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# On the Dissolution of the Communist Party of the United States.

by Jacques Duclos

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Many readers of *Cahiers du Communisme* have asked us for clarification on the dissolution of the Communist Party of the USA and the creation of the Communist Political Association.

We have received some information on this very important political event, and thus we can in full freedom give our opinion on the political considerations which were advanced to justify the dissolution of the Communist Party.

The reasons for dissolution of the Communist Party in the USA and for the "new course" in the activity of the American Communists are set forth in official documents of the Party and in a certain number of speeches of its former secretary, Earl Browder.

In his speech devoted to the results of the Teheran Conference and the political situation in the United States, delivered December 12, 1943, in Bridgeport and published in *The Communist* magazine in January 1944, Earl Browder for the first time discussed the necessity of changing the course of the CPUSA.

The Teheran Conference served as Browder's point of departure from which to develop his conceptions favorable to a change of course of the American CP. However, while justly stressing the importance of the Teheran Conference for victory in the war against fascist Germany, Earl Browder drew from the Conference decisions erroneous conclusions in no wise flowing from a Marxist analysis of the situation. Earl Browder made himself the protagonist of a false concept of the ways of social evolution in general, and in the first place, the social evolution of the United States.

Earl Browder declared, in effect, that at Teheran capitalism and socialism had begun to find the means of peaceful coexistence and collaboration in the framework of one and the same world; he added that the

Teheran accords regarding common policy similarly presupposed common efforts with a view to reducing to a minimum or completely suppressing methods of struggle and opposition of force to force in the solution of internal problems of each country.

That (the Teheran Declaration) is the only hope of a continuance of civilization in our time. That is why I can accept and support and believe in the Declaration at Teheran and make it the starting point for all my thinking about the problems of our country and the world.

(Address at Bridgeport, Conn., Dec. 12, 1943.)

Starting from the decisions of the Teheran Conference, Earl Browder drew political conclusions regarding the problems of the world, and above all the internal situation in the United States. Some of these conclusions claim that the principal problems of internal politics of the United States must in the future be solved exclusively by means of reforms, for the "expectation of unlimited inner conflict threatens also the perspective of international unity held forth at Teheran." (*Teheran and America*, pp. 16-17.)

The Teheran agreements mean to Earl Browder that the greatest part of Europe, west of the Soviet Union, will probably be reconstituted on a bourgeois-democratic basis and not on a fascist-capitalist or Soviet basis.

But it will be a capitalist basis which is conditioned by the principle of complete democratic self-determination for each nation, allowing full expression within each nation of all progressive and constructive forces and setting up no obstacles to the development of democracy and social progress in accordance with the varying desires of the peoples. It means a perspective for Europe minimizing, and to a great extent eliminating altogether, the threat of civil war after the international war. (Bridgeport speech, *The Communist*, January 1944, pg. 7.)

And Earl Browder adds:

Whatever may be the situation in other lands, in the United States this means a perspective in the immediate postwar period 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.

We can set our goal as the realization of the Teheran policy, or we can set ourselves the task of pushing the United States immediately into socialism. Clearly, however, we cannot choose both.

The first policy, with all its difficulties, is definitely within the realm of possible achievement. The second would be dubious, indeed, especially when we remember that even the most progressive section of the labor movement is committed to capitalism, is not even as vaguely socialistic as the British Labour Party.

Therefore, the policy for Marxists in the United States is to face with all its consequences the perspective of a capitalist postwar reconstruction in the United States, 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. (*Teheran and America*, pg. 20.)

To put the Teheran policy into practice, Earl Browder considers that it is necessary to reconstruct the entire political and social life of the United States.

Every class, every group, every individual, every political party in America will have to readjust itself to this great issue embodied in that policy given to us by Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill. The country is only beginning to face it so far. Everyone must begin to draw the conclusion from it and adjust himself to the new world that is created by it. Old formulas and old prejudices are going to be of no use whatever to us as guides to find our way in this new world. We are going to have to draw together all men and all groups with the intelligence enough to see the overwhelming importance of this issue, to understand that upon its correct solution depends the fate of our country and the fate of civilization throughout the world.

