

ONE YEAR OF STRUGGLE AGAINST BROWDERISM

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MY TASK in these opening remarks is to deal briefly with the progress of the Party since our Convention one year ago.

At the time when Browder was eliminated from the leadership, we had a very sick Communist Party on our hands, and if his opportunist regime had continued much longer we would have had practically no Party at all. What we have had to do, therefore, in the course of this past year has been literally to reorganize and rebuild our Party.

OUR POLITICAL LINE

First, let me say a few words with regard to the political line of the Party. As the comrades are aware, in bidding ourselves of Browder's revisionism we had to reshape our political line. You will recall the main features of Browder's line which were so sharply condemned by our Convention last year. Browder envisaged a postwar world in which harmonious relations would prevail among the capitalist powers and between them and the Soviet Union, friendly relations which he claimed would be dictated by the "intelli-

gent" sections of the big capitalists, particularly those of the United States. A sufficient answer to that particular illusion of Browder's is the dangerous war tension now existing in the world.

Browder also expected the United States to democratize and industrialize China, Latin America and other undeveloped sections of the world. The answer to this utopianism is the present drive of American imperialism to transform these countries into economic and political satellites on a semi-colonial basis.

Browder expected a long period of class harmony in the United States at the end of the war, from which the conclusion was drawn, logically, for a continuation of labor's wartime no-strike pledge. The answer to this political nonsense was the recent strike wave, the greatest in the history of the United States, a strike wave which is by no means finished. Precisely because we had reshaped our policies in time, we were able to make significant contributions toward ensuring the victory of the workers in these gigantic struggles.

Browder also stated, even as late

as four months ago, that President Truman was a worthy bearer of the political mantle of Roosevelt. This opportunism has been answered by President Truman's further abandonment, since that time, of the Roosevelt policies, both foreign and domestic, and by his active leadership in the campaign of American imperialism to establish its hegemony throughout the world.

At the Convention a year ago when we broke with Browder's revisionist line, we laid down a correct political orientation for the Party. A key quotation from the Resolution of the National Committee at that time reads as follows:

A sharp and sustained struggle must still be conducted to secure the complete destruction of fascism throughout the world and to guarantee that the possibilities which now exist for creating a durable peace shall be realized. This is so because the economic and social roots of fascism in Europe have not yet been fully destroyed. This is so because the extremely powerful reactionary forces in the United States and England, which are centered in the trusts and cartels, are striving to reconstruct liberated Europe on a reactionary basis. Moreover, this is so because the most aggressive circles of American imperialism are endeavoring to secure for themselves political and economic domination in the world.

In this quotation can be found the essence of the line adopted by the Party at the Convention. The Convention Resolution indicated clearly the increasingly rapacious greed of

the big monopolists at home, and their imperialist expansionism abroad. These conclusions have been fully borne out by the course of events. However, I shall not enlarge upon this, since Comrade Dennis will make the political report for the National Board and he will dwell at length upon the application of this political line to the various problems that confront us.

RE-ESTABLISHING OUR VANGUARD ROLE

Together with changing our political line at the Convention a year ago, we also began to re-establish the independent, vanguard role of our Party. Browder, as you know, had abandoned completely the conception of the independent role of the Communist Party. He tagged uncritically behind Roosevelt, he tagged behind John L. Lewis, and finally he wound up by actually tailing behind the National Association of Manufacturers, that is, behind the most aggressive sections of American imperialism.

We have cleansed ourselves of this opportunist tendency. Our Party is once more beginning to function in an independent role, in alliance with its allies of course, in the Communist sense of a vanguard party. We can be pleased at the progress of our Party in this respect, particularly with regard to the political analysis we have made. Our Party was in the very forefront in its analysis of the increasingly reactionary tendencies exhibited, even as early as a month

after Roosevelt's death, by the Truman Administration. We also drew the proper conclusions from Truman's shift to the Right, namely, that while it was resulting in a weakening of the democratic coalition, it was stimulating an extension and new advance of independent and progressive political action.

As for the stress we laid upon the role of American imperialism, this, in my opinion, was a real service to the American people. Our Party can be gratified by the fact that, so far as I know, we were the first Communist Party in the world to outline clearly the expansionist program of American imperialism. In view of the fact that the Party, under Browder's leadership, had been following a line in which the true role of American imperialism was practically obscured, it was no small achievement for us to have so clearly perceived and to have so boldly stated just what American imperialism was seeking to accomplish, namely, to dominate the world. This political clarity constituted a strong reassertion, politically, of the vanguard role of our Party.

