

The Seventh Comintern Congress, Browderism and the CPUSA, and Some Problems Confronting Revolutionary Communists Today

By: Jose deLeon

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I. Introduction

Ever since the development of the working class in the US in the late 1700's and early 1800's, it has shown itself to be the vanguard fighter for democracy and social justice. The aspiration for socialism, the gravitation towards socialist ideals, has been a constant feature of the US working class. The US working class has produced many heroic leaders, organizations, and exemplary class struggles against the bourgeoisie and reactionary classes. Two of the world's most important international commemorations of the proletariat and oppressed peoples, May Day – International Workers' Day, and International Working Women's Day, were rooted in heroic class struggle of the US working class. Socialist and Communist workers and oppressed peoples all over the world celebrate these two events, forcing many governments to commemorate them. But, the US has yet to officially commemorate these great international holidays of the world proletariat.

The importance of the struggle of the US working class has been confirmed by the attention that such international organizations as the First Workingmen's International, led by Marx and Engels, the Second Socialist International, led by Engels and Kautsky (prior to its collapse), and the Third Communist International, led by Lenin and Stalin, have given to the education and organization of the US working class. Marx, Engels and the First International, particularly, followed and provided advice to the US proletariat and its role in the struggles against the Slavocracy and for the emancipation of the Black peoples. Engels and the Second International placed emphasis upon the importance of the US proletariat

creating its own political party, separate from the bourgeois parties, through which it would be able to enter the arena of political struggle. And Lenin, Stalin and the great Communist International often intervened in the problems of the working-class movement in the US, greatly assisting the struggles for Black liberation, worker's democracy and socialism in the US.

Behind every advance in democracy and social justice we find the Struggles of workers led by revolutionary socialists, communists or revolutionaries from the oppressed nationalities enslaved within the US. Unfortunately, unresolved problems which continuously crop up in the revolutionary process resulted in the inability of the class-conscious vanguard to successfully lead the workers and oppressed masses in overthrowing the source of exploitation and oppression in the US, the US monopoly capitalist class.

It is vitally important, however, that Revolutionary Communists of all nationalities today recognize, study, and understand that the greatest achievements of the working class in the US in the fight for democracy and socialism, and against US monopoly capitalism were /accomplished when it was led by the best vanguard party that the US proletariat has ever produced, the Communist Party USA.

The CPUSA, as the American section of the Communist International, despite all defects, product some of the most heroic class struggles and struggles for Black liberation, led by the working class, since the days of the Civil War. It was as a result of the battles led by the CPUSA, as a part of the Comintern, that the bourgeoisie was forced to grant many reforms to the working class: social security, public housing, unemployment benefits, etc. Many democratic reforms that many of us take for granted today were by-products of either the revolutionary class struggles led by the CPUSA in the 1930's or the Civil Rights movement led by the Black Liberation movement of the 1960's. In these struggles the revolutionary vanguard lost hegemony over these movements to either the labor aristocracy or national reformists, and to the Democratic Party. Nevertheless, the greatest achievements of the working class is rooted in the Communist leadership, when the CPUSA was a part of the Communist International

led by Lenin and Stalin.

In contrast, with the ideological and organizational crisis in the CPUSA prior to, during and after the 1940's, and its degeneration into a reformist, liberal-labor and electoral party, the position of the US working class has declined. Close to 35% of the US working class was unionized in post WW2. Yet, with the degeneration of the CPUSA, the working class suffered defeats and reversals leading to a situation where less than 17% of the US working class is organized today.

Imperialism today is more aware than the left of how dangerous the working-class movement was becoming under the guidance of! the CPUSA and the Comintern. For this reason it is spearheading an ideological campaign to discredit the old revolutionary CPUSA in the eyes of our generation. But the task of discrediting the Comintern and the old CPUSA is not carried out by some frankly capitalist historian. This task is carried out by ex-members of the CPUSA, social-democrats, and Trotskyites. Various books on the CPUSA have been flooding the universities and progressive bookstores. They are saturated with the viewpoints of the opportunists, many of whom were purged from the CPUSA at one point or another. Books such as Theodore Draper's *The Roots of American Communism* and *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, Earl Browder's *Marx and America*, Joseph Starobin's *American Communism in Crisis—1943-1957*, Philip Jaffe's *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, Harvey Klehr's *The Heyday of American Communism—The Depression Decade*, Maurice Isserman's *Which Side Were You On?-The American Communist Party During the Second World War*, and Peggy Dennis' *The Auto-biography of an American Communist* are some examples. All these authors were either members or fellow travelers of the CPUSA. A common denominator of all these is their reliance on the falsification of Comintern history provided by the Trotskyites, the Social-democrats and revisionists. As well, if anything unites all these agents of imperialist distortion of Comintern history, it is that they all wish to convince any student of communist history that the collapse of the CPUSA is rooted not in the American opportunists, but with the subordination of the CPUSA to the USSR and, especially, Stalin.

It has recently become fashionable for many "leftists" to

pinpoint the Seventh Comintern Congress, Stalin and Dimitrov as the source of Browderism. After all, wasn't Browder considered the "Stalin of the US"? And wasn't Browder's uncritical support of Roosevelt in line with USSR foreign policy? Didn't Browder have a secret hotline to Dimitrov? Wasn't Browder's liquidation of the CPUSA in 1944 only following upon the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943?

It is unfortunate that the new generation of revolutionary fighters of the 1960's and 1970's lacked any real knowledge of the Comintern's experience. Instead, many of us who dedicated our lives to the reconstruction of a Communist Party in the US proceeded blindly. We knew many learned-by-rote quotations from Chairman Mao or Che or Nkrumah, but we had practically no real grasp of Marxism-Leninism. Disgusted with CPUSA's reformism and class collaboration, many young revolutionaries ignored the revolutionary history and battles of the CPUSA and the US working class. We proceeded to build many petty-bourgeois based and self-proclaimed "communist vanguard parties" with no real history or roots in the working class, with no real understanding of the roots of opportunism internationally and with no real knowledge of the experiences of the greatest of all international organizations of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples, the Communist International. The new Marxist-Leninist, party building movement of the 60's and 70's failed to reconstruct a vanguard working class party in the US, or anywhere else in the world. As a result, a period of "freedom of criticism" has reigned, in which many new leftists who never really grasped Marxism-Leninism are succumbing to the imperialist, revisionist, and Trotskyite interpretations of revolutionary history. The task of party building still remains the central task of all revolutionary communists today. Many of us know this. Yet, in the study of past revolutionary traditions, many are rapidly accepting the imperialist, revisionist, social-democratic and Trotskyite interpretations of the Comintern and CPUSA's history. Many of us are not even aware of the two previous attempts to reconstruct a revolutionary communist party in the US prior to the 70's, and the causes of their failure.

Today, therefore, we have the repetition of revisionist, Trotskyite, anarcho-syndicalist theories, strategies, and tactics

that have plagued the workers' movement historically. *WHAT IS TO BE DONE?* To begin with, we must liquidate the practices of the past period. We must strive to overcome past squabbles and sectarian practices, and strive to bring together the Marxist-Leninist forces. We must take up a serious plan of work to lay the foundations to reconstruct a vanguard revolutionary party of the US proletariat. We must learn and assimilate the positive revolutionary experiences of the US and international revolutionary movements.

II. The Foundations of the Communist Party U.S.A., 1919-1929

In outlining the history of the Bolshevik Party of the USSR, Lenin and Stalin generally identified three periods of its activities. The first period was described as the period of its foundation, from the early 1900's until 1904-05, when the Bolshevik Party concentrated chiefly upon itself. The second period is described as the period of the fight for the masses in the struggle for socialism, from 1905 to the October Revolution of 1917. The third period was identified as the period of the struggle for the construction of socialism, beginning with 1917 and onward.

Following this method of outline, the first period of the foundation of the CPUSA can be generally traced from its founding in September 1919 until 1929, when the main opportunist factions which prevented the Bolshevization of the CP were finally purged. In the book, *The Communist International in America—Documents from 1925-33*, the introduction entitled, "Brief Outline of the History of the Communist Party USA and the Struggle for Bolshevization", presents a fairly brief and correct appraisal of the foundation of the CPUSA from 1919 to 1929.

The CPUSA had its origins in the left wing of the Socialist-Party, the left wing of the Industrial Workers of the World, the Trade Union Educational League, and the left wing of the Black liberation movement. From its inception, factionalism and narrow sectarianism affected the founders of American communism. American Communism had its origins in the formation of two separate parties. One was the Communist

Labor Party, formed on August 31, made up about 10,000 American born workers. The other was the Communist Party, formed on September 1, made up of about 58,000 immigrant workers organized along the lines of language federations. These two parties, which supported the Bolshevik Revolution and the Communist International, had an influence over a total of 68,000 workers.

The Comintern and the Struggle Against Factionalism in American Communism

The new, young communist movement was riddled with anarcho-syndicalist tendencies, chauvinism, narrow-nationalism, and social-democratic traditions. Its roots were in the proletariat, but mainly in light industry. The Comintern, also-born in 1919, pursuing its proletarian internationalist responsibilities, intervened in the struggles of the new US communist movement. The Comintern refused to recognize the two parties because of the sectarianism and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies in both parties, the chauvinist deviations on the part of the CLP and the narrow nationalist deviations on the part of the CP. Internationally, Lenin waged a struggle against "left" wing communism in this new communist movement world-wide. By April, 1921, both parties united into the Communist Party of America (unified), with Charles Ruthenberg as its general secretary. The CPA became the American section of the Comintern. However, the party was still far from being a Bolshevik party. It was riddled with factions, social-democratic structures, lack of revolutionary theory, and various chauvinist and narrow nationalist deviations. As well, to make matters worse, with the formation of the CPA, came the baptism of the bourgeois state in the form of the reactionary Palmer raids, which forced the newly formed CPA to go underground. Its membership was reduced from 68,000 to 10,000. By the end of 1921 the CPA became an underground party. A legal open party was formed, called the Workers' Party of America. Throughout this period, the Comintern provided advice on how to proceed. But the struggle to Bolshevize was continuously pigeonholed and sabotaged due to the opportunist and unprincipled factional

struggles within the party. Nevertheless, with the pressure of the Comintern, the CPA began to rectify some of its dual unionist tendencies, began to pay attention to the Black liberation struggle, began to address united front tactics in the form of the farmer-labor party movement, etc.

