

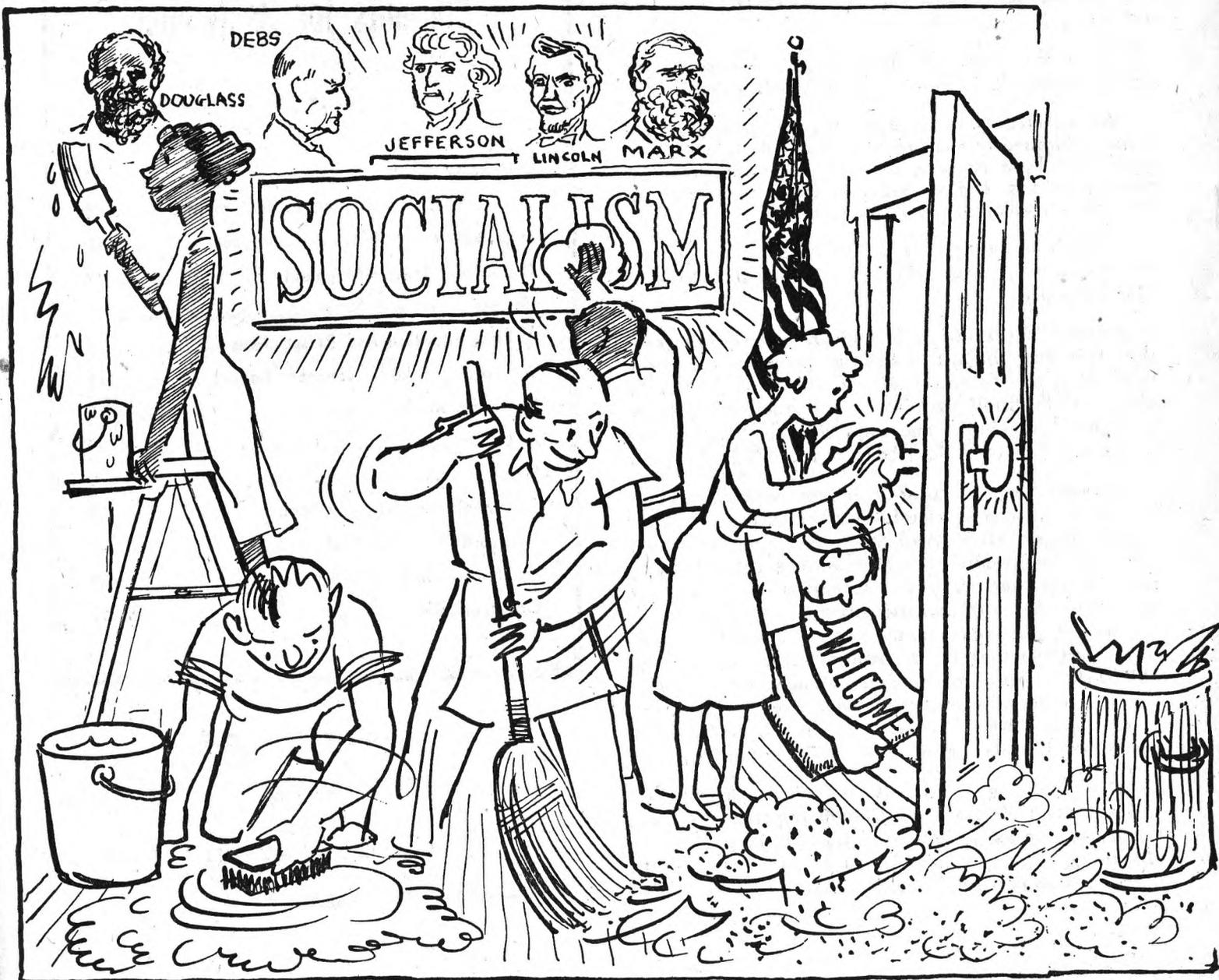
A BULLETIN
Issued by the
N. Y. STATE
COMMUNIST
PARTY

PARTY VOICE

SEPTEMBER, 1956

NO. 5

THIRD
DISCUSSION
ISSUE



Dear Reader:

PV recently got some unaccustomed publicity in the N. Y. Post and the N. Y. Times. We want to tell our readers about *l'affaire Mason*.

Mason is an old timer with a long history of activity in the Party—as a “fraction secretary,” branch organizer, section organizer, active in people's organizations, and, lately, a section committee member.

