled dozens of streetcars. In Philadelphia, striking hackies burned a hundred taxicabs and rioting New York cabbies, impressed by their bloody victory, drove most of the city's 15,000 taxis off the streets. Communists led strikes of farm workers from the lettuce sheds of California's Salinas Valley to the tomato fields of southern New Jersey. Union electrical workers pulled a control switch which plunged 160,000 people in Des Moines into darkness Workers tied up Terre Haute with a general strike. Butte copper miners closed the Anaconda pits for months, and striking cooks, waiters, and busboys from the Waldorf-Astoria paraded the sidewalks of Park Avenue singing the 'Internationale.' At the Electric Auto-Lite plant in Toledo, where A. J. Muste and Louis Budenz of the American Workers' party sought to direct the walkout, mobs battled police and helmeted National Guardsmen. They defied bayonets, clouds of tear gas, and even volleys of rifle fire, and, after threatening a general strike, won most of the union's demands. The American correspondent of the London "Daily Herald" cabled: 'Toledo (Ohio) is in the grip of civil war.'

On Labor Day, 1934, textile workers began the largest single strike ever undertaken in this country. For the next sixteen days, Italian silk workers from Paterson joined with French weavers in Rhode Island, Portuguese millhands from New Bedford, and Lintheads from the Carolinas to shut down the industry in twenty states The walkout, aimed as much at the NRA's Cotton Code Authority as at the operators, ended in failure when the union found itself outmanned by the industrialists and the state governors, who did not hesitate to use force to put down the strike. 'A few hundred funerals,' observed one textile journal, 'will have a quieting influence.'

The representative prairie metropolis of Minneapolis saw naked class war when the city's truckdrivers sought to crack that openshop stronghold by crippling its transportation system. They were led by Vincent Raymond Dunne, a teamster at eleven, a Wobbly at fourteen, a radical who had been expelled from the Communist Party as a Trotskyite. Business leaders countered by organizing an army of the wealthy, who were sworn in as special deputies to break the strike. On the morning of May 22, 1934, two of the deputies, one a member of one of the town's prominent families, died in a clash in Minneapolis' central market place, where twenty thousand people had massed. In July, when the walkout resumed after a temporary armistice, an armed police convoy shot down sixty-seven persons, two of whom died. The teamsters refused to surrender, and in the end won a settlement which made it possible for them to establish themselves as the most powerful union in the Northwest. The open-shop bastion of Minneapolis had been smashed--and by a union under radical leadership.

In the summer of 1934, after a strike of stevedores had tied up Pacific ports from San Diego to Vancouver for two months, the Industrial Association decided to open the harbor of San Francisco by force. When two strikers were killed and many injured on the Embarcadero on Bloody Thursday, July 5, Harry Bridges, a hard, sourfaced Australian who consistently followed the Communist line, persuaded conservative unionists to launch a general strike on July 16. Strikers shut down not only plants but barber shops, laundries, theaters, and restaurants, blockaded highways, and barred incoming shipments of food and fuel oil Within four days the strike, which had never actually disrupted essential services, was over. Despite Bridges' opposition, the dockers agreed to arbitration, and in the end won recognition for their union and most of their other demands. (pp. 111-114)

The AAA's (Agricultural Adjustment Act, Part of the NIRA) reduction of cotton acreage drove the tenant and the cropper from the land, and landlords, with the connivance of local AAA committees which they dominated, cheated tenants of their fair share of benefits. When Norman Thomas and others called these abuses to Roosevelt's attention he counseled patience Even the bolder New Deal spirits feared to jeopardize the rest of their program by antagonizing powerful conservative southern senators like Joe Robinson of Arkansas.

It was in Arkansas that croppers and farm laborers, driven to rebellion by the hardhanded tactics of the landlords and the AAA committees, established the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in July, 1934. Under Socialist leadership, the farmers, Negro and white--some of the whites had been Klansman--organized in the region around Tyronza. The Landlords struck back

with a campaign of terrorism. 'Riding bosses' hunted down union organizers like runaway slaves; union members were flogged, jailed, shot--some were murdered

Tractored off their land, some of the 'Arkies,' and even more of the 'Okies,' whose farms had blown away in the dust storms, trekked westward to the orange groves and lettuce fields of the Pacific Coast. By the end of the decade, a million migrants . . . had overrun small towns in Oregon and Washington and pressed into the valleys of California (to be) drowned in a sea of cheap labor, exploited by the great orchards, hounded by sheriffs, their poverty a badge of shame. (pp. 137-139)

In 1935, Roosevelt's NRA was gutted by the Supreme Court and he came under heavy attack from big business. Roosevelt consequently had enacted such reform legislation as the Wagner Act, and Social Security. But that legislation was, essentially, conservative. Leuchtenburg tells us:

Even the most precedent-breaking New Deal projects reflected capitalist thinking and deferred to business sensibilities. Social Security was modeled, often irrelevantly, on private insurance systems; relief directors were forbidden to approve projects which interfered with private profit-taking. The HOLC (Home Owners' Loan Corporation) gave no relief to homeowners who were unemployed; had a commercial agency investigate each applicant to determine whether he was a sound 'moral risk'; and foreclosed more mortgages than the villain of a thousand melodramas. By the middle of 1937, it had acquired enough properties to house a quarter of a million people; by the spring of 1938, when it was dispossessing workers who could not make payments because they had been thrown out of work in the brutal recession that year, the HOLC had foreclosed mortgages on more than a hundred thousand homes. (p. 165)

III. Comment on the Comintern's Failure to Distinguish the Tasks That Faced the Parties in the Capitalist Countries

But, ostensibly, Roosevelt's "new New Deal" was the reason the CPUSA began "a policy of support with active criticism" for the Roosevelt administration. (William Z. Foster, History of the Communist Party of the United States, p. 330). In 1936, the CP gave "objective, but not official support for Roosevelt" on the basis that the central issue in his campaign against the Republican Landon was "democracy versus fascism" (Foster, p. 333). As stated in the paper "The Seventh Congress of the Comintern on War and Revolution," the Comintern "assumed that if there was any fascist threat, this meant that there was a great danger of its coming to power in a country" (p. 249). This, and its failure to distinguish between "fascism as a distinct form of state rule and fascism as a tool or instrument of the bourgeoisie" (p. 198) as well as its failure to distinguish between fascism and reaction led the Comintern not only to magnify the importance of united and popular front governments, but to condone the support of a bourgeois government not threatened by fascism. It must be re-emphasized that the line of the US Party followed that of the Comintern.

A substantiation of our thesis that the line of the US Party followed that of the Comintern, that the weaknesses of the line of the US Party had

their roots in the Seventh Congress, is the fact that when the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed in August 1939 and the line of the Comintern immediately reverted to, essentially, the one it had had prior to 1935, the line of the US Party correspondingly changed. This is not to say that the new Comintern line was incorrect, but to emphasize that the line of the US Party followed that of the Comintern.

The US Party (like all the other Communist Parties) characterized the war that was started by the German attack on Poland in the following way:

The outbreak of the Second Imperialist War, which for years has been developing as a one-sided war, fundamentally changes the situation hitherto existing. All issues and alignments are being re-examined and re-evaluated in the light of these changes. The previous alignment into democratic and fascist camps loses its former meaning. The democratic camp today consists, first of all, of those who fight against the imperialist war. The preconditions have been created for the destruction of fascism by the German people themselves. The Axis is broken, and British imperialism works feverishly to incorporate its disconnected anti-Soviet war. Democracy in Britain and France, long in eclipse, suffers a 'blackout' which can be lifted only when the working class, leading the nation, defeats the predatory aims of their ruling classes. (Statement of the National Committee, CPUSA in "The Communist," October 1939)

The US Party quickly attacked the Roosevelt administration as pro-British imperialist and opposed it on all issues. The Roosevelt administration, in turn, started a wave of persecution against both CP members and leaders.