In 1925, the CI again intervened in the factional struggles of the CPA/WPA. The struggle was degenerating very rapidly, to the point that two leaderships existed: one in the underground CPA and the other in the legal WPA. As a result of CI intervention, and in light of the existence of a partial stabilization of capitalism, both parties again merged and formed the Workers' Communist Party. By 1926, the WCP was leading thousands of workers in strikes in textile, cotton mills, mines. It led labor defense battles, fights for equal rights for Black workers, and organized anti-imperialist campaigns in support of liberation movements and in defense of the USSR.

The Sixth Comintern Congress and the Struggle Against *American Exceptionalism* and National Chauvinism

The Sixth Comintern Congress, held in 1928, issued a world Program, Constitution, and Strategy and Tactics for the world communist movement. At the Sixth Congress, a report was issued on the international situation and the tasks confronting the workers and oppressed movements throughout the world. The CI showed how the period of capitalist stabilization was coming to an end, and that the world was heading towards a deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the inevitability of world war. In the face of this situation, the CI reviewed the danger of right opportunism spearheaded by social-democracy and the Bukharinites in the international communist movement, and the secondary danger of "left" wing communism, spearheaded by "left" wing opposition forces, anarcho-syndicalists and utilized by the sect of Trotskyites. The Sixth Congress issued a call to fight the main danger of right opportunism and called on all the sections of the Comintern to Bolshevize and purge their ranks of right opportunism and Trotskyism.

Prior to, during, and immediately after the Sixth CI Con-

gress, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) paid particular attention to the factional struggle that was crippling the WCP. A special commission was formed to investigate and recommend solutions to the problems in the WCP. As well, the ECCI, on the advice of first Lenin and then Stalin, formed a special commission on the Back National Question, which also assisted the WCP in following a correct course on the Black question in the US. Harry Haywood was instrumental in the development of a correct approach on the Black question in the US, despite the opposition the Lovestone leadership of the WCP to the position of the Comintern, which upheld the right to self-determination of a Black Nation in the South of the US.

With the assistance of the Comintern, and of the direct intervention by J.V. Stalin, the WCP moved to once and for all resolve the internal problems in light of the 6th CI Congress resolutions. In the struggle to eradicate the factionalism wrecking the WCP, the opportunist theory of "American Exceptionalism" was revealed and unmasked. Both key factions, the majority led by Lovestone and Pepper, and the minority led by Foster, Bittleman and with the assistance of the Trotskyite James Cannon, were guilty of "American Exceptionalism".

The theory of "American Exceptionalism" raised the following: "a crisis of capitalism, but not of American capitalism; a swing of the masses to the left, but not in America; the necessity of accentuating the struggle against reformism, but not in America; a necessity for struggling against the right danger, but not in the American Communist Party. And yet, the present period, when the process of shaking the foundation of capitalist stabilization is going on, signifies for, the United States that it is being ever more closely involved in the general crisis, of the capitalism.... The crisis will shake also the foundation of the power of American imperialism.

"Under these conditions the, theory, of 'exceptionalism' is a reflection of the pressure of American capitalism and reformism which are endeavoring to create among the mass of workers an impression of absolute firmness and 'exceptional' might of American capital in spite of its growing crisis and to strengthen the tactic of class collaboration in spite of the accentuation of class contradictions."¹

Stalin stated in a speech addressed to the WCP: "I think the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America. And when a revolutionary crisis develops in America, that will be the beginning of the end of world capitalism as a whole. It is essential that the American Communist Party should be capable of meeting that historical moment fully prepared and of assuming the leadership of the impending class struggle in America. For that end the American Communist Party must be improved and Bolshevized...."²

This took place in March 1929. Were Stalin and the Comintern right? Objective events answered in the affirmative. By the fall of 1929, the great crash occurred, plunging the US and the entire capitalist world economy into the grave economic crisis which was to be the prelude to the second world war and the second round of world revolutions.

With CI intervention, this struggle was opened up to the rank and file of the WCP, resulting in the demotion, and eventual purge, of Lovestone and Pepper, the purge of James Cannon and the Trotskyite schemers, the development of a rectification campaign, and the formation of a new Central Committee whose task was to unify and lead the campaign for Bolshevization. A pamphlet was published in the US entitled, "On the Road to Bolshevization" (reprinted in CI in America). By the Seventh CP Convention in 1930, a new secretariat was reorganized, made up of W.W. Weinstone (organization secretary), William Z. Foster (trade union secretary). and Earl Browder (administrative secretary). The WCP became the Communist Party USA, ending the first period in the foundation of the CPUSA.

In accordance with the Sixth CI Congress resolutions, the resolutions in the pamphlet "On the Road to Bolshevization", and the CI resolutions on the Black National Question, the CPUSA embarked upon leading the rising upsurge of workers, toilers and the oppressed Black masses.

In the Comintern Resolutions, the ECCI also particularly called out white supremacy and national chauvinism as the cornerstone of U.S. imperialist ideology in maintaining its class rule. _An uncompromising struggle against white supremacy and national chauvinism was one of the key struggles that the CI instructed the, CPUSA to wage.

III. The C.P.U.S.A. and the Struggle for the Masses in the Fight for Socialism, 1930-1944

The international situation in the early 1930's proved the correctness of the analysis made at the Sixth CI Congress. The third post-WW1 period was indeed the deepening of the general crisis of imperialism, leading to the development of a leftward swing in the international working class, and the intensification of the national liberation struggles. The great crash in the fall of 1929 proved that America was not exempt from the world capitalist crisis. As well, the prediction that the imperialist powers would proceed toward an imperialist war for markets and territories was being proven correct. As early as 1931, Japanese militarism embarked upon a war of conquest of Asia, invading Manchuria and Northern China. The seeds of WW2 were already set in motion. In Europe, the finance capitalists in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, were financing the growing fascist movements, whose cardinal principle was the destruction of communism and the democratic movements of the oppressed peoples.

In the US, the struggle for Bolshevization of the CPUSA was beginning to bear fruit in the ability of the CPUSA to link up with the growing unemployed movement, the Black movement for self-determination and equal rights, and the growing strike wave and workers' movement for industrial unionism. The CPUSA was also participating in certain sections of the women's movement, particularly the Women's Charter movement. The following is briefly summed up in the introduction to the *CI in America*: "In the US the CPUSA led broad mass struggles, pursuing the 'class against class' tactics as outlined by the 6th CI Congress. The CP led many hunger strikes and demonstrations of the unemployed. On March 6th, 1930, the CP led the historic National Unemployment demonstrations, under the slogans 'Work or Wages' and 'Don't Starve, Fight'. Demonstrations took place in NY (110,000), Detroit (100,000), Chicago (50,000), Pittsburgh (50,000), Milwaukee (40,000), Philadelphia (30,000), Cleveland (25,000) and Youngstown (20,000). Unemployment insurance

and social welfare reforms were by-products of this movement. In 1930 a National Unemployment Council was formed which led the mass hunger marches in 1931 and 1932.

"The TUUL led mass strikes in steel, coal, textile, auto, needle trades, cotton pickers, etc. Such famous strikes as the San Francisco General Strike in 1934 were led and participated in by the CP. By 1935 the CIO was formed, representing a step forward in the industrial labor movement. The CP also led struggles of farmers and war veterans.

"In the Black national movement, the CP began to concentrate activity in the Black Belt South. It published the *Southern Worker* as a special publication to guide the activity of the CPUSA in the oppressed Black Nation. The CP led an international campaign to free the nine Scottsboro Black youth who were framed on rape charges."³ The CP helped form first the American Negro Labor Council, and then by 1930, formed the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, which helped popularize the struggles for self-determination of the Black Nation. A powerful sharecroppers' movement was developed with CP leadership. The CP's campaign in defense of the Black masses in the US was heard throughout the entire world, including the USSR. In 1932, a huge demonstration of Soviet workers was held in Moscow with slogans and banners stating: "Free the Scottsboro Boys!", "Down with U.S. Imperialism!", "The Soviet Union- Friends of the Oppressed Blacks".⁴

In the 1932 elections, the CP participated in an electoral campaign under the slogan, "For a Soviet America", running Foster for president and James Ford for vice-president, the first time ever that a Black candidate ran on a presidential ticket in the US. The CP ticket received over 100,000 votes. While small compared to the 900,000 which the Socialist Party ticket rallied, the vote revealed an increase in influence by the CPUSA. As well, the vote did not reveal the growing influence that the CP was gaining in the workers' and toilers' movements.

While all these reflected the fruits of the campaign to Bolshevize the CP, the CP nevertheless had many problems and shortcomings. The tasks of Bolshevization outlined by the CI in 1929 proceeded very slowly and were often pigeonholed. There developed much infatuation with the growing mass

movement. The worship of spontaneity, the ideological root of all opportunism, was setting in. While thousands of workers were beginning to rally to the basic line of the CPUSA and the CL, the CP was unable to consolidate these gains ideologically and organizationally along Bolshevik lines.

Less than half of the 10,000 members of the CPUSA had roots in basic industries. Of those who were in industries, less than 10% were organized along the lines of factory nuclei, the basic cell of a Bolshevized Communist Party. Half of the nuclei that existed were paper nuclei, failing to function properly at the workplaces. Often, strikes led by the Trade Union Unity League were not properly prepared and lacked sufficient immediate partial demands. Many of the CP's workers refused to join or do work in the TUUL. In 1930, the ECCI again had to intervene in the CP and criticize its lack of Bolshevization and the growing tendency towards phrasemongering abstract slogans, trying to rally workers along what Stalin called "planetary" issues. In certain strike struggles, such as the textile strike in Lawrence, the CP was criticized by the CI for "isolating themselves by setting up parallel strike organs, isolated from the masses".⁵ The CP began to dogmatically implement the struggle against social-fascist leaders of the Socialist Party, and applied it in a sectarian manner, often against the rank-and-file workers of the SP. In 1931, both Piatnitsky and S. Lozovsky criticized the CPUSA at the 11th plenum of the ECCI for their abstract slogans, and views within the CP, which suggested that partial reforms were impossible under capitalism.⁶ The lack of Bolshevization was resulting in a problem of constant fluctuation of membership into and out of the CP. This lack of Bolshevization began to affect the social basis of the CP. Many unstable and petty bourgeois elements were allowed to enter the party. The CP failed to change its social-democratic structure (party branches organized only on the basis of regional, community, and electoral areas) to one organized according to Bolshevik policy, i.e., party branches based on factory nuclei. In 1932, an article appeared in the CL journal, *The Communist*, which reported that the move towards factory nuclei was not moving forward, but regressing.⁷ In 1933, an "Extraordinary Conference of the CPUSA" was held in which an open letter was again

issued to the membership regarding the lack of Bolshevization, the lack of proper criticism and self-criticism, and the continuation of sectarian practices. In November 1933, the ECCI again did a check-up on the implementation of tasks by the CPUSA and noted that there was still a lack of follow-up on tasks. Browder was criticized for phrase-mongering “self-criticism”, while in practice not fulfilling the tasks of Bolshevization.

