

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNISTS REJECT BROWDER'S REVISIONISM

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THE RECENT EVENTS in the Communist movement of the United States, the mistakes that have been made there, and the efforts of the comrades to rectify their position, have a direct bearing on the policies which we Australian Communists are now discussing in preparation for the forming of correct perspectives and policies at our coming National Congress.

Jacques Duclos revealed, and the American Communist leadership has now accepted his view, that the Communist Political Association has been following a line of propagating a theory which represented a "false theory of social evolution in general" and resulted in practice in the revision of Marxism-Leninism and the dissolution of the Communist Party of the United States.

The "false theory of social evolution" was clearly expressed in the speeches of Earl Browder on the sub-

ject of the Teheran Conference and particularly in his book on Teheran.

ASSUMPTIONS FROM TEHERAN

On Teheran, Browder based theories that "everything was changed," that the colonies would be liberated and industrialized by the capitalist monopolies by agreement and without struggle, that if the workers collaborated with the capitalists in the postwar period and carried through a "no strike" pledge the capitalists would voluntarily "double living standards" and provide 60,000,000 jobs, that peace would be guaranteed and there would be such an economic development and "rosy" future for the masses that Socialism could more or less be relegated to the museum.

A condition for this was that in no country should there be the raising of the issue of Socialism by the workers, nor even nationalization of key monopolies, particularly in the U.S.A., nor any demand that would in any way "tease the (monopolist) beast."

Communist Parties, as eyesores to the capitalists, were to be dissolved in order to put the monopolists in the humor to "double living standards." Marxism-Leninism still had a role to play in the educational field, the minor one of enlightening the capitalists as to the methods whereby wonders were to be achieved and the necessary miracles performed.

Browder's statements were supplemented by a pamphlet by Robert

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Minor in which the cardinal teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the dictatorship of the proletariat and armed struggles were likewise renounced. The criticism of Jacques Duclos has dissolved these pretty bubbles into thin air.

The question arises, whether, in rejecting the false concepts of Earl Browder, the Communists reject the decisions of the Teheran Conference, the world organization for peace established at the San Francisco Conference, the rehabilitation of devastated areas, industrialization of backward countries, the application of the Atlantic Charter in regard to the independence of the nations and participation in postwar reconstruction plans while capitalism is still in existence over a large part of the world?

IS WAR INEVITABLE?

Have the Communists, in rejecting Earl Browder's false theory of social evolution, gone over to a standpoint of the inevitability of war? Will they cease to participate in plans to cushion or avert economic breakdown, and see the future as merely a new depression followed by a new world war, which should be accepted fatalistically, as inevitable?

No, such a mechanical outlook is alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, which is active and creative, and understands that within the strength of the masses and a united labor and democratic movement lies the power needed for the struggle to avert such catastrophes.

The Communists would be the last to deny, however, that if the masses fail and the reaction, the monopolists and fascist sympathizers gain the day in America and the countries of the British Empire, then the world will be in peril of repeating the history of war-depression-war which has marked the path of capitalism since the beginning of this century in particular.

Mankind again would be headed for the abyss if the anti-Sovieteers had their way. But to recognize the danger and where it lies is not to accept it as inevitable but, on the contrary, to sharpen our weapons for the political struggle against the forces which personify the danger.

THE FEAR OF ANOTHER WAR

Earl Browder, contemplating this possibility, appears to have panicked; at any rate, he suffered a complete ideological collapse. He said a new world war would mean "ruin" and "the end of civilization," and saw the way to avoid the danger as "pacification" or "appeasement" of the reactionary monopolists and a tailing behind the liberal bourgeoisie, instead of as the further growth and unity of the mass movement for peace and security, the further strengthening of the Communist Party and of the democratic forces unleashed by the historic victory over fascism and the struggle to control monopolies and to nationalize them. True, a new war would be a catas-

trophe more gigantic than this war, but not "the end of civilization."

We reject Earl Browder's exaggerated conclusions around Teheran; but the Communists are among the firmest supporters of the world organization for peace and security and the most vigorous opponents of war in the future as we have been in the past.