We shall have to be prepared to break with anyone that refuses to support and fight for the realization of the Teheran Agreement and the Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition. We must be prepared to give the hand of cooperation and fellowship to everyone who fights for the realization of this coalition. If J.P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it, I as a Communist am prepared to clasp his hand on that and join with him to realize it. Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now except as they reflect one side or the other of this issue. (Bridgeport speech, January 1944, *The Communist*, pg. 8.)

Browder's remark regarding Morgan provoked quite violent objections from members of the American CP. Explaining this idea to the plenary session of

the Central Committee, Browder said:

...I was not making a verbal abolition of class differences, but that I was rejecting the political slogan of "class against class" as our guide to political alignments in the next period. I spoke of Mr. Morgan symbolically as the representative of a class, and not as an individual — in which capacity I know him not at all. (*Teheran and America*, pg. 24.)

As Browder indicates, creation of a vast national unity in the US presupposes the Communists would be a part of this. Thus, the Communist organization must conclude a long-term alliance with far more important forces. From these considerations, Browder drew the conclusion that the Communist organization in the US should change its name, reject the word "party" and take another name more exactly reflecting its role, a name more in conformity, according to him, with the political traditions of America.

Earl Browder proposed to name the new organization "Communist Political Association," which, in the traditional American two-party system, will not intervene as a "party," that is, it will not propose candidates in the elections, will neither enter the Democratic or Republican Party, but will work to assemble a broad progressive and democratic movement within all parties.

In his report to the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPUSA, Browder spoke in detail of the economic problems of US postwar national economy, and their solution on the basis of collaboration and unity of different classes. Browder indicated that American business men, industrialists, financiers and even reactionary organizations do not admit the possibility of a new economic crisis in the US after the war. On the contrary, all think that US national economy after the war can preserve and maintain the same level of production as during the war.

However, the problem is in the difficulties of transition from wartime economic activity to peacetime production, and in the absorption by home and foreign markets of \$90 billions in supplementary merchandise which the American government is now buying for war needs. In this regard, Earl Browder claims that the Teheran Conference decisions make possible the overcoming of Anglo-American rivalry in the struggle for foreign outlets, and that the government of the United States, in agreement with its great Al-

lies, and with the participation of governments in interested states, can create a series of giant economic associations for the development of backward regions and war-devastated regions in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

As to extension of the home market, to permit absorption of a part of the \$90,000,000,000 worth of merchandise, Browder suggests doubling the purchasing power of the average consumer, notably by wage increases.

Marxists will not help the reactionaries, by opposing the slogan of "Free Enterprise" with any form of counter-slogan. If anyone wishes to describe the existing system of capitalism in the United States as "free enterprise," that is all right with us, and we frankly declare that we are ready to cooperate in making this capitalism work effectively in the postwar period with the least possible burdens upon the people. (*Ibid.*, pg. 21.)

Further, Browder claims that national unity could no more be obtained by following a policy based on slogans aimed at the monopolies and big capital.

Today, to speak seriously of drastic curbs on monopoly capital, leading toward the breaking of its power, and imposed upon monopoly capital against its will, is merely another form of proposing the immediate transition to socialism. (*Ibid.*, pg. 23.)

In his closing speech to the plenary session of the CP Central Committee in January 1944, Browder tried to base himself on "theoretical" arguments to justify the change of course of the American CP. Also he expressed his concept of Marxism and its application under present conditions.

Browder thinks that by pronouncing the dissolution of the CP and creating the CPA, the American Communists are following a correct path, resolving problems which have no parallel in history and demonstrating how Marxist theory should be applied in practice.

Marxism never was a series of dogmas and formulas; it never was a catalogue of prohibitions listing the things we must not do irrespective of new developments and new situations; it does not tell us that things cannot be done; it tells us how *to do* the things that have to be done, the things that history has posed as necessary and indispensable tasks. Marxism is a theory of deeds, not of don'ts. Marxism is therefore a positive, dynamic, creative force, and it is such a great social power precisely because, as a scientific outlook and method, it takes living realities as its starting

point. It has always regarded the scientific knowledge of the past as a basis for meeting the new and unprecedented problems of the present and the future. And the largest problems today are new in a very basic sense.

We have more than ever the task to refresh ourselves in the great tradition of Marxism, completely freeing ourselves from the last remnants of the dogmatic and schematic approach....

True, according to all of the textbooks of the past, we are departing from orthodoxy, because none of our textbooks foresaw or predicted a long period of peaceful relations in the world before the general advent of socialism. (*Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.)