While we think the German-Soviet Pact was necessary and principled, it was wrong for the Comintern to conclude, as did Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Prime Minister) of the Soviet Union and Member of the ECCI, in October 1939:

One may accept or reject the ideology of Hitlerism as well as any other ideological system; that is a matter of political opinion.

In other words, fascism was no longer distinct from any other bourgeois ideology. Consequently, there was no longer any need for Communists to emphasize the danger of fascism. This is substantiation for our point #6, above, that the defense of the Soviet Union had--wrongly--become the primary task of the Comintern. Thus, when state relations between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany changed, fascism was no longer the danger it had been previously. A very wrong and dangerous concept in 1939. Fascism and the most powerful fascist state were no longer the main danger to the proletariat. Thus an article in the "Communist International" of February 1940 stated that English imperialism had

revealed itself to the whole world as the chief enemy of the international working class.

Browder, in an article in "The Communist" of November 1939, stated Hitler had

abandoned his Axis allies and his whole ideology merely for the formal assurance that the Soviet Union, always pledged to a policy of non-aggression, would not commit or be a party to any warlike act against Germany.

We have presented the above, not to analyze Comintern policy in the August 1939-June 1941 period, but rather to demonstrate that the rapid change in CPUSA policy toward the Roosevelt administration occurred because of the turn in Comintern (and in turn Soviet) policy. This is a strong indication that Comintern policy was primarily responsible for the US Party's original support of the "new New Deal." The Comintern's "revised" estimates of Hitler fascism came about, in our opinion, from its mistakenly putting the defense of the Soviet Union as the primary task of the world revolutionary movement. (Please refer to the paper "Defense of the Soviet Union.")

IV. A Feature of Browderism--Great Nation Chauvinism

In this section, we maintain that:

1. Browder, from 1934 to 1939 and throughout the war, promoted an uncritical nationalism which condoned US imperialism--past and present--and, objectively condoned chauvinism among the US working class.
2. The chauvinism referred to above found its justification in Dimitrov's exhortation at the Seventh Comintern Congress for the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries to use nationalism to counter the appeals of the nationalist demagogy of the fascists. In failing to mention that the use of nationalism by a Communist Party in a capitalist country is fraught with danger, Dimitrov provided the US--and other parties--with the excuse to betray their obligation to the peoples oppressed by "their" imperialism.

Chauvinism, that is uncritical devotion to one's country with concomitant contempt for other countries and peoples, is a feature of Browderism that is found in his writings and speeches from 1934 onward. It is, of course, a rationale for imperialism, that is, the imperialism of one's own bourgeoisie.

In April 1934, according to Foster, Browder at the US Party's Eighth Convention, introduced the slogan "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism" (p. 338). In his book What is Communism?, which contains his writings from May to November 1935, Browder wrote "We are the Americans and Communism is the Americanism of the Twentieth Century." The slogan is repeated by Browder in an article in "The Communist" of September 1937.

For a Communist Party in an imperialist country to promote nationalism, particularly an uncritical nationalism, is for it to express the grossest kind of chauvinism. Dimitrov, at the Seventh Comintern Congress, pointed out that fascism's demagogic use of nationalism was capable of having mass influence.

To counter fascist demagogic nationalism, he exhorted Communists to "Link up the present struggle with the people's revolutionary traditions and past" as an alternative to "hand[ing] over to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, that the fascists may dupe the masses." He went on to state:

The task of educating the workers and all working people in the spirit of proletarian internationalism is one of the fundamental tasks of every Communist Party. But anyone who thinks that this permits him, or even compels him, to sneer at all the national sentiments of the wide masses of working people is far from being a genuine Bolshevik, and has understood nothing of the teaching of Lenin and Stalin on the national question. (Report on the Seventh Congress, Red Star ed., pp. 104-05).

This is fine and good. But Dimitrov failed to mention that the use of nationalism by a Communist Party in an imperialist country is fraught with danger. After all, are not the imperialist countries built through the oppression of peoples and nations without and within? Dimitrov's failure to point this out, in effect, condones the imperialist past, excuses the Communists from reminding the working class of its special obligations to the peoples and nations oppressed by "their" nation. It excuses the Communists from reminding the working class in the oppressor nation that much of their sustenance comes from superprofits. (If we think that during the depression the plight of the working class in the imperialist countries was bad--and it was--we should remember the plight of the peoples subjugated by imperialism was many times worse.)

Dimitrov's exhortation for all Communists to pick up the national banner was certainly heard by Browder, who constantly referred to past US traditions and heroes. Examples: Browder uses Jefferson as a foundation of Communist policy.

Let the farmers and middle classes take a leaf from the book of the C.I.O.; let them bring their Jeffersonianism up to date, let them join forces with the working class, which welcomes them with open arms--then truly, and only then, will democracy have created for itself some guarantees and strongholds. (The People's Front, p. 243).

Browder refers to Jefferson as an example of an apparently progressive expansionism.

Never before was such national unification achieved as under Jefferson, in his second election. And it was Jefferson who, to the horror of the Federalists, used the national power (in a way not provided by the Constitution) to secure to the United States the great territory of the Louisiana Purchase, and thus first opened up this nation to its continental perspectives, the highroad of national development. (The People's Front, containing writings of 1936 and 1937, p. 263)

Some folks, such as the Mexican people and the Indians, were probably not as enthusiastic about the US' "continental perspectives" as Browder was, not being aware, probably, of the value of US expansionism to the fight against fascism.

Our paper on the development and application of the united and popular fronts by the French Communist Party demonstrates that the opportunist nationalism unleashed by Dimitrov's inadequate handling of the question was not limited to the United States.

One sees fewer and fewer references to the right of self-determination for Black people in the Black Belt in Browder's writings and speeches in the years 1935-49, just as one finds fewer and fewer references to support for anti (US) colonial struggles, including those in Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

V. A Feature of Browderism--Support of One's Own Imperialism

In June 1941, the Soviet Union was invaded by Nazi Germany. The anti-fascist struggle again became the priority of the world Communist movement. In December 1941, the US entered the war against the fascist powers.

In this section, we maintain that:

1. Browder's contention that the involvement of the bourgeoisie in an anti-fascist struggle could change the very nature of that bourgeoisie had precedent in Comintern formulations regarding the anti-fascist struggle in Spain. That view held that the victory of a bourgeoisie-led struggle over fascism could produce "a new type of democratic republic" in which there would be no place for fascism or exploitation.
2. The admonition of the international Communist movement for the parties in the non-occupied countries to, in effect, stop all struggle except that for greater production and the demand for the second front to relieve the Soviet Union which was fighting for its very existence, as well as to follow the war leadership of their own capitalists, gave Browder the opportunity to completely subordinate the party to the bourgeoisie to the point where he could openly uphold US imperialism.

In his book Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace, Browder wrote:

The guarantee of Teheran is that we bring all our specific policies into harmony with its spirit and letter, which provide long-term confidence and collaboration between the capitalist democracies and the socialist democracies in international relations, and between all the democratic parties--including the Communists--within the nations (p. 23).

Before we continue with Browder's exposition of how the Teheran Agreement had fundamentally changed class relationships throughout the world, we will present to the reader this "successor" to Marx's Communist Manifest and Lenin's Imperialism.

We, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Premier of the Soviet Union have met in these four days past in the capital of our ally, Teheran, and have shaped and confirmed our common policy.

We express our determination that our nations shall work together in the war and in the peace that will follow.

As to the war, our military staffs have joined in our roundtable discussions and we have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of operations which will be undertaken from the east, west, and south. The common understanding which we have here reached guarantees that victory will be ours.

As to the peace, we are sure that our concord will make it an enduring peace. We recognize fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the nations to make a peace which will command good will from the overwhelming masses of the peoples of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations.

With our diplomatic advisers we have surveyed the problems of the future. We shall seek the co-operation and active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as are our own people, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance. We welcome them as they may choose to come into the world family of democratic nations.

No power on earth can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U-boats by sea and their war plants from the air. Our attacks will be relentless and increasing. Emerging from these friendly conferences we look with confidence to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives untouched by tyranny and according to their varying desires and their own consciences.

