

Some Aspects of Our Policies and Tasks

By Eugene Dennis

Report to the National Committee, CPA, June 18-20

It is with deep humility that I submit this report on behalf of the National Board. For, despite the positive estimation of my position made by Comrade Foster, I realize that I bear a full share of the responsibility for the main errors and mistakes which the National Board of our Communist Political Association has made.

Generally speaking I have not been among those who considered that the objectives of Teheran and Crimea would be fulfilled automatically and without the most active intervention of the masses. I have not been one of those who have minimized the resolute struggle which must be waged against pro-fascist reaction, or who underestimated the independent role and activity of labor and the people.

Yet it is a fact that I have held and fostered certain opportunist illusions regarding the postwar role of the anti-Axis sections of monopoly capital. And in so doing I participated in, and contributed toward, the main errors which our national leadership has committed. Besides, on such specific questions as liquidating the CPA in the South, as well as in incorrectly estimating the significance of the Labor-Management Charter, I bear a particular responsibility.

Moreover, while I have taken issue with and opposed a number of individual and separate mistakes which the collective leadership of our Association committed, it should be recognized that I did not draw the full conclusions from these, nor did I fight as effectively and consistently as was required. Like most other comrades in our leadership I have always endeavored to preserve the unity of our Communist movement as the apple of our eye. But in this connection I have sometimes tended to overlook the essential fact that Communist unity must be forged without making any concessions on questions of principle, even "minor" or "temporary."

In view of this, I wish to re-emphasize that I submit this report with a profound sense of humility and with a deep realization of my own responsibility for the errors which our National Board has made.

With these introductory remarks, I shall now proceed with my report. And I am sure all comrades will appreciate the fact that this report embodies not only my personal views and deep convictions, but likewise the general viewpoint of the majority of the National Board.

The political discussions which our CPA has now embarked upon is, in many respects, of historic significance. For our deliberations on the draft resolution of the National Board and the article of Duclos will shape the course of our Communist movement for the next immediate period. In so doing we shall effect the main line of development of broad sections of the labor and progressive movements for the period ahead. Thereby we shall help influence the future role of the U.S.A. in world affairs.

Because of this, our discussions transcend the level of ordinary inner-Party matters. Our views and the conclusions we draw therefrom already command far wider attention than even the profound interest and concern displayed by the members of our Association. Our deliberations are being watched and studied by all segments of American public life, by friend and foe alike. Whether in the slanders of the New York World-Telegram, in the distortions of The New York Times, in the misconceptions of Mrs. Roosevelt, or in the varied comments of the progressive press, our views and judgments on policies and the changing world situation are being scrutinized and commented upon everywhere and in many ways.

The great interest in our current discussions arises not only because we are surveying the past and striving to overcome our former opportunist errors. Public interest is acute because we are rectifying our former erroneous postwar orientation and line in order to estimate concretely the present political situation and accurately determine perspectives. Public interest is widespread because we are mapping out correct policies and tactics to cope with those central and immediate tasks and objectives which we set ourselves yesterday, and which now have come more sharply to the fore since V-E Day. And these tasks which must be solved are: to insure the final destruction of fascism in Europe; to speed victory over Japanese imperialism; to guarantee the establishment of a long-term peace; to promote greater economic security; and, above all, to rout the American reactionaries and prevent fascism from coming to power in the United States.

The main reports and documents upon which our discussions are based are already before you. These are the draft resolution of the National Board adopted on June 2, the article of Comrade Duclos, Comrade Foster's report to this plenum, as well as the highly important political letter which Comrade Foster submitted to our National Committee in February 1944.

From these the following facts are self-evident:

First, during the course of the anti-Hitler war, in which we Communists made sterling contributions, our Association made a number of basic opportunist errors and mistakes. We started to depart from and revise certain Marxist theories and principles. We tended to weaken and liquidate the vanguard role of our Communist movement as the independent Marxist political party of the working class.

The responsibility for this opportunism rests not only upon Comrade Browder, who bears the heaviest responsibility for our notorious revisionism. The responsibility for our errors; and mistakes likewise rests upon our entire national leadership, and in the first place upon our National Board.

Those revisionist departures from Marxism which we were making up to recently, adversely affected the application of our current policies for winning the war, and were disorienting our Communist organization and other anti-Fascists as regards coping with the new and complex problems which now arise as we enter the postwar period.