The new political course outlined by Browder found but few adversaries among the leading militants of the CPUSA. At the enlarged session of the Political Bureau of the Party, those who spoke up violently against Browder were William Foster, President of the CPUSA, and Darcy, member of the Central Committee and Secretary of the Eastern Pennsylvania district.

Foster expounded his differences with Browder in two documents — in a letter to the National Committee of the CPUSA and in his introductory speech to the extraordinary session of the National Committee, Feb. 8, 1944.

In these two documents, Foster criticizes Browder's theoretical theses regarding the change in character of monopoly capital in the USA, the perspectives of postwar economic development as well as Browder's position on the question of the Presidential elections.

In his Feb. 8 speech Foster also attacks those who, on the basis of Browder's theses, suggested that strikes be renounced in the postwar period.

But in neither one of these documents did Foster openly take a stand against the dissolution of the Communist Party.

In his report Comrade Browder, in attempting to apply the Teheran decisions to the United States, drew a perspective of a smoothly working national unity, including the decisive sections of American finance capital, not only during the war but also in the postwar; a unity which (with him quoting approvingly from Victory and After), would lead to "a rapid healing of the terrible wounds of the war" and would extend on indefinitely, in an all-class peaceful collaboration, for a "long term of years." In this picture, American imperialism virtually disappears, there remains hardly a trace of the class struggle, and Socialism plays practically no role whatever. (*Foster Letter to Members of NC.*)

Foster violently criticized Browder because the

latter, while outlining a new course in the activity of the American CP, had lost sight of several of the most fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism.

It seems to me that Comrade Browder's rather rosy outlook for capitalism is based upon two errors. The first of these is an underestimation of the deepening of the crisis of world capitalism caused by the war. When questioned directly in Political Bureau discussion, Comrade Browder agreed that capitalism has been seriously weakened by the war, but his report would tend to give the opposite implication. The impression is left that capitalism has somehow been rejuvenated and is now entering into a new period of expansion and growth. (*Ibid.*)

According to Foster, world capitalism can surely count on a certain postwar boom, but it would be wrong to think that capitalism, even American capitalism, could maintain itself at the production level attained in wartime, and resolve,, in a measure more or less satisfactory to the working class, the complex problems arising after the war.

Without diminishing the importance of the Teheran conference, Foster considered, nevertheless, that it would be an extremely dangerous illusion to think that Teheran had in any way changed the class nature of capitalism, that the Teheran conference had liquidated the class struggle, as it appears from Browder's speech. The fact that capitalism has learned to live in peace and in alliance with socialism is far from meaning that American monopoly capitalism has become progressive and that it can henceforth be unreservedly included in national unity in the struggle for the realization of the Teheran conference decisions.

The class nature of imperialistic capitalism [Foster asserted] is reactionary. That is why national unity with it is impossible. The furious attack of these circles against the democratic Roosevelt government — does this not supply a convincing proof? Can one doubt, after that, that the monopolist sections in the US are enemies and not friends of the Teheran decisions as Earl Browder thinks?

The dagger in this whole point of view is that, in our eagerness to secure support for Teheran, we may walk into the trap of trying to cooperate with the enemies of Teheran, or even of falling under their influence. Trailing after the big bourgeoisie is the historic error of social-democracy, and we must be vigilantly on guard against it. (*Ibid.*)

Foster also criticized Browder for his attitude toward the National Association of Manufacturers, which is, in his opinion, one of the most reactionary organizations of monopoly capital in the US. How-

ever, Browder thought he had to approve a certain number of the economic measures of this association. He accepts its central slogan, that of "free private enterprise," which is in reality basically reactionary and contrary to the Roosevelt policy. What is more, Browder, counting on seeing workers' wages increased 100 percent after the war, invites US monopolists to share his good intentions and says to them: "[You] must find the solution in order to keep their plants in operation."

Citing these words of Browder's, Foster declared:

In my opinion, it would be a catastrophe for the labor movement if it accepted such a plan or such an idea, even if only provisionally. Starting from a notoriously erroneous conception, that US monopoly capitalism can play a progressive role, Comrade Browder looks askance at all suggestions tending to subdue the monopolies, whereas the CP can accept only one policy, that of tending to master these big capitalists now and after the war. In calling for the collaboration of classes, Browder sows wrong illusions of tailism in the minds of trade union members. Whereas the job of the trade unions is to elaborate their policy and dictate it to the big employers.