In the early part of the summer he submitted a handwritten discussion article to PV. We discussed cutting and changes, and said that it would be run, maybe serially.

After it was typed it turned out to run close to twenty thousand words, about two thirds of a full issue of PV. We reached him and asked him to cut his article.

Meanwhile, Mason decided to mimeo his article without waiting for PV, and sent it out to Party leaders and others.

There were some opinions that we should not run his article because it defended Browder's policies and ideas.

We rejected these opinions. Our policy is that any article addressed to the problems of our Party, written in good faith by a member, deserves publication. We feel strongly on this, and we are sure that the membership supports this policy, as the State Board does.

Mason's article appears in this issue, cut as he suggested. An early issue will carry an article discussing Mason's article.

Mason's uncut article defends Browder's full position. It is our opinion that Browder projected the world now emerging—the world of peaceful coexistence—that has yet to be firmly established in further and difficult struggles. This unique and unprecedented stage of human affairs has been described at the XXth Congress.

Browder's error was this: he did not see that American finance capital was fighting it—as is the nature of finance capital. He described Wall Street as a purring kitten, when it is a voracious tiger. Browder called for national unity of the workers with “progressive Big Business.” In missing the tooth and nail struggle of the giant monopolies against the emerging new world, he missed the big dialectic of history—the contradiction between the old world of imperialism, and the new, rising world. He was profoundly wrong in this. The results of his policy, had it been permitted to unfold, would have been ever more damaging.

After throwing out this theory of benevolent Big Business, we rightly recognized and opposed the reactionary, expansionist policy of Big Business. But we also threw out, unfortunately, much that was good in the Party's work with it. And we tended to lose sight

of the forces rising, fighting, building the new world—both at home and abroad.

* * * * *

Our editor's statement correcting the wrong impression left by the N. Y. Post story leaves another incorrect impression. That is that the N. Y. State leadership had discussed and adopted a position on the content of the Mason article. There has been no such discussion; some of them have not read the article. The State Board discussed and voted only on whether to print Mason's article. There are different opinions in the State leadership on many subjects, including Mason's article. Among those who have read it, some agree with one point or another. We believe that all disagree with Browder's central thesis of benevolent imperialism.

Contents for September

Our Party Crisis	3
On the National Committee Statement	8
Gaps Between Leaders and Members	10
The Jewish Mass Movement	12
On the Vanguard Role	13
A New Situation and Perspectives	14
Discussion of 20th Congress Report	16
Some Proposals	18
A Letter	19
Errors in Trade Union Activity	20
Comments on Schrank's Report	23
To Learn From the Past	27
Problems Facing Our Party	29
Communications	30

PARTY VOICE

No. 4

SEPTEMBER

1956

101 West 16th St., New York 11, N. Y.

209

OUR PARTY'S CRISIS

By M. D.

BY NOW, no one can or should deny our Party is in a crisis. It seems to me this places in the very center of our discussion the question of our Party. The purpose of our discussion must be “how can we bring our Party out of it?” The debate and discussion, regardless of differences should unite everyone on this common aim. This is by no means the case now and it should be frankly recognized. There were far less serious situations we faced in which our party was unitedly rallied. Why is this lacking now? It seems to me a big contributing factor is that the basic issues around which our Party is divided are not being squarely put before the membership for resolution.

The national leadership is debating these questions on top, differences are being concealed and at most “compromise” positions are being made public and at worst there is silence. Why our national leadership does not take our membership into its confidence, reveal the thinking of the national committee, majority and minority views on the basic questions our party faces, is the subject for discussion. At a time when much has already happened to raise doubts in leadership, this only serves to further aggravate them. Are these differences deep? Obviously. Does this confront the party with serious danger? There should be no pollyanna-like denial of this fact.

No one should make a fetish of parading differences, but it should be recognized that these differences exist on all levels of the party and are at present the subject of wide discussion. It is the membership which in the last analysis must resolve them. The danger of divi-

sion cannot be eliminated by concealment of differences. But concealment of differences on top does hinder their resolution and confuses and disorients the party and makes it prey to all kinds of rumors and doubts at a time when we can little afford either.

A rallying of the party is needed in which all, no matter how sharply their views clash, unitedly participate. Not a “hip-hip-hooray all is well” pep rally, but one that boldly and honestly confronts the party membership with what is at issue, places before them those issues upon which there is honest unity and those upon which there are differences.