We came here with hope and determination. We leave here friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.

According to Browder, the fact that the Soviet Union had been accepted by Britain and the US "as an equal" after they had been "convinced that a victorious Red Army will not carry the Soviet system on its bayonets to the rest of Europe up to the English Channel" meant that collaboration would continue into the post-war period, meant that "the world has opened a new epoch in its history." (pp. 32, 34).

He went on to say:

The political and social framework of this European cartelized economy cannot, however, survive the defeat of Hitler, and cannot be taken over intact or in part by British and American capital. It must be completely dissolved, and the rising democracy of Europe is in the process of dissolving it now. For this political and social frame of the cartel system in Europe is made up entirely of the rotten remnants of feudalism, rigid oppression of workers and peasants, absolutism and authoritarianism, a military caste system, oppression of national minorities, and the suppression and domination of entire nations from outside. The sweeping away of all these relics of feudalism, which is the substance of the people's democratic revolution in Europe, is a necessary accompaniment of the smashing of Hitlerism, and will give rise unavoidably to the reconstitution of European capitalist society, including cartels, within an entirely new political and social framework.

It is the most stupid mistake to suppose that any American interest, even that of American monopoly capital, is incompatible with this necessary people's revolution in Europe. As a matter of fact, this is the only way in which Europe can become the effective market which is absolutely necessary for American economy's survival on a capitalist basis (p. 44).

And,

What is clearly demanded by the situation is that the United States take the lead in proposing a common program of economic development of the Latin American countries. This should be planned now and set in motion immediately following the war on a huge scale in some degree commensurate with Latin America's great reserves of land, raw materials, and manpower, and with the Anglo-American ability to furnish capital and create markets for heavy industry products.

Such a program, in order to be really held in common, must reconcile the interests of each corner of the triangle. For the Latin American countries it must provide the guarantee of scrupulously guarding their national independence, while rapidly raising their standards of economic well-being, and tending toward a balanced economy in each country, avoiding the evils of the old colonial system of monoculture, of extreme specialization. For Anglo-American capital it must provide a huge and sure market, in which a reasonable profit and amortization schedule is assured of fulfillment. Between the British and Americans there must be the dissolution of their unrestrained rivalry by the apportionment to each side of its share in the common project in some agreed relationship to past expectations and present abilities. (pp. 62-63)

The premises on which Browder bases his post-war programs for European, Latin American and US Communists as well as, of course, US imperialism are:

1. That part of Europe that had been capitalist would remain capitalist. That part of Europe that had been feudal would become capitalist, US imperialism would play an integral part in the new European bourgeois democratic revolution. Socialism is not on the agenda for the peoples of Europe.

2. US imperialism, with its British partner, would determine the destiny of the Latin American peoples, being assured, of course, of "a reasonable profit."

Browder had similar programs for Africa and the Far East. They, like the ones cited, were based on US imperialism having become non-exploitative through its involvement in the war against fascism. The "acceptance" of the Soviet Union "as an equal" by Britain and the US was a substitute for the success of revolutionary and national liberation movements.

Clearly, the General Secretary of the CPUSA was serving his own imperialism by letting Communists and those under their influence "know" that US imperialism was benign, that its moves into Europe, Asia and Africa after the war would be necessary for the well-being of the masses there.

Also, this was a prelude to his calling for the dissolution of the CP. After all, who needs a Communist Party--anywhere--if the most powerful imperialist country on earth is going to spread its largesse (for a "reasonable" profit) throughout the world?

Two questions arise:

1. What are the sources of the blatant revisionism cited above?
2. What did the international Communist movement and Browder's own Party do or say about it?

To answer the second question first: nothing--for a year. Why they did nothing for a year will be discussed in the next section which treats Browder's dissolution of the CPUSA.

To answer the first question: As shown in our paper "Application of the Comintern's United Front/Popular Front Policy in Spain," the Comintern held that the defeat of fascism in Spain by what was, in effect, a popular front government, i.e., a coalition of parties representing a coalition of classes, would result in

A new type of democratic republic . . . where there will be no place for fascism, where its economic basis has been uprooted, and where the material guarantees have been created for the defense of the rights, liberty, and interests of the people.

We said in that paper, and we repeat now:

To say that it is inevitable that a government that is 'for the people' would come out of the defeat of fascism is dangerously wrong.

And

The view that the threat of reaction/fascism could be eradicated under any bourgeois government is not Leninist. The view that any bourgeois government could develop into a socialist government is not Leninist. Exploitation and oppression are integral to any bourgeois political system and it was unprincipled for the Comintern . . . to indicate otherwise. It was unprincipled to imply that any bourgeois government would obviate the ultimate necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat (pp.319-320).

In other words, the Comintern had provided Browder with some of the rotten underpinning for his thesis that, by being in a fight against fascism, the very nature of a bourgeois government could change.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, it precipitated the creation of what the revisionist Outline History of the Communist International calls

An international united front . . . made up of the most diverse political forces; the anti-nazi coalition of states and peoples included not only the Soviet Union and the peoples of the occupied countries, but such big capitalist states as Britain and the U.S.A.

Fundamentally antagonist classes became united in the struggle against fascism.

The revisionist History tells us:

The Communist parties of the countries that were fighting fascist Germany were recommended [by the ECCI] to support all the war efforts of their governments, as these were in the national interest of their peoples and a real aid to the Soviet Union. In pursuing such a policy, the Communist parties were to preserve their independence with respect to their governments (p. 480).

Foster, addressing the CPUSA's National Committee a few days after the German invasion of the Soviet Union stated

The Communist Party will support every measure of the United States government that is directed against Hitler and Hitlerism. At the same time we will reserve our Party's right of criticism. Certainly we will not support American capitalism's attempt to throw the burden of the costs of the war upon the toiling masses of our people, to set up a military dictatorship in this country, or to dominate Latin America. On the contrary, we will continue to oppose all such reactionary policies.

While supporting the Roosevelt administration in all blows it may deliver against Hitler, we do not forget the imperialist character of the government nor its imperialist aims in this war. We do not forget that the reason the great capitalist powers started this war was to redivide the world among themselves to the profit of the great monopolists.

And

Our Party will support resolutely the workers' struggle for better wages, for the right to strike, for the organization of the unorganized, against excessive taxation, against profiteering monopolists, for the rights of the Negro people, against the persecution of the Communist Party. (Cited in "The Communist," the Journal of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (October 1976), p. 97.)

This seems to us to have been a correct position for the US Party to have taken.

But it is apparent that the leadership of the international Communist movement saw the tasks of the Communist Parties in the non-occupied capitalist countries as: (1) putting pressure on the governments for a second front in Europe to relieve the Soviet forces who were almost single-handedly resisting Hitler's forces which had almost all of Europe's resources at their disposal, and (2) spurring "the campaign for increased production."

In "the campaign for increased production" it seems the Communist Parties in all the non-occupied capitalist countries put their leadership of the class struggle "on ice." A writer in "The Communist," (October 1976) in the article "On the Character of World War 2," claims that it was only after Browder was released from prison in May 1942 by Roosevelt to resume leadership of the CPUSA that the Party capitulated in its leadership of the class struggle. (E.g., it promulgated no-strike pledges for all unions, encouraged piece-work, encouraged government arbitration as a means of

settling disputes and, generally, tried to squelch all opposition to worsened conditions in industry.) But Browder did not have leadership in the Canadian Party--which was doing the same thing. (Interviews) (And I am also sure this was true of the British and Australian Parties.)

Browder's collaboration with the capitalists of the most powerful imperialist nation, one that was not only undamaged by the war, but prospered because of it, gave him the opportunity to "forget" class and most other struggles. His "forgetting" of all struggle, except that for production, was further encouraged by the Comintern's urging the Parties to follow their national (i.e., capitalist) leadership. His collaboration, with apparently no check from the world Communist movement, made it easy for him to endorse the imperialism of his (much more powerful) collaborator.