As to the problems of postwar organizations, Foster repudiated all illusions regarding the self-styled progressive role of monopoly capital. America, Foster declared, will emerge from the war as a powerful state in the world, the industrial magnates will be rather inclined to dictatorial acts than to compromises, and it is hardly likely, he added, that we can expect a progressive program from them.

So far as the bulk of finance capital is concerned, starting out with a prewar record of appeasement, it has, all through the war, followed a course of rank profiteering and often outright sabotage of both the domestic and foreign phases of the nation's war program, especially the former. While these elements obviously do not want the United States to lose the war, they are certainly very poor defenders of the policy of unconditional surrender. In the main, their idea of a satisfactory outcome of the war would be some sort of negotiated peace with German reactionary forces, and generally to achieve a situation that would put a wet blanket on all democratic governments in Europe. (*Ibid.*)

Foster thinks that Browder is right when he says that the question of socialism is not the issue of the present war and that to pose this question would only result in restricting the framework of national unity. But considering the fact that the successes of the USSR will increase the interest of the masses in socialism,

the Communists must explain to the workers the importance of the socialist development of our epoch and the way in which it concerns the US, for otherwise the Social Democrats could represent themselves as a part of socialism.

The enforcement of the Teheran decisions, both in their national and international aspects, demands the broadest possible national unity, and in this national unity there must be workers, farmers, professionals, small businessmen and all of the capitalist elements who will loyally support the program. (*Ibid.*)

Foster's letter to the National Committee and his speech at the extraordinary session of the National Committee on Feb. 8, 1944, against Browder's line, provoked violent criticism from those in attendance. Most speakers rejected Foster's arguments and supported the "new course" of the CPUSA outlined by Browder.

Speaking during the meeting against Browder, Darcy said that in his opinion Foster's speech was not aimed at diminishing Browder's authority. Like Foster, Darcy violently criticized the interpretation given by Browder of the Teheran decisions and asserted that the political agreement of the big three powers who constitute the Teheran conference should not be considered as an agreement on the principal post-war economic problems.

Afterwards Darcy was expelled from the Party by the Congress on the proposal of a commission named by the Central Committee and headed by Foster, because, as the decision says, by sending to Party members a letter containing slanderous declarations on Party leaders, he attempted to create a fraction within the Party, and because he submitted the letter in question to the bourgeois press.

After the extraordinary session of the National Committee, a discussion on Browder's report to the plenary assembly of the Central Committee was opened in the basic organizations of the Party, in regional congresses and the Party press.

According to information published in the *Daily Worker*, after the discussion the organizations and regional congresses of the Party unanimously accepted Browder's proposals. As to Foster, he declared at the extraordinary session of the National Committee that he did not intend to make known his differences with

Browder outside the Party Central Committee.

The Congress of the CPUSA [12th National Convention] (held May 20, 1944) heard Browder's report in which he expressed his opinions regarding the political situation in the US and he proposed adoption of a new course in the policy of Communists of the US.

Proposing a resolution on the dissolution of the CPUSA, Browder declared:

On Jan. 11 the National Committee of the Communist Party in the interest of national unity and to enable the Communists to function most effectively in the changed political conditions and to make still greater contributions toward winning the war and securing a durable peace, recommended that the American Communists should renounce the aim of partisan advantage and the party form of organization....

With that purpose, I propose in the name of the National Committee and in consultation with the most important delegations in this Convention, the adoption of the following motion:

I hereby move that the Communist Party of America be and hereby is dissolved.... (*Proceedings*, pg. 11.)

After having accepted the resolution on dissolution of the CP, the Congress of the CPUSA proclaimed itself the Constituent Congress of the Communist Political Association of the United States and adopted a programmatic introduction to the Association's statutes. In this introduction it is said:

The Communist Political Association is a non-party organization of American which, basing itself upon the working class, carries forward the traditions of Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, under the changed conditions of modern industrial society.

It seeks effective application of democratic principles to the solution of the problems of today, as an advanced sector of the democratic majority of the American people.

It upholds the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and the achievements of American democracy against all the enemies of popular liberties.