Secondly, the reports and material before you indicate that the majority of the National Board now understands and is attempting to rectify its former errors and deviations. Aided by the wise and invaluable counsel of Comrade Duclos, learning from our own experiences and the latest international developments, and helped greatly by the essentially sound position of Comrade Foster who warned us some 17 months ago of the dangerous opportunist path we were embarking upon, we have begun to overcome our mistakes and correctly to reorient ourselves and the Association. Already most of the National Committee and the overwhelming majority of our membership have expressed themselves decisively and enthusiastically in favor of the main viewpoint of Duclos' article and the main line of the resolution of the National Board.

However, the fact also remains that Comrade Browder as well as those relatively few comrades who continue to support his erroneous, non-Marxist theories and policies, are resisting the rectification of our past mistakes. Comrade Browder stubbornly clings to a false post-war orientation. He is actively oppos-

ing the sound political line which is now being hammered out by our National Board in conjunction with our membership. In so doing, Comrade Browder is compounding his previous errors and embarking on an even more dangerous course—a peculiar kind of non-Marxian "isolationism" and American exceptionalism.

Before analyzing the nature and basic source of Comrade Browder's errors and thus also the errors of our entire National leadership, as well as why these errors happened, it is worth while and enlightening to examine the present position of Comrade Browder in respect to a series of key positions.

Take the cardinal question of American-Soviet relations and cooperation, which every anti-fascist and most patriotic Americans understand is the cornerstone of national and world security: Together with the National Board, Comrade Browder recognizes the paramount need and the great possibilities for maintaining and extending American-Soviet friendship and peaceful collaboration after the war, as part of and as the heart of the anti-Hitlerite coalition. Browder also agrees with the Board that the position of the State Department and the American delegation at San Francisco on a host of vital questions, as well as the slowness and inconsistency with which Washington and London moved to realize the concords of Yalta, create strains and fissures in the coalition, endanger the unity of the Big Three.

But Comrade Browder differs fundamentally from the position of the National Board on how to prevent America from vacillating and departing from the agreement of Yalta in the future, on how to prevent divisions within the coalition, on how to consolidate and strengthen American-Soviet unity. Browder considers that the "coincidence of interests" of capitalist America and the Soviet Union—the joint interests of our nations arising from the common need of establishing a durable peace and prosperous and mutually beneficial trade—predetermines the future role and position of the decisive sections of American monopoly capital in respect to future American-Soviet relations. Browder counts first of all on the "intelligence" of the most "far-sighted" sections of the bourgeoisie as the main "guarantee" that the crucial necessity of American-Soviet amity and cooperation will more or less automatically overcome and surmount existing difficulties and differences and will suffice to curb the aggressive imperialist aims and policies, including the anti-Soviet hostility, of powerful sections of American finance capital.

The National Board believes that the common interests of the United States and the USSR are real, and are strong and compelling factors, without which there could be no basis for long-term and friendly cooperation and peace. At the same time, the Board also believes that these interests in themselves, that these favorable objective conditions, neither can nor will automatically determine America's policies. We cannot overlook the contradictions between the capitalist and Socialist system. We cannot forget the lessons of the League of Nations, Munich, or World War II.

This is why we consider that American-Soviet friendship and cooperation, and the task of completing the destruction of fascism in Europe and everywhere, will not and cannot depend upon the "intelligence" of this or that section of monopoly capital. It will depend above all and to a large extent upon the welding of a firmer and more solid national democratic coalition within our country—a coalition resting upon the power and unity of labor and all other democratic

forces especially upon the working farmer, the Negro people, small businessmen, professionals and intellectuals.

In this connection, we also take into account the fact that there still are certain influential capitalist groupings which, for one or another reason, support the Crimean decisions, and we consider that it is possible and necessary for labor and the popular forces to fight for these objectives together with such capitalists. But equally, we believe that labor and the people cannot rely on any capitalist group or elements to maintain a steadfast position or to struggle against fascism to the end. We believe, now more than ever, that within the camp of national unity, within the national democratic coalition, labor, together with other progressive forces, must not only be the backbone and the main driving force, but must play the leading role.

Further, in respect to the decisive question of American-Soviet relations, the National Board likewise differs from Comrade Browder in two other important respects. Unlike Browder, we do not believe that the USA follows at the tailend or is the naive pawn of British imperialism. We consider, while world capitalism has emerged from this war weakened by the defeat of Hitler Germany and will be further weakened by the defeat of imperialist Japan, that the USA is emerging from the war as the strongest imperialist power—economically, militarily and politically.

The U. S. is not the servile and junior partner of the British Lion. Quite the contrary. Furthermore, in the postwar period, U. S. and British economic and political rivalries are bound to sharpen and become more acute. In fact, after the war, Anglo-American rivalry and contradictions will constitute a main source of conflicts endangering world peace and stability. And in the struggle against its chief imperialist rival, the U. S. will play an increasingly aggressive role.