The CP was indeed growing in a period of a spontaneous upsurge and a leftward swing in the working class and toiling masses. But, unfortunately, the CP was failing to grow along Bolshevik lines. This resistance to Bolshevization, and growth of the worship of spontaneity, would lay the foundation for the development of the Browderite right deviation, and eventual liquidation of the CPUSA.

The 13th Plenum of the ECCI, the Rise of Nazism, and the CPUSA

Fundamental changes were taking place internationally by 1933 which delayed the convening of the 7th Comintern Congress. New problems arose that needed to be resolved by all the Comintern parties. By 1933, the world economic crisis that was ransacking the capitalist world subsided, not with a boom, but with a prolonged depression. The imperialist drive for markets was aggressively being pursued by Japan, Italy, and in 1933, by Germany. Hitler in Germany came to power as a result of the bankrupt social-fascist policies of the social-democrats, who failed to unite with the Communists, and due to weaknesses and problems within the German Communist Party itself (one of the most important parties of the Comintern at this time). With the victory of Nazism, the German Communist Party was forced to go underground, with many of its heroic leaders, like Thaelmann, placed in jail to rot.

Hitlerite Germany, along with the other fascist powers, embarked on an active campaign to not only smash the USSR and the world communist movement, to colonize the oppressed nations and peoples, as in Africa, but also to conquer Europe and eventually the US. The Hitlerite fascists em-

barked on a barbaric plan of world conquest, in certain places restoring feudal and slave conditions. In the Pacific, the Japanese militarists had declared themselves to be the dominant power, seeking to conquer all races in that part of the world. As a result, Germany, Japan and Italy left the League of Nations to freely embark on their plan for world conquest.

The USSR, on the other hand, in view of these international events, joined the League of Nations and embarked upon an energetic peace policy, calling for collective security against aggressor nations. In the US, Franklin D. Roosevelt became the president and for the first time opened official relations with the USSR. While the basic features of the imperialist crisis were developing along the general lines that were foreseen at the 6th CI Congress, the new features of fascism were revealing new tendencies in the international situation, which Lenin had speculated could occur. In 1916, in addressing the character of wars internationally and refuting the "leftist" arguments of Rosa Luxemburg on the National question in the imperialist epoch, Lenin stated:

"Transformation of the present imperialist war of 1914-16 into a national war is highly improbable, for the class that represents *progressive* development is the proletariat which is objectively striving to transform it into a civil war against the bourgeoisie. Also this: there is no very considerable difference between the forces of the two coalitions and international finance capital has created a reactionary bourgeoisie everywhere. But such a transformation should *not* be proclaimed *impossible* if the *European* proletariat remains impotent, say, for twenty years; if the present war *ends* in victories like Napoleon's and in the subjugation of a number of viable national states; if the transition to socialism of non-European imperialism (primarily Japanese and American) is also held up for twenty years by a war between these two countries, for example, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. It would hurl Europe *back* several decades. That is improbable. But *not* impossible, for it is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong to regard the course of world history smooth and always in a forward direction, without occasional gigantic leaps back."⁸

By 1933, the world situation revealed new important con-

traditions which forced the Comintern to reassess policies and tactics. At the 13th plenum, fascism was described as the rule of the most reactionary and chauvinist sectors of finance capital, seeking to maintain its bourgeois dictatorship without the slightest semblance of bourgeois democracy, seeking to dupe the awakening, revolutionary masses with social demagoguery, with the objective of crushing any communist or democratic movements that posed an imminent danger to the bourgeoisie. But within the Comintern there were differences on how to assess fascism and its effect on the strategy and tactics of the Comintern sections.

In the CPUSA, very little was actually done to help resolve the proper orientation towards the struggle against fascism, imperialist war, etc. On the contrary, the CPUSA with Browder as its leader, often pursued "leftist" tactics in regard to united front tactics in the labor movement. In regard to the economic and political crisis in the US bourgeoisie, very little was done to assess tendencies towards fascism on the basis of a serious Marxist analysis.

Roosevelt's New Deal government was geared toward saving capitalism via a path of centralizing the power of capital, while granting reforms and concessions to the growing militant workers' movement. Roosevelt passed such reforms as the National Industrial Recovery Act, and later the Wagner Act (NLRA) which provided labor with some basic rights. But these laws were designed to contain the growing class struggle of the working class. They were reforms that the US bourgeoisie preferred to spend money on rather than run the risk of the class struggle erupting into revolutionary class battles (which were already on the rise). The Roosevelt reforms did seek to control the labor movement and promote class collaboration between labor and management. Internationally, Roosevelt broke with previous US foreign policy and officially opened relations with the USSR.

But, Browder, Foster and the CPUSA called Roosevelt's government a fascist government, and the NIRA a fascist program. In the struggle against the real social-fascist forces (so-called socialists whose policies coincided with the fascists, or pave the way for a growth of fascist influence) in the Socialist Party and the AFL, the mistake of labeling misguided

rank and file socialists as social-fascists had serious negative consequences. While the UP was growing and leading many struggles, it was still unable to really consolidate and go to the head of the growing spontaneous movements.

In this period, Sam Darcy, a CP leader in California, called for a critical support policy for the governorship election of the socialist Upton Sinclair. "At the Party convention in early April 1934, Darcy presented his plan to the Politburo. He was rudely rebuffed. Browder instructed him to expose and denounce Sinclair and, in the bargain, to run for governor of California himself." The *Western Worker*, a CP west-coast publication ran many stories calling Sinclair a fascist, social-fascist, a "better fascist than the President", i.e., Roosevelt. Sinclair nevertheless won a decisive victory. Browder then proceeded to criticize Sam Darcy for not exposing Sinclair sufficiently, sending Robert Minor to do the job of properly exposing Sinclair as "Hitler-like". Darcy's views were denounced in the CP's journal, the *Communist*. Darcy threatened to resign unless he was allowed to publish his views in the CP journal. But the Comintern representative in the US, Gerhart Eisler, supported Darcy, forcing Browder to retreat on his criticisms of Darcy.⁹ Later, in July, 1934, while the CP called Roosevelt's regime an imminent fascist regime, Stalin gave an interview with H.G. Wells which presented praise to some of Roosevelt's initiatives. Nevertheless, the Browderites continued with their "leftist" united front policies. It appears that it is due to Sam Darcy's pioneer views on the united front tactics against fascism that he later became one of the U.S. delegates to attend the 7th Comintern Congress.

The Seventh Comintern Congress and the CPUSA

In the summer of 1935, the 7th Comintern Congress met and reviewed the international situation and advanced a new tactical orientation to fight fascism and the imperialist war danger, and to implement the fight for the policy of peace, democracy and socialism, defense of the USSR, and in support of China and other national liberation movements.

At this juncture, the CI recorded that the deepening crisis

of world capitalism had already resulted in the development of a one-sided, imperialist war of expansion being waged by the fascist powers, while the US, Britain and France pursued a policy of appeasing the fascists, hoping that the fascist pursuit of conquest would proceed in the direction of the USSR. Japan moved to conquer Manchuria and China, Italy moved to take over Ethiopia and Northern Africa and" the oil rich regions which are so strategic for the oiling of war machinery, and German Nazism busied itself crushing all the left and democratic traditions in Germany, and moved to occupy various Eastern European countries. In Spain, the fascist axis powers were arming the Franco fascists. In France, the fascist movement around Petain was gaining strength. At this point in world history, it became quite clear that Hitler's program for world conquest was being realized, that the Japanese quest for the creation of a Japanese Empire in the entire Pacific and Asia was proceeding, and that the cornerstone of unity' of the barbaric plan was the crushing of the USSR, and the world communist and democratic movements.

The 7th Comintern Congress reviewed the activities of all the parties since the 6th Comintern Congress and addressed many of the shortcomings of all the Comintern policies, as well as recognizing many of the great advances made. But most important, the 7th CI Congress established the new tactical orientation of the united front and popular front tactics against fascism and war. In summarizing the basic orientation of the 7th congress, Dimitrov stated:"...Ours has been a Congress of a new *tactical* orientation for the Communist International". It was resolved at the 7th CI Congress that... 'The establishment of the united front of the working class is the decisive link in the preparation of the working people for the forthcoming great battles of the second round of proletarian revolution. Only the welding of the proletariat into a single mass political army will ensure its victory in the struggle against fascism and the rule of capital, for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet power."¹⁰

In Dimitrov's report on fascism he states the following regarding the US.:

"A. The United States of America.

"Let us take, for example, so important a country in the

capitalist world as the USA. There millions of people have been set into motion by the crisis. The program for the recovery of capitalism has collapsed. Vast masses are beginning to abandon the bourgeois parties and are at present at the cross-roads.

“Embryo American fascism is trying to direct the disillusionment and discontent of these masses into reactionary fascist channel. It is a peculiarity of the development of American fascism that at the present stage it comes forward principally as an ‘un-American’ tendency imported from abroad. In contradistinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the Constitution and ‘American democracy’. It does not as yet represent a directly menacing force. But if it succeeds in penetrating to the wide masses who have become disillusioned with the old bourgeois parties it may become a serious menace in the very near future.

“And what would the victory of fascism in the US involve? For the mass of working people it would, of course, involve the unprecedented strengthening of the regime of exploitation and the destruction of the working-class movement. And what would be the international significance of this victory of fascism? As we know, the US is not Hungary, or Finland, or Bulgaria, or Latvia. The victory of fascism in the US would vitally change the whole international situation.

“Under these circumstances, can the American proletariat content itself with organizing only its class-conscious vanguard, which is prepared to follow the revolutionary path? No.