It is shaped by the needs of the nation at war, being formed in the midst of the greatest struggle of all history; it recognizes that victory for the free peoples over fascism will open up new and more favorable conditions for progress; it looks to the family of free nationals, led by the great coalition of democratic capitalist and socialist states, to inaugurate an era of world peace, expanding production and economic well-being, and the liberation and equality of all peoples regardless of race, creed or color.

It adheres to the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism, the heritage of the best thought of humanity and of a hundred years' experience of the labor movement,

principles which have proved to be indispensable to the national existence and independence of every nation: it looks forward to a future in which, by democratic choice of the American people, our own country will solve the problems arising out of the contradiction between the social character of production and its private ownership, incorporating the lessons of the most fruitful achievements of all mankind in a form and manner consistent with American traditions and character.... (Preamble, *Proceedings*, pp. 47-48.)

The Constituent Congress of the CPA adopted a main political resolution, "National Unity for Victory, Security and a Durable Peace."

The resolution points out the exceptional importance of the Teheran conference decisions for victory over the aggressor and establishment of a lasting peace. It calls for reinforcement of national unity as the necessary conditions for their application.

By national unity is meant union of all patriotic forces from Communists, Laborites to adherents of the Democratic and Republican parties. All ideological, religious and political differences must be subordinated to this unity. The resolution stresses the exceptional importance of the 1944 elections on whose results depend the country's unity and destiny. It recognizes the increasingly important role of the working class in national unity, its growing activity and its political influence.

The resolution flays the reactionary policy of groups led by DuPont, Hearst, McCormick, characterizing this policy as pro-fascist and treason, and calling on the American people to struggle against these groups.

The resolution then says that the majority of the American people are not yet convinced of the need for a more radical solution to social and economic problems with the aid of nationalization of big industry or by means of establishing socialism.

That is why, the immediate task consists in obtaining a higher level of production in the framework of the existing capitalist regime. With this, private employers must receive all possibilities to solve the problem of production and employment of labor. Solution of these problems is likewise, in the first place, linked to the maximum increase in the American people's purchasing power and extension of foreign commerce. If private industry cannot solve these tasks, the government must assume responsibility.

The resolution expresses itself against anti-Se-

mitism, anti-Negro discrimination, calls for the outlawing of the "fifth column" and for the banning of calls by the latter for a negotiated peace with the aggressor.

The resolution concludes:

For the camp of national unity, which is composed of the patriotic forces of all classes, from the working people to the capitalists, rests and depends upon the working class, the backbone and driving force of the nation and its win-the-war coalition.... It requires the extension of labor's united action of the AF of L, the CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods. It requires the most resolute development of labor's political initiative and influence, with labor's full and adequate participation in the government....

...we Communists, as patriotic Americans, renew our pledge to the nation to subordinate everything to win the war and to destroy fascism.... (*Resolutions*, pg. 7.)

In addition to the resolution on "National Unity," the CPA Congress passed a series of other decisions: on transition from war to peacetime production; on international trade union unity; on the CPA's wage policy; on political life as it regards demobilized veterans; on work among women; on farmers; on the situation in the southern states; on suppressing the poll tax; on the fight against anti-Semitism; on unity among countries of the western hemisphere and on the 25th anniversary of the Communist movement in the US.

The congress unanimously elected Browder president of the CPA.

The CPA Congress addressed a message to Comrade Stalin and the Red Army saying especially:

In every American city and village, every factory and farm of our great land, men and women and children of all classes speak with wonder and deep gratitude of the heroic achievements of the Soviet Union and its valiant Red Army. Every day since the brutal and treacherous common fascist enemy violated your borders on June 22, 1941, more of the American people have come to know and love your leaders and your people.

The political and military leadership of the USSR and its mighty Red Army is applauded not only by our great political and military leaders, but by our workers, farmers, businessmen, professional people, artists, scientists and youth. The appeasers of the Hitlerites and the enemies of our common victory, who have been trying to frighten us with Hitler's "Soviet bogey," have not succeeded in blinding our people to the realities. Your deeds daily speak with an authority that drowns their poisonous words.

As the relentless offensives of your mighty forces drive the Nazis from your soil, bringing nearer the day of your common and final victory over the Fascist enemy, we grow ever more conscious of our enormous debt to you, the

leaders and fighters and peoples of the great Soviet land. The names of your liberated towns and villages are daily on our lips, the name of Stalin and the names of your countless heroes enshrined in our hearts.