At the Convention a year ago, as the comrades will recall, we laid great stress upon the danger that, in correcting our line from the revisionism of Browder, we might, so to speak, over-correct it, and make a swing into "Left"-sectarianism. Such swings have happened before in correcting a wrong line, not only in the history of our Party, but of other Parties as well. It can be said, however, that in the course of this past year we

have, by and large, avoided this mistake. Of course, some serious Leftist mistakes have been made in a number of districts and industries, and I dare say this will be discussed during the course of our sessions. But the main thing is that our Party, for the first time in its history, was able to make a drastic correction of its line without falling into the error of flying to the other extreme.

Let me add, however, that if at the time of the Convention we gave special warning regarding the danger of swinging into "Left"-sectarianism, we did not mean thereby to underestimate the danger of Right opportunism which was, in fact, the main danger, and against which we sharply polemized. It is generally easy to detect Leftist mistakes because these mistakes are often very dramatic and very obvious, particularly to a Party with our most recent experiences. But a Right mistake is much more insidious, much more quiet, much more comfortable, so to speak. We must therefore keep our eyes wide open to prevent subtle, insidious Right mistakes and practices, many of which have they roots in the past. At the same time, we must remain on guard against "Left"-sectarian errors.

BUILDING THE PARTY

During the past year, we have also had to rebuild our Party organizationally, for the Party under Browder's leadership had been dissolved into the C.P.A. and wiped out altogether in the South. We have, how-

ever, re-established the Communist Party nationally, and we have re-organized the Party in the South, doubling its membership there. We have also just concluded a general membership campaign that brought in over 15,000 new members, of whom a large percentage are industrial workers and trade unionists. Simultaneously with this, we carried through a very successful financial drive. We are now planning various other organizational tasks for building our Party. This work of Party building required a great effort on the part of our membership and shows that our Party is in a strong and healthy condition.

The difference between the old Browder revisionist regime and the Party today can be measured quite adequately by their respective attitudes towards the question of the role and the building of the Party. Browder, as you know, with the ripening of his revisionism, finally came to the conclusion that our Party was actually an obstacle in the way of the development of the progressive movement in the United States. That is why he proceeded to liquidate the Party. The Party today, however, has a proper appreciation of its vanguard role in the development of the labor-democratic coalition and the membership and leadership are bending every conceivable effort to strengthen the Party.

In this connection, one of the things we have been especially trying to do during the past year is to infuse the Party with the conception

of more or less continuous Party building. We must get away from the idea of merely carrying on a Party building campaign every year or so and then letting the matter of Party building go by the board in between such campaigns. We want to infuse the Party with the capacity to build itself all the time, as it goes along, in the various phases of its mass work. The American people need a strong Communist Party and it is up to us to build it as speedily as possible.

We are also undertaking to build our Party press. The restricted circulation of the *Daily Worker*, and its huge deficit are simply intolerable. Both these obstacles must be overcome. One of the major tasks of this meeting of the National Committee will be precisely to further this work of building the *Daily Worker*. We must put an end to the present situation and see to it that our Party puts the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* on a sound basis. This we can readily accomplish if we will but turn our hands to the task with Communist determination.

During the past year, we have made determined progress in eliminating the bureaucratic system that was characteristic of the Browder regime. In a spirit of self-criticism we are attacking every vestige of the bureaucratic practices which remain. We have re-established thoroughgoing political discussions in all our leading bodies throughout the country, and this Plenum

I am sure, will fully reflect that fact. This freer discussion that has been established in the Party has greatly strengthened its unity. We have also gone far toward building a real collective leadership in the Party. This is true of the various districts, and it is also true of our national apparatus. Departments which had been allowed to fall to pieces during the period of revisionism—Negro, National Group, Educational, Trade Union, Legislative, etc.—are all being re-established now. This will not only give the Party a richer approach to many questions, but will also help to develop a strong collective leadership throughout the Party.

OUR IDEOLOGICAL WORK

During the past year, our Party has also been radically strengthening its ideological work. Our Educational Department has checked over our schools and has helped strengthen our work on the ideological front in general.

To help rid ourselves of Browder's revisionism, it was necessary for the Party to prepare a whole series of pamphlets expressing the new line of the Party, and this has been done. In this general connection, we are now trying to improve greatly the mass agitation methods of the Party. One of our traditional weaknesses has been a lack of system and organization in our mass agitation work. This was at its worst during the period of Browderism, when so much stress was laid on one man's

voice. Now, however, we are setting out to make sure that the voice of the Party as a whole will be heard.

Plans will be brought before this meeting of the National Committee to expand the Educational Department so that it will take up, more systematically than in the past, the whole question of mass agitation. We must establish Speakers' Bureaus, nationally and in the states; we must develop a more systematic utilization of the radio; we must better organize the publication of our literature; we must survey our papers from an agitational standpoint; we must improve our publicity relations with the general press; etc.