However, we do not conclude from this that all is hopeless, that America inevitably and irrevocably will come forward only in a reactionary and pro-Fascist role in the world of tomorrow. The relationships of international forces, and the strong progressive currents within our country are such that it is possible for labor and all democratic forces—if they are united on an anti-Fascist program and wage a resolute struggle—to influence effectively the course of America, at home and abroad.

The point is, that neither American nor British imperialism will be weakened, nor their reactionary conflicts and aims thwarted, by Browder's appeal to their "intelligence" and "true" class interests; nor by his fantastic blueprints designed to soften their antagonisms, to divide up peacefully the world market, or to arrive at arrangements whereby Downing Street would voluntarily liberate the British Empire. American, just as British, imperialism, will be weakened and curbed, particularly when the American working class and people, by their unity and struggle, weaken and undermine the position of the most reactionary and aggressive forces of finance capital, and establish closer and firmer unity of action with the freedom-loving peoples of all lands.

Moreover, we of the National Board cannot agree with Browder's fatalistic position and his arbitrarily chosen alternatives of the future course of world development. For instance, we do believe that if the imperialist bourgeoisie of the U. S. and Britain reneged on Crimea and were to force a rupture in American-Soviet-British relations—that this would engender new aggressions, great suffering, damage and untold hardship for the world, and not least of all for the American people. This is

why everything must be done to preserve and strengthen the unity of the Big Three.

Yet we cannot agree that the only alternative to Browder's concept of the Grand Alliance is chaos, anarchy and the end of civilization. Browder has not yet drawn all the necessary conclusions from this war of national liberation in which there has emerged a stronger and a more influential Soviet Union, a new and democratic Europe and a stronger world labor movement. These historic developments certainly are an indispensable part of the world of reality; they are an essential basis and an organic part of the anti-Hitlerite coalition—a part and basis which has already created an entirely new relationship of world forces, irrevocably strengthening the cause of world democracy and national freedom.

In this connection, it should not be forgotten that out of this war there has also emerged a stronger and more influential American labor movement. The supreme task now is to forge labor's unity of action, locally and nationally, and to make American labor fully conscious of its vanguard role and its immediate historic task to complete the destruction of fascism, and toward this end to affect decisively, in alliance with all democratic forces, America's policies, both foreign and domestic. This, admittedly, is no easy task. For the labor movement is sharply divided, and the Greens, Wolls, Dubinskys, Hutchesons and Lewises still retain positions of great power. However, the conditions are ripe, and the need is so great, that it is now possible to make new advances in welding labor's anti-Fascist unity. This can and must be done.

Next, take the question of the slogans of action set forth in Part I of the Draft Resolution of the Board. With certain reservations and one basic difference, Browder alleges that he could agree with this immediate program of action.

Leaving aside the "reservations," what is Comrade Browder's stated and most basic disagreement with the slogans of action? Browder claims that the National Board has omitted what he terms, the decisive question of any national unity program for the postwar period, namely, the question of "markets." Browder still contends that the solution of postwar markets, especially of foreign markets, on a scale capable of absorbing the entire productive output of U. S. wartime industry and production levels, remains the key and heart of any sound reconversion and postwar plan for securing economic prosperity.

Obviously, the question of markets, both foreign and domestic, is not unimportant, especially as these will have a pronounced effect upon the postwar levels of production and employment in the USA.

What then, let us ask, are the prospects for expanding American postwar trade in the immediate postwar period?

For one thing, the defeat of German, and subsequently of Japanese imperialism, as well as the vast destruction of property, plant capacity and capital goods during the war, will enable both the U. S. and Great Britain to increase their share of the world market, in comparison with pre-war levels, particularly during the first period of rehabilitation and reconstruction—though it must be emphasized this will take place under conditions of sharpened Anglo-American rivalry, and sooner or later under circumstances of a "depression" and a cyclical crisis.

However, to realize the great possibilities which are now open for considerably extending American foreign trade—possibly from \$7,000,000,000 to \$10,000,000,000 annually—during the early postwar years, as well as

to achieve a level of exports for a longer period of time considerably above the prewar level of 1939—it is necessary, as the Resolution of the Board proposes, to achieve the following conditions:

(a) To ensure a stable and long-term peace.

(b) To guarantee that liberated Europe develops further along democratic, anti-Fascist lines.

(c) To promote a free and democratic Asia.