Daily more and more of our people understand why it is that yours, the world's first Socialist state, has given the world such an unparalleled example of unity, heroism, individual initiative and a new discipline in the art and science of warfare.

All patriotic Americans are determined to strengthen still further the concerted action of the United Nations, and its leading coalition of our country, the Soviet Union and England on which our assurance of victory rests. They are determined to continue and deepen this coalition in the peace to come and to extend the friendship among our peoples which will cement the alliance of our two powerful nations as the mainstay of victory, national freedom and an enduring peace." (Message to Stalin, *Proceedings*, pp. 13-14.)

After the Constituent Congress, the leadership of the CPA waged a campaign of explanation on the aims and tasks of the Association.

In one of his speeches Browder said:

...That is why we dissolved the Communist Party, renounced all aims of partisan advancement, and regrouped ourselves into the non-partisan Communist Political Association. That is why we are ready and willing to work with any and all Americans who place victory in the war as the first law, and who move toward such a minimum program as we have outlined for the solution of our postwar problems. This is why we do not associate ourselves with any other political party, but rather with the most forward-looking men in all parties. ("The War and the Elections," *Daily Worker*, June 18, 1944.)

Explaining the functions of the CPA, its Organizational Secretary, [John] Williamson, declared:

As regards the functioning of the Association, we emphasize that this means manifold increase and improvement in every aspect of political-educational activity, on a national, state and local club basis. We must become known as an organization whose grasp of Marxism provides us with correct answers to the complex political problems confronting the people. While the members belong to, and are active in, every type of mass organization — political, economic, cultural, fraternal, etc. — the Association in its own name will speak out boldly and with initiative on all issues and policies." (Williamson, *Proceedings*, pp. 55-56.)

The practical activity of the CPA since the Congress was subordinated to the principal task of the hour: active participation of the CPA in the 1944 election campaign.

The national CPA Congress unanimously

backed Mr. Roosevelt's Presidential candidacy. In their speeches, Browder and the other leaders of the CPA in the named of the CPA supported Mr. Roosevelt's fourth term. The regional-state organizations of the CPA and local clubs carried on an active propaganda campaign in favor of Mr. Roosevelt and congressional candidates favorable to Mr. Roosevelt.

On Sept. 25, 1944, during a meeting called by the New York CPA on the 25th anniversary of the Communist movement in the US, Browder said:

...every group, however small, just as every individual has the same supreme duty to make its complete and unconditional contribution to victory. We must give not only our lives, but we must be ready also to sacrifice our prejudices, our ideologies, and our special interests. We American Communists have applied this rule first of all to ourselves.

We know that Hitler and the Mikado calculated to split the United Nations on the issue of Communism and anti-Communism; we know that the enemy calculated to split America on this issue in the current elections, and thus prepare our country for withdrawal from the war and a compromise peace. We therefore set ourselves, as our special supreme task, to remove the Communists and Communism from this election campaign as in any way an issue, directly or indirectly.

To this end we unhesitatingly sacrificed our electoral rights in this campaign, by refraining from putting forward our own candidates; we went to the length of dissolving the Communist Party itself for an indefinite period in the future; we declared our readiness to loyally support the existing system of private enterprise which is accepted by the overwhelming majority of Americans, and to raise no proposals for any fundamental changes which could in any way endanger the national unity; we went out into the trade unions and the masses of the people, straightforwardly and frankly using all our influence to firmly establish this policy of national unity; we helped with all our strength to restrain all impulses toward strike movements among the workers, and to prepare the workers for a continuation of national unity after the war....

As spokesman for American Communists I can say for our small group that we completely identify ourselves with our nation, its interests and the majority of its people, in this support for Roosevelt and Truman for President and Vice-president.

We know quite well that the America that Roosevelt leads is a capitalist America, and that it is the mission of Roosevelt, among other things, to keep it so. We know that only great disasters for our country could change this perspective of our country from capitalism to that of socialism, in the foreseeable future. Only failure to carry through the war to victory or a botching of the peace and failure to organize it, or the plunging of our country into another economic catastrophe like that of the Hoover era, could turn the American people to socialism.

We do not want disaster for America, even though it

results in socialism. If we did, we would support Dewey and Hoover and Bricker and their company. We want victory in the war, with the Axis powers and all their friends eliminated from the world. We want a world organized for generations of peace.