“It is perfectly obvious that the interests of the American proletariat demand that all its forces dissociate themselves from the capitalist parties without delay. It must find in good time ways and suitable forms to prevent fascism from winning over the wide mass of discontented working people. And here it must be said that under American conditions the creation of a mass party of working people, a “*Workers’ and Farmers’ Party*” might serve as such a suitable form. *Such a party would be a specific form of the mass People’s Front in America and should be put in opposition to the parties of the trusts and the*

banks, and likewise to growing fascism. Such a party, of course, will be *neither Socialist nor Communist*. But it *must be* an anti-fascist party and *must not be an anti-Communist Party*. The program of this party must be directed against the banks, trusts and monopolies, against the principal enemies of the people, who are "gambling on the woes of the latter. Such a party will justify its name only if it defends the urgent demands of the working class; only if it fights for genuine social legislation, for unemployment insurance; only if it fights for land for the white and black sharecroppers and for their liberation from debt burdens; only if it tries to secure the cancellation of the farmers' indebtedness; only if it fights for equal status for Negroes; only if it defends the demands of the war veterans and the interests of members of the liberal professions, small businessmen and artisans. And so on.

"It goes without saying that such a party will fight for the election of its own candidates to local government, to the state legislatures, to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"Our comrades in the US acted rightly in taking the initiative for the creation of such a party. But they still have to take effective measures in order to make the creation of such a party the cause of the masses themselves. The question of forming a 'Workers' and Farmers' Party,' and its program, should be discussed at mass meetings of the people. We should develop the most widespread movement for the creation of such a party, and take the lead in it. In no case must the initiative of organizing the party be allowed to pass to elements desirous of utilizing the discontent of the millions who have become disillusioned in both the bourgeois parties, Democratic and Republican, in order to create a 'third party' in the US, as an anti-Communist party, a party directed against the revolutionary movement."¹¹

Browder, Foster, Sam Darcy, and Gil Green were the key US rep representatives from the US delegation attending the 7th Comintern Congress. Darcy remained in Moscow as the US representative to the ECCI after the 7th Congress. In Browder's response to the reports at the 7th Comintern, very little concrete analysis was made regarding the_ existence of fascist trends in the US. After a few very vague words of "fascist

dangers" in the US, Browder concluded his report stating that "What is taking place in the United States is a race between fascism and communism for the leadership of the oppressed, starving, desperate masses of the toiling population." But no real analysis was made as to who the fascists were. This is in part due to the fact that Browder and the CP did not even understand what fascism was, labelling Roosevelt as a fascist, at a time when the USSR was approaching Roosevelt to pursue a policy of collective non-aggression pacts.

In Browder's report to the 7th Congress, he over exaggerated the positive developments of the CPUSA in the struggle of the masses, and makes no real mention of the sectarian policies. continuation of social-democratic practices and resistance to Bolshevization which still persisted in the CP. He also liquidated the revolutionary content of the growing Black liberation movement (i.e., never mentioning the struggle to uphold the right to self-determination of the Black nation). Yet, in 1935 in the U.S., J. Peters had to issue a pamphlet entitled, "CP Manual on Organization," which again spelled out tasks for Bolshevization. Instead, Browder issued a criticism to the Comintern parties (which was accepted) for the neglect of work among the youth. Apparently, the area of united front tactics in die American youth movement was one of the more positive areas of the CPUSA in this period. But, basically, Browder presented a report which glossed over the continuing Menshevism of the CPUSA, and its lack of a proper analysis of the contradictions in the US bourgeoisie and their effects on foreign policy. Gil Green essentially parroted many of Browder's views, concentrating his presentation on how well the CP's youth work was proceeding. Poster and Sam Darcy (members of the CC of the CPUSA who opposed many of Browder's policies) said very little.

After hearing the little said in regard to the analysis of fascism by the US delegates, Dimitrov again had to intervene later on at the congress, and he got right to the point of the topic that needed to be discussed by the American Communists, so little of which was actually mentioned. Dimitrov states:

"Comrade Dutt was right in his contention that there has been a tendency among us to contemplate fascism in general,

without taking into account the specific features -of the fascist movement in the various countries, erroneously classifying all reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie as fascism and going as far as calling the entire non-Communist camp fascist. The struggle against fascism was not strengthened but rather weakened in consequence.

“Even now we still have survivals of a stereotyped approach to the question of fascism. When some comrades assert that Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’ represents an even clearer and more pronounced form of the development of the bourgeoisie toward fascism than the ‘National Government’ in Great Britain, for example, is this not a manifestation of such a stereotyped approach to the question? One must be very partial to hackneyed schemes not to see that beginnings of real fascism in the US behind the hypocritical outpourings of these circles in defense of the democratic rights of the American citizen, is tantamount to misleading the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy.”¹²

It became apparent at the 7th Congress that the CPUSA delegation lacked a Marxist-Leninist grasp of what fascism was, and how the US government was responding to this phenomenon. As a result, the CPUSA, despite many of its advances in the growing, spontaneous movement, was misleading the US working class, first with many “leftist” and sectarian mistakes, and after the 7th CI, as we will see, in a rightist deviation.

The Growth of the Right Deviation in the CPUSA

By 1936, the analysis of the 7th Congress regarding the fascist war danger was being proven correct. In addition to Japanese aggression in the Pacific and Asia, and Italian expansion in Northern Africa, the Germans and Italians signed an Anti-Comintern Pact, and backed, and supplied the Fascist gangs of Franco to overthrow the popular government in Spain, while Germany proceeded to take over various small Eastern European countries, thereby proceeding to encircle the USSR with reactionary, fascist regimes.

The USSR actively fought for the realization of a peace

policy of collective security at the League of Nations, while the British,, French and US side-stepped and sabotaged these efforts, continuing an appeasement policy towards the fascists. The US-Anglo-French imperialists still had their hopes pinned on the possibility of the fascists directing their war of aggression not at Europe, but at the USSR. Internally, the USSR had to deal with the development of a fifth column, counter-revolutionary movement, headed by the Trotskyites and Bukharinites, which threatened to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. This counter-revolutionary trend was looked at positively by the fascists and imperialists, as a sign of disorder and of the potential collapse of the USSR, the fatherland of the international working class, at a time when the fascists threatened to invade it from outside. Fortunately, the great conspiracy against the USSR was successfully routed during the great purge trials of the 30's. This resulted in the strengthening of the USSR, making it the only country in the world where a fascist movement was unable to gain strength.

In the US, the CPUSA proceeded to implement some of the resolutions from the 7th Comintern Congress. The CP participated, in the American League against War and Fascism. It began its work more in the AFL as well as in the growing CIO. It participated in united front mass organizations of youth, women, and in the Black movement (such as in the formation of the National Negro Congress, chaired by A. Philip Randolph). With the institution of united front policies, the influence of the CP began to grow tremendously.

The struggles of the unemployed forced the Roosevelt government to issue social security and unemployment benefits. The strike waves in the mid-30's gave rise to the right to strike and collective bargaining. While all these reforms were forced from the capitalist class, like all reforms, they also played a role in containing the class struggle. Roosevelt, rather than being viewed as a reactionary or fascist, was more and more viewed as the popular candidate of labor and the oppressed. Yet, it was the CPUSA's leadership of many militant mass demonstrations that forced the Roosevelt government to give in to the demands of the masses, even if on a reformist basis designed by the Roosevelt regime to cool out the growing class struggle.

One of the greatest acts of Proletarian Internationalism on the part of the CPUSA in this period was its mobilization of US workers and masses to fight in Spain against the Franco fascists and in support of the Spanish Loyalists. The CPUSA rallied over 15,000 of its members and supporters to fight in the anti-fascist struggles of the International Brigades. This mobilization by the CPUSA contrasted greatly with the official policy of the Roosevelt government, which refused to send arms and troops in defense of Spanish democracy and against the encroachments of world fascism. While the German and Italian fascists actively supported Franco's gangs, only the Comintern rallied active support for the defense of the anti-fascist popular regime. The appeasement policies of Western imperialism only whetted the appetite of the fascist powers.

Although these are some of the best examples of internationalism on the part of the US working class, the CP's policies continued to be riddled with opportunist deviations. Despite Dimitrov's comments regarding the necessity of avoiding "hackneyed stereotypes" in analyzing fascism in the US, Browder lagged in correctly implementing the resolutions, and proceeded to implement some of Dimitrov's recommendations in a dogmatic approach.

In preparation for the 1936 presidential elections in the US, the CP campaigned at first for the creation of a Farmer-Labor Party. In February 1936, Browder stated the following in a radio speech: "The New Deal, which aroused such hopes among the people, is in ruins and bankrupted.... Tweedledum and Tweedledee are still twins, even when one wears the cold mask of Hoover and the other the professional smile of Roosevelt."¹³ Between February and May, 1936, the CP attempted to put together a Farmer-Labor party with the various anti-fascist mass organizations, the CIO and others in labor, with the Socialist Party, etc. But they all declined, preferring to back Roosevelt rather than form a third party that would be unable to win, and would take votes away from Roosevelt, allowing the Republican- Landon. to win.

At this juncture, the Republican Landon represented those sectors of monopoly capital which were openly pursuing a pro-fascist, appeasement policy. They rallied those sec-

tors of the bourgeoisie, like the Hearsts, Fords, Liberty League, and other Klan and fascist groupings, which were in growing contradiction to Roosevelt's New Deal. This sector believed that Roosevelt was conceding too many reforms to the working-class movement. They also advocated a position of isolationism and keeping the US out of any European war. This isolationist stance was merely a cover for their belief that the fascist countries were only preparing for an invasion of the USSR, an aim which they shared with the fascists.

Concerned that the CP might pursue a wrong tactical policy in regard to the 1936 elections, Sam Darcy, who remained in Moscow after the 7th CI Congress, spoke to the Comintern leaders, Manuilsky and Dimitrov, regarding the US situation. Darcy believed that given the weakness of the Farmer-Labor Party movement, and attempts by the CP to initiate a Farmer-Labor Party without a real mass support in the '36 elections, the election could potentially result in the defeat of Roosevelt. An election victory for Landon would greatly affect the development of a pro-fascist government in the US. As a result, both Browder and Foster visited Moscow to discuss the situation with Dimitrov, Manuilsky and Darcy.¹⁴ It was agreed that in-view of the weakness of the Farmer-Labor Party movement, the weakness in the CP's ability to mobilize an anti-fascist party, and the international significance of this particular election, that the CPUSA should make its principal target the Republican Landon ticket. While the CPUSA ran its own candidates, objectively, the CPUSA pursued a policy of critical support for Roosevelt.

From this point on, the CP campaigned less for a Farmer-Labor Party movement, and went into the 1936 election with its own CP ticket, while concentrating all its propaganda mainly against the Republican ticket. Objectively, the CP's policy was critical support for Roosevelt. To rally support against the fascists in Europe, the CP sought to rally the masses around the following slogan: "Keep America Out of the War by Keeping War out of the World".