Further, it should be stated what the differences are and who have them. It would be for better if this came before the party through the National Committee, in this manner first, rather than an individual national leader presenting his personal views, although the full and continuous personal expression of views should follow. The appeal of the National Committee for the active participation of the membership in the resolution of differences would rouse and rally the party. It would be a powerful act for strengthening internal democracy. Confidence in the national leadership, in the party, would grow as a result of this demonstration of confidence in our members and friends. Likewise the public prestige of our party would be enhanced.

Debate is necessary to resolve these differences, but let it take place in the context of an objective, factual, analytical examination of our experiences. Let it take place in an atmosphere of forthrightness in which positions are taken on issues clearly

and sharply. But there is a vast difference between taking positions and taking sides.

It is possible and very often the case that one finds oneself in full agreement on one issue and sharp disagreement on another with one and the same person. In taking sides rather than positions, the debate acquires rigidity, subjective influences begin to cloud the exchange of views and people simply cease to listen to each other while those who take no sides are relegated to the side lines.

UNITE OUR PARTY

The objective of all of us regardless of differences is to unite our party upon a common estimate and perspective. It cannot and should not be done by the sheezy weight of political authority as was sometimes done in the past. Our party is in rebellion and correctly so against bureaucratic authority.

It cannot and should not be done by a reconciliation of views, a compromise on differences. It can only be achieved by an objective appraisal of all views. It means striving to achieve a state of open-mindedness. In such a situation the discussion and the convention can really mark a turning point in our history.

It seems to me the overwhelming majority of the party recognizes the need for some very basic changes. They are ready to actively support a policy that projects a realistic socialism. They are prepared to fight for a source that would get us out of our sectarian rut. They would wholeheartedly welcome as a real sign of our coming of age, our Party's standing on its own feet, basing itself in the first place on the particular

interests, conditions, problems, and needs of our country and establishing a fraternal relationship as equals with our brother parties. This is so because both our own as well as international experience has laid the basis for it. It is my opinion that both the Dennis and Schrank reports, despite their weaknesses, provide the frame-work for such a discussion.

What then, is holding us back? We have not yet clearly defined "what" would constitute thorough-going democratization of our party, "what" would be considered standing on our own feet, "what" course would get us out of our sectarian rut.

Some outrightly reject or would drag their feet on such changes. Weighted down by deeply encrusted sectarianism and paralyzed by sheer force of habit, they seem to have learned very little from our costly experiences and the deep lessons of the 20th Congress. To them nothing basic has happened to warrant such profound change. "A little correction of an error here, overcoming a weakness there—would suffice; "after all" we've done it before."

While this in its most concentrated form is confined to a minority, the resistance to change, the force of habit to a greater or lesser degree exists in most of us. In the most basic sense and in the long run, this constitutes our main problem.

But on the other hand, as a reaction to the costly errors that contributed toward our present isolation, and the Stalin revelations, strong moods of defeatism have penetrated our party. This has been in no small way aided by the new "prestige" acquired by the capitalist press in our ranks. As a result of the fact that the Khrushchev revelations seemed to bear out many of the slanderous charges (which we readily dismissed in the past) and his secret report was first made known through its publication in the New York Times, some have concluded that the capitalist press has not been so wrong and appears to have known and know more than we do. This is a question in itself that requires serious discussion. But I say this merely to note



that coming at a time when the State Department is mightily striving to use this "golden opportunity" for all its worth, this new "prestige" has given them a more open door to our minds than they have ever enjoyed.

This defeatism is expressed in its most serious form in loss of confidence in everything, the party, Soviet Union, socialism, Marxism-Leninism. It is also reflected in other ways.

At a time when fundamental and necessary changes are desired in the party dissolution of the party is posed. This seems to confuse and disorient the party, further undermines its confidence in its ability to overcome its present weak and isolated position. It reinforces the influence of sectarian and conservative resistance to change and force of habit upon those ready to break with them.

For if the choice is wrongly put "no party" (that is what it objectively means to project dissolution under slogan of a new party as an immediate perspective) or status quo, many will conclude they really have one choice. But that is a false choice. Regardless of what else divides us, it seems to me that the starting point of the consideration of all questions must rest upon the premise that the need for our party exists in our country, notwithstanding our serious errors and weaknesses or the "bad shape we're in."