We want our country's economy fully at work, supplying a greatly multiplied world market to heal the wounds of the world, a greatly expanded home market reflecting rising standards of living here, and an orderly, cooperative and democratic working out of our domestic and class relationships, within a continuing national unity that will reduce and eventually eliminate large domestic struggles....

That is why American Communists, even as our great Communist forebears in 1860 and 1864 supported Abraham Lincoln, will in 1944 support Franklin Delano Roosevelt for President of the United States....

As to Browder's attitude toward the Soviet Union, he highly appreciates the USSR's role in the United Nations system and in the work of finally crushing Hitlerite Germany and establishing a lasting peace after the war. Browder stressed more than once that the Soviet state built by Lenin and Stalin constitutes the irreplaceable force which saved the world from fascist slavery and he called for it to be made known to all Americans all the wisdom of Leninist-Stalinist theory that made the Soviet Union great and powerful.

From an organizational point of view, the CPA structure is as follows: the basic organizational cell is the territorial club whose general meeting is called once a month. Between general membership meetings all the work planned by the club is carried out by its committee, made up of the most active members. The clubs are subordinated to regional CPA councils. The leading organization of the CPA is the National Committee elected for two years at the Association Congress. The Association's President and 11 Vice-Presidents elected by the Congress comprise the permanent leading organization of the Association.

The CPA Congress set forth maintenance of the principle of democratic centralism as the structural basis of the Association. Williamson, CPA Organizational Secretary, explained to the Congress in these terms the application of the democratic centralism principle of the CPA:

...While maintaining a structure and minimum organizational requirements compatible with the character of a Marxist political educational association, we must grant greater autonomy to the lower organizations, emphasize that democracy is a two-way street from top to bottom and

bottom to top, and eliminate all rigidity of organization. (Williamson, *Proceedings*, pg. 58.)

The National Congress of the Political Association adopted the CPA constitution in which it said that everyone who wishes to belong to the CPA accepts its program and its line.

Explaining who can belong to the Association, the *Daily Worker* wrote:

We can ask of the new applicants to membership in the Party only loyalty to the principles that are already comprehensive to all workers, devotion to the most basic duties of action today; plus a willingness and eagerness to study the program and history and the theory which will make them thorough Communists. And above all a willingness to fight, to sacrifice in the war of mankind against Nazi enslavement is the first requirement for entering the Communist Party. (Minor, *Daily Worker*, Feb. 1944.)

At the time of its dissolution the Communist Party of the United States, according to Browder's declaration, had 80,000 members without counting the 10,000 Party members in the army. According to the Congress decisions all members of the CPUSA are members of the CPA and must register before July 4, 1944. As the *Daily Worker* announced up to July 16, 1944, hardly 45,000 persons had been registered.

Without analyzing in detail Browder's full position on the dissolution of the CPUSA and creation of the Communist Political Association, and without making a developed critique of this position, one can nevertheless deduce from it the following conclusions:

1. The course applied under Browder's leadership ended in practice in liquidation of the independent political party of the working class in the US.
2. Despite declarations regarding recognition of the principles of Marxism, one is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters, a revision 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 postwar period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital.

3. By transforming the Teheran declaration of the Allied governments, which is a document of a diplomatic character, into a political platform of class peace in the United States in the postwar period, the American Communists are deforming in a radical way the meaning of the Teheran declaration and are sowing



dangerous opportunist illusions which will exercise a negative influence on the American labor movement if they are not met with the necessary reply.

4. According to what is known up to now, the Communist Parties of most countries have not approved Browder's position and several Communist Parties (for example that of the Union of South Africa and that of Australia) have come out openly against this position, while the Communist Parties of several South American countries (Cuba, Colombia) regarded the position of the American Communists as correct and in general followed the same path.

Such are the facts. Such are the elements of understanding which permit passing judgment on the dissolution of the American Communist Party. French Communists will not fail to examine in the light of Marxist-Leninist critique the arguments developed to justify the dissolution of the American Communist Party. One can be sure that, like the Communists of the Union of South Africa and of Australia, the French Communists will not approve the policy followed by Browder for it has swerved dangerously from the victorious Marxist-Leninist doctrine whose rigorously scientific application could lead to but one conclusion, not to dissolve the American Communist Party but to work to strengthen it under the banner of stubborn struggle to defeat Hitler Germany and destroy everywhere the extensions of fascism.