VI. A Feature of Browderism--Liquidation of the Communist Party

In this section, we maintain that:

1. The liquidation of the Party was the conclusion of the subordination of the Party to the bourgeoisie both during and before the war.
2. The dissolution of the Third International in May 1943 had to have been a factor in the dissolution of the US Party a year later. An examination of the reasons given by the Comintern leadership for its dissolution makes the revolutionary outlook of those leaders appear to be the same as that of the Second International. No mention is made of the possibility that the relations of the Soviet Union with its anti-fascist capitalist allies in the middle of a world war could have something to do with the dissolution.
3. An antecedent to the dissolution of the Party itself was the dissolution of the factory nuclei in the late 1930's. Lenin and the Comintern--in earlier and better times--had held that nuclei in industry were essential to a Communist Party. The dissolution of the nuclei had its antecedents in Dimitrov's offer (to social-democrats and other reformists) to dissolve Communist fractions made at the Seventh Congress.
4. The dissolution of the industrial fractions in the CPUSA was very harmful to democratic centralism within the Party.

The Second Congress of the Communist International, in July 1920, declared:

The Communist International decisively rejects the view that the proletariat can accomplish its revolution without having an independent political party of its own. Every class struggle is a political struggle. The goal of this struggle, which is inevitably transformed into civil war, is the conquest of political power. Political power cannot be seized, organized, and operated except through a political party. Only if the proletariat has as leader an organized and experienced party with clearly defined aims and a practical programme of immediate measures both for internal and external policy, will the conquest of political power turn out to be not an accidental episode, but the starting point of an enduring communist structure of society built by the proletariat.

In early 1944, Browder proposed, with the endorsement of the Party's National Committee, the liquidation of the Communist Party which was to be replaced by a "Communist Political Association," described as "a non-partisan association of Americans," which "adheres to the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism." Browder's proposal was adopted overwhelmingly by the Party membership.

What were the roots of this liquidation? What features within both the CPUSA and the international Communist movement allowed this gross repudiation of Marxism-Leninism to occur? How was it that the membership of a Communist Party could overwhelmingly vote for its dissolution?

Browder had subordinated the Party to its anti-fascist capitalist allies to such an extent that he ended up dissolving it for them. But there had been lesser instances of subordination of the Party to the Roosevelt administration in 1935-39, which greased the ways for its more complete subordination after December 7, 1941, the date of the US entry into the war.

A. The Dissolution of the Comintern: A Forerunner

There were other roots to Browder's liquidationism. One relatively short one was the dissolution of the Comintern on June 10, 1943.

What follows is the "Resolution of the ECCI Presidium Recommending the Dissolution of the Communist International" dated May 15, 1943. We cite it in full because of its significance. It may mark one of fascism's more lasting victories. Let us briefly examine the premises of this document which appears on pages 396-97 in this paper.

1. The historic role of the Communist International consisted of its
 - (a) upholding the principles of Marxism.

Comment: This is true, but it fails to mention its role was to uphold Marxism in the era of imperialism, i.e., Leninism, which entails the concepts of the dictatorship of the proletariat and democratic centralism, neither of which is mentioned.

(b) helping consolidate "real working class parties" and "helping to mobilize the workers for the defense of their economic and political interests and for the struggle against fascism and the war the latter was preparing and for the support of the Soviet Union as the chief bulwark against fascism."

Comment: It also told the workers that "defense" of their economic and political interests would not be enough. The C.I. told the workers that only through revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism could their economic and political interests be achieved. No mention is made of imperialism as a cause of war, or that the C.I. had "told" the workers that they must support those resisting imperialism if they themselves were to effectively combat capitalism. It is certainly true that the C.I. helped the Parties "mobilize the workers" for the support of the

Soviet Union, but not only because the Soviet Union was a bulwark against fascism, but because it was a bulwark against capitalism. In other words, this interpretation of "the historic role of the Communist International" has torn the revolutionary guts out of what the C.I. actually stood for.

2. While the Comintern exposed the "Hitlerite" Anti-Comintern Pact as "a weapon for the preparation of war," "any sort of international centre" would encounter "insuperable obstacles" in solving the problems facing the individual parties in their respective countries because

(a) The various countries had different historical paths of development, and differences in character and social orders, as well as differences in the level and tempo of the economic and political development which resulted in differences in the consciousness and organization of the workers in those countries.

Comment: The "differences" cited held true from the very first day of the creation of the Comintern! But, since there were certain generalizations that the working class, through scientific socialism, could make about imperialism, and certain generalizations that class could make about the political and organizational tasks necessary to combat imperialism, that class went ahead to organize a world movement based on Marxism-Leninism and the organizational form concomitant with that theory, democratic centralism. It seems to us that, programatically, throughout its existence, the Comintern claimed to take into account the differences cited above. It did not, after the Seventh Congress, take into account the differences in those countries, where there was an immediate fascist danger and in those where there was not. Also, no mention is made of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and their significance to the oppressed classes and peoples. Not only has the revolutionary significance of the C.I. been obliterated, but the universality of Marxism-Leninism is denied.

(b) The world war had exacerbated the problems resulting from the existence of the Comintern because the differences between the peoples occupied by the "Hitlerites" and those who have not been have become greater, with the task of the occupied being to help sabotage the "Hitler military machine" and the task of the non-occupied, particularly the working class, to aid to the utmost the military efforts of the governments against the "Hitler machinery machine."

Comment: Insofar as this relates to the working class it is a non sequitur. So there's a difference in tasks. Dimitrov, back in 1935, proposed different tasks for those Communists who were in fascist countries and those who were not. There can be little doubt that the Communist International was an embarrassment to the Soviet government in its 'grand alliance' with its imperialist allies. (In our view, there was nothing, in principle, wrong with the alliance, and there was nothing to prevent the co-existence of both the alliance and the Comintern.) But the document doesn't mention the Soviet government and its relation to its allies. Also, no mention is made of Japanese or Italian or anybody else's fascism. (The Soviet Union was neutral in the war against Japan at the time; that explains its omission. Mussolini's government didn't fall until July 1943, and Italy wasn't invaded by the allies until September 1943.)

The historic role of the Communist International, which was founded in 1919 as a result of the political union of the great majority of old, pre-war working-class parties, consisted in upholding the principles of Marxism from vulgarization and distortion by the opportunist elements in the working-class movement, in helping to promote the consolidation in a number of countries of the vanguard of the foremost workers in real working-class parties, and in helping them to mobilize the workers for the defence of their economic and political interests and for the struggle against fascism and the war the latter was preparing and for support of the Soviet Union as the chief bulwark against fascism.

The Communist International from the first exposed the real meaning of the 'Anti-Comintern Pact', as a weapon for the preparation of war by the Hitlerites. Long before the war, it ceaselessly and tirelessly exposed the vicious, subversive work of the Hitlerites who masked it by their screams about the so-called interference of the Communist International in the internal affairs of these States.

But long before the war it became more and more clear that, with the increasing complications in the internal and international relations of the various countries, any sort of international centre would encounter insuperable obstacles in solving the problems facing the movement in each separate country. The deep differences of the historic paths of development of various countries, the differences in their character and even contradictions in their social orders, the differences in the level and tempo of their economic and political development, the differences, finally, in the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers, conditioned the different problems facing the working class of the various countries.

The whole development of events in the last quarter of a century, and the experience accumulated by the Communist International convincingly showed that the organizational form of uniting the workers chosen by the first congress of the Communist International answered the conditions of the first stages of the working-class movement but has been outgrown by the growth of this movement and by the complications of its problems in separate countries, and has even become a drag on the further strengthening of the national working-class parties.

The World War that the Hitlerites have let loose has still further sharpened the differences in the situation of the separate countries, and has placed a deep dividing line between those countries which fell under the Hitlerite tyranny and those freedom-loving peoples who have united in a powerful anti-Hitlerite coalition.