(d) To extend American long-term and low-interest credits and loans to all democratic nations for purposes of economic reconstruction and industrialization—and on the basis of non-interference in the internal affairs of these nations.

Undoubtedly the various proposals in the Resolution which are designed to promote international economic cooperation and world trade, can and should be implemented. Equally, it may be necessary to augment that section of the resolution dealing with reconversion and how to promote the fight for 60,000,000 jobs.

But, it is the firm opinion of the Board that on the question of markets we cannot adopt the "amendments" and alternative economic proposals and concepts which Comrade Browder now advances and which are essentially the same as those he set forth in his book *Teheran*.

This is our considered opinion because Browder's postwar economic views contain, among other things, two basic flaws:

Firstly, Browder remains obsessed with the idea that the way to improve the wage and living standards of the American people is to try and solve all the market and profit problems of monopoly capitalism, that is, to try and make capitalism work. This is why Browder puts forward an economic program for monopoly capital, for trying to overcome the anarchy and contradictions of capitalist production, for trying to bring about a super-organized capitalism "free" from crises.

Browder is also obsessed with the idea that in the postwar period the workers will not have to depend, first of all, upon their own organized strength and struggles; rather, he believes that they can advance their interests by making one after another concession to the monopolists.

However, the National Board believes that the way to promote jobs and social security and to raise the purchasing power of the working people—which we consider vital for the expansion of the domestic market—depends, among other things, upon how we rally and unify labor and all anti-Fascists to struggle vigorously against the efforts of most employers to utilize the reconversion period to lower wages and living standards, and to undermine the trade union movement. This is why we stress the need for mobilizing the masses today to fight for improved federal and state emergency unemployment insurance; to enact the Murray Full Employment Bill and the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill; to start a gigantic federal and state public works and housing program, etc.

This, too, is why we place such great emphasis upon the urgent need of protecting the trade unions, organizing the unorganized, and developing labor's unity and independent political action. But these key questions, which are organically connected with the problem of markets, are seldom mentioned or stressed by Browder.

Secondly, on the question of postwar markets and economic perspectives, Browder refuses to entertain any notion of the embryonic or forthcoming economic crises in the U. S., whose clouds are beginning even now to loom on the horizon. Browder is still hypnotized by his original opportunist illusions regarding the postwar possibility of a long-term period of expanding production and full employment taking place under present social conditions without conflicts, crises or mass unemployment.

But what are the facts? Present internal conditions in the USA are now featured, in part, by the present transition and shift from wartime to a peacetime economy. This process, which is taking place in the midst of prosecuting the war

against Japan and under circumstances of a greater concentration and centralization of big capital, is accompanied by vast dislocations in the economy and a marked increase of unemployment. This difficult period of reconversion may last one to two years. It probably will merge with, or be followed by a postwar economic "boom."

But this "boom," too, will be a boom of a special kind. Whatever its length, two, three or five years, it will develop unevenly, advantageous primarily to the most powerful trusts, under conditions in which there will be large-scale and chronic unemployment and serious internal struggles. Further, this postwar economic "boom," due to the inherent contradictions of capitalism, will inevitably give rise to a cyclical crisis, to a severe economic crisis—and this will take place despite the prospective expansion of America's foreign trade in the immediate postwar period. And if we do not see this, and do not map out a program of action to protect the interests of the people along the lines set forth in the Board's Resolution, then the monopolies, headed by their most reactionary groups, may succeed in utilizing that crisis for their own reactionary ends, and along Fascist lines.

There is also another aspect of the slogan of action embodied in Part I of the Resolution that Comrade Browder objects to. He considers that our proposals to curb the powers of the monopolies are sectarian, if not utopian. But the contrary is true. Only by resolutely mobilizing the people to curb the powers of the trusts and cartels will it be possible greatly to expand both the foreign and domestic markets under conditions more favorable to the peoples. Only by curbing the monopolies can we seriously check and defeat those American imperialists who advocate a soft or compromise peace with feudal-Fascist Japan. Only by such measures can we best promote today the fullest rallying and unification of the national liberation forces in China, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere, thereby hastening victory over Japan and the free and democratic advance of the peoples and nations of Asia. Only by curbing the economic royalists now can we most effectively prevent the restoration or unbridled predatory activity of the Anglo-American-German cartels, the scuttling of the Crimean decisions and the coming peace settlement, and help put a halt to those who want to plunder, rob and oppress the liberated peoples.

