

Foster's Letter to the Members of The National Committee

(written by Comrade Wm. Z. Foster on January 20, 1944)

Dear Comrades:

In Comrade Browder's report to the recent meeting of the National Committee, which was adopted as our Party's policy, there are, in my opinion, a number of serious errors, which must be corrected. After listening to Comrade Browder's report, of which I had previously seen only some parts, I placed my name on the speakers' list to reply to the proposals that he had made. However, several Polburo members urged that I should not make the speech, arguing that it would cause confusion in the Party and that further Polburo discussions would clarify the situation. So I refrained from voicing my objections at the time, proposing instead to take them up in the P. B. As I consider Comrade Browder's errors to be of an important nature, I feel myself duty bound to express my opinions to the National Committee.

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

In his Bridgeport speech, Comrade Browder said that "Old formulas and old prejudices are going to be of no use whatever to us as guides to find our way in the new world." But this must not cause us to lose sight of some of the most basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

It seems to me that Comrade Browder's rather rosy outlook for capitalism is based upon two errors. The first of these is an underestimation of the deepening of the crisis of world capitalism caused by the war. When questioned directly in P. B. discussion, Comrade Browder agreed that capitalism has been seriously weakened by the war, but his report would tend to give the opposite implication. The impression is left that capitalism has somehow been rejuvenated and is now entering into a new period of expansion and growth. Characteristically, he says that there is general agreement that there is "no valid reason why the same (American, W. Z. F.) economy, including agriculture, should not produce at approximately the same level (as during the war, W. Z. F.) and that no plan is worth considering that proceeds from any other basis." Contrary to this picture of a flourishing, easily recovering capitalism, I would say, the reality is a badly weakened world capitalist system, whose weakness will also be felt in postwar United States. The problems of reconstruction, in this country and especially in devastated Europe, will be gigantic and, in the long run, insoluble under capitalism. This is not to say, however, that there may not be a temporary postwar economic boom in some countries and possibly also an increase in the productive forces. It does assert, however, that the gravity of the

postwar reconstruction will not admit of any such easy solution as Comrade Browder seems to imply.

The second basic error in Comrade Browder's report is the idea that the main body of American finance capital is now or can be incorporated into the national unity necessary to carry out the decisions of the Teheran Conference in a democratic and progressive spirit. It is true that

fact is, as I shall develop at length later, the great body of American finance capital is following a line contrary to a democratic and progressive interpretation of Teheran, and in all probability will continue to do so.

The only way a national unity could be made with the main forces of American finance capital, and this is most emphatically true of the postwar period, would be upon a basis incom-

ter. He says further that he would put no more curbs on the monopolists than they themselves see the need for, which would indeed be an ideal situation for the monopolists.

Comrade Browder's misconception as to the progressive role of monopoly capital in the postwar period is further indicated by his playing down the initiative of the workers in formulating proposed governmental economic

of Teheran, we have to rally the great popular masses of the peoples and to resist the forces of big capital now, during the war, and that, also, we will have to curb their power drastically in the postwar period. This policy is a fundamental condition for success of Teheran and all it means to the world. When Roosevelt and Wallace single out the monopolists for attack, as they often do, they are sounding not only a popular, but also a correct note.

Call for CPA National Convention July 26

To all Members, Clubs and Committees of the CPA:

To all State and District Conventions:

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In accordance with Art. 7, Sec. 7 of the CPA Constitution the National Committee voted on June 20 to convene a special National Convention of the CPA in New York City on July 26, 27 and 28, 1945.

The purpose of this special convention is to act upon the political line and immediate tasks confronting the CPA; to review the present work and responsibility of the National Board and National Committee, collectively and individually; and to elect a National Committee of the CPA.

The National Committee is submitting to the membership for further discussion the Draft Resolution of the National Board as amended by the National Committee. The National Committee also established a committee of 13 members, to make a political examination of the leading cadres and a preliminary review of the responsibilities of the present leadership, and to make recommendations to this convention for strengthening and refreshing the national leadership.

Insofar as the number of out-of-town delegates is limited by our compliance with the ODT travel restrictions, the basis of representation shall be one delegate for every 700 members or major fraction thereof on our books as of June 1, 1945, from every district.

Delegates to this National Convention shall be elected by specially called State Conventions (except for special arrangements on the Pacific Coast), and shall have been members of the organization for at least one year prior to their election. These State Conventions shall be composed of delegates elected by the membership from each club. The basis of representation to the State Convention shall be set by each State Committee.

All members in good standing, according to the Constitution (dues paid for second quarter), are eligible to be elected delegates and to participate in the election of delegates.

An assessment of \$1 for those members who pay \$3 quarterly dues and 50 cents for those paying \$1 quarterly dues is necessary to defray the convention expenses.

For the National Committee,
WILLIAM Z. FOSTER,
EUGENE DENNIS,
JOHN WILLIAMSON.

Comrade Browder sometimes makes modest estimates of the extent of the sections of monopoly capital that he hopes will go along in the democratic camp in fulfilling the decisions of Teheran in their international and national implications. He says, for example, that "Such an approach is correct even if it should turn out that we find no allies there." But obviously he is making policy calling for new relations between two whole classes, the working class and the capitalist class. That he is calculating upon the bulk of finance capital being won for the proposals he outlined is clear from many indications, including the great stress he lays upon the symbol of Browder shaking hands with Morgan and by the fact that he foresees no serious opposition by big capital in "the long term of years" of peaceful collaboration which he sees ahead.

This great optimism as to the progressive stand of big business in backing the war and in working out the reconstruction problems is quite unfounded. The enforcement of the Teheran decisions, both in their national and international aspects, demands the broadest possible national unity, and in this national unity there must be workers, farmers, professionals, small businessmen and all of the capitalist elements who will loyally support the program. But to assume that such capitalists, even if we should include the Willkie supporters, constitute the decisive sections of finance capital, or can be extended to include them, is to harbor a dangerous illusion. The

patible with a democratic realization of Teheran. Such a national unity would be necessarily one under the hegemony of big capital, and in the long run it would fail in realizing the line laid down at the Teheran Conference. The plain fact, and we must never lose sight of it, is that American big capital cannot be depended upon to cooperate with the workers and other classes in carrying out the decisions of Teheran, much less lead the nation in doing so.