In the countries of the Hitlerite *bloc* the fundamental task of the working class, the toilers, and all honest people consists in giving all help for the

defeat of this *bloc*, by sabotage of the Hitlerite military machine from within, and by helping to overthrow the Government who are guilty of the war. In the countries of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, the sacred duty of the widest masses of the people, and in the first place of the foremost workers, consists in aiding by every means the military efforts of the Governments of these countries aimed at the speediest defeat of the Hitlerite *bloc* and the assurance of the friendship of nations based on their equality.

At the same time the fact must not be lost sight of that separate countries which are members of the anti-Hitlerite coalition have their own particular problems. For example, in countries occupied by the Hitlerites which have lost their State independence the basic task of the foremost workers and of the wide masses of the people consists in promoting armed struggle, developing into a national war of liberation against Hitlerite Germany. At the same time, the war of liberation of the freedom-loving peoples against the Hitlerite tyranny, which has brought into movement the masses of the people, uniting them without difference of party or religion in the ranks of a powerful anti-Hitlerite coalition, has demonstrated with still greater clearness that the general national upsurge and mobilization of the people for the speediest victory over the enemy can be best of all and most fruitfully carried out by the vanguard of the working-class movement of each separate country, working within the framework of its own country.

Already the seventh congress of the Communist International, meeting in 1935, taking into account the change[s] that had taken place both in the international situation and in the working-class movements that demand great flexibility and independence of its sections in deciding the problems confronting them, emphasized the necessity for the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in deciding all questions of the working-class movement arising from the concrete conditions and peculiarities of each country, to make a rule of avoiding interference in the internal organizational affairs of the communist parties. These same considerations guided the Communist International in considering the resolution of the Communist Party of the USA of November 1940, on its withdrawal from the ranks of the Communist International.

Guided by the judgment of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, communists have never been supporters of the conservation of organizational forms that have outlived themselves. They have always subordinated forms of organization of the working-class movement and the methods of working of such organizations, to the fundamental political interest of the working-class movement as a whole, to the peculiarities of the concrete historical situation and to the problems immediately resulting from this situation. They remember the example of the great Marx, who united the foremost workers in the ranks of the Working Men's International Association, and, when the First International had fulfilled its

historical task, laying the foundations for the development of the working-class parties in the countries of Europe and America, and, as a result of the matured situation creating mass national working-class parties, dissolved the First International inasmuch as this form of organization already no longer corresponded to the demands confronting it.

In consideration of the above, and taking into account the growth and political maturity of the communist parties and their leading cadres in the separate countries, and also having in view the fact that during the present war some sections have raised the question of the dissolution of the Communist International as the directing centre of the international working-class movement,

The Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in the circumstances of the World War not being able to convene a congress of the Communist International, puts forward the following proposal for ratification by the sections of the Communist International.

The Communist International, as the directing centre of the international working-class movement, is to be dissolved, thus freeing the sections of the Communist International from their obligations arising from the statutes and resolutions of the congresses of the Communist International.

The Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International calls on all supporters of the Communist International to concentrate their energies on whole-hearted support of and active participation in the war of liberation of the peoples and States of the anti-Hitlerite coalition for the speediest defeat of the deadly enemy of the working class and toilers—German fascism and its associates and vassals.

The Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International
(Signed):

G. DIMITROV	O. KUUSINEN
M. ERCOLI	D. MANUILSKY
W. FLORIN	A. MARTY
K. GOTTWALD	W. PIECK
V. KOLAROV	M. THOREZ
J. KOPLINIG	A. ZHDANOV

The following representatives of communist parties also append their signatures to the present resolution:

BIANCO (Italy)
DOLORES IBARRURI (Spain)
LEKHTININ (Finland)
ANNA PAUKER (Rumania)
MATTHIAS RAKOSI (Hungary)

Moscow, 15 May 1943.

3. It had been decided back at the Seventh Congress in 1935 that the Parties needed more flexibility and independence from the (Comintern) center. It was decided then that the ECCI would not "interfere" in the organizational affairs of the individual parties. These considerations guided the Comintern in letting the US Party disaffiliate from it in 1940.

Comment: There is no doubt that more independence and flexibility was given the parties as a result of the Seventh Congress. That is apparently cited as a step toward dissolution, which was not the intention at the time. Regarding the US Party: The Voorhis Act of 1940 made it "illegal" for the US Party to have affiliation with the Comintern and that is why it withdrew. Legalism and the preservation of the "mass party" were more important than principle. It was that same legalism, intimately tied in with the concept of the "mass party," that caused Browder to expel some 4,000 Communists from the CPUSA because they were not citizens of the United States of America. (He was obliging the Smith Act of 1940 on that one.) That's precedent all right.

4. Marx dissolved the First International.

Comment: Partly because of its corruption (by the anarchists and other non-marxist elements, not because of the "maturity" of its parties)(see 5).

5. The "growth and political maturity" of the Communist Parties and its leading cadres was a consideration.

Comment: If it had been, the Comintern leadership shouldn't have even considered dissolving it.

There can be no question that Browder saw the dissolution of the Comintern as a tremendous opportunity to dissolve the CPUSA.

B. The Dissolution of the Factory Nuclei: Another Forerunner

We hold that the Fourth Comintern Congress, November-December 1922, put forth a fundamental Leninist principle when it declared:

No Communist Party can be considered a bona fide, well organized Communist mass party if it has no well established Communist nuclei in the workshops, factories, mines, railways, etc.

Lenin, in his "Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks," (September 1902) wrote

Now about the factory circles. These are particularly important to us: the main strength of the movement lies in the organisation of the workers at the large factories, for the large factories (and mills) contain not only the predominant part of the working class as regards numbers, but even more as regards influence, development and fighting capacity. Every factory must be our fortress. For that every 'factory' workers' organisation should be as secret internally as 'ramified' externally, i.e., in its outward relationships, it should stretch its feelers as far and in as many directions as any revolutionary

organisation, I emphasize that here, too, a group of revolutionary workers should necessarily be the core, the leader, the 'master.'
(Collected Works, Volume Six, p. 241)

Dimitrov, in his "Speech in Reply to Discussion" at the Seventh Comintern Congress said:

We are even prepared to forego the creation of Communist fractions in the trade unions if that is necessary in the interests of trade union unity [with the social-democrats and other reformists].
(Report to the Seventh Congress, Red Star Press ed., p. 153)

Joseph Starobin¹ relates one consequence that came from the abolition of Communist fractions in the US in the late 1930's. (The nucleus is the basic organization of Communists at the workplace; a fraction consists of Communists within the union at the workplace, so a nucleus could be a fraction within each committee; if there was more than one union at the workplace, then the Communists in each union would be the fraction there, responsible to the nucleus).

Moreover, the Party's own decision in the late thirties to abolish its 'fractions' or caucuses within the labor movement had the paradoxical effect of widening the gap between union Members in the Party and secretly affiliated leaders. Until the caucuses were abolished, all Communists in any given group or in any campaign would map out strategy and tactics together, and a common discipline would be binding to everyone no matter what their echelon or particular task. The American Communists were seeking to break away from this Leninist form, suitable to quasi-military purposes; their object was to obviate the suspicion of conspiracy, and to give their influentials leeway to behave as organizational leaders with no strings attached to a hidden center. Yet this very dissolution of fractions operated to remove the influentials from the discipline of Communist rank and file in their organizations. At the same time it relieved them of the obligations to 'build the Party' within these organizations.
(American Communism in Crisis, 1943-1957, pp. 39-40)

Cochran relates what the abolition of the fractions did to Party democracy--and centralism.

But the very mechanism [the fraction]--with its egalitarian implications--has become an irritant, for the high Communist official, like other union officials, is convinced that much of what he and his associates do is confidential and cannot be aired at a town hall gathering. Moreover, he is not prepared to have his decisions questioned, much less overridden, by nondescript members he considers untutored or unseasoned.

It is true that Communist leaders inform him from time to time of decisions that may disturb his internal alliances, and that until the cold war the Party was generally successful in having these honored. That does not negate the fact that a social-democratic strain was affecting its system, and had the trend continued, in time Communist union officials would have balked at Party supervision of any sort.