On the question of the Labor Management charter, Browder was and still remains in error. Browder still considers, as I and others formerly did, that this charter could be an instrument for dividing the ranks of the bourgeoisie and for promoting cooperation between the AFL and CIO nationally. Browder still accepts the charter at face value. He refuses to draw any conclusions from the fact that Eric Johnston and Wm. Green already have violated the charter and will now seek amendments to the Wagner Labor Relations Act. Browder ignores the fact that the Chamber of Commerce and the AFL, just as the NAM, still refuses to use the Charter to launch a concerted national campaign for unemployment insurance, increased purchasing power, or an improved social security program.

Of course, it is not excluded that under the pressure of labor and because of the exigencies of the reconversion period, some employers may cooperate with labor nationally and in certain communities in behalf of specific measures that may be mutually advantageous and in the national welfare. Possibly some of the sponsors of the Charter may yet do this. However, Browder's illusions concerning the Charter can only play into the hands of the Winthrop, Aldrich and Rockefeller crowd who aim to use the Charter to launch a nationwide public relations campaign to dull the vigilance and sap the strength of the progressive labor movement and to promote a streamlined version of Gompers' infamous class collaboration policy.

There is also, and not least of all, the question of the dissolution of the Communist Party. Brow-

der still believes that here is nothing to worry about in regard to this action. He even has the audacity to state now—which he didn't do some 14 months ago—that he realized when the decision to establish the CPA was taken that this might cause difficulties for a number of Communist Parties in other lands in the trying days of their national liberation struggle. At the same time, Browder insists that the dissolution of the CP was an indispensable act necessary to ensure victory in the 1944 elections and advisable from the viewpoint of the future role of the American Communists.

However, what are the facts? The dissolution of the CP in May 1944, as Comrade Duclos indicates, caused serious difficulties for a number of Communist Parties in Europe. This in itself makes clear that we had no right to dissolve the CP. For the interests of the world working class, and therefore of its vanguard parties, are basically identical, so that an injury to one can never be anything but an injury to the others.

Moreover, the dissolution of our Party, as we can see, accelerated previous and all tendencies to put an end to the independent role and position of the American Communist organization as an independent Marxist political movement and entity. The dissolution of the CP accentuated the tendency to weaken our base among the workers in the decisive sections of industry. It promoted all opportunist views, including the tendencies to limit and negate the independent role of the Communists in the elections, as well as in other progressive and broad united front political-legislative movements.

Insofar as the 1944 elections are concerned, the facts are: the dissolution of the CP aided the enemies of the camp of national unity. We Communists, as well as those whom we supported in the elections, were charged or castigated with dissolving our independent party organization in order to "capture" or "dominate" the ALP and the Democratic Party. And it must be admitted that this line of Red-baiting attack was used by the Hoover-Dewey Republicans and the Socialist-Democrats with marked and harmful effect. Furthermore, while the CPA did play a key role in the elections, the dissolution of the CP tended to reduce the power and activity of our Communist movement precisely during the course of the elections, and prevented us from exerting our full strength.

Clearly, we cannot perpetuate this state of affairs. Irrespective of what name or form we may now choose, we Communists now, from this day on, must augment and expand our independent, Communist vanguard role. Pending future changes in our name or formal electoral status, we can and must build our Communist Association among the basic industrial workers, expand our independent mass activities, including our own independent electoral tickets and campaigns. We will do this, of course, in conjunction with organizing the broadest unity of action together with all other anti-Fascist and democratic forces. But now and in the future, whether we retain the status of the CPA, as a non-party organization in the accepted electoral sense, or reorganize into the CP, we must develop our organization as the Marxist Party of the American working class.

The final point I wish to mention regarding Browder's present position is his non-Marxist views concerning theory. When pressed to the wall, Browder admits that "perhaps" some of his theories were and are untenable, or at least, that they don't square with realities and with our practice. Further, Browder claims that even if we made mistakes on the theoretical front, these were not so serious because we American Communists performed virtual miracles in our mass work, such as during the 1944 elections. Also, Browder contends that it doesn't matter if we erred as regards theory because, according to him, we have been reacting correctly, especially since V-E Day, to many of the current political developments, internationally and within the country.

This distortion of and contempt

for Marxian theory is dangerous and has nothing in common with Marxism. Insofar as our National Board and membership are concerned, it is our deep conviction and determined purpose to insure that now as never before, for us Communists, theory must serve as a guide to action. Our Marxist-Leninist theory and practice must be inseparable. They must confirm and reinforce each other.