Rejecting the idyll of a capitalist-worker economic paradise providing "doubled standards of living" by means of class-collaboration, the Communists remain in the vanguard of the fight for postwar reconstruction, for homes, jobs and improved living standards and freedom for the individual.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PARTIAL PROGRAMS

An immediate program of a constructive character, meeting the urgent needs of the masses, is as much a part of Marxism-Leninism as dialectics, surplus value or any other cornerstone of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. If the workers did not struggle for partial programs, for reforms, they would become degraded wretches past hope of redemption, Karl Marx himself wrote in *Value, Price and Profit*. Our views as to what constitutes a postwar program are outlined in the draft policy, "Jobs, Peace, Freedom," now under discussion and amendment by Party branches and which will be submitted to our coming 14th National Congress.

Therefore, as always, we support all measures, economic, political and organizational, for the maintenance of world peace and to secure homes and jobs for the people, while rejecting the Browder concept that this is assured by class collaboration with the monopoly capitalists and reliance on the goodwill of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie.

We rely on the strength of a united and conscious labor movement, cooperating with all other democratic forces in struggle against the imperialists and pro-fascists, as the best guarantee of peace and reconstruction.

STRUGGLES AGAINST MONOPOLY GROUPS

Also, we believe that postwar reconstruction can be achieved by means of serious political struggle against the most powerful and reactionary monopoly capital groups, by the nationalization of key industries and strict control of prices and profiteers, raw materials and essential public utilities and services, whereas Browder rejected not only nationalization, but any form of control of monopolies.

All of this demands a strong, independent Communist Party, a united labor movement and a genuine national unity of the workers, soldiers, middle-class and the toiling farmers.

If, then, the laws of capitalism, as revealed by Marxism-Leninism, remain in full force, does this mean

that there will be new economic crises in the future, instead of the "rosy future" and long period of capitalist expansion, internally and as a world system, predicted by Browder?

There can be no doubt that the capitalist countries will experience economic crises in the future as in the past.

No "diplomatic document" between States can overcome that fundamental feature of capitalism; while international efforts may cushion, mitigate or delay it, eventually the basic laws of capitalist production and the market will assert themselves. *No Marxist could ever believe otherwise and remain a Marxist.*

UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE U.S.A.

Already, in the United States, the unemployed queues are forming as industries are being re-adjusted to the new situation created by the end of the anti-Nazi war. Capitalism also experiences periods of boom and there is the likelihood of a boom period in the postwar, created by the demand for capital goods in the devastated areas and the shortage of all kinds of consumption goods, including foodstuffs and agricultural products.

Our immediate postwar program is aimed at fighting against possible immediate recrudescence of mass unemployment. That is its main urgency and significance for the working class.

Has capitalism, taken as a world system, been strengthened by the

anti-fascist People's War, as assumed by Earl Browder? The very fact of the destruction of such mighty imperialist powers as Germany, in the first place, Japan and Italy, obviously weakens on all sides the power of world imperialism.

IMPERIALISM AFTER THE WAR

In addition, in many countries of Europe the most powerful trusts are being nationalized. The land-owning aristocracy in East Prussia, Poland, Hungary, etc., are being expropriated and their former possessions divided among the peasantry.

Capitalist relations are not abolished, but the new democracy in Europe is, nevertheless, fundamentally different from the "orthodox" bourgeois democracy we know in Australia, namely, a Parliamentary system dominated by the trusts and finance capitalists whose power remains intact.

In Europe, there are being established States which represent a democracy of the working class, peasants, and middle class, based on the expropriation of the big bourgeoisie in town and country. That must be fully appreciated. Browder believed these countries should remain capitalist; we never shared that view. Imperialism, therefore, has been dealt severe blows in those countries, including France.

Then there is the added strength and prestige of the Soviet Union and the increased strength of the national revolutionary movements in the col-

onies. Above all, the resurgence of a united labor movement, as expressed in the establishment of the World Trade Union Federation and the new position of leadership held by the labor movement in the anti-fascist governments.

All this has weakened the position of imperialism and the foundations of capitalism itself.

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM STRENGTHENED

At the same time, American imperialism has become stronger and emerges as the most powerful capitalist country in the world. One would not say the British Empire has emerged much stronger, although it has greater market possibilities now that German competition has been destroyed. The greater strength of the U.S.A. and the colonial movements limit its strength to a degree.

So much attention has been focused on the policy divergences between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Britain and America on the other that the antagonism between the latter two is often overlooked. Nevertheless, the struggle for positions, markets and domination of vital strategic points between them is acute.