The new model unionism did not disturb the discipline with which the ranks carried out instructions and assignments, but Party functionaries acted like parliamentary whips to line up union ranks behind their officials, and relied on personal liaison with the latter to gain adoption of party policies (Bert Cochran, Labor and Communism, pp. 136-137).

We know that when some Communists in the factories resisted the dissolution of the fractions, and, ultimately, the nuclei, the Comintern's Representative in the US, "Brown" (Alpi), was sent in to "straighten them out." (interview)

VII. A Feature of Browderism--the Acceptance of the Two-Party System as the Only Viable Arena for Political Work or How the CPUSA Abdicated the Labor Movement to the Democratic Party

One of the premises of Browder's dissolution of the Party was that the two-party system would be the only practical political arena in the foreseeable future. Said Browder

In my book Victory--and After, published in 1942, I gave an extended analysis of the two-party system and its workings. I showed how the Democratic and Republican parties had become semi-official institutions, buttressed in laws and customs which rendered difficult if not impossible the rise of new major parties

No one can predict any more which party has the majority in the country, because neither has a stable majority at any time. The independent voters who 'split their vote,' and who agree with neither party as a whole, hold a growing balance of power. (Teheran, p. 118).

Browder concluded that Communists as "independents" could be more effective in electoral politics (apparently, the only "politics" left for Mr. Browder) than in a Communist Party (p. 120).

Another premise, intimately connected with the one cited above, was that the US labor movement had nowhere to go but with Roosevelt, whom he distinguished from the political machine of the democratic party!! (Who the hell did he think ran the machine?) (Teheran, pp. 109-110).

This abdication of the labor movement to the Democratic Party also has long roots--roots that go back to the mid-thirties, roots that come out of the soil of the CP relation to the US labor movement from 1934 through the war years.

We have already shown that in 1934-35 the Party dissolved the independent unions which it had led. (See our paper "Summary of 1928-1935 Conditions in USA and CPUSA.")

Bert Cochran, in his *Labor and Communism* tells us that when the Communists tried to organize workers through the TUUL "red" unions, the workers shied away from joining "Communist" organizations. Since this is a significant contention, I shall quote in full Cochran's attempt to substantiate it.

TUUL isolation had little to do with their having committed the Cardinal sin of engaging in dual unionism. Dual unionism was a bugaboo devised by the AFL officialdom to justify its claimed monopoly of the trade-union business. It was the repeated smashup of militant independent unions--for reasons little related to dual unionism--that gave the AFL's propaganda catchword its seeming validity. There was nothing to it. A union with an authentic base in an industry--like Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers, or the subsequent CIO breakaways--could flourish without AFL benediction; all the more so, since in so many industries the AFL lacked organizations to which another union could be dual. The problem of the Communist unions was not that they were dual, but that they were Communist. Even under favorable circumstances, the Communist identification was like a bar sinister warning off the citizenry. This was brought out in chemically pure form in the unsuccessful Communist attempt to join forces with the steel rank-and-file committee. Here was an opposition movement led by heretics who were taking advice from a brain trust of four left-wing journalists and economists. The heretics had no bias against radicals and desperately needed help. A meeting of the Committee of Ten and the four braintrusters was set, to which were invited representatives of the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union to determine what the Communist outfit could offer. The meeting, described by one participant, went this way:

"The first thing that happened was that the date of the strike was set for June 16. Then the executive board of the SMWIU was asked in. John Egan, their secretary, presented their case. They wanted the rank-and-file group and the SMWIU to issue a joint statement from this meeting, a joint call for a joint convention to focus public attention on the issues, and local organizations to issue joint statements and call mass meetings. It was perfectly clear that they wanted to formalize the whole affair and be sure that the SMWIU was in the limelight as an organization. As soon as they had withdraw, the rank-and-file group voted thumbs down on the proposition. We'd have been smeared immediately as Communists if we had accepted. The sense of the meeting was that the two organizations should cooperate informally on a local basis wherever there was such a possibility. Number Three [of the braintrusters] had a hell of a job persuading John Egan not to print anything about the meeting in the Communist press."

Harry Bridges reported the same reaction. He was urging sailors to join the Marine Workers Industrial Union in 1933, but admitted that despite individual desperation and the AFL union's abdication, seamen refused to affiliate with a Communist outfit (pp. 89-90).

Browder, in his report to the Eighth Convention of the CPUSA in April 1934, in regard to the Party's trade union line, stated:

The revolutionary unions of the T.U.U.L. with their 125,000 members, while numerically the smallest of these main groups of the trade union movement, are by no means least important. The T.J.U.L. unions in developing the whole mass movement of resistance to the N.R.A. and the whole capitalist offensive, in the development of the strike movements, have played a decisive role. This is brought out by an examination of the statistics of the strike movement in 1933, as shown in the following table:

	Membership	Led in Strikes	New Members
A.F. of L	2,500,000	450,000	500,000
Independent Unions	250,000	250,000	150,000
T.U.U.L.	125,000	200,000	100,000
Unorganized		100,000	
	<u>2,875,000</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>750,000</u>

From these figures we see that the T.U.U.L.--although not quite 5 per cent of the total union membership--directly led 20 per cent of all strikes, and gained 20 per cent of all new members. The independent unions, a little under 10 per cent of the total membership, led 25 per cent of the strikes. The A.F. of L. unions, comprising over 85 per cent of the membership, led 45 per cent of the strikes.

This statement, with its supporting statistics, seems to demonstrate that while the Communists were not exceptionally successful in organizing workers into the T.U.U.L. unions, they played a significant role in strike leadership.

But the Comintern had a different set of figures. In the "Communist International" of September 20, 1934, an article declared:

In March 1934 . . . it was found that the TUUL organizations were pushed into the background by the unions belonging to the AFL The Red textile union did not participate in the leadership of the numerous strikes of this period At the present time it has only 1000 to 1200 members Among the miners the revolutionary union led only one percent of the strikes In the same way the revolutionary union succeeded only in winning the leadership of two percent of the strikes in the automobile industry. The revolutionary miners union had only 1000 members now and the revolutionary workers union only a few hundred. (Cited in Howe & Coser, The American Communist Party, pp. 268-69).

Piatnitsky, the Comintern's Organizational Secretary, observed in the November 20, 1934 issue of the same publication:

In the United States there can be no question of the Communists building up a revolutionary trade union opposition . . . parallel to the existing unions of the AFL. There the task is to penetrate deeply into the AFL It was a complete mistake to try to build up a revolutionary trade union opposition in all countries (Cited in Howe & Coser, p. 269)

Many non and anti-Communist historians claim that the CPUSA abandoned its policy of working mainly through the TUUL unions, not because it had determined it had been

unable to exercise a decisive influence in the leadership of the workers because we were not yet entrenched inside the A.F. of L. unions which the masses were entering. (Browder statement, January 1935)

but rather because of the growing danger of fascism, and, more particularly, the danger fascist Germany presented to the Soviet Union. Examples: Howe & Coser, pp. 269-70, Cochran, pp. 71-77.

Another non (and ex) Communist historian, Al Richmond, tells us that there was a spontaneous "grass roots" movement within the Communist Party for popular and united front policies which brought about the abandonment of the "Red" trade unions. Wyndam Mortimer, who was key in the Communist work in auto (though, sadly, he never admits he was in the Party) indicates there was a natural and spontaneous tendency for the workers to want to affiliate with the AFL rather than the TUUL unions. (Organize, p. 60)

The evidence seems to show that, essentially, the move to disband the TUUL unions came from the Comintern, not from independent analysis and decision by the CPUSA. The evidence also shows us that this decision was, in itself, not unprincipled, and did correspond to the realities of the situation. What we intend to examine now, and what we originally set out to do, is how the CP worked within the AFL and later the CIO and how that led Browder to abdicate the labor movement to the democratic party.