It exists because we are the only Marxist-Leninist party in the U.S. and while the American workers and people could well do without dogmatism and doctrinarism (which we inflicted on them in large measure) it cannot do without a party guided by a science which has overwhelming-

ly met the test of life even from a pragmatic view as the very existence of a growing world system of socialism best proves.

It exists because with all its weaknesses our party has the most mature, most devoted, most tested Marxist membership and cadre in our country today.

It exists because with all our present isolation, with all the slanderous charges of "Moscow agent," with all our weaknesses which fed these charges, our party has a rich body of history and experiences not entirely unknown or unappreciated. It exists because our party, given the clear and firm leadership that is sorely lacking, has the capacity and the will to overcome its weaknesses.

The fight for establishing a correct line, for carrying it into life, for clarifying and uniting ourselves, for establishing a better system of organization, a proper relationship between leadership and membership, for confidence in itself—in a word, the fight for our party is the decisive question today. *Solution* of our pressing problems, *not dissolution* of our party is our present main need.

It is from this point of view that I want to take part in the current discussion on a number of questions.

1. *The question of a broader mass party of socialism.* I am in basic agreement with the manner in which it is projected in Comrade Dennis' report and further amplified in Comrade Blumberg's discussion articles. I think our task at present is to first of all establish clearly and realistically the perspective for such a party. Here again, as we have so often done in the past we can substitute wishful thinking for objective reality. I think this is being reflected in a tendency to treat this question as the sole and immediate solution to our party's present serious problems. This view sees not only the necessity, but bases its sense of urgency for the bringing into being of a broader party of socialism, primarily on the subjective needs of our party. To put it crudely it argues "We're in bad shape. Who knows in how many years, if ever, we can repair the damage done our party. There's only one answer and this is it."

We are in bad shape. How long it will take us to repair the damage depends on how well we learn from our experiences (as did our Chinese comrades) as well as the objective conditions that unfold.

But even if we were in far worse shape, even if we strained our guts, is that all or mainly all that's necessary to bring such a movement into existence? Haven't we learned anything from our experiences with the Progressive Party?

The need for a broader party of socialism existed "before" we got into "bad shape." It exists now, not as a panacea for our problems, but as an objective need for the American workers and people. It is wishful thinking as well as a desire to avoid coming to grips with extremely difficult problems which views such a party as the means for the dissolution of our woes and weaknesses. Aside from everything else, what a lone contribution we would be bringing to start a new party!

On the contrary, the solution of these woes and weaknesses constitutes one of the necessary pre-conditions for making it possible for our party to play its decisive role in the organization of such a party.

We are at present in the process of re-evaluation of many past attitudes and relationships on a number of important questions. In their own way, others are like-wise participating in such a re-evaluation. A period of internal examination, discussion and debate in which all clarify themselves and resolve their position is required. Likewise, a period of exchange of views, friendly debate, united and parallel activity on issues, informal discussion on the character and principles of such a party, among all socialist-minded groups and individuals is necessary. We should not forget we have just emerged into the stage of talking to and with these groups.

Our task, at this stage, is to unite, our party on a realizable perspective, on the fundamental character and principles we consider necessary for such a movement, and to actively engage in laying the basis for it.

2. *The question of democratic cen-*

tralism—The shocking revelations of the Khrushchev report combined with our party's own serious bureaucratic and undemocratic practices has raised the question "Is not the concept of democratic centralism basically at fault?"

If it is, it should be discarded. It certainly merits examination. At the outset, I think we should be careful not to attribute everything that's wrong to fundamental principles. A good deal has evolved from a historically developed method of work and system of leadership, that has long needed a deep probing and drastic overhauling. Our fund drives that have made the cost of party membership prohibitive, for one, cannot be ascribed to party principles of organization, its source however undoubtedly lies in sectarian concepts of party organization.

It seems to me there are three basic questions involved.

One, given the present leadership of forces in which Socialism has emerged as a world system and in which the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in our country has been greatly enhanced (and I whole-heartedly agree with that perspective) is it necessary to have the kind of party which places such stress upon ideological unity, discipline, centralization of action and authority?

Secondly, in view of international and our own experience, are centralism and democracy compatible?

Thirdly, Does democratic centralism fit a party in a country as ours which has a history of strong democratic traditions and concepts?