The fact that all the members of the Communist Party of the United States did not sign up automatically in the Communist Political Association shows that the dissolution of the Party provoked anxieties, perfectly legitimate.

In the United States the omnipotent trusts have been the object of violent criticism. It is known, for instance, that the former Vice-President of the United States, Henry Wallace, has denounced their evil doings and their international policy.

We too, in France, are resolute partisans of national unity, and we show that in our daily activity, but our anxiety for unity does not make us lose sight for a single moment of the necessity of arraying ourselves against the men of the trusts.

Furthermore, one can observe a certain confusion in Browder's declarations regarding the problem of nationalization of the monopolies and what he calls the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Nationalization of monopolies actually in no sense constitutes a socialist achievement, contrary to what certain people would be inclined to believe. No, in nationalization it is simply a matter of reforms of a democratic character, achievement of socialism being impossible to imagine without preliminary conquest of power.

Everyone understands that the Communists of the United States want to work to achieve unity in their country. But it is less understandable that they envisage the solution of the problem of national unity with the good will of the men of the trusts, and under quasi-idyllic conditions, as if the capitalist regime had been able to change its nature by some unknown miracle.

In truth, nothing justifies the dissolution of the American Communist Party, in our opinion. Browder's analysis of capitalism in the United States is not distinguished by a judicious application of Marxism-Leninism. The predictions regarding a sort of disappearance of class contradictions in the US correspond in no wise to a Marxist-Leninist understanding of the situation.

As to the argument consisting of a justification of the Party's dissolution by the necessity of not taking direct part in the presidential elections, this does not withstand a serious examination. Nothing prevents a Communist Party from adapting its electoral tactics to the requirements of a given political situation. It is clear that American Communists were right in supporting the candidacy of President Roosevelt in the last elections, but it was not at all necessary for this to dissolve the Communist Party.

It is beyond doubt that if, instead of dissolving the Communist Party of the United States all had been done to intensify its activity in the sense of developing an ardent national and anti-fascist policy, it could very greatly have consolidated its position and considerably extended its political influence. On the contrary, formation of the Communist Political Association could not but trouble the minds and obscure the perspectives in the eyes of the working masses.

In France, under cover of Resistance unity, certain suggestions for the liquidation of the party have been circulated, with more or less discretion, during the last months, but none among us has ever thought of taking such suggestions seriously. It is not by liqui-

dating the Party that we would have served national unity. On the contrary we are serving it by strengthening our Party. And as far as the American Communists are concerned, it is clear that their desire to serve the unity of their country and the cause of human progress places before them tasks which presuppose the existence of a powerful Communist Party.

After the Teheran decisions came the Yalta decisions which expressed the will of the Big Three to liquidate fascism in Germany and to help the liberated peoples to liquidate the remnants of fascism in the different countries.

It is scarcely necessary to recall that the material bases for fascism reside in the trusts, and the great objective of this war, the annihilation of fascism, can only be obtained to the extent in which the forces of democracy and progress do not shut their eyes to the economic and political circumstances which engender fascism.

The American Communists have an especially important role to play in the struggle taking place between the progressive forces of the earth and fascist barbarism.

Without any doubt they would have been in a better position to play this role in the interests of their country and human progress if, instead of proceeding

to dissolve their Party, they had done everything to strengthen it and make of it one of the elements of the assembling of the broad democratic masses of the United States for the final crushing of fascism, that shame of the 20th Century. It would be useless to hide the fact that fascism has more or less concealed sympathizers in the US, as it has in France and other countries.

The former Vice-President of the US, Henry Wallace, present Secretary of Commerce, said rightly that one cannot fight fascism abroad and tolerate at home the activity of powerful groups which intend to make peace "with a simple breathing spell between the death of an old tyranny and the birth of a new."

The Yalta decisions thwart these plans, but the enemies of liberty will not disarm of their free will. They will only retreat before the acting coalition of all the forces of democracy and progress.

And it is clear that if Comrade Earl Browder had seen, as a Marxist-Leninist, this important aspect of the problems facing liberty-loving peoples in this moment in their history, he would have arrived at a conclusion quite other than the dissolution of the Communist Party of the United States.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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