At the Ninth CP Convention, held in the summer of 1936, Browder rallied the CP to this new tactical policy. By the November, '36 elections, virtually no criticism was raised of Roosevelt, and only Landon was criticized by the Com-

munists. Needless to say, Roosevelt won the election.

Interestingly, the Socialist Party, which previously was notorious for its liquidation of socialist propaganda and defense of bourgeois democracy, changed positions in the 1936 elections, and joined with the American Trotskyites in denouncing both bourgeois parties, and stating that the 1936 election was an election of socialism vs. capitalism. At this juncture, the SP essentially collapsed, losing thousands of its former supporters, while the CP influence grew to close to 200,000.

From then on, however, Browder led the CP in a direction of abandoning communist propaganda and agitational work, proceeding in a direction of blindly tailing Roosevelt, and directing the activities of the CP more towards the electoral arena. In 1937, Roosevelt made a speech in which he publicly endorsed the need for collective security in the growing European conflict, a policy which the USSR had been seeking since 1933. Browder used this event to further the right opportunist path of complete support to Roosevelt and liquidation of the independent character of the CPUSA. By mid-April, 1937, Browder called upon the Central Committee to change tactics from the Popular Front to a "Democratic Front". Browder's reaction to the lack of receptiveness to the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party was to lead the communists into the Democratic Party and become a "left"-wing pressure group within the growing Roosevelt coalition in the Democratic Party.

The 10th CP Convention – Browderite Revisionism Blossoms

At the 10th CP Convention in 1938, the CP changed its tactical policy of building a popular front against fascism, and instead called (*j* the new orientation, the "Democratic Front" for peace and against fascism. This change signified a policy of abandoning many of the organizations and positions that the CP had achieved, under the guise of "anti-fascism", "democracy" and "national unity". In 1934, Browder had advanced the national-chauvinist slogan that "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism". This view revealed

Browder's bourgeois democratic illusions regarding the struggle for socialism in the US. This slogan was criticized shortly thereafter by the CP and withdrawn. But by 1938, this viewpoint resurfaced. At the 10th CP convention, the Browderite leadership proceeded to consolidate the growing right-wing deviation in the CPUSA. In the constitution of the CP, Browder changed the Preamble to read that-Marxism-Leninism was the evolution of Jeffersonianism. The CP was now to place George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln on the same plane as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Democracy lost all its class content, confusing proletarian democracy and socialism with bourgeois democracy. These changes reflected the revisionist changes in the ideological foundations of the CPUSA. Cadres were no longer studying Marxist-Leninist theory. Instead, the writings of the American bourgeois revolutionists were studied, along with the "concrete application of Marxism to US conditions" as elaborated by the so-called "Stalin of the US", Earl Browder (sic!).

The CP's liquidation of popular front tactics in favor of class collaborationist Democratic Front tactics took place at a world juncture in which the British, French, and the US exposed their bourgeois interests in sham anti-fascist declarations. In March, 1938, the British and French, supported generally by the US, met with Hitler and issued the infamous Munich Agreement. In this agreement, the imperialist democracies agreed not to send arms and intervene against fascist aggression in Spain, and allowed the fascists to maintain the status quo, i.e., the fascist occupation of various parts of the world. The agreement further appeased the fascist bloc to permit it to pursue its war of expansion without resistance from the French, British, and US. The Munich Agreement was a blow to the attempts by democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist forces, which were pursuing diplomatic efforts to prevent a fascist world war via the path of collective security and the signing of non-aggression pacts.

While Roosevelt was not in total agreement with the Munich Pact, the US government nevertheless pursued an appeasement policy, failed to support the Spanish Loyalists fighting Franco, and resisted the USSR's attempts at the

peace policy of collective security.

Meanwhile, in the US, Browder led the CPUSA to abandon the Popular Front strategy, to the point that the movement against the appeasement policies being pursued by the US was conducted in a very inconsistent manner, and eventually, virtually eliminated. The CP became more concerned with the reform "successes" that it was achieving as participants in the Democratic Front.

Browder and the CP praised Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy towards Latin America. Roosevelt, with the intent of consolidating US imperialist control over Latin America, tried to erase the aggressive image of Yankee imperialism resulting from the policies of the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt introduced various liberal policies in relations with Latin America. He abolished the Platt Amendment in Cuba that had given the US the right to intervene in Cuba. He abolished similar aggressive treaties with Mexico. He withdrew military troops from Haiti (of course, after Haiti was in the hands of a pro-US dictator!). He abandoned in words the right of the US to interfere in Panama and the Dominican Republic. While Roosevelt's policies assisted the development of anti-fascist movements in Latin America, by identifying and exposing many of the pro-fascist supporters, by no means was Yankee imperialism dead in Latin America. On the contrary, the US shifted more to policies of semicolonial control of Latin America. The US supported reactionary, fascist regimes, when it was clear that they were pro-US. The Good Neighbor Policy certainly did not grant Puerto Rico its right to independence. On the contrary, in front of the nationalist independence movement in Puerto Rico, Roosevelt's regime conducted the infamous Ponce Massacre in 1937. Many Puerto Rican *independentistas* were massacred during a peaceful march and rally. But Browder propagated the illusion that Yankee imperialism was losing its aggressive claws with Roosevelt at the helm.

Between 1938 and 1939, Browder led the CP into completely disarming itself in front of the Roosevelt bourgeois dictatorship. In the mid and late 1930's, John L. Lewis, the leader of the Mine Workers Union and the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO), invited the CP to join the CIO and help build the industrial union movement. Lewis offered

the CP positions in the leadership of the CIO. CP members became paid organizers for the CIO. In many of the CIO unions, the CP controlled the newspapers, various locals, etc. In this period, the CP grew tremendously in the growing industrial unions. The CP cadres, due to their training in the Trade Union Unity League, were among the best labor organizers in the US. John L. Lewis, often called a social-fascist in the 1920's, was now considered one of the greatest labor leaders in the US. A policy of uncritical support for Lewis developed under Browder. By 1939, Browder saw no need for continuing the Bolshevik concept of "make every factory our fortress" through the creation of factory nuclei. Nor did he consider very important or applicable to American conditions the need to capture the trade unions and guide their activities via the creation of communist fractions in the mass organizations and trade unions.

To Browder, the "New Deal" face of America did not warrant the CP having the Bolshevik apparatus that the Comintern and the Bolsheviks within the CP had been trying to create since 1919. Factory nuclei and fractions were abolished by 1939. The illegal and Bolshevik apparatus ceased to exist. Browder rebuilt the CP along the lines of electoral branches, community branches, and all other features of social-democratic structure. Despite the growing penetration of the CP in the labor movement, the CP failed to consolidate these gains along Bolshevik lines.

The CP work in the Black liberation movement also degenerated with Browder at the helm. While in the early 1930's, when a struggle against white chauvinism was raised, the CP led international campaigns exposing the plight of Blacks in the US, as well as struggles for self-determination of the Black Nation in the US, by the latter 1930's many of these gains were rolled-back and liquidated.

By the mid-1930's, the growing and powerful Sharecropper's Union was liquidated. It had a membership of 10,000 workers, organized with the assistance of many Black Communists like Harry Haywood. It was presumed that its independent character was no longer necessary with the existence of the CIO. After Haywood volunteered to fight with the Spanish Loyalists against the Franco fascists in the latter

1930's, the Browderites, including Browder's token, James Ford, proceeded to undermine the CP's work in the South, and abandoned the struggle to uphold the right to self-determination of the Black Nation. Presumably, with Roosevelt, the plight of Blacks would be relieved. By 1939, the CP's main southern newspaper, the *Southern Worker*, was liquidated.

After Haywood's return from Spain, due to a campaign of false rumors and provocations designed to discredit Haywood, led by cadres loyal to Browder, Haywood was demoted from the Politburo and Central Committee of the CPUSA with no official explanation. From then on, Haywood was essentially black-listed within the CPUSA, until the latter part of the 1940's. This helped clear the ground for the liquidation of the fight for self-determination of the Black Nation.

In 1935, Chicano communists and workers in the Southwest held a conference and issued a declaration calling upon the workers' movement to also uphold the right to self-determination of the Chicano Nation in the Southwest of the US. Browder would have nothing of the sort. Browder proceeded quickly to crush any attempts by Chicano communists to raise a struggle for Chicano liberation.

While Foster, Sam Darcy, William Dunne and others in the CP opposed many of the Browderite policies, they often were unable to rally others. They themselves conciliated and capitulated to many of the right-wing revisionist policies of Browder. By the end of 1939, the CP was disarmed ideologically and organizationally: The right deviation, which Dimitrov at the 7th Comintern Congress had warned against, had taken control of the CPUSA.

The USSR-German Non-Aggression Pact and the "Leftist" CPUSA

In March 1939, Spain was finally overcome by the Fascists. At the 18th Congress of the CPSU, Stalin issued a report on the international situation in which he assessed the developments of the imperialist, fascist war of conquest. The Munich Agreement paved the way for the further encouragement of the fascists. Stalin exposed how the appeasement policies of the British, French and the US, were designed to push

the fascist axis powers towards an invasion of the USSR. Stalin showed that despite the anti-Comintern declarations of the fascist axis, they were actually proceeding in their barbaric dream of conquering Europe, Asia, and then the world.

Despite all the betrayals and sham peace talks by the British, French, and the US, Stalin still struggled for the anti-fascist, peace policy of collective security. But the Anglo-French-American imperialists were bent on sabotaging the peace and anti-fascist efforts of the USSR and the Comintern. While Hitler proceeded to invade more European countries in the Spring and Summer of 1939, creating a fascist encirclement of the USSR (with the assistance of Japanese militarism in the Far East), the democratic imperialist powers stalled negotiations for the realization of a genuine peace policy of collective security.

Hitler, quite aware that the USSR was the only country actively preparing to battle the fascists, and knowing that he had no fifth column in the USSR, for they had been routed out with the purge of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite gangs, proceeded to break the agreements he had made with the democratic imperialist governments. He opted first to conquer the weak European imperialist countries with active fifth columns, and then later, with the military arsenal and productive forces of Europe under his command, take on the USSR.