The American ruling class has no intention of helping British capitalism maintain its world position by refraining from using its own enormous advantages and its superior military strength. Quite the contrary.

Lenin's analysis of imperialism gives the answer to that and not Browder's futile idea that these two would liberate the colonies and amicably divide the world market between them.

This does not "inevitably" mean war between them, but it does mean rivalry and political and economic struggles, and perhaps "revolutions" in various satellite countries as in the past; neither does it exclude war. This, too, means a weakness in world capitalism and strengthens the position of the democratic forces in relation to it.

The conclusion is that world capitalism has been weakened, not strengthened, by the defeat of the fascist powers.

WHAT IS REVISIONISM?

The criticism of Jacques Duclos revealed revisionism and liquidationism in the U.S.A. Communist movement. What, then, is meant by revision and liquidation?

Lenin defines revisionism in Vol. IV, *Selected Works*, p. 151, as

... The attempts of a certain section of the Party intelligentsia to liquidate the existing organization of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and substitute for it an amorphous association within the limits of legality at all costs, even if this legality is to be attained at the price of an open renunciation of the program, tactics and traditions of the Party.

Liquidation does not necessarily

mean a complete organizational dissolution, but the renunciation of the "program, tactics and traditions of the Party." The organization could continue as an opportunist ghost of a workers' party. And that was largely the position into which the American comrades had allowed themselves to drift.

The discussion in the U. S. organization reveals: loss of trade union positions, falling off in dues payment to a serious extent, record low circulation of the Party press and Marxist-Leninist literature, lessening of mass activity by the branches, accompanied by the calling off of a series of mass meetings, radio talks and issuance of leaflets during the election campaign, cancellation of recruiting, and a proposal for the liquidation of the Party organization entirely in the Southern states.

Party members studied the "popular" writings of Browder and others and disregarded study of the Marxist classics. Such was the morass into which Browder's opportunist theorizing led the U. S. Communists.

WHAT LENIN SAID

Revisionism was defined by Lenin as follows in Vol. II, *Selected Works*, p. 709:

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the final aim of the Socialist movement. "The final aim is nothing, the movement is everything"—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments.

The policy of revisionism consists in determining its conduct from case to case, in adapting itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics; it consists in forgetting the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole, and in sacrificing these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment.

And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less "new" question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it may change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the shortest period of time, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism.

Revisionism of Marxism and liquidation of the Party in principle was the historical crime of the Germans and Second Internationalists, headed by Bernstein and Kautsky, which was so often and so scathingly denounced by Lenin.

What was the outcome of revision and liquidation on the part of Kautsky, Bernstein and the Second International? History supplies a most convincing answer: the defeat of the revolution in all countries except Russia (where Lenin and Stalin had successfully combatted the revisionists, including the traitor Trotsky) at the end of the last war; the going over of the Second International to the side of the counter-revolution and

the subsequent temporary victory of fascism throughout Europe. Such were the dreadful fruits of revisionism for the labor movement and the people of the world: millions were slain by fascists.

Jacques Duclos makes it abundantly clear that the victory of Browderism in the Communist Parties would have led to a catastrophe similar to that caused by the triumph of Bernsteinism in the Second International.

BROWDER ON AUSTRALIA

Crassly revisionist was the outcome of Browder's theory in relation to the objective of the labor movement and his attempt to apply it to Australia.

In a letter addressed to myself Earl Browder applied his "postponement of Socialism" theory to Australia as follows:

Australia, I believe, presents enough established facts to demand the conclusion that, so long as at least the Teheran-Yalta concord lasts, it will remain in the capitalist sector of the world.

What are the facts upon which this judgment is based? First, that Australia shares to a high degree those characteristics which make the U.S.A. the capitalist pole of the world; together with Canada, she is an outstanding example of rapid expansion of basic production plant.

Second, that Australian economy is closely geared in with that of the U.S.A., and has not sufficient independent base to make possible a divergent course even if a majority desired it.

Third, Australia's geographical position plus her high production potential

is highly favorable for securing her full share of the world markets which must be developed as the pre-condition for the lasting peace projected by Teheran-Yalta. . . . In my judgment these three factors are alone sufficient to establish as a practical certainty that Australia will remain a capitalist country for so long a time as the U.S.A. is able to retain a firm capitalist perspective.