Precisely because under Browder's leadership we were, until recently, revising Marxism, our "new theory" took us into strange postures; we were tending to slide into the swamp of Bernsteinism and Kautskyism. And, naturally, our "new theory" failed to equip our Association and our friends to foresee and to meet in time the new changes in world and national affairs. We were not forearmed for the new tasks with which we are now confronted. We were reacting to certain events, such as the San Francisco Conference, etc., piecemeal, in an isolated and limited way, and without vision and all-round clarity, without displaying the required political initiative. Because of our erroneous theoretical conclusions, we did not adequately arm politically the American working class and all anti-Fascists for the new tasks now arising.

Some say, however, that despite our opportunist errors, possibly we could meet and correctly adjust ourselves to many aspects of the present changing situation, and that our practice would inevitably have led us to correct our theoretical mistakes. But, the fact remains, because of an incorrect theoretical position, we were lagging behind events, we were acting spontaneously and without that essential Communist compass: Marxist foresight and insight.

But to continue: What we should ask, was the basis of the opportunist errors, not only of Comrade Browder but also of the entire national leadership?

The root of our revision of Marxism arose, essentially, from an erroneous estimate of and attitude towards monopoly capital, especially towards those sections of Big Business which supported the military defeat of Germany.

Did our mistakes consist in cooperating with the win-the-war sections of Big Capital to speed the military defeat of Nazi Germany and the Axis? Did they arise from collaborating in a broad national electoral coalition with those capitalists who wished to reelect Roosevelt? Did our errors flow from our efforts to utilize and sharpen the divisions and contradictions within the ranks of capital, so as to try and isolate and defeat the pro-Fascist cliques headed by du Pont, Hearst and McCormack? Obviously the answer is—no!

Then, from what did our fundamental mistakes arise? Our errors arose, for one thing, because we tended to forget why the main sections of American finance capital entered the war. We forgot that the monopolists did not participate in the war against Hitler completely to destroy fascism, to eradicate its social and economic roots. Rather, they came into the war against the Nazis in order to prevent German world domination, and also to eliminate or weaken an imperialist rival. Of course, their pro-war position coincided with the immediate interests of the American people, even though there was no reason to assume that these big capitalists would fight consistently against Hitler or to the end against Hitlerism.

Our opportunist errors arose because we lost sight of the fact why the Roosevelt and Churchill governments, and the bourgeoisie supporting them, entered into the agreements of Teheran and Crimea. We forgot that the USA and Britain became partners of these accords primarily because of military necessity, because of the given relationship of world forces and because of the strong and powerful anti-Fascist sentiments, objectives and determination of the American and British peoples.

Similarly, we did not take into account the fact that the records of Teheran and Yalta were, as Comrade Duclos has pointed out, **diplomatic agreements**. Clearly, these diplomatic agreements were political events and acts of the first importance; they were of historic significance. Yet

what we overlooked was the fact that while the USSR would honor and fulfill its pledge to the letter, as well as in the spirit, the ruling circles of America and Britain would carry out these agreements only to the extent that labor and the people—the true democratic and anti-Fascist forces—spoke out and waged a resolute and an effective struggle; as well as to the extent that the relationship of international forces compelled this.

Our revisionist mistakes consisted further in the fact that, even during the wartime period, while correctly cooperating for victory with the win-the-war sections of capital, we often tended to rely upon these sections of capital; we did not adequately criticize or counteract their vacillations; we did not systematically and sharply enough oppose their concessions to pro-Fascist reaction; we did not maintain at all times our own independent position. We were influenced negatively, by illusions regarding the "intelligence" and "far-sightedness" of the so-called pro-Roosevelt sections of capital. And, in retrospect we must admit that our recent opportunist mistakes have a long history and were influenced no little by the "Roosevelt decade," by the liberal-bourgeois influence which the Roosevelt "era" exerted upon the American labor and progressive movements.

Finally, and most important, because of illusions concerning the wartime and future role of the anti-Axis sections of monopoly capital, we tended to forget that American finance capital, American imperialism, itself breeds and engenders fascism and wars; and that after the war, American capitalism would seek and foster imperialist aggrandizement—that it would strive, either by force or by using the "dry" method, to attain world hegemony.

Because of this we Communists inadvertently tended to obscure and weaken the independent and leading role of the working class and consequently the vanguard role of our Communist organization. Because of this we did not sufficiently forewarn and prepare labor and the people to mobilize all their strength and force for the new and complex postwar problems. And this we must do now, at great speed and despite all difficulties, so as—for one thing—to prevent, in time, the growth of fascism within our own country.

The question inevitably arises as to why this basic opportunist error, as well as other rightist mistakes, was allowed to penetrate into our wartime work and influenced our main political line and approach for the postwar period.