In August of 1939, Hitler proposed a non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR. The USSR was confronted with the following two choices:

“either to accept for purposes of self-defense, Germany’s proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact and thereby ensure to the Soviet Union a prolongation of peace for a certain period of time which might be used by the Soviet State to prepare better its forces for resistance to a possible attack on the part of the aggressor;

“or to reject Germany’s proposal for a non-aggression pact and thereby permit the war provocateurs from the camp of the Western Powers immediately to involve the Soviet Union in armed conflict with Germany at a time when the situation was utterly unfavorable to the Soviet Union, and when it was completely isolated.”¹⁵

Obviously, in the face of this very complicated world sit-

uation, the USSR signed the non-aggression pact with Germany, allowing it a period of respite. Germany proceeded with its fascist plans of world conquest, proclaimed in the early 1920's. Meanwhile, the USSR moved to strengthen its borders, to sign non-aggression pacts with Eastern European countries, and secured positions in Finland (which had a fascist regime) which could have been strategic strongholds from which the imperialists could have invaded the USSR.

The US, France, and Britain, considered this an act of betrayal. Apparently, it was fine for them to make agreements with the fascists in the Munich Agreement, designed to push the fascists into war with the USSR, but it was not fine for the USSR to make similar non-aggression treaties to forestall an imperialist scheme to overthrow the socialist fatherland of the international working class.

Unfortunately, the agreement led not only to slanders against the USSR on the part of the imperialists, social-democrats and Trotskyites, but it also led to great ideological confusion and deviations within the Communist International.

Internationally, Molotov (and Dimitrov) responded mainly to the slanders, appeasement policies and plots of the democratic imperialist countries, and concentrated less on continuing the exposure of the fascist program of the axis powers which were never abandoned. The start of WW2 in the fall of 1939 between the fascist axis and France and Britain, was characterized solely as an inter-imperialist war.

In the US, the CPUSA was unable to find its Marxist-Leninist bearings, due to the fact that Browder had done such a good job of abandoning Marxism, liquidated all the Bolshevik features of the CP, etc. Hence, overnight the CP changed positions regarding the character of WW2 and the role of Roosevelt. Prior to the fall of 1939, the CPUSA had been uncritically supporting Roosevelt, opposing the isolationist and neutralist positions of the Republican Party, the pro-fascist forces, and the appeasers of fascism. The isolationist forces in the US wanted Germany to invade the USSR, and did not want the US to enter a European war against Germany. This viewpoint also had a "left" cover, as expressed principally by the Trotskyites, who considered the USSR to be a degenerate bourgeois, socialist state. The Trotskyites opposed the popular

front tactics against fascism. They viewed WW2 as solely an inter-imperialist war, including the role of the USSR.

In the Autumn of 1939, Browder and the CPUSA, announced that WW2 was an-imperialist war, and that the US working class should transform the imperialist war into a "peace policy"! While Browder at first resisted the idea of going back to a policy of criticizing Roosevelt, he eventually flip-flopped positions, supposedly due to hot-line communications he had with Dimitrov (a claim which only Browder can prove. This has never been established by anyone else in Comintern history.) In any case, Browder roamed the country stating that WW2 was an inter-imperialist war, a "continuation of the last World War, with no difference in essence or principle"¹⁶ Suddenly, the fascist character of the Axis powers was no longer important. On Sept. 13, 1939, Browder declared: "What we have to deal with is an imperialist war in which the rulers of both sides are equally guilty; it is not a war waged for the destruction of fascism, but is carried on to extend and perpetuate imperialist control over the world. The character of this war in no respect can be said to differ from that of the late world war."¹⁷ By May, 1940, Browder states: "Let us be under no illusions. The War Party of the American bourgeoisie is on the march, and Roosevelt stands at its head."¹⁸

This change in position led to a crisis in the CPUSA, whereupon many of the anti-fascist mass organizations, and the CP's work in many unions, etc. collapsed and disintegrated. The CPUSA now found itself in a similar position to the right-wing and pro-fascist forces who pursued an isolationist policy in regard to the European war. For a while, the CP flirted with the idea of uniting with the isolationist, Republican candidate in the 1940 elections, but in the form of a third party, and against Roosevelt. But it abandoned this idea because Wendel Wilkie refused to abandon the Republican Party. The CP participated in the 1940 presidential elections by itself, with a Browder-Ford ticket. But while the CPUSA characterized the war as an inter-imperialist war, it did not call for a civil war slogan, but rather, for an isolationist, peace situation. Browder did make attempts to explain the Soviet-German pact, but ended up exposing the imperialist democ-

racies more and more, and the fascist Axis powers less, and less.

In this period, Roosevelt allowed the reactionary Dies Committee to initiate a Red Scare, red-baiting communists all over the country. Given Browder's good job at liquidating the Bolshevik apparatus, many communists began to be purged and jailed. Browder was thrown in jail for false identity charges arising from passports used in the 1920's. The Congress passed the Voorhis Act, which prohibited any political party from having international affiliations. Hence, the CP was forced to withdraw its membership from the Communist International. The CP withdrew from the CI in the most despicable manner, claiming that it never really had serious affiliations with the CI. As well, the CP capitulated to the Smith Act, which called for the expulsion and repression of immigrants. As a result, Browder led the CP in purging over 15% of its immigrant communist membership. The CP's membership dropped from about 85,000 to 55,000. The CP attempted to create an underground apparatus, but it was wretchedly amateurish. The political police often laughed at the "illegal" apparatus of the CP in this period. The anti-Bolshevik policies of Browder allowed the CP to be ideologically unequipped to deal with the complex international situation, and the Menshevik party structure allowed the CP to be attacked by the Roosevelt "New Deal" democracy. With the CP's turn to the policy of anti-Roosevelt and "pro-socialism", many of its positions in the Democratic Front were lost to the Democratic Party, the Socialist party, etc.

The Fascist Invasion of the USSR and the Defeat of World Fascism

Between 1931 and June 1941, the fascist powers were able to accomplish the occupation of all of Europe, except for Britain and the USSR. In the Far East, the fascists occupied Northern China, Manchuria, and were expanding more and more into the Pacific. In the oil rich Middle East and North Africa region, the fascists had control. In Latin America, the fascists were gaining ground in countries like Argentina. The fascists were particularly skillful in manipulating many na-

tional liberation movements by promoting the nationalist, bourgeois-led sectors in the national liberation movements. The Japanese, for example, called on Blacks in the US to join them, as people of color, against the racist Americans. Franco's Spain often called on the Nationalist movements in Latin America to rebel against the Yankee imperialists, and bring back the Franco Spanish Empire to Latin America. By 1941, the fascist plan to conquer the world was in full gear.

In June, 1941, Hitler proceeded to conquer Britain. The British government, while fighting back, was preparing to abandon London and move to Canada. What saved the British government from complete collapse was Hitler's fear and concern that the USSR was building its fronts, undermining various fascist-occupied Eastern European countries. At this juncture, Hitler decided to postpone the invasion of Britain, and-Withtlie capture of European industry (with the exception of Britain) invade the USSR and bring it under the grip of fascism.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the USSR. Hitler, and the entire capitalist world believed that the USSR would fall to the fascist armies quite rapidly. The contrary was true. Stalin led the USSR in the most heroic war of liberation in this century, accomplishing great military victories against the fascists. The battle of Stalingrad, in 1942-43 resulted in the first defeat that the fascist powers received. From that time on, the USSR moved to the offensive, forcing the fascist powers to retreat. It was the USSR that spearheaded the entire struggle for liberation from the fascist powers. In this period, May 1943, the Communist International was dissolved, in large part as a concession to enhance the development of an anti-fascist coalition. (It should be noted as well that the various sections of the CI, especially in Europe, for all practical purposes were unable to meet due to the fascist occupation of Europe and many colonial countries where CPs existed.) The imperialist democratic powers did very little to assist the USSR in its fight against fascism. But by the latter part of 1943, the imperialist democracies were forced to enter into serious negotiations with the USSR, in the fight against fascism. The imperialists sought to avoid a world situation. where most of Europe would have been liberated with the

assistance of the USSR. Their policy of appeasing the fascists for the purpose of smashing the USSR had failed. Now, the US and Britain had to enter the war in order to ensure that liberated Europe would remain in the capitalist world, and not be drawn into the growing socialist camp. By December, 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to meet with Stalin at Teheran, Iran, to plan the opening of a second front against the fascists. Secretly, the imperialist democracies had tried to get a secret, separate peace with Germany, in order to then try to weaken the positions of the USSR. But this plot also failed. Hence, the plans for D-Day were made at Teheran, as well as discussions regarding post-world war Europe. The defeat of the fascists resulted in saving the USSR, the creation of People's Democracies in Europe, and the acceleration of national liberation struggles, spearheaded by the Chinese liberation movement led by the Communist Party of China. World War Two resulted in the creation of a large Socialist camp.

In contrast to the views of Molotov, Dimitrov and Browder, however, the position of Stalin regarding the overall character of WW2 differed from the official position adopted by the ECCI and various officials in the USSR. Stalin stated: "...unlike the First World War, the Second World War against the Axis states from the very outset assumed the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one the aim of which was also the restoration of democratic liberties."¹⁹ The defeat of world fascism was principally due to the anti-fascist policies of the USSR. The war could have been ended much earlier. But unfortunately, due to the maneuvers of the imperialist democracies, the appeasement policies and anti-Soviet plots allowed for the delay in the complete destruction of Nazism. Fortunately, Stalin, the USSR and the revolutionary forces throughout the world were able to save the world from fascism.

Browder's *Teheran* Speech and the Liquidation of the CPUSA

For the CPUSA, however, world events were viewed from a completely anti-Marxist, and liberal bourgeois world

view. In 1942, Roosevelt released Browder from jail. Browder then led the CPUSA to once again cement an alliance with Roosevelt.

Between 1942 and 1944, Earl Browder led the CPUSA to adopt political positions completely subordinating the CP to Roosevelt's coalition. Roosevelt "the fascist" from 1933-36, the "great democrat and peace advocate" from 1936-39, the "warmonger" from 1939-41, was now the greatest American that ever lived. In his book entitled, "Victory – And After", written in 1942, Browder proceeded to describe events in the world according to his profound views. Browder called for complete national unity in the US against the fascist axis powers. Browder went so far as to deny the need for labor to be represented, on a coalition basis, in the Roosevelt cabinet. Browder developed views that it was not necessary for labor to have an independent policy because Roosevelt represented the national interests of the entire country.