. . . . The practical tasks in Australia, if this analysis is correct, may be summed up in the organization and training and education of the working class in the solution of all the problems of the nation, to make it capable of becoming the ruling class some day.

SOCIALISM TO BE POSTPONED

Socialism is postponed indefinitely; "some day," somehow, in some mysterious fashion, in the midst of the capitalist paradise of "doubled standards of living," the people would decide to change to Socialism. Roughly, I would say, this would coincide with the Second Coming.

To be noted is his point that Australia's economic base does not allow of an independent development even if "a majority wanted it." This is but a version of the Trotskyite "Socialism cannot be built in one country" ideology with which the Trotskyites strove to hide their betrayal. While production is high enough to ensure a "rosy" capitalistic future, it is not high enough to permit of Socialism! Recall Stalin's sardonic rebuttal of Kautsky, in *Leninism*, when he sought to cover the betrayals of the Socialist Revolution by Social-De-

mocracy, by declaring that the failure had to be blamed on the low level of "the productive forces."

On the other hand, note the statement "she (Australia) is an outstanding example of rapid expansion of basic production" and emphasis on "her high industrial potential."

THESIS REJECTED BY AUSTRALIAN PARTY

The Australian labor movement was condemned by Browder to passivity and helplessness until such time as the Americans got tired of their capitalist utopia.

Is it any wonder that when I submitted this self-contradictory, Kautskyite "organized capitalism" nonsense to the Political Committee of our Party it was rejected out of hand as a perspective for the Australian labor movement?

How do we visualize Socialism? We understand that our whole policy for peace and security is itself a preparation for Socialism, a struggle for an immediate program that meets urgent mass needs and prepares, by uniting and raising the political level of the masses, for the transition to Socialism.

Seen in this light, we do not regard victory, in the anti-fascist People's War, the strengthened position of the Soviet Union and of the international labor movement, the weakened position of world imperialism nor Yalta, and "the peaceful co-existence of the Socialist and capitalist systems" as factors postponing So-

cialism; on the contrary, we regard all this as creating a favorable world situation in which Socialism can be realized.

This does not mean that we put everything aside and concentrate on a slogan of "Socialism now."

THE PRESENT ISSUES

The issue in the coming Australian Federal elections will not be to elect a Labor and Communist majority to establish Socialism forthwith; the elections will be fought on the issue of postwar problems: whether there will be a postwar reconstruction planned in the interests of the masses or whether the "Free Enterprisers" will gain control and create a paradise for capitalists and a hell for the masses, accompanied by a reactionary foreign policy leading to new war. Such is the immediate struggle. Victory in this struggle would make the labor movement the leader of the nation and thus pave the way for Socialism.

HASTENING SOCIALISM

How long this period may last no one knows. Nobody can set a date for Socialism's coming. We can hasten its advent by building the Communist Party, by uniting the forces of the labor and democratic movements and by means of correct policies.

It cannot be considered accidental that such a thorough-going revisionist theory originated in the United States, where capitalism is strongest

and industrially the most developed, any more than it is accidental that no mass labor party has yet developed there and that America possesses the most reactionary trade union bureaucracy in the A. F. of L. leadership.

A PREVIOUS ERROR

It is proving more difficult to establish a mass Communist Party in the U.S.A. than elsewhere, and this is not the first time that the Communists there have taken a wrong turning. Lovestone, a former Secretary, developed the theory of American "exceptionalism" in relation to the economic crisis of 1929-32, asserting that the great economic and financial resources of American capitalism would limit, or even preclude, the possibility of an economic crisis. On this basis the analysis of the Communist International foreshadowing the economic crisis was repudiated by the majority of American Communists.

This theory of "exceptionalism" was embraced in Australia by the Kavanaghite right wing in our Central Committee, which brought about a strenuous struggle against opportunism, which I led, ending in defeat for the right wing at the Party Congress. Lovestoneism was defeated in the U.S.A. by Foster and Browder with the assistance of the International.

The factional struggles within the American Party were more prolonged and bitter than in most other countries. All this reflects the pres-

sure of the huge U.S. trusts upon the labor movement and the dominance of bourgeois ideology, which infiltrates into the working class ranks and disrupts the labor movement.

That is why the revisionism of Browder, which also reflected the new position of American imperialism as the dominant capitalist power, cannot be regarded as an accident.

AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON BROWDER?