Did this take place because the leading cadres of our Communist movement are organically inclined towards revisionism, or are incurable opportunists? Did this take place because our leadership is bankrupt and has made little or no contributions to the struggle against fascism and reaction, or because we are devoid of Bolshevik honesty, integrity and devotion?

To ask these questions is to answer them. And the answer is, No! The membership and the vast majority of our leadership are adherents of Marxism, are staunch proletarian anti-Fascists, who champion the immediate, as well as the ultimate interests of the working class—socialism. We have made vital contributions to victory in the war, to advancing the cause of democracy, peace, freedom and social progress. We have proved ourselves capable, albeit in varying degrees, of defending and promoting the interests of the working class, of our people and nation.

Then why and how can we account for the disorienting and paralyzing opportunist influences and errors which adversely influenced our policies and mass work in the recent period? These can be explained by the following reasons and factors:

1.—During and in the midst of mobilizing everything to defeat Hitler-Germany and the Axis, we tended to become careless and dizzy with success. We correctly devoted ourselves to achieving victory at all costs and in so doing we made signal contributions

towards this end. Yet, in the process of doing this, we became one-sided. While correctly subordinating everything to the great objective of smashing Hitlerism, and working effectively to achieve this goal we carried on a relentless struggle to root out all sectarianism in our work; but we completely neglected to combine this with an equally vigilant struggle against opportunism. We forgot the sound advice of Comrade George Dimitrov, who, in 1935, warned the Communists of all lands that to apply successfully the policy of the united and people's anti-Fascist front, we must

“ . . . eradicate from our ranks all self-satisfied sectarianism, which above all blocks our road to the masses and impedes the carrying out of a truly Bolshevik mass policy. We want to intensify in every way the struggle against all concrete manifestations of Right opportunism, realizing that the danger from this side will increase precisely in the practice of carrying out our mass policy and struggle.”

2.—In the course of our win-the-war and general anti-Fascist activity, while participating in the broad camp of national unity, we adopted, in practice, a non-vigilant attitude towards our non-labor allies. We unconsciously allowed ourselves to be influenced by the anti-Axis sections of the bourgeoisie. This was particularly true in respect to President Roosevelt and those sections of capital aligned with him. Thus, we frequently dragged at the tail-end of Roosevelt, were slow in criticizing his mistakes, weaknesses and hesitations. Consequently, we did not develop a sufficiently independent position. We did not adequately maintain our own Communist identity and vanguard role. Moreover, because of this, we tended to gloss over many of the pressing grievances of the workers and the Negro people, and sometimes even put a damper on their struggles.

3.—Then, too, our opportunism was abetted by the fact that our national leadership has not yet fully mastered Marxism, that in the midst of energetically supporting and waging this national liberation war, we often confused the woods for the trees, and tended to evaluate or raise short-term tactics and transitory phenomena to the level of strategy or a “new theory.” And in this connection we should pon-

der over the penetrating remarks of Lenin in his article “Marxism and Revisionism”:

“To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the windings of political trivialities, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat and the main features of the entire capitalist system as well as the whole capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these basic interests for the sake of real or would-be advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it obviously follows from the very essence of such a policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms and will give rise to one or other variety of revisionism, each time when there is some ‘new’ question, or when there is more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though this turn changed to the basic line of development to but an insignificant degree and for but the shortest period of time.”

(V. I. Lenin: *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, International Publishers, p. 77.)

4.—Lastly, though not to exhaust the subject, our errors arose because in our leading committees and methods of work we have not yet established genuine democracy and collective work. We have tended to fall into the trap of formal democracy and self-adulation. We have confused the forging of firm, unbreakable Communist unity with the creation of a synthetic unity which curtailed criticism and self-criticism, which separated the leadership from the membership, and which failed to draw most of our trade union cadres and the entire membership into the fullest and most active participation in formulating and executing policies. This has played no small role in feeding and prolonging opportunism and bureaucratic methods of leadership and work.

What must be done now to rectify our errors, most speedily, to help prevent the recurrence of such a situation within the leadership of our Communist movement and to enable our organization to fulfill its new tasks and responsibilities with dispatch and success?

Obviously, there are a number of steps and measures which must be undertaken now and in preparation for convening at the earliest moment a special na-

tional convention. Among these are the following:

1.—It is necessary to deepen and extend the democratic discussion now taking place within our Association, and to combine continuous, searching and constructive criticism with the maximum self-criticism and correction. We must guard against excesses and distortions, whether of a rightist or leftist tendency. And, in so doing, we must resolutely preserve and strengthen the basic unity of our Communist organization.