With the Japanese invasion of Hawaii shortly after the Nazi invasion of the USSR, the US finally entered the war in December, 1941. But the US government delayed the opening of a second front in Europe to defeat the fascists and assist the USSR's war of defense against Germany. But rather than have the CP organize demonstrations energetically in defense of the USSR, Browder prioritized the activities of the CPUSA along the lines of fighting for a "centralized war economy" in the US to help the war effort. Browder pushed the CP to endorse a "no strike pledge" during the war, and after. In his "Victory – And After", Browder began to once again revive the theory of "American Exceptionalism" and "organized capitalism". After the Teheran meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in December, 1943, Browder expanded on his revisionist theories and developed his second great revisionist work that led to the complete liquidation of the CPUSA. This was his 'Teheran' speech. In January, 1944, Browder presented to the CC of the CPUSA his consolidated views of the world, the US, and the eventual path to socialism in the US.

Browder distorted the military diplomacy being conducted between the USSR and the imperialist democracies. Instead, Browder developed a view that post-WW2 was to be a

world of peaceful competition between the USSR and the USA, where one "organized" world market would eventually be formed involving socialist USSR and the organized capitalism of the USA.

But in order to realize this objective, the American communists had to ensure that there would be complete national unity in the US. Browder began to advise the US imperialists how to economically rebuild and organize the world after the defeat of world fascism. 4: Browder recommended that the US follow a decolonization policy, by exporting capital to Asia, Latin America and Africa. The national liberation struggles would then cease their armed paths, and the US would assist in bringing peace even to the colonial world. Browder explained how the export of US capital to Africa would not only help crush armed struggles and "violence" in the world, but would also prevent another great economic crash from occurring. Browder envisioned an organized capitalist world without cyclical crisis.

Browder envisioned a US foreign policy which would encourage the collapse of colonialism. Further, Browder, before the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan of the late '40's, called on the US imperialists to rebuild Europe. Browder even provided sample facts and figures on how the export of US capital abroad would lead to the raising of the quality of life for the American working class, making class struggle obsolete in the US. Browder called on all adherents of socialism to stop propagating immediate socialist aims after the war, and to help build a capitalist America that would assist world peace and reconstruction. Browder explained to the CP that American capitalism was the most "advanced" but not the most "matured", and needed the patience and assistance of the communists to help make American capitalism more "mature". Apparently, via this Browderite conception of world unity, the monopoly capitalists would eventually realize that the monopolized, centralized government would be better with a socialist government, rather than a capitalist government. But this eventuality would be a phenomenon to occur in the far-distant future. Meanwhile, Communists had to fight for national unity, work within the two-party system, and become examples of national unity and peace. This

Browderite policy of complete capitulation to US imperialism was worse than Loyestone's version of "American exceptionalism". Browder referred to Roosevelt as the leader of the strongest nation in the world, with a holy mission to reconstruct the world.²⁰

With this perspective, the Communists called for Roosevelt to run for a fourth term, the first and only time in the history of the US. But in the "spirit of national unity", the Communists also supported Truman (the senator supported by most of the reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie) to be the vice-president with Roosevelt, over Henry Wallace, the liberal vice-president who later led the Progressive third-party movement. As well, in show of complete national unity and class collaboration, it wasn't enough that the CP endorsed a policy of "no strikes", participation in the two-party system, liquidation of the Black liberation struggle, advocacy of strong capitalist America to rebuild the world after WW2, but the CPUSA must also cease to exist as an independent political party of the working class. So, in May, 1944, at the 12th CP Convention, the CPUSA was liquidated and became the Communist Political Association of the US. The entire central committee of the CPUSA, except for Foster and Sam Darcy, supported Browder.

In the South, the CP was completely liquidated. Not even the CPA existed. Only "political education associations". When A. Philip Randolph organized a massive demonstration of Black workers and masses forcing Roosevelt to grant concessions to the Black movement, Browder saw this as a potential threat to "national unity".

Foster wrote a letter criticizing Browder's post-WW2 views of the US, but said nothing in regard to Browder's policy during WW2 and accepted the liquidation of the CPUSA into the CPA. Being in a minority position, Foster capitulated to the CC's directive that his letter be withdrawn. They ordered Foster not to let his views be known to the CP membership. Foster complied with the Browderites. Darcy, on the other hand, persisted in fighting Browder's revisionism. After the creation of the CPA, Foster was instructed to lead a committee which purged the only person who supported him on the CC, Sam Darcy.

By 1944, Browder succeeded in completely dismantling the CP. Membership criteria were broadened. Membership to the CPA was like belonging to a left-wing YMCA. Any “progressive” and patriotic American who could reconcile George Washington with Karl Marx could have been a member of the CPA. The second period of party building in the struggle to rally the masses in the fight for socialism was abandoned.

In actuality, Browder’s CPUSA/CPA assisted Roosevelt’s delays in opening the second front and in prolonging WW2. Rather than pursue an anti-fascist struggle, and a class struggle to force the US to open up the second front, to come to the defense of the USSR and in support of the national liberation struggles, Browder concentrated on consolidating the CPUSA along his revisionist path, calling for a centralized US war economy.

It was not the 7th Comintern Congress, nor the liquidation of the Comintern, that inspired Browder to pursue his revisionist line. There are those who say that Browder was following the path of the dissolution of the Comintern. If so, then why didn’t any other CP follow Browder’s path? There is nothing in Stalin’s writings, or in Dimitrov’s writings that insinuates agreement with liquidationism. Certainly, there were those in other parties who agreed with Browder’s path, but those were revisionists. But it is slander and a distortion of the history of the Comintern to propagate that Browder’s liquidationism is rooted in Stalin’s views and the 7th Comintern Congress.

Browderism is rooted in the capitulation to “American Exceptionalism” and the persistence of white supremacist, national chauvinism. *Browderism was made in the USA*. Any attempt to deflect this and pin it on the greatest fighters of the international proletariat is only to cover one’s own sympathies and capitulation to revisionism or Trotskyism. It was the bourgeois views, Menshevik and social-democratic traditions, and corruption from the bourgeois privileges that affected the CPUSA. The strong traditions of pragmatism, anti-theory, and the “American Exceptionalist” traditions which were never truly purged from the ranks of the CP, were the material basis for the degeneration of the CPUSA. This is a very important line of demarcation that Revolutionary Com-

munists today must make in order to proceed in our tasks.

Even in its best periods, the CP revealed weaknesses in fully grasping events in the international situation, and its effects on strategy and tactics in the US class struggle. From its inception, the CP revealed an inability to understand the role of the US in both the imperialist world economy, and in the world revolutionary class battles. As a result, without a Comintern to check them during the war, the Browderites proceeded to do what all the other revisionist, Trotskyite and imperialist agents were unable to do — liquidate the best vanguard organization that the US proletariat had ever produced.

IV. The Battle to Reconstruct a Genuine Communist Party in the U.S., 1944-?¹

Though Foster waged a battle with Browder, he capitulated to the Browderite liquidation of the CPUSA. Instead, Browder used Foster to purge Sam Darcy in 1944, the only other person on the CC who consistently fought Browder. In the Spring of 1945, Jacques Duclos, a French CP leader, reported on his investigations of the CPA and publicly condemned the liquidation of the CPUSA and some of Browder's views in his "Teheran" statement. This open letter became the rallying point for opposition forces to fight Browder and reconstruct the CPUSA. Foster then became the leading CPUSA member leading the attack against Browder. When Foster and the ex-Browderites in the CPA reconstituted the CPUSA in July, 1945, Sam Darcy was not allowed to enter the party.

Foster ended up getting rid of the *person* Browder, but maintained the Browderite leadership of the CPUSA. Foster, rather than split with the Browderite politics and open discussion up to the entire rank and file, proceeded to constrain the growing criticisms within the party, and to particularly

1 In the introduction to the book, *Cl in America*, there is a brief review of the attempts to reconstruct a CP that took place following Browder's liquidation of the Party. The following is not an in-depth study of that period.

attack the left-wing cadres.

While Foster did reconstitute the CP, he did so on a centrist ideological basis and Menshevik organizational basis. The CP did not fight to restore the program for socialism, instead advocated an electoral path to socialism. The CP made a pretense of upholding self-determination for the Black Nation due to the persistence of many of the Black cadres, led by Harry Haywood's interventions in the CP. However, by the 15 and 16th CP Conventions, the followers of Eugene Dennis and John Gates, rallying the large number of Communist Bundists (i.e., Jewish socialists with nationalist and Zionist viewpoints) hiding within the CP, proceeded to liquidate the right to self-determination of the Black Nation, while calling on the CP to recognize the right to existence of the reactionary, settler state of Israel upon Palestinian soil. The "Browderites without Browder", as Fergus McKean (the Canadian Communist purged by Tim Buck's Canadian gang of revisionists) referred to this new generation of opportunists, began to use Stalin's writings to only attack his positions. For example, the revisionist theoretician, A.G. Magil, wrote a book in 1950 stating that the Zionist state of Israel had the right to exist based on Stalin's definition of nationhood! The CPUSA, already falling into the grip of Zionist elements within it, was rallied to this reactionary position while proceeding to liquidate the struggle for self-determination of a Black Nation in the US.²

Since the liquidation of the CPUSA, there have been three periods in which revolutionary communist forces attempted to rebuild it along revolutionary lines.

The first attempt occurred simultaneously with the Fosterite reconstruction of the CPUSA. In the CP, many of the old veteran leaders opposed Browder and the conciliationist and centrist forces who were capitulating to Browderism. Aside from Sam Darcy, there was Harrison George, William F.

² The author recommends the reader to examine the introduction-to the book, "Liberation for the Black Nation" which reviews how the Fosterite, Dennis and Gates leadership attacked Harry Haywood and the correct Communist line on the Black National question, while capitulating to Zionist political lines. It examines much of the CPUSA's past practices on the Black National question.

Dunne, Vern Smith and others. Formations like the Turning Point-Communist League (1947-1962) attempted to rally Revolutionary Communists to reconstruct the CP but failed. Unfortunately, within the opposition also existed semi-Trotskyite viewpoints, which blunted and further confused the situation. These forces, however, did not just “defect” from the Party, as Foster wrote in his book, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*. They were purged by Foster. Rather than make the main blow against revisionism and centrism, Foster got rid of a few die-hard Browderites and opened a campaign against the left forces in the CPUSA who were called “disgruntled sectarians” or “dogmatic Stalinists”. However, this period, from 1944-1948 ended with the defeat and isolation of the “dogmatic Stalinists”. But struggle within the CPUSA continued.

By 1948-49, the Dennis-Gates group, former loyal followers of Browder, began to attack many of Foster’s positions within the party. Foster fought for views which raised that imperialist war was inevitable, and possibly imminent, and that fascism was right around the corner, voicing the view internationally of persons like Molotov in the USSR.