Cochran characterizes the role of the AFL leadership during the 1934 strike wave as one of "ineptitude and mismanagement." While not questioning that, we think a more basic characterization of its role would be class collaboration carried to its natural conclusion. In the steel, textile and auto industries, that leadership conceded the struggles to the owners before they had hardly begun. (Cochran, pp. 83-87). The AFL leadership resisted the organization of the mass-production industries much much more than they resisted the owners.

Within the AFL was its Committee for Industrial Organization, initiated and led by John L. Lewis at the end of the AFL's October 1935 Convention, which had rejected organization of the unorganized, and, concomitantly, industrial unionism. The unions adhering to the Committee for Industrial Organization were not to be ejected from the AFL until September 1936; the CIO did not issue certificates of affiliation until March 1937, and did not hold its first constitutional Convention until November 1938 when it became the Congress of Industrial Organization.

Lewis quickly went to the Communists for help in organizing mass-production industry--and the Communists helped.

In the fall of 1935, Len De Caux, "an old time Communist adherent," (Cochran, p. 95) who had been editor of the journal of a UMW District that "had fought Lewis tooth and nail in the inter-union wars of the twenties," was made head of publicity for the CIO. Lee Pressman, another Communist "adherent" (and member 1934-36) became general counsel. More important, the organizational resources of the CP were thrown into the campaign to organize the steel industry a year later, and to the campaign for industrial organization in general.

Cochran sums up the Communist contribution to the steel campaign:

According to Foster, of the approximately 200 full-time organizers on the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) payroll, sixty were Communists. 'In Ohio,' said John Williamson, the Party District Organizer at the time, 'our entire party and Young Communist League Staffs were incorporated into the staffs of the committee. This included Gus Hall, in charge of Warren and Niles . . . , John Steuben, in charge of Youngstown, and many others.' William (Boleslaw) Gebert, who had been president of the Polonia, the Polish division of the IWO [International Workers Order, a Communist-influenced fraternal and insurance organization, consisting mostly of foreign-language speakers, which, in 1952, still had 165,000 members] (after the war he became an official in the Polish Communist regime), was appointed by Murray to mobilize the foreign-language fraternal societies. An important Congress held in Pittsburg in October 1936 with delegates representing Lithuanian, Polish, Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian, Ukrainian, and Russian societies, chaired by Gebert, and addressed by Murray and Clinton Golden. Another national conference of Black groups was held in Pittsburg in February 1937 organized by Benjamin Carreathers, a Black Communist functionary, also on the SWOC staff. According to other testimony, 31 or 32 SWOC staff members in the Chicago area were attending the Communist caucus. Similar although less extensive hiring of CP'ers occurred later in connection with the packinghouse campaign headed by another administration stalwart from the mine union, Van Bittner. (pp. 96-97)

Foster's account, which is included in Cochran's, is the only recognition, in print, I have seen of the invaluable contribution of the much maligned (by Piatnitsky, for example) Communist-led foreign language groups to the organization of the CIO unions, particularly in steel and packinghouse, where many, perhaps the majority of workers, were from Eastern Europe. (Interviews)

In the words of Roosevelt's biographer Leuchtenburg:

By 1936 [when he ran against the 'modestly liberal' Landon], Franklin Roosevelt had forged a new political coalition based on the masses in the great northern cities, and led in Congress by a new political type; a northern urban liberal democrat While old-stock Americans in the small towns clung to the G.O.P., the newer

ethnic groups swung to Roosevelt, mostly out of gratitude for New Deal welfare measures, but partly out of delight at being granted 'recognition.' Under Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, one out of every twenty-five judicial appointments went to a Catholic; under Roosevelt, more than one out of every four. (p. 184).

Cochran tells us:

A pronounced economic upturn that lasted from 1935 to the recession in the fall of 1937 brought with it a restoration of self-confidence among wage earners. The other background factor was the buoyant political climate that reassured workers they were in understanding hands, that there was somebody in authority from whom they could get a fair hearing.

And of

the continued faith overcoming rebuffs and disillusionments, that the man in the White House was a peerless humanitarian, that in him labor had the greatest friend that American politics had ever produced.

This reverence was given institutional expression that summer [1936] as Lewis and his coworkers set up Labor's Non-Partisan League to round up the labor vote for Roosevelt and the Democrats. They contributed \$770,000 to the campaign chest (60 percent of which came from the mine union), hammered out a de facto bloc within the Democratic Party, and were credited with swinging Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana to the Roosevelt column. This energetic, purposeful mobilization of labor behind the Democratic candidates was an innovation; it transformed the old Gompers' casual and largely symbolic endorsements of labor's friends, to open a new chapter in unions' political involvement and rise to national influence. (pp. 106-07)

The Communists were playing an important role in the CIO organization campaigns. The CIO was, by far, the Party's largest source of influence. At the same time the Party was "objectively supporting" Roosevelt against Landon, who represented "fascism." The Party was not about to jeopardize its de facto alliance with the CIO leadership by repudiating the political orientation of that leadership.

In our opinion, if the Communist Party could not propose an alternative to a Democratic Party administration in 1936, a farmer-labor party, when the conditions were ripe for it to do so, it would not do so at some other time. The working class had been conceded to the Democratic Party. But the Communists had considered the alternatives. Foster, who endorsed the Communist support of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party in 1936 tells us:

The strength of the workers' political movement was further indicated by the fact that at the second national convention of Labor's Non-Partisan League (held in Washington, March 1937), there were present 600 delegates, representing 1,500,000 workers in the A.F. of L., C.I.O., and Railroad Brotherhoods. But the top union leaders, true to form,

did not rise to the situation. Despite the broad demand of the rank and file and the energetic agitation of the Communists, they refused to establish an independent party of the toiling masses, even though this would have strengthened, not weakened, the mass support for Roosevelt. So this golden opportunity to launch the working class on the path of independent political action was lost. (History of the Communist Party of the U.S., pp. 332-33)

But Foster says of 1936, two pages later:

The Party was quite aware of the historic opportunity which the early New Deal years presented for the working class to break with the poisonous capitalistic two-party system and embark upon a course of independent political action.

In this general matter, however, the Party narrowly escaped making a serious blunder. After the C.I.O., the A.F. of L., and the other various existing state labor and farmer parties had clearly indicated, early in 1936, that they were not going to launch an independent party for the presidential elections of that fall, Earl Browder, general secretary of the C.P., nevertheless insisted in our Party that it put a Labor ticket in the field. If this had been done, it would have meant another Federated Farmer Labor Party (1923), but upon a still narrower basis. Browder sought to justify this impractical right-sectarian proposition, which would have disastrously isolated our Party on the absurd grounds that such a party would draw votes from Landon's column rather than from Roosevelt's. Only after he was defeated did Browder withdraw his proposal and accept the policy of a qualified endorsement of Roosevelt which the Party successfully followed in the 1936 elections.

Foster wants it both ways.

Browder, at the Ninth National Convention of the CPUSA, June 1936, gave the following rationale for supporting Roosevelt:

It had long been the hope of our Party that we would be able to go into the Presidential elections this year with a Farmer-Labor national ticket. Already in May it had become clear that this was impossible. The great majority of organizations composing the Farmer-Labor movement while breaking with the old parties, had decided to follow the policy of the big progressive unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization, in supporting Roosevelt for re-election.