The error of Comrade Browder is precisely the false assumption that they can be so depended upon. He thinks (Bridgeport speech) that the big capitalists fall within the scope of "the intelligent people of the world, the united moral forces of Britain, America and the Soviet Union," who are fighting for a new and better world. Contradicting his own correct statement in his report that the working people are the main base of the Teheran supporters, he makes various proposals that appear to go in the direction of expecting a progressive lead from the monopolists. This is indicated, for example, by his praise of the postwar program of the National Association of Manufacturers, and by his looking hopefully to the big capitalists to bring forward plans for doubling the workers' wages in the postwar period. It is also shown by his agreement with the NAM that in the question of foreign trade "the government should go no further in this direction than the export-capitalists themselves demand," which would put the monopolists in full control of this vital mat-

ter. He says further that he would put no more curbs on the monopolists than they themselves see the need for, which would indeed be an ideal situation for the monopolists. Comrade Browder's misconception as to the progressive role of monopoly capital in the postwar period is further indicated by his playing down the initiative of the workers in formulating proposed governmental economic policies and his looking for programs rather to the big employers, "who must find the solution in order to keep their plants in operation." There are also his flat acceptance of the two-party system, his indefiniteness as to what forces constitute reaction in the United States, his understress on the national election struggle, and his curt dismissal of the whole question of Socialism. Characteristic of Comrade Browder's new conception of the progressive character, if not the actual leading role of monopoly capital, is the way he states the method of arriving at a national economic program, putting the capitalists first and the workers second. He says such a program must "rouse a minimum of opposition, from at least the two most decisive groups: First, the businessmen, industrial and finance capitalists and their managers, who have effective direction of the nation's economy; and second, the working classes, organized labor and the farmer." This is putting the cart before the horse.

The danger in this whole point of view is that, in our eagerness to secure support for Teheran, we may walk into the trap of trying to cooperate with the enemies of Teheran, or even of falling under their influence. Trailing after the big bourgeoisie is the historic error of social-democracy, and we must be vigilantly on guard against it. Our task, instead of pursuing illusory plans of creating a national unity to include the body of monopoly capital, is, therefore, to understand that in order to realize the plans and hopes

American monopoly capital and the Teheran decisions

Among the major objectives established by the Teheran decisions are (a) the development of all-out coalition warfare for complete victory over the enemy; (b) an orientation toward an eventual democratic world organization of peoples to maintain international peace and order; (c) an implied enfoldment of an elementary economic program with which to meet the terrific problems of postwar reconstruction. In carrying out these objectives, ample experience and plain realism teach us that American finance capital is a very reluctant cooperator indeed with the bulk of the American people, not to speak of its being their progressive leader.

Take first the matter of an all-out military policy. In this respect American monopoly capital has indeed given anything but a patriotic lead thus far or a convincing promise for the future. The patriotic lead, on the contrary, has come, and will continue to come from the national unity elements grouped mainly around the Roosevelt forces. So far as the bulk of finance capital is concerned, starting out with a prewar record of appeasement, it has, all through the war, followed a course of rank profiteering and often outright sabotage of both the domestic and foreign phases of the nation's war program, especially the former. While these elements do not want the United States to lose the war, they are certainly very poor defenders of the policy of unconditional surrender. In the main, their idea of a satisfactory outcome of the war would be some sort of a negotiated peace with German reactionary forces, and generally to achieve a situation that would put a wet blanket on all democratic developments in Europe. All this still remains a serious obstacle to full victory. A real victory policy, as laid down at Teheran, can be achieved only in opposition to these elements, certainly not in easy collaboration with them, and above all, not under their leadership.

As to the creation of a world organization to maintain the postwar peace, as outlined at the Moscow and Teheran meetings, American finance capitalists, in the main, are equally unreliable. All through the war they have been saturated with anti-British and anti-Soviet tendencies. They were literally shoved into their dubious endorsement of Teheran by heavy mass pressure. They probably would accept some sort of an after-war world organization to maintain peace, but certainly not one as contemplated by the signers of the Teheran and Moscow pacts. At best it would be a kind of a touch-and-go proposition calculated not to interfere with the active imperi-

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alist maneuverings they have in mind. So far, the real pressure and leadership in the United States for a democratic world organization of states has come, not from the main forces of finance capital, but from the broad masses of the people, and there is no reason to suppose that this situation will alter in the foreseeable future.

Regarding the development of a co-operative world economic program of reconstruction after the war, as Teheran obviously foresees, American finance capital again would indeed be a shaky reed to lean upon. While the great capitalists of this country would probably accept some elementary program to encourage world trade and also would provide a niggardly program of emergency relief, their guiding principle would be to grab off whatever they could of the world market. That is about all the significance they would attach to epoch-making Teheran. It is idle to think that they would come forward with a broad economic plan based upon the true interest of our nation and the world. The United States is not Czechoslovakia or Greece. It is not even Great Britain. Despite its war injuries, which are much more serious than appears at first glance, it will nevertheless emerge from this war by far the most powerful capitalist nation in the world. And its great industrial rulers will not be inclined to make such concessions to the peoples' interests as is now being done by the capitalists of some occupied countries, who are even accepting Communists in the Cabinets. American finance capital has not been seriously chastened by the war. It does not consider this war as a world defeat for monopoly capital (which it doubtless is) after which its job will be to assume a responsible attitude toward the world capitalist system and to work out a progressive domestic program with democratic forces. It is strong, greedy and aggressive.

When American capitalism looks out upon the postwar world it will see mostly that its great capitalist rivals have been badly disabled by the war, and its imperialistic appetite will be whetted. Germany, Japan, Italy, France and many other capitalist countries will be prostrate by the war's end, and Great Britain also will be much weakened. While American big capitalism acutely fears Socialism, it nevertheless considers that the USSR, facing a gigantic problem of internal reconstruction, will not be an insuperable obstacle to its plans of imperialistic expansion. Altogether, it sees principally an alluring opportunity to conquer markets and strategic positions, and we may trust the Wall Street moguls not to overlook this chance. The Teheran Conference by no means liquidated American imperialism. A postwar Roosevelt Administration would continue to be, as it is now, an imperialist government, but one with a certain amount of liberal checks upon it. An election victory of the Republican Party, the chosen party of monopoly capital, would mean, however, imperialism of a far more aggressive type. Comrade Browder goes too far when he says that world capitalism and world Socialism have learned to live peacefully together and (in his Bridgeport speech) that "Britain and the United States have closed the books finally and forever upon their old expectation that the Soviet Union as a Socialist country is going to disappear some day." The fruition of such an attitude on the part of those capitalist countries is dependent upon the extent to which democratic support is built up for Teheran and its perspective.