Although Foster and Molotov may have raised these views, Stalin differed with them. Stalin recognized the inevitability of imperialist war. But he argued against those alarmist and provocative views which claimed that war between the USSR and the imperialist world was imminent, and that fascism was imminent. On the other hand, revisionists like Malenkov, and later Khrushchev, utilized Stalin’s views on peace to promote a pacifist line, denying the inevitability of imperialist wars, and advocated the path of peaceful transition to socialism. The Dennis-Gates faction in the CPUSA united with this revisionist viewpoint internationally.

The Dennis-Gates faction, by then the majority of the CC, countered Foster’s views, claiming that the US was entering into a period of prolonged economic growth and prosperity. Once again, “American Exceptionalism” was raising its ugly head. Actually, it had never been really routed out with the purge of Browder.

By 1951, the British CP completely abandoned the revolutionary path to socialism, propagating that it could arrive at

socialism via the parliamentary path. Foster attempted to polemicize against this view, but was ordered not to do so, especially since prominent leaders in the CPSU (like Malenkov) and in the Cominform agreed with the views of the British CP. Some right-wing leaders, like Malenkov, advised Joseph Starobin, a CP leader, to inform the CPUSA not to make a big fuss over some of Stalin's comments that imperialist war was inevitable so long as imperialism existed. As well, they recommended that the CPUSA follow such models as the British CP. This support from the growing revisionist wing of the CPSU encouraged the Dennis-Gates faction to restore many of Browder's revisionist lines, with the exception that the CP continued to exist. At one point, Gates even raised the possibility of liquidating the CP, but retreated when Foster attacked it as an example of the world-discredited "Browderism".

With the victory of Khrushchevite revisionism at the 20th CPSU Convention, and the purge of Molotov's faction, revisionism world-wide went on an offensive to purge its ranks of any remnants of Revolutionary Communists and even conciliators to the left. In the CP, Foster and many of his followers were being isolated and expelled. A struggle against "dogmatic Stalinism" ensued. The revisionists proceeded once again to consolidate complete power in the CPUSA. Foster's centrist leadership was unable to save the CPUSA and restore its revolutionary path. By the 16th CP Convention, Foster, in a minority, was able to stay within the party and barely got reelected to the CC.

The second attempt to reconstruct a genuine CP occurred with the purge or resignation of many Black and Puerto Rican cadres, and cadres formerly in Foster's faction, in the 1956-58 period. Many of these, especially in the NY area, formed what became known as the Provisional Organizing Committee to reconstruct a Communist Party. Shortly after this period, Foster went to live the remainder of his life in the USSR. As to the P.O.C., it had a short lifespan, disintegrating due to the sectarian practices and lack of ideological unity within this grouping. But many individuals from the P.O.C., like Harry Haywood, would later join in the third attempt to reconstruct a Communist Party.

The third attempt is the one with which many of us are most familiar. The new and young Marxist-Leninist party building movement of the late 1960's and 1970's was a by-product of the revolutionary upsurge among the oppressed nationality movements and the anti-war student movements. Much of this movement was not connected with the old Communist movement. It was what many called the "new left". Ideologically, this movement gravitated to some Marxist-Leninist teachings. But it was often accompanied with all sorts of opportunist and petty-bourgeois theories. Due to the militancy of the Cultural Revolution occurring in China, and Mao's Opposition to the Russian social-imperialists, Maoism blossomed tremendously among this new generation of revolutionaries. But so did many other petty-bourgeois socialist currents (e.g., Che, Nkruma, Trotskyism, etc.). While the 60's did produce a large party building movement, it was generally isolated from the working class. It was mainly the oppressed nationality sectors which had the greatest base in the working class. Yet, still, the communist structures were not based at the workplaces. Many leaders claimed to be "Marxist-Leninist". While many new revolutionaries were introduced to Marxism-Leninism, most never really studied nor grasped scientific socialism. This movement produced at least 7 parties, of which only 4 still exist today. Yet none of these were or are vanguard workers' parties. They are small sects with very little influence, if any, in the working class.

The fact is that the third attempt to build a Communist Party in the US has failed. But this past period has produced many Revolutionary Communists (and there exist still a few Communist organizations), which are still dedicating their activities to contribute to the task of Party building in the US. Ideological, political and organizational differences still divide us. But the potential to work together on the basis of a defense of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, summing up our and past experiences, and struggling on principled and non-sectarian basis towards the formulation of a proper party building plan, still exists. The Internationalist Party Building spirit still exists. We must find the proper ways on how to move forward in the present conditions.

Some Problems Confronting Revolutionary Communists Today

Today there is a growing list of books reviewing the history of American communism for the purpose of discrediting communism and propagating the view that Bolshevism and revolutionary communism cannot succeed in the US. It seeks to discredit the past revolutionary traditions in the US. Revolutionary Communists have a responsibility to learn from the history not only of the Russian working class and the struggles internationally, but also our own working class. It is unfortunate that the revolutionary movement of the 1960's and 1970's failed to produce a working-class vanguard party. But we must be clear that the blame for this does not lie with Stalin, nor with the US multinational working class. Quite the contrary. The failure of the last decades resides in the dominance of revisionism and opportunism which resulted from the greatest tragedy of the international working class, the victory of revisionism over Bolshevism, and the restoration of capitalist relations in the USSR.

This act created not only world-wide confusion and pessimism in the ranks of the international proletariat, but also created the conditions that allowed the disintegration of the socialist world market, and its reintegration into the capitalist world market. This goal was one that Malenkov sought in his Speech at the 19th CP Convention. The reintegration of the socialist camp into the capitalist camp has actually led to the restoration of capitalist relations in the USSR. Obviously, such a phenomenon allowed for a "detente", a respite for the world imperialist system.

In the 1960's, while revolutionary upsurges were taking place in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and among oppressed peoples, like the Vietnam War and the Black liberation movement inside the US, the world capitalist system was, nevertheless, still enjoying a partial stabilization of capitalism. In the US, this coupled with the dominance of US imperialism in the world due to the Marshall Plan of the 1940's, allowed the US bourgeoisie to get crumbs from its superprofits to corrupt and bribe the privileged sectors of the US workers' movement, while pursuing an internal policy of

purging the labor movement of its communist organizers. In front of this capitalist offensive, the CP capitulated and once again abandoned its independent character. In the US, the Black Liberation movement, alongside a growing Chicano liberation movement, and movements of other oppressed nationalities, inspired the anti-war movement, and the rise of a new left movement. The "new left", however, was largely isolated from the workers' movement. While being introduced to Marxism-Leninism, it suffered from eclecticism, and from a pragmatic or dogmatic approach towards the application of revolutionary theory to the conditions in the US. As well, the police infiltrations and opportunist sabotage of many revolutionary organizations played an instrumental role in the destruction of the party building movement of the 1970's.

. Today, those Revolutionary Communists who are by-products of the last decade's struggles have a great responsibility to learn from the revolutionary experiences of the Communist International and the CPUSA. We must be able to separate the good from the bad not only in the CPUSA's experiences, but also in the various attempts at party building since the Browderite liquidation of the CPUSA.

But most important, Revolutionary Communists today must struggle for unity on an ideological and organizational basis. We must take a clear stance in regard to the role that the Comintern played historically. We must grasp the Leninist theory of revolution in the present epoch of imperialism. We must develop a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of US imperialism, and its relationship to the world imperialist system, and its counter-revolutionary role worldwide. We must wage a conscious struggle against all the manifestations of "American Exceptionalism" and national chauvinism. We must develop a grasp of the basic foundations of Leninism. We must be clear on what type of party it is that we must create a *Leninist Party*. And we must ensure that the central task of constructing this vanguard workers' party be a task of the advanced workers themselves, and not the project of self-proclaimed "communist vanguards". In our struggle for Marxist-Leninist unity, we must also sink roots in the working class. It is time that we not only strive to interject

communist ideas in the working class, but that we too learn from the workers' experience of struggle, organization, and the need for a disciplined corps of fighters. We have had too many of these self-proclaimed "vanguard parties" in our short life-time.

We are living in a period in which the general crisis is deepening once again. It is a period when the working class is beginning to question its allegiance to the Democratic Party. While it is true that the workers' movement has yet to move in the direction of calling for its own independent party, not to mention a Bolshevik Party, such a revolutionary workers' movement will never develop if the present-day existing Revolutionary Communists fail to address this most urgent task of our day.

Today, the signs of a reawakening workers' movement have even been recognized by the AFL-CIO. They issued a "plan" in February, 1985 (what's commonly called the "AFL-CIO Report") to ensure that they maintain control of the inevitable workers' movement. Yet the Revolutionary Communists, many of whom are so fond of criticizing all existing left movements and the labor aristocracy, have yet to put forth a conscious plan of action to penetrate this growing workers' movement, while proceeding in a clear and conscious plan to lay the foundations for a new Bolshevik Party in the US. Many good Revolutionary Communists have capitulated to the ideological confusion and the swamp of revisionism and Trotskyism, thereby neglecting the central task of communists today. While it is good that many of us are involved in local work, it is often very narrow and has tended toward economism and reformism. Others may be in nationwide or regional communist organizations. Many rich experiences have been gained in these efforts. But many resist joining such formations due to the persistence of differences and unresolved problems from the past party building efforts. Without a plan to proceed, we Revolutionary Communists will contribute to the history of opportunism, whereby we will fail to make use of the growing class and national contradictions that will produce a new wave of spontaneous struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities.

It is urgent that Revolutionary Communists, who can

minimally agree on the positive contributions of Lenin, Stalin and the Comintern, on the positive contributions of the past CPUSA, on the revisionist betrayal of the CPUSA and the need to reconstruct a *Leninist Party*, based in the working class, and on the need to rally with Proletarian Internationalists world-wide, begin to come together and develop a dialogue with the aim of reviving the Internationalist Party Building Spirit that is so much needed today.

If there is anything that we can learn from the history of the revolutionary workers' movement internationally is that the policy of Proletarian Internationalism assisted the development of revolutionary movements in individual countries. Hopefully, we can unite today in assessing the history of the Comintern and the positive and negative features of the old CPUSA. Hopefully, this can be the beginning of a path by Revolutionary Communists to collaborate more with each other in order to lay the foundations of a plan for Party building in the US and unite with Revolutionary Communists forces internationally. Do we dare set aside our shallow, sectarian notions, often based on poor grasps of Marxism-Leninism and a lack of knowledge of the history of US and world Communism, and strive to find common grounds of unity in order for the Marxist-Leninist forces to move forward? Many of us hope so. But we must strive to make it happen. Let's go for it!

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