These are questions that require far more probing than I am individually capable of. The collective thinking of our entire party should be addressed to them. I offer my opinions in no way in an authoritative or final sense.

As regards the first question: It seems to me that while the question of democratic centralism is undoubtedly affected (as are all organizational forms by specific objective conditions) by

whether the prospective is one of peaceful transition or violent transition, it does not **DEPEND** on it. The prospective of a violent transition brings to the fore, emphasizes the centralized aspects, discipline, etc. Certainly, the prospective of a peaceful transition, can mean more stress on the democratic aspects and less upon the centralized. But peaceful transition does not and cannot mean **EASY** transition, **DEVOID OF SHARP CLASS STRUGGLES**. It does not mean capitulation by the most powerful and ruthless capitalist class in the world. It does not mean that the ideological and organizational task of winning the American working class to socialist thinking and surrounding it with the support of the overwhelming majority of the American people, will not be immense.

In a word, bringing about peaceful transition to socialism, is a peaceful revolution but a revolution none-the-less. For us, undoubtedly, it will be with the most favorable advantages because of the international relationship of forces that will probably exist, but that should not lead us to minimize the tremendous effort that will be required, the vast problems that will have to be surmounted, the sharp resistance that will have to be overcome both in the preliminary struggle to curtail and oust monopoly from its present position of political power by replacing it with a form of Democratic Peoples Front, and in the subsequent struggle for peaceful transition to socialism and the period of consolidation of socialist victory.

Does such a perspective hold forth the need for a party which by its ideological unity, its united will and action can impart the necessary clarity, firmness, determination and purpose to the American working class and people in achieving socialism in a huge country such as ours, with a ruthless, powerful and des-



perate capitalist class such as ours?

It is my opinion that the experiences of both the international movement which now is far more varied and richer than that of the Soviet Union, rich as that has been, as well as our own perspective, attest to the need of democratic centralism.

Here, it should be remembered that the Leninist concept of a party based upon democratic centralism has long ceased to be merely a Russian experience. It has been the basis upon which other parties besides the Russian have led their working class to victory and are building socialism as well as those parties which today are mass parties in capitalist lands. Not everywhere, nor at all times should it be applied alike. In our country, because of our traditions and for reasons that I've indicated, it is my opinion there is need for greater stress upon the democratic features than upon the centralized, but that is quite different from discarding them.

Which brings me to the second question. Has international experience as well as our own proven centralism and democracy incompatible? I do not believe it has proven them to be incompatible. I think it *has proven* the terrible dangers and results that flow from a distortion of democratic centralism in this case in the direction of centralism. It is possible to distort in the opposite direction. This I believe would be the case if democratic centralism were discarded.

Was it the Leninist principles of organization or drastic violation of those principles that opened the flood gates to Stalin's tyrannical rule?

Wasn't it a hideous distortion of democratic centralism that substituted one man rule for the collective thinking and decisions of the Central Committee of the CPSU?

Was it not a flagrant disregard for one of the basic principles of democratic centralism that did away with Party congresses for thirteen years?

Is it not the *restoration* of the Leninist principles of *democratic centralism* and the elimination of the distortions which is the essence of the corrections now taking place in the Soviet Union? Is this not the best

proof that democracy and centralism are not necessarily incompatible?

No form of organization, no organizational principles are immune from distortions. If we are seeking a set of organizational principles that in themselves will guarantee against undemocratic violations we are searching in vain. If we are looking for better *checks* and *guarantees*, the use of which will enable our party to more adequately guard against the repetition of these dangers and excesses, then I believe we are on a realizable path. There is no question in my mind that at this point there must be *particular stress* on the democratic aspect of democratic centralism and that specific measures should be adopted and placed in our constitution and party rules as well as certain existing rules enforced to drastically democratize our party. (I'll make some proposals later on).

Finally, does democratic centralism fit a party in such a country as ours which has a history of strong democratic centralism in principle (although the term may be) is not peculiarly Russian, anymore than it is now peculiarly Chinese, French or Polish. Nor is it peculiarly an American. The distortions are un-Russian as much as they are un-American, although each country can and does have its own particular brand (we certainly have ours). Just as we are learning to apply Marxism to fit the needs of our country, rather than our country to fit a quotation, so we have to learn to adopt organizational principles to our particular needs and conditions. I am as opposed to throwing away anything