In my article in the *New Masses*, December 14, 1943, I gave a brief summary picture of about what we could expect from American finance capital in the postwar period, given the strong control that a Republican victory would bring it. It would endanger the whole set-up and

program of Teheran:

"A Republican Administration would encourage reaction all over the world. Rampant American imperialism again in the saddle would weaken the foundations of the United Nations and sow seeds for a World War III. Such an administration would not insist upon unconditional surrender, it would not extinguish fascism in Europe or establish democracy; it would not collaborate loyally with the USSR or Great Britain; it would degenerate our Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America. . . . Nor could Willkie as President, even if he wanted to, substantially alter this basically reactionary course of the Republican Party."

The important sections of the capitalists who support Wendell Willkie incline somewhat more to a liberal application internationally of the Teheran policies, although Willkie's stand on Poland was not very promising. Their basic kinship with the bulk of finance capital and their willingness to follow its main international and domestic policies, however, are indicated by their common, all-out hatred of Roosevelt and by the practical certainty that they will, in the event that Willkie does not get the Republican nomination, support any other Republican candidate, unless possibly it should be some outright Fascist or isolationist, such as Colonel McCormick. The weakness in our own attitude towards the Willkie forces has been to stress too much their more superficial liberal tendencies and not enough the more basic fact that they are part of the camp of reaction and that they constantly tend to lure the workers away from the Roosevelt progressive line into the trap of the Republican Party. The Willkies will accept the reactionary line of the Hoovers, Tafts and Deweys, rather than join with the masses of the people to fight these reactionaries.

All of which means that the bulk of monopoly capital can not be relied upon either to cooperate loyally, or to lead in a progressive application of the Teheran decisions. It will yield in this direction only under democratic mass pressure! Instead, our reliance must be upon the great democratic people, the real backbone of national unity, now organized in the main in and around the Roosevelt camp. The basic flaw in Comrade Browder's report was that he failed to make clear this elementary situation, but instead tended to create illusions to the effect that these antagonistic forces, the bulk of big capital and the democratic sections of the nation, now locked together in one of the sharpest class battles in American history, can and should work harmoniously together both now and during the postwar period.

National unity in the elections

Following logically his argumentation to the effect that the decisive sections of monopoly capital are, or can be drawn, not only in "the democratic-progressive camp" for the realization of the Teheran decisions, but may also be the leaders of that camp, Comrade Browder gave little emphasis indeed to the bitter presidential election struggle now developing. For, certainly, if the decisive sections of American monopoly capital are behind the Teheran decisions loyally, and indeed may lead the national unity, there would be little to worry about regarding the outcome of the elections. It would make little difference which side won. Comrade Browder did not sound any note of alarm about the elections. He did not warn the American people militantly of the grave danger that would be involved in a Republican victory. Instead, in his National Committee report, he handled the two major parties almost in a tweedle-dee, tweedle-dum manner, and in his Madison Square Garden speech, where he presented the Party line to the public, he devoted only twelve

lines to the vital subject of the elections. Logically following out his general position, he seemed rather to be more interested in bridging the gap between the two warring parties in the name of an all-inclusive national unity, than in stirring into victory action the great democratic forces of the country, the only ones who can be relied upon to make the hope of Teheran real.

Let us consider the elections a little more in detail: Briefly, the situation is this: During the eleven years of the Roosevelt Administration, monopoly capital has, of course, remained dominant; its profits have gone right on, and it has also very greatly increased its concentration and strength, particularly during the war period. Nevertheless, monopoly capital has found an obstacle in the Roosevelt Administration. This Administration is, in fact, if not formally, a coalition among the workers, middle class elements, and the more liberal sections of the bourgeoisie (with the special situation in the Democratic South). The big monopolists, after the first few emergency months of 1933, have in overwhelming majority come to hate the Roosevelt Administration bitterly. They especially attack the domestic angles of his policies. What backing Roosevelt had from finance capital at the start has mostly leaked away from him. This is because of certain restrictions his Administration has placed upon big capital's drive for unlimited power. The monopolists hate the Roosevelt government because it is not an instrument that will do their bidding fully and immediately; they hate it because of the social legislation it has written on the books and also for what it threatens to adopt during a fourth term; they hate it because it has facilitated the organization of 10,000,000 workers into trade unions, which weakened their great open shop fortress in the basic industries; they hate it because they think there is altogether too great a democratic content in its war and foreign policies.

The substance of the present election struggle, therefore, is an attempt of monopoly capital to break up the Roosevelt liberal-labor combination. It is an effort of the big financial tycoons to get rid of the governmental and trade union hindrances that have irked them so much under the New Deal, so they can branch out into the active imperialistic regime they have in mind. They are fighting Roosevelt viciously, trying to defeat him in his own party with their Farleys and Southern poll taxers, and, if they fail in this, to beat him with a Republican candidate if he is nominated for a fourth term. The big capitalists are fighting Roosevelt with striking unity. Even though they are having trouble to decide upon a candidate of their own, they are nevertheless united in opposing Roosevelt. The fact that 90 percent of the daily press and all the leading employers' associations and conservative farmers' organizations are definitely opposed to Roosevelt, tells graphically where finance capital is standing in this crucial election struggle. Its victory would be understood all over the world as a victory for reaction. The Fascists and every other enemy of Teheran in the United States and abroad would hail it as their triumph.

In this most crucial election since 1864 our duty as a Communist Party is plain. We must go all-out for a continuation of the Roosevelt policies, as the only way to support effectively the Teheran decisions, both in their national and international implications. We must tell the people precisely who the enemy is that they are fighting—organized big capital—and mobilize our every resource to help make their fight succeed. We must awaken them to the grave danger of a reactionary victory, pointing out the heavy mobilization of the capitalist elements, the systematic propaganda poisoning of the armed forces against labor, and the serious inroads that have

been made into Roosevelt's labor and working farmer support.

The mobilization of labor's forces politically and combining them with all other democratic, win-the-war forces supporting Teheran for an election victory over reaction, whose main fort is the Republican Party, should have been the all-pervading business of our National Committee. But it most emphatically was not. Instead, with Comrade Browder's new conceptions of national unity, there was a tendency for us to bridge the gap in the elections. This would, indeed, be a serious mistake for us to make, to try to convince the American people in the heat of this great and significant struggle, that there is a possibility for progressive unity with the very forces that they are fighting against and must defeat in this election, the monopolists.

Let us not make the serious error of slipping in between these fighting forces in the name of an all-inclusive but illusory national unity with big capital. We must understand clearly and definitely that the basic forces of a progressive national unity are those grouped, in the main, around Roosevelt's banners and we must fight to help them extend and solidify their ranks. Perhaps we can learn a lesson from the recent hotly-contested elections for the Auto Workers' conventions when we, in the name of trade union unity, took a neutral position and the dangerous Social-Democrat, Walter Reuther, almost won control of the convention out of the hands of the win-the-war forces. The influence of our Party in the national elections can be very great, especially in solidifying the at present confused ranks of labor, and it must not be frittered away in any middle, half-middle, or above-the-battle position.

The perspective of national unity in the post-war period

What kind of a postwar perspective may we look forward to in this country? In my judgment it will be quite different from the long period of peaceful class collaboration and social advance, in which the monopolists are progressively collaborating, that Comrade Browder seems to envisage. The gravity of the world's postwar construction problems, which our country also will feel, and the sharp contradictions in class interests involved, will not permit such a harmonious progress.

It is true that at the present time many big capitalist leaders and organizations are talking glibly in generalizations about the fine economic conditions they will create after the war. But bearing in mind the glowing promises, all unfulfilled, that were made towards the conclusion of World War I, we can safely discount much of their rosy prophecies and look sharply at their real policies. After all, these men of big promises have a great prize at stake, the full control of the United States government, and if they can fool the people with tricky demagoguery it will be a well-paying investment.

Actually, the great capitalists in this country are orientating in the main upon a long-time postwar industrial boom, based upon reconstruction work and the spontaneous development of new industries, as well as the capture of new international markets. Although in case of a crisis these elements would be quick to appeal to the state for aid, they are quite generally pooh-poohing and opposing any attempts to prepare in advance a federal governmental program to keep the industries operating and the masses employed. To them this is still all pretty much "boondoggling" and interference with the mystical operation of "free enterprise." That their true perspective is almost complete reliance upon privately owned industry along the accustomed paths of the past, is evidenced by the fact that they have not introduced a single postwar economic measure into Congress or

popularized it before the country. Every progressive proposal made so far, from the general slogan of the Four Freedoms, to the economic reconstruction program of the National Resources Planning Board, the Wagner-Murray social insurance bill, and the legislation to rehabilitate members of the armed forces, and now the President's recently announced 34,000 mile highway plan and his new Bill of Rights, have all originated in the camp of the Administration forces and are opposed by the main forces of monopoly capital.

And so it will continue to be. In the domestic, as in the international sphere, the progressive lead will not come from monopoly capital. The far-reaching economic programs, involving government intervention in industry on an unprecedented scale that will be necessary to guard our country from an economic collapse worse than that of 1929, will originate in a truly progressive camp, consisting of the masses of workers, farmers, middle classes and liberal sections of capitalists. And they will be brought to realization, not in easy agreement with the monopolists, as Comrade Browder would appear to believe, but in active pressure against them.

Let us consider, therefore, what is likely to confront us as a result of the elections? First, if President Roosevelt should be elected again and should try vigorously to put into effect a progressive program, including the international decisions of Teheran and the economic and political aims he enunciated in his recent "Report to the Nation," concretely, his new Bill of Rights, then he will certainly collide heavily with the powerful forces of the bulk of American finance capital. Their present bitter opposition to all such measures would not suddenly melt away in sweetness and collaboration. Inasmuch as we now fall far short of national unity even under the severe pressure of war, may we expect more unity when this unifying pressure is released? The American big bourgeoisie show no signs of interpreting the Teheran Agreement in the sense that henceforth they must voluntarily adopt progressive programs in the United States. They still respond only to pressure of one kind or another, exerted nationally or internationally. The progressive democratic forces of national unity under a postwar Roosevelt Administration should, and no doubt would, seek to widen as far as possible the area of agreement around their necessary economic programs and also generally to work on an orderly development of our national progress, but this desire will not save them from coming into serious collisions with the forces of finance capital.

On the other hand, should a Dewey, Taft or Bricker, or even the liberal-speaking Mr. Willkie be elected, then we could expect definite attempts of the new Administration to give monopoly capital a much freer hand at the expense of the people. If successful, this could only result in strengthening reaction and imperiling our economic future. At best, the domestic economic program of such an administration would be one based on boom expectation and upon extending government aid to the workers only in the most niggardly measure and under heavy pressure. American finance capital would soon demonstrate that it had learned very little of a progressive economic nature through the war and the period of the New Deal. The big capitalists, if they did not make an open attack upon the unions, would probably try to paralyze organized labor by ensnaring it into a program of intensified class collaboration, designed in their own interests and not in those of labor and the nation. The capitalists have not forgotten the way they did this so disastrously to the labor movement and the people after World War I. With the added consideration that big business today,

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bitterly remembering the liberal-labor coalition that has backed the government for the past dozen years, would adopt any means to prevent a repetition of this hated experience. It could therefore be expected, what with the growing Fascist spirit in its ranks and the tricks it has learned from Hitler, that the monopolists would adopt, if necessary, the most drastic means to clip the strength of labor and to prevent the return to power of any popular, progressive government.

At our National Committee meeting there were delegates who interpreted Comrade Browder's report, not illogically, as implying a no-strike policy for the trade unions in the postwar period. One, who went uncorrected said: "We have the perspective of continued cooperation, a no-strike policy and no class clashes for a long time after the war." This is nonsense, of course. It would disarm the trade unions in the face of their enemies. The Teheran Conference did not abolish the class struggle in the United States. The workers would indeed be foolish if they were to orientate upon any such illusory perspective. The cue to the trade unions, in facing the postwar period, is to unify their ranks, nationally and internationally, to organize the millions of still unorganized workers, to develop their united political action movement so that they may be a real force in the democratic coalition, to establish the broadest possible alliances with all other democratic groups and classes, to defeat reaction in the coming national elections, to prepare constructive economic proposals for the postwar period and work diligently for them, and generally to strengthen their ranks and be in readiness to defend their organizations and their living standards from any and all attacks by their powerful and inveterate enemy, monopoly capital. It would be disastrous if our Party were in any way to weaken labor's alertness to these necessities.

The slogan of 'free enterprise'

Comrade Browder was correct in saying that we should not take issue with the reactionaries' slogan of "free enterprise" in the sense that in the presidential election the issue is for privately-owned industry or against it. But he is incorrect when he says, "The issue of 'free enterprise' is thus not in any way, shape or form the issue of the coming struggle for control of United States policy in the congressional and presidential elections." On the contrary, "free enterprise" is the main slogan of the monopolists and behind it stands the whole conception of their program. It cannot be dismissed by saying that "If anyone wishes to describe the existing system of capitalism in the United States as 'free enterprise,' that's all right with us."

In stressing their main slogan of "free enterprise" the monopolists are of course trying to make plausible their unfounded allegation of socialism against the Roosevelt Administration. But they are also seeking to do much more than this. Within the purview of this slogan is comprised their whole determination to regain unrestricted control of the government, to weaken the power of organized labor, and generally to free the hands of monopoly.

The economic essence of this slogan is a main dependence upon a long-term industrial boom to solve our national economic problems, with improvised government work programs and aid for the workers and farmers considered merely as emergency programs. Thus, Senator Taft says in the Saturday Evening Post, December 11: "Substantially full employment must be restored and maintained through free enterprise, with only such assistance from government as

is proved to be absolutely necessary." That is to say, only after the economic crisis bursts upon us we may look for fragmentary, skinflint programs of government work and relief. The "free enterprise" slogan represents a concrete program just as definitely as did that of the "New Deal." Hence, to accept or ignore this slogan means to imply, in the popular mind, to accept or ignore the program behind it.

It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot simply brush aside big business' main slogan of "free enterprise" as being merely demagogic and let it go at that. On the contrary, while thoroughly exposing the demagoguery of the slogan, we must also expose its reactionary economic and political content. This can only be done on the basis of bringing forward the program of the progressive forces. In doing this, the question of social insurance and government stimulation of industry can not be put forth merely as emergency stop-gap measures to apply in times of crises. They must be presented as essential steps if we are to cushion ourselves against plunging headlong into overwhelming economic crises; if we are to make even an approach to the full production and jobs for all that everybody is now talking about so glibly. The counter-program of the progressive, win-the-war, win-the-peace forces to the reactionary "free enterprise", or unrestrained monopoly program of the reactionaries, does not now contain demands for the nationalization of banks, railroads, or other industries, and it will not in the immediate postwar situation. But the grave difficulties that will confront capitalism all over the world after this war, not excluding American capitalism, will surely eventually raise the need and popularity of such demands.

On the question of the two-party system, it is my opinion that Comrade Browder also dismisses that matter too easily, by speaking of "the stone wall of the two-party system." He subscribes to "the general national opinion that this 'two-party system' provides adequate channels for the basic preservation of democratic rights," and thus leaves the impression that the Communists no longer look beyond the present two-party line-up, even in the most eventual sense.

In such a presentation, it seems to me, there is contained an underestimation of the political initiative of the democratic masses of the people and an over-estimation of their acceptance of the bourgeois leadership of the two main parties. While the situation is very much not ripe for a new political party line-up in the United States, nevertheless this can by no means be excluded permanently. I prefer, instead the formulation of Philip Murray in the current issue of the American Magazine, where he states that the political situation at this time in the United States does not justify the formation of a third party.

The question of socialism

In presenting such a basic change in line to our Party as he did, it seems to me that Comrade Browder should have made a more complete statement regarding our Party attitude to the question of socialism. While it is correct to say, as Comrade Browder does, that socialism is not the issue in the war, nor will it be the issue in the immediate post-war period in the United States, and that, therefore, to raise the issue now could only result in narrowing down the national unity necessary to win the war and to carry out generally the decisions of Teheran, nevertheless, merely to take this negative attitude towards socialism is not enough. We must also develop our positive position.

We have to bear in mind that although socialism will not be

Agrees with Browder

I am in accord with Comrade Browder's stand on this problem. I think that Comrade Foster's arguments are based more on precedent than on progress. The Communist Party can and should participate in capitalist endeavors towards readjustment because the Communists can do so without becoming contaminated. On the other hand, labor unions have not yet acquired sufficient scientific insight to render their members immune to capitalist logic. Their tendency might be to submit to the will of their "good and kind masters."

JOHN CAMPBELL,
Chula Vista.

the political issue in the United States in the early postwar period, it will nevertheless be a question of great and growing mass interest and influence. This is true for a couple of major reasons, aside from the possibility that some countries of Europe may adopt socialism at the close of the war: First, the Soviet Union in this war has given a world-shaking demonstration of the power and success of socialism. The democratic peoples of the world, who have been saved by the Red Army from Hitler tyranny, are looking upon this great demonstration with amazement, gratitude and a lively curiosity. For the first time they are beginning to see through the wall of prejudice that was so carefully built up against the USSR over so many years. They are extremely interested, and in a more and more objective sense, to learn further about the great, new Socialist world power. The present new crop of books friendly to the USSR is an early sign of the new mass interest in the Soviet Union and its socialism. With the development of the postwar reconstruction period, in which we can expect the USSR to perform as great "miracles" as it is now doing in a military way, hence this mass interest is bound to increase. The second basic reason for a great postwar mass interest in socialism is that with the world capitalist system badly injured, there will be definite tendencies for the peoples in all countries to learn from the Soviet regime and to adapt to their own problems such features as they can from the obviously successful and flourishing Socialist Soviet Union. The whole question of the advance to socialism will be in for a fresh discussion in the new world conditions.

In view of all this, obviously the Communist Party, as the party of socialism, cannot take merely a negative attitude towards socialism. We must teach the workers the significance of the Socialist development of our time and their relation to the United States. While we point out that socialism is not now the issue in our country, we must also show that it is nevertheless the only final solution for our nation's troubles. If we do not do this, then the Social-Democrats will be left a free hand to pose as the party of socialism, with consequent detriment to our Party and to the whole struggle of the win-the-war, win-the-peace forces.

Obviously, the question raised by Comrade Browder in his report are of far-reaching significance and represent a radical departure from our past conceptions of national unity. They deserve the most profound consideration in the pre-convention discussion that is now beginning. In these days of world-shaking war and with postwar problems of enormous size and complexity looming before us, our Party must be doubly careful in the development of its political line. I for one am convinced that if we give this close attention to Comrade Browder's report, adopted by the National Committee, we will find it necessary to alter it in the general sense of the several points raised in this letter.

Comradely yours,
Wm. Z. Foster

Teheran and the Dissolution of the Party

In dealing with the question of the dissolution of the American Communist Party, it does not seem that we will find the real reason for this action in connection with the problems of the 1944 election campaign, but rather as the result of the interpretation of the Teheran agreement. For IF our perspectives based on the Teheran agreement had been correct, then it was a perfectly logical step to dissolve the CP in favor of a political educational association—such an association being needed to "educate" the American working class to believe that it was possible for the dominant sections of the capitalist class to cooperate after the war to give full employment and a rising standard of living for all.

Therefore it seems to me that it is necessary to discover how it was possible for us to make such a misinterpretation of the Teheran agreement. By way of example: We did not draw the wrong conclusions at the time of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. We did not believe that this meant that Socialism and Fascism would now get along fine together. We knew that the Soviet Union did not depend on this agreement for the protection of its borders, but continued to strengthen the Red Army and its defense industries. How, then was it possible for us to read into the Teheran agreement, things which were not there? Here we have, as Comrade Duclos puts it, a "diplomatic document" between a Socialist State and two Capitalist States, and as such, was not to be regarded as a political analysis to be used by us as a basis for a policy of class collaboration in the United States because Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that their countries should work together with the Soviet Union in the postwar period. We know that the Soviet Union was and is fully prepared to carry out its part of the agreement: To cooperate to win the war and to work together after the war to maintain peace for many generations.

What right had we, as Marxists, to assume from this that finance capital in Britain and the United States might cooperate with the Soviet Union to complete the destruction of fascism after the war? We were being taken in when we believed that these capitalists were in the war for any other reason than to eliminate a dangerous competitor, whose system as such they do not oppose in principle. What right did we have to assume that monopoly capitalism could change its nature and cooperate with labor after the war to give jobs to all and raise wages at the same time? What then had happened to the class struggle, which all our Marxist teachings tells us cannot be eliminated under capitalism? Comrade Browder told us, "True, according to all of the text books of the past, we are departing from orthodoxy, because none of our text books foresaw or predicted a long period of peaceful relations in the world before the general advent of Socialism."

Having been disarmed by this statement, we did not bother to look into our Marxist-Leninist literature, because, of course, we would not find any help there. It seems strange now in looking back, that we were not more alarmed by the fact that all our previous teachings would be of no help to us in the "new situation." But new situations have a habit of appearing in history all the time—Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks faced unprecedented situations, but to find the correct path, it was not at all necessary to junk the Marxist teachings of the past. As a matter of fact, we know that precisely because Lenin rescued Marxism from the opportunists and revisionists of the 2nd International that the Bolsheviks were able to build a party that could cope with the "new situation" that history placed before them in 1917.

Certainly we should not be dogmatic in the application of Marxist theory, and certainly we stand for creative Marxism (as

Comrade Browder always stated we were doing) but when our "creation" runs counter to all our previous teachings on the nature and the development of capitalism, then most certainly we are distorting and revising Marxism, and we are all, to a greater or lesser degree, responsible for it. The degree of responsibility should be in proportion to the amount of authority held in the party, which means that the greatest responsibility lies with Comrade Browder and the National Board (with the notable exception of Comrade Foster, who we now know, opposed Comrade Browder's position) on down through the National Committee, State, County, and Club leadership. It is too bad that we had to wait to learn of Comrade Foster's opposition from our French comrades. The knowledge of Foster's opposition to the new line at the time of the discussion might not have changed the outcome, but it could have laid the basis for a quicker reconsideration of our non-Marxist position.

From the manner in which the discussions were held throughout the Party last year, it is hard to see how any real opposition to the new policy could have developed. Our principle of demo-

CPA DISCUSSION

The discussion in the press is open to all members of the Association. Articles and letters should not exceed 1200 words. This rule will apply equally to all members.

Mail articles to Wm. Schneiderman, Suite 701, 942 Market Street, San Francisco 2, Calif.

cratic centralism was also undergoing a revision and the lack of inner party democracy brought about by it is uncomfortably reminiscent of the development of the Social-Democratic parties of the Second International where the opportunist policy of the leadership directly led to the stifling of any really free expression and discussion in the parties. We were approaching the dangerous point where any chance of changing a wrong policy on the initiative of the membership was becoming very slim, due to the fact that our method of arriving at this wrong policy was not at all democratic and our membership became hesitant in "sticking their necks out" on any question that was not in agreement with this policy.

In this connection, I feel we are greatly indebted to Comrade Duclos and the other European Communists whose opinion his article represents, for bringing our deviation out into the light of day. With this help, our organization, through the initiative of the National Board and its draft resolution, and the free and open discussions now taking place, plus the full use by the entire organization of our invaluable Marxist-Leninist literature, will be able once again to earn the right to be called the vanguard of the American working class.

George Walker
San Francisco

Believes in a Platform of Socialism

Our platform must be socialism because only through this platform can we help capitalism to develop.

Why? Through the platform of socialism we are fundamentally compelled to expose the nature of capitalism. By exposing the nature of capitalism we strengthen the progressive tendency within capitalism. And to the extent that we do not call for socialism, to that extent do we aid the reactionary tendencies of capitalism.

The Communist Party set-up is much more understandable and inspiring to the workers for carrying out the program for socialism.

Morry Alpern,
San Francisco

Feels Browder Evades the Issue Discusses the Effect of Opportunism

As I read Comrade Browder's Board statement I couldn't help but feel that he simply evaded tacking the point which in my opinion is the key to the criticism—the character and role of American finance capital. This he fails to discuss at all.

It is clear to me now that our mistake was not a tactical one, i. e. of our wartime program, but one of long range theoretical thinking and planning which naturally affected our every day work, and tended to immobilize our own organization and the labor movement.

It is wrong in my opinion to say that we should change our program now without too much fuss because, after all, the capitalist class failed to "live up" to its promise after we gave it that "hundred to one" chance and after it failed to grasp this opportunity to "remain" progressive. This approach misses the point completely. Our main error centered in the fact that it was a dangerous illusion even to impute to our monopoly capital the possibility of becoming progressive because inherently monopoly capital is reactionary, and its course is not charted by so called "intelligence" but by class contradictions and struggle for profit and markets. When the American bourgeoisie fights for the defeat of Germany and Japan—reluctantly at times—it does so to eliminate a dangerous competitor and while doing it of course finds ready support from the labor movement whose interest in the defeat of fascism is in the interest of democracy and greater freedom.

In approaching Teheran from this point of view, one can't help but agree with Comrade Duclos that we have made an error in transforming a diplomatic document into a political document with a platform of class peace. As I see it now, the Teheran declaration is an important document between states, a document that can succeed however only if the progressive forces throughout the world take the lead in fighting for its realization with the working class in the forefront of this struggle because it alone can be a consistent force for progress. It was not a pledge by our capitalist class to our workers that it will solve the problems of full employment, higher wages, etc. Recent events, and there were many during the war too, around the question of profits, freezing of wages, opposition to labor's participation in government, etc., should make it pretty clear that our capitalist class had no such illusions and acted accordingly.

As I understand it, this means that our capitalist class is governed by the laws of class struggle and capitalist contradictions which carry again the seeds of future wars. But it seems to me that we have to consider this bearing in mind that there has been a great change in the relationship of forces as the result of the defeat of German fascism. The world force of capitalism has been greatly weakened. On the other hand the anti-fascist forces the world over have been tremendously strengthened and have the power to check and prevent an outbreak of another war or at least to postpone it for a long period. I can't help but recall the words of Comrade Togliatti who, while speaking at the Seventh World Congress on the question of the inevitability of wars under capitalism said—"But we know equally well that all questions of the development of human society are decided in the final analysis by struggle—by the struggle of the masses."

If the forces of the working class and all anti-fascist forces are mobilized and given leadership, the pledge of Teheran can be carried out, but not as interpreted by Browder, but as understood by Duclos. And this coalition can certainly include some elements of the capitalist class. On this, the Board resolution can be more clear. I think that if this is done, it would prevent sectarian mistakes and indicate that we should strive to improve all such relations bearing in mind however that only the working class can find solutions to the problems of the people.

One section of Browder's remarks particularly strikes me as being incorrect. It reads, "In my opinion there is even no disaster

in theoretical mistakes so long as our Association retains its ties with the masses which constitute our most precious possession next to our own basic Marxist understanding, which is not fundamentally disturbed by any theoretical mistakes that may have occurred."

Frankly speaking, I don't see how we can make theoretical mistakes and retain contact with the masses unless it is done at the expense of an advanced program and leadership and we cater to the backward sections. In that case we would play the role of the "tail to the kite" which is precisely what we have been doing of late.

This dangerous trend did not develop over night. It must have been a gradual one. Its seeds are present in "Victory and After" and I am sure if we are to examine our work that we would find a number of tactical errors as the result of this trend. This makes the problem even more serious. I can't help but give thought to some of the causes that made this possible.

I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that I accepted our last year's program fully and that I fought for it to the best of my ability. Certainly I wish to take my full share of the responsibility with all that it involves as a member of one of the leading committees. Though I feel that all of us must share in this error, certainly our state and national leadership must bear the major portion of criticism.

It is clear to me now that our past methods of discussion were not democratic. This is also true of our last year's discussions of Teheran. This was true first of all of our national leadership which failed to submit Comrade Foster's letter for broad democratic discussion, but it was also true of the methods used in our own State. We developed too much "blind faith" in Browder's opinions. As the result of his previous fine contributions, the Teheran perspective and even earlier statements of the National Board were accepted without analysis or criticism. This stifled initiative and self-criticism and was reflected in our methods of work and was carried further into Clubs and Counties. Though done unconsciously, the damage was great and we should be frank enough to admit it now. This is bureaucracy pure and simple in which I share definite responsibility. In our methods we always felt it our "duty" to "convince" all members of the correctness of every important statement. It is true that we held discussions, but the entire atmosphere was not conducive to an open and frank discussion. We were always too anxious to prove our point and often resorted to reading quotations to do it. I believe that it is easy to find quotations to prove just about anything. What is necessary is more independent thinking and searching out, and, we failed to do this. This is a sign of our political immaturity. Over a period of years what has taken place is not a deepening of democratic centralism, which we need very much—but centralism from the top, bureaucratic at times, with but little participation of our membership and Clubs from below. I would also like to urge that, in the interest of real democracy, we be very patient in our present discussions. We have hundreds of members who are fairly new in our organization who are not familiar with all that transpired, and who may not fully understand our terminology. Certainly we should consider special steps to insure clarity on their part.

I for one, do not feel that the questions of becoming a Party again is a decisive one for the present, though our minds should not be closed on this. What we must have now is a change in the basic program of work and even a change in some of our organizational forms to enable our trade unionists to play a greater political role in our organization. Our new program is bound to give that something which has been missing for quite some time—a program based on real Marxism—of leadership and struggle.

This will be an answer to members who could not see any basic difference between our organization and that of many others. And it seems to me that

I should like to utilize this space to discuss a few of the effects which opportunism have had upon our orientation and organizational methods during the past period. Other letters will unquestionably deal with the theoretical issues at stake but if we do not learn to identify and root out the reflections of incorrect theory in our tactics and manner of work, there is a real danger that we may correct our general political line while allowing conditions to survive within our organization which would only make similar mistakes inevitable in the future.

Historical experience shows us that the danger of opportunism is at its greatest in any period during which working-class strategy demands a coalition with broad strata of other classes. For not only do we influence these other classes but, unless we are far more alert than we have been, they tend quite unconsciously to influence us as well and as a result all sorts of petty-bourgeois methods and misconceptions have a habit of creeping into a working-class party. We have been in such a period since 1935 and hence it would be a mistake to feel that opportunist practices were something which made their dramatic appearance only in January of 1944. The proof of this assertion lies within the very events of January, 1944—for if opportunist conceptions had not already taken a strong, if unconscious, grip upon the great part of our membership and leadership, our organization could never have swallowed so complacently such preposterous and un-Marxian theories as those we adopted. Mistakes are not made overnight—their seeds are a long time growing.

It is only natural, then, that a theoretical line which envisaged all classes in America as almost equally progressive would have a distorting effect upon our orientation toward the working class. In practice this distortion has resulted in the abandonment of much of our independent activity among the working class and the liquidation of many organizational forms which aided this activity in the past. In San Francisco street and park meetings were virtually eliminated and we pointed with pride to the fact that we were now able to conduct public forums in one of the city's most fashionable hotels, a place where the average worker has never set foot. In June, 1943, the industrial and shop branches were in great part dis-

even though the American people are not yet ready to accept a socialist system of society, we should intensify our education around that question and stop this "soft pedaling" of socialism because it may drive some capitalist into the ranks of reaction by this general mass education.

Though my first reaction to criticism by Duclos was one of subjective antagonism, I feel that this was incorrect and that his criticism must be welcomed. Our movement is an international one and we should welcome ideas and criticism no matter from what part of the world they come. To say that the French can know little about America is very silly, to say the least. Marx knew more about America of his day and about the Civil War than the majority of the American people.

Duclos' thoughts are particularly important since our revisionary policy began to affect other countries. All this indicates that we are not alert to the fact that while under capitalist democracy we are constantly subjected to a revisionary pressure from petty bourgeois thinking and by the influx into our ranks of people without a strong working class ideology. Though this always takes place, it does not mean that we must succumb to this pressure and adopt a revisionary policy. We simply have to be more alert to the dangers and carry on struggle against it. What has happened is a serious lesson to us but I am sure that it will become a source of strength to us in the very near future.

LEO BAROWAY,
San Francisco.

solved, on the excuse that they fostered fractional methods and were a "non-American" form of organization. Here, as in the later dissolution of the CP, I think the baby was thrown out with the bath: the way to fight fractionalism is by educating our trade union members, not by liquidating one of our most tested links with the workers in basic industries. While most neighborhood branches set up "labor committees" the fact remains that the content of the work in the neighborhood branches soon became of such a classless, "community service" nature that great numbers of our industrial members stopped attending club meetings. Since the socialist content of our program had been carefully submerged in order to avoid "offending" our middle-class allies, industrial workers could hardly be blamed if they could see nothing in the program of our branches which they could not get from the progressive labor unions and other people's organizations.

This disorientation from the working class and Leninist nature of our Party also resulted in serious errors in our inner organizational structures. One of these errors has been the tendency to compromise with vacillating and petty-bourgeois elements within our own association. Because of organizational looseness (Williamson points out that some clubs now have a membership of up to 700) and theoretical complacency, groups have sprung up, particularly among the trade union officials and professional members, which feel quite free to pay lip service to our principles and then follow their own line in public, a line which frequently consists of distorting or repudiating our basic program on grounds of expediency. Needless to say, most of these "Communists" never attend club meetings and spend their lives not among the working people but in an exalted atmosphere completely devoid of Bolshevik self-sacrifice and hard work.

This dislocation of our orientation toward the working class had also inevitably resulted in bureaucratic methods within our own organization. Periodic self-criticism, always a distinctive feature of a Leninist party, had all but vanished. Tactical mistakes were made and no accounting of them taken, assignments voted in meeting after meeting and then followed by no systematic checkup. Political decisions of the utmost importance were evolved in "top committee" meetings and then transmitted to

the members as a fait accompli. And what were the nature of these "top committees"? Frequently they were made up of people "drawn in" for the discussion while the elected committees were ignored or only notified later. One result of such practices was to stifle initiative on the lower level. Club leadership was often admittedly reluctant to make the simplest decision without prior consultation with county or state leadership. And this method of work revolves, of course, in a vicious circle, for the more the membership counts on the top leadership to do its thinking for it, the more burdened that leadership becomes with interminable meetings and "consultations," the more it is lost in details, and the less time it has for theoretical study and guidance.

The absurdity of this type of relationship between leadership and membership is best illustrated in recent state and county conventions of the CP and CPA which I have attended. Everything is planned in advance, the main reports assigned to the leadership, the subsidiary speakers selected by leading committees and their subjects allotted to them. An unscheduled speaker who wishes the floor is looked on with suspicion as if he might be carrying some concealed threat to this magical "unity" in his notebook. No self-criticism, no examination of mistakes and shortcomings, has ever, to my memory, been allowed to creep into these recent conventions. Instead of an honest give-and-take among the elected delegates whose trust it is to shape policy and select leadership, delegates are instructed to come in with Pollyannish "success stories" on such subjects as "How We Organized a Community Blood Donor Drive" or "What Our Club Did to Sell War Bonds." An unfamiliar observer might get the impression, with Browning, that "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."

Do I exaggerate? At any rate I think those comrades who have attended such conventions will recognize the picture.

These rather disorganized remarks will, I hope, serve at least one purpose: that of stirring up discussion and examination of these questions. That we will correct and overcome our mistakes I have not the slightest doubt. The first great step in the right direction has been made—now let's follow through.

George Hitchcock,
San Francisco

ATTENTION—

ALL MEMBERS COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

CALL TO SPECIAL STATE CONVENTION Communist Political Association of California

In accordance with the call to convene a special national convention of the Communist Political Association on July 26, 27 and 28 in New York City, we are issuing this call to convene a special State Convention for the purpose of discussing the draft resolution of the National Board as amended by the National Committee and to elect delegates to the National Convention.

In view of transportation restrictions, the State Convention will be held in two sections: for Southern California, in Los Angeles, on July 13 and 15; for Northern California, in San Francisco, on July 15.

All Clubs shall elect delegates to the special State Convention on the basis of one delegate for every ten members or major fraction thereof. All members in good standing, according to the Constitution (dues paid for second quarter) are eligible to be elected delegates and to participate in the election of delegates. All Clubs shall hold special weekly meetings during the pre-convention period for the purpose of discussing the draft resolution and electing delegates to the State Convention.

WILLIAM SCHNEIDERMAN, State President.

LOUISE TODD, State Secretary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE
CONTACT YOUR CLUB WITHOUT DELAY