The Communist Party declared that it seriously disagreed with this policy of dependence upon Roosevelt. We did not, however, withdraw from full participation in this rapidly growing movement for the Farmer-Labor Party. We are fully prepared to continue and develop our united front relations with those who support Roosevelt, reserving our disagreement on this question. Our solid united front with these organizations and groups has the solid foundation of complete agreement with them that the Republican Party, with its Hearst-Liberty League allies, is the main enemy that must be defeated at all costs. (The People's Front, pp. 25-26)

We can appreciate that the Party did not want to become "isolated" from its newly-found mass movement and that Foster and others must have had bitter memories of the Party's farmer-labor fiasco in 1924; but it seems to us the Party would have been of more service to its class and itself if it could have sought--and hopefully found--a way to channel the working class away from the Democratic Party. We know of course, in a way that the Communists in the 1930's could not have known, that when their CIO and liberal allies had no more use for them, they had nowhere to go. It is interesting, and perhaps even instructive to recall that in the fall of 1939, when it broke with the Roosevelt administration because of the consequences of the German-Soviet Pact--and it did suffer for that--it still retained its influence in the labor movement. (Partly, admittedly, because John L. Lewis opposed Roosevelt at the time.) This is because it had functioned to some degree as a Communist Party. (H & C, pp. 396-98; Cochran, pp. 156-95)

We recognize that Roosevelt's popularity, and the orientation of its labor and liberal allies were difficult obstacles for the Party to overcome. But it was terribly mistaken, both in principle and practicality, when it considered those not to be obstacles, but a free ride. The CP became so dependent on its bloc with labor and the liberals, so afraid of jeopardizing it, that, long before 1944, it had handed the working class over to the Democratic Party--without a fight.

What should it have done? The "unpopular" thing. It should never have failed to point out what Roosevelt was, what he represented. If that would have lessened Communist "influence," then perhaps that "influence" wasn't worth that much. And although it is not immediately germane to the question of how the working class (and Black people and the poor) got stuck with imperialism's Democratic Party, it must be pointed out that what the CP had in the US labor movement--in the best of times--was influence, not power.

VIII. Social-Democratic Features of the Communist Party

Below, we shall attempt to show that the US Party, prior to April 1944, when Browder made his proposal to dissolve it, already had certain features that were more akin to a social-democratic party of the Bernstein type than to the party described in What is to be Done.

1. An extremely low ideological level among the membership. Investigation, including the reading of Party material and interviews of people in the Party in the 1930's has shown us that the Party leadership gave little import to both the significance of theory and the necessity of the membership's learning fundamental Marxist-Leninist theory. Certainly, Marxist-Leninist material was available, but the constant activity/busywork expected from the rank-and-file precluded their getting the time and instruction necessary for the learning of adequate theory. This was a critical (but not sole) cause of:

2. A near-complete absence of democratic centralism. Because the rank-and-file was not given the ideological equipment to debate, discuss and

promulgate political ideas, it didn't. Policy came from above. Thus policy (and leadership generally) was provided (at except the very highest level) by the college-educated, those who had "come from" the petty bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie. Another contributory factor to the lack of democratic-centralism, one which seems to have come from the Soviet model, was the inviolability of leadership from criticism, unless it came from a yet higher level of leadership.

3. The very nature of the "popular" or "democratic" front policy of the Party in the 1930's caused it to receive an influx of middle-class recruits whose influence was much greater than those from the working class, and many of whom became "leaders." That same "popular front" policy, with its emphasis on electoral politics changed the very structure of the Party.

The anti-Communists Howe and Coser are correct when they relate:

Slowly, the whole structure of the party was being changed. Previously, its basic organizational form was supposed to be the shop unit, though more often than not it was a street branch. Now shop units were merged into larger industrial groups that paralleled the new industrial unions, and the street branches were succeeded by large area branches based on conventional political divisions, thus better preparing the party for electoral work and for joint projects with other groups similarly organized. By the 1938 convention of the New York State party, for example, it was reported that only 20 percent of the membership still belonged to the shop units, and the implicit, though not formal, sentiment was for still further decreasing the percentage. (p. 335)

We have already mentioned and commented on the abolition of the factory nuclei, or shop units, and its consequences.

As a consequence of the premises of Browderism already discussed, and the opportunistic features of both the Party and the Comintern, already discussed, came Browder's all-conclusive premise--capitalism worked (But do not ask for whom!).

Whatever may be the situation in other lands, in the United States the consequence of Teheran means a perspective, in the immediate post-war period and for a long term of years, of expanded production and employment and the strengthening of democracy within the framework of the present system--and not a perspective of the transition to socialism. (Teheran, p. 69)

IX. Conclusion

From all accounts, it is clear that Browder's policies as expressed in Teheran were opposed in the Party leadership by Foster. But the Party rank-and-file, nor any one else (except, we can assume, an interested party or two in government) was not to know of that opposition until spring of 1945. Foster assumed the chairmanship of the Communist Political

Association in May 1944. Later, Foster explained his silence by saying that open opposition to Browder in 1944 would have precipitated a crisis in the Party. Browder had threatened to expel Foster if he continued his opposition and that expulsion could indeed have precipitated a crisis. But one may ask: So what? (and the answer--from Foster--most certainly would have been "the anti-fascist war, the defense of the Soviet Union would be harmed.")

Another reason for Foster's muted criticism must have been the little known and less publicized fact that Browder had Dimitrov's sanction to dissolve the Party. Browder said, in 1965, that all transcripts of the early 1944 discussions within the Party's top leadership, including, of course, Foster's opposition to Browder, had been sent to Dimitrov, who told Foster "not to press his differences." (Dimitrov had become chief of the Soviet Central Committee's section for foreign parties, after the dissolution of the Comintern.) (Joseph R. Starobin, American Communism in Crisis, 1943-1957, pp. 74-75)

In April 1945, Jacques Duclos, Secretary of the French Communist Party published an article in the French Party's journal "Cahiers du Communisme." He was obviously familiar with the debates that had taken place within the US Party's leadership.

Foster describes the article:

Duclos made a long statement of Browder's policy, counterposing to it copious quotations from Foster's letter to the National Committee. In drawing his own conclusions, Duclos declared that 'one is witnessing a notorious revisionism which is expressed in the concept of a long-term class peace in the United States, of the possibility of the suppression of the class struggle in the post-war period and the establishment of harmony between labor and capital.' He condemned Browder's distortion of the Teheran diplomatic declaration 'into a political platform of class peace,' and he excoriated the liquidation of the Communist Party. He declared that nothing justifies the dissolution of the American Communist Party.' Instead, the situation 'presupposes the existence of a powerful Communist Party.' (History of the C.P. of the U.S., p. 434)

Between April 1944 and April 1945, there had been not one open criticism of Browderism from anywhere in the Communist movement. (Starobin, citing CP organizational director John Williamson, p. 84)

Browder, in the meetings of the CP leadership that followed the Duclos article, was given many opportunities by his colleagues to abandon his "Teheran line," and agree to the Duclos article and a letter Foster had written the National Committee in 1944 in opposition to Browder. He refused. At a special convention held in July 1945, the Communist Political Association was liquidated and the CPUSA reconstituted, with Foster at its head. Browder was expelled from the Party in early 1946. (Starobin, pp. 103-04, Foster, p. 437)

There is a detailed and fascinating account of the discussions that went on in joint meetings of the Communist Party and Communist trade union leaders in the spring of 1945 in Starobin's book (pp. 77-106)--based on transcripts of those meetings.

X. A Summation: The Main Causes of Browderism

1. The right opportunism that was engendered by the imprecise and sometimes incorrect formulations from the Seventh Comintern Congress meant to combat the growing fascist threat. The dissolution of the Comintern: Not only did this encourage the dissolution of the CPUSA, but, in general, it seems to us impossible for a Communist Party, especially in an imperialist country, to operate in a principled manner for any significant period without being part of an international Communist movement operating on the principles of democratic centralism.
2. The failure of the US Party to develop into a Bolshevik-type party. This, in turn, had its roots in its
 - a. striving to be a "mass" party.
 - b. neglecting the political development of its members
 - c. ignoring even the rudiments of democratic centralism
3. The ignoring, for the most part, of the imperialist nature of the US government and of the ability of the bourgeoisie to penetrate the US Communist and labor movement.

XI. Footnote

¹Both Starobin and Bert Cochran wrote their books under the auspices of Zbigniew Brzezinski, then Director of Columbia University's Research Institute on Communist Affairs (since renamed the Research Institute on International Changes). Brzezinski, whose *raison d'etre* is anti-Communism, is now National Security Advisor to the President of the United States. These books were written with the purpose of helping to destroy Communism. But all weapons can fall into the "wrong hands." These have.

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