2.—It is essential to institute everywhere, full inner-party democracy, based upon the principle of democratic centralism. For one thing, it is necessary to put an end to that practice where new and major policies are suddenly, and without consultation, thrust upon our membership and often upon the National Committee and the Board, as the line and settled decisions of our Association. For another, it is necessary to convert the National Committee, as well as each State Committee, into a functioning and responsible policy-making and leading body.

3.—It is essential to refresh and strengthen our national and state leadership with the most tested working-class cadres, with the most devoted and competent Marxists. This will require a bold policy of promotion, as well as the amalgamation of the healthiest Marxist core of the existing leadership with a new and large circle of loyal and able proletarian cadres. This will require the establishment of far closer ties between our entire leadership, the membership and the masses. This will also require that our entire membership and all leading committees exercise the greatest political vigilance and judge each and every leader and member not alone by his or her vote or political declaration, but by deeds, by performances.

4.—It is imperative that we build and strengthen our CPA as a Marxist organization, as an independent working class party. Whatever final judgment our membership may render as to the name and form of our Communist organization, we must immediately fortify our organized working class base in the most decisive industries, and effect a new disposition of our leading cadres to help affect this; we must expand and improve our independent Communist mass work and political and

organizational initiative on all fronts—on the industrial, electoral and legislative fronts, and particularly on the ideological and theoretical fronts.

5.—It is also especially urgent now that we shall organize the most systematic study and mastery of Marxism - Leninism throughout our Association, from top to bottom. Starting with the planned study and application of the main line of the draft resolution of our National Board, with the Duclos article, as well as with Comrade Foster's letter of January 20, 1944, we must encourage and develop the widest and most profound study of the Marxist-Leninist classics, especially the reports and writings of Comrade Dimitrov; the *History of the CPSU*; Lenin's *Imperialism and Left-Wing Communism*, *Marx, Engels—Marxism*, *The Renegade Rautsky* and the *Collapse of II International*; and not least of all *The Foundations of Leninism* and the *Mastery of Bolshevism* by Stalin.

6.—It is necessary that we immediately commence to examine, in the light of our discussion and Resolution, all fields of work, all press, publications and institutions led or influenced by the CPA; that it, it is essential to examine our theory and practice, as well as our cadres, in all spheres of work and in all mass organizations.

7.—It is urgently necessary that we raise the vigilance of our entire movement, root out and prevent factionalism, as well as smoke out and expel all Trotskyite and other enemy agents.

8.—It is equally imperative, particularly now during our inner-discussion period, that we reach and clarify the broadest sections of the masses regarding our policy and tactics. We must react immediately to all slanders, distortions and misrepresentations of our position which appear in the press, such as have been recently expressed in the columns and editorials of *The New York World-Telegram* and *The New York Times*. We must utilize every avenue of public information to explain and popularize our position.

9.—And, finally, it is essential that our CPA resolutely combine our present discussions and deliberations with the maximum mobilization of all our resources and strength, with a broadening of our contacts and relations with all anti-Fascists and pro-

gressives, rapidly to implement the program of action outlined in our Resolution.

Everything must be done without delay to rally and unify labor and all democratic forces to consistently support a progressive foreign policy, a sound reconversion program, and in preparation for the current municipal and the fateful 1946 Congressional elections. Everything must be done now, in time, to weld the broadest anti-Fascist and democratic unity of the nation and to reinforce the friendship and concerted action of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition.

Everything should be done to help determine the course of the Truman Administration, which despite its recent vacillations and inconsistencies in the sphere of foreign policy, is still subject to mass pressure and can be influenced in a progressive direction, along the lines of Yalta, especially—if labor and the people are organized, united and active.

I am confident as is the National Board, that our discussions and deliberations will result in a great strengthening of our Communist movement, in the achievement of greater independent Marxist thinking, genuine democracy and collective work and a higher type of inner-Communist unity. This is already borne out by the first results of our discussions and by the fact that already, prior to any official decisions, we have, in a basic sense, begun to reconstitute and convert our CPA into the Marxist Party of the American working class. This is all to the good. This augurs well for the future.

Insofar as the Resolution of the National Board is concerned, I would like to venture the following opinion: the main line and approach of the Resolution is correct. Yet there is much ground for additions, changes and improvement. Therefore, I should like to suggest that we approve the main line of the Resolution, accept it as a draft and elect a small committee to incorporate in the Resolution, all amendments advanced by the National Committee and our membership. Then, on this basis, we should submit the improved draft resolution for the consideration of our membership and final approval at a special national convention which should be convened at the earliest moment.