It has been asked why our Central Committee, which, Jacques Duclos pointed out, openly rejected the Browder liquidation theory, did not launch an attack on the policy of the American Political Association also?

I reported to the Central Committee on Browder's speech announcing the "changes" and characterized it as a "retreat and compromise" which I then regarded as arising from the internal and external role and relationships peculiar to America.

Marxism-Leninism accepts as a truism the need for temporary retreats and compromises. Lenin indicated that the N.E.P. in the Soviet Union was a temporary retreat and compromise with the capitalist elements in Soviet economy at the time.

I stated I could not agree with Browder's reference to Marxist "formulas" being obsolete, nor his phrase about shaking hands with Morgan. J. P. Miles supplemented this by criticizing Browder's acceptance of the "free enterprise" slogan and other

comrades criticized various points made by Browder.

Unanimously, the Central Committee agreed that this policy had no application to Australia, in fact would be disastrous to the Party and the labor movement here.

MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED

Nevertheless, we thought that there could be conditions in the U.S.A. which would justify it from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism and said this in our public statements.

Later, we received further material from the U.S.A., including Browder's book on Teheran and Minor's pamphlet to which I have referred. These gave us a more comprehensive view of the theories of the new Political Association. We had no knowledge of the basis of Foster's opposition, but these two documents convinced us that the American policy was non-Marxist.

A proposal was made at the Political Committee that we adopt a policy similar to Browder's in Australia. J. C. Henry summed up the feeling of the Political Committee when he said: "I read these proposals with feelings of horror."

We, however, did not consider it correct yet to open an attack on a brother party without, at least, consulting the Communist parties of other countries. This was difficult owing to the war conditions and the fact that the easiest to contact were pro-Browder. That was the position

when we received from America a copy of the article of Jacques Duclos.

AUSTRALIAN POLICW MAINTAINED

In the meantime we pursued our own policy. The December meeting of the Central Committee re-affirmed our policy and leading comrades emphasized deliberately the Socialist objective of the Party in order to make clear the difference between our and the American policy.

In this period also was published *Government Enterprise in Australia*, the whole line of which was in open opposition to Earl Browder's theories.

Nevertheless, there were undoubted tendencies towards the percolation of some of these theories, particularly the economic ones, into our Party. It is necessary now carefully to review our thinking in order to make sure these are rooted out. Tendencies to revise this or that part of the Party program are not new to us.

Revisionist tendencies have shown themselves in a desire on the part of some to throw Marx out of the Marx School and substitute "popular," agitational lectures, and to confine the curriculum to "practical" subjects without study of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Our youth work has evidenced this revisionist tendency on a number of occasions, when proposals were made to delete reference to Socialism, the class struggle, the labor movement, etc., and to concentrate purely on

spirit, recreation and entertainment and "practical" subjects of discussion. There have been proposals to "broaden" our Press by deleting Party policy and confining it to tabloid news-reporting.

There have been a number of denials of the validity of Marxism in regard to agriculture and land nationalization. These kind of acorns grew into oaks in the U.S.A. and resulted in a political catastrophe for the American Communists.

MARXIST-LENINIST TEACHING ESSENTIAL

We are all for broadening and popularizing the Party's appeal and for studying practical questions and for the production of the greatest volume of simple agitational material for the masses; but all this must be combined with Marxist-Leninist training of the Party membership, and the workers, as far as possible, and the presentation of the fundamental aims of the Party policy.

The defeat of the Browderite revisionism is a new vindication, a triumph for Marxism-Leninism. It demonstrates anew that we must not depart from Marxism-Leninism, and

must ever apply it to our problems in order to solve them correctly.

We must study Marxism-Leninism and master it in order to avoid mistakes and opportunism, and in order that the membership, can, if necessary, correct the leading organs. It is, and always remains, the compass that guides our Party. That is one of the major lessons of the American developments.

Our Party Congress, while rejecting revisionist and liquidationist tendencies, will formulate a policy for international peace, for jobs, homes and economic security for all toilers, for improved living standards, social amenities and cultural opportunities for the masses, for labor and national unity. It will plan a course towards the nationalization of key monopolies and the Socialist education of the masses.

The realization of such a program implies a serious and decisive struggle with the monopoly capitalists and their reactionary, political parties and stooges.

Such is the kind of perspective and program which our Congress will undoubtedly place before the labor movement and Australian democracy.