The aim of the Party leadership must now be to get away from the hit-or-miss system of mass agitation that has prevailed up to now and to place this entire vital aspect of our work on a modern and systematic basis. Let me say just a few words about the idea of a Speakers' Bureau. I belonged to the Socialist Party many years ago, and that organization had one very important advantage over us. It was not so narrowly confined to the big cities as we are. The Socialist Party had roots in small towns all over the country and one of the principal means for developing this organization in the smaller communities was precisely the systematic routing of speakers, for street meetings as well as hall meetings, through all the localities. We must take up this kind of work in our districts and on a national

scale. To do this will be one of the major tasks for the expanded Educational Department, the plans for which, we hope, will be approved by this meeting of the National Committee. We shall reap rich rewards in the shape of a strengthened Party in the smaller communities if we take up seriously the matter of a Speakers' Bureau.

FOR A PARTY OF MASS ACTION

Of course, in a Communist Party like ours, the basic weakness is the ideological weakness. Naturally, the more we improve our theoretical understanding, the better our work will develop in every respect. To strengthen our Marxist-Leninist understanding is always our major task; but in doing so we must not forget the questions of organization and action. We have made, as I have been indicating, considerable progress in these fields during the past year, although we still suffer from grievous shortcomings. For one thing, I do not think we have succeeded in developing our entire Party sufficiently as a Party of mass action; a Party in which every district and section committee and every individual member can move swiftly into action and struggle; a Party that can stimulate into greater action, and unite, our allies. Certainly, important progress has been made in this vital respect during the past year. As a Party we have played an important role in the fight for peace, in the fight to save what can be saved of the O.P.A., in the recent

strikes that have taken place, and I think that, particularly, we have played a very important role in the fight to defend the Negro people from the persecution that is being increasingly heaped upon them.

Nevertheless, I think that we cannot remain satisfied with our achievements thus far in this respect. Sections of our Party still remain altogether too sluggish. Not every Party leader and organization has learned effectively to mobilize our membership and allies. We are still weighted down too heavily with the bureaucratic practices and the lethargy that we suffered so much from under the Browder regime. This we must end at all costs.

Another phase of our mass work in which we must make a radical improvement is in our work in the various industries. Browder was no mass organizer. He had no conception of the need for building the Party on a solid foundation in the basic industries, and we paid very dearly for this throughout the years of his leadership. In place of the methods we inherited from the long period of Browder's leadership of the Party, we must develop systematic organizational work on the basis of the respective industries, so that we may really strengthen the Party's position and influence in this field. This point, however will be developed in detail by Comrade Stachel. Suffice it to say that we must raise our trade union work to a new stage. This will make for more fraternal and solid cooperation with a

the progressive elements in the labor movement and, generally, for a stronger Communist Party.

THE TASKS AHEAD

When we sum up the work of the past year we must come to the conclusion that our Party has made good progress, both politically and organizationally. Altogether, it has been perhaps the most difficult year in the life of our Party. But the Party is rising above all its problems and displaying a new strength and fighting spirit. Of course, we are still plagued with many weaknesses and shortcomings, but these are being attacked in a spirit of appreciation of the importance and role of our Party. With a continuance and intensification of this Party building spirit and an expansion of our mass work, we can look forward to real progress in the near future in building a mass Communist Party.

We shall soon be celebrating the 27th anniversary of the founding of our Party. This will be a most important event and it should be utilized to teach the new members the history of our Party. During these 27 years, our Party has been in the very forefront of the class struggle in this country in defense of the interests of the working class and the nation. Our Party has participated loyally in the hundreds of strikes, in the struggles of the unemployed, in the defense of the Negro people, in election struggles, in the struggle against imperialism, in the

struggle against developing fascism and in the fight to win the great war against Hitlerism. Our Party has done an immense work of Marxist-Leninist education among the masses. We may well be proud of the record of our Party during the 27 years of this most stormy and significant period in the history of humanity.

The period ahead of us is one that will test all the strength and understanding of our Party. The big corporations, in order to achieve their imperialist aims at home and abroad, are more and more openly pursuing the path of political reaction, the most aggressive and chauvinist circles of monopoly capitalism driving directly toward fascism.

In this situation, Marxist clarity on the part of the workers of this country is imperative. A host of great problems now confront the American working class and the nation at large, the answers to which can be provided only by Marxist-Leninist leadership. Therefore the need for a strong Communist Party in the United States grows constantly.

Our entire Party must realize the tremendous role that our Party must play now and in the future, and must spare no effort to build the Party numerically, to strengthen its vanguard role, and to increase its ties and contacts with all other progressive forces. In this way we shall be able to help rally and unite labor and the democratic forces to defeat reaction and thus advance the struggle for security, democracy and peace, the eventual triumph of socialism.