Distressing Procedure

Apparently, Mrs. Roosevelt finds it possible to make judgments on American Communists without having read what they themselves are saying. Such a procedure is distressing, to say the least. One may disagree with the Communists—as sharply as one desires. But how can one disagree without having read from original sources what they are saying?

The N. Y. Times did the same thing a week ago, in picking up a phrase from a statement by Browder on June 4 and drawing the unwarranted conclusion that American Communists are dubious about supporting the war against Japan.

This was a misquotation. It was made all the worse by the fact that the N. Y. Times failed to publish a letter of correction sent out by the National Board of our organization the very next day. This letter draw attention to the emphasis in the resolution of the National Board, calling for the complete defeat of militarist Japan and stressing the need for

When anyone in this discussion misquotes to begin with, and then refuses to acknowledge the correction of a previous misquotation, I can only conclude that the behavior is deliberate. Withdescribing the same motive to Mrs. Roosevelt, certainly the problem remains.

For example, she says that "it frightens us to see any group in our midst proposing to propagandize instead of cooperating where possible" . . . She fears "this may lead to war at home and abroad." Therefore, she continues, "the French Communist leader and the American Communists who encourage a policy of world revolution have done the peace of the world harm."

But where—in the article by Jacques Duclos or in the statements of our own organization—did Mrs. Roosevelt get the idea that Communists, either here or abroad, are advocating "world revolution"?

I have the documents before me. There is no mention of this phrase at all. It is of course ridiculous to suggest that American Communists can make a "world revolution," and neither can the French. But aside from that, why should any progressive, like Mrs. Roosevelt, employ such a loose and meaningless phrase, which has obviously been culled from a newspaper summary that bears the imprint of the newspaper writer's prejudice, and just does not correspond with the facts?

Further along the same lines, "The American Communists had been cooperative, where they could be. But now, as we understand it, they are to force Communism on our democracy. This we will not tolerate."

Here again—in all fairness to Mrs. Roosevelt—I am compelled to suggest that she has not read any of our discussions thus far. The draft resolution of our National Board (June 2) says that "It is essential to weld together and consolidate the broadest national coalition of all anti-fascist and democratic forces, including all supporters of Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies. . ."

At another point, the resolution says: "While cooperating with the patriotic and democratic forces from all walks of life, Labor must in the first place strengthen its ties with the veterans, the toiling farmers, the Negro people, the youth, the women, professionals and small-business men and with their democratic organizations."

This hardly sounds as though Communists are suddenly ceasing to be cooperative, does it? Indeed, the resolution stresses that cooperation with the dominant sections of monopoly capitalism is illusory. It says that cooperation must take place on the basis of principle—roughly speaking, on "Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies." The resolution proposes to criticize mercilessly all hesitations toward these policies and all concessions to the reactionaries. This has nothing to do with "forcing Communism upon our democracy." The conception that Communism can be forced upon any people is an insult both to the Communists and to the people upon whom it would be allegedly be foisted.

But what is the source of this strange thinking from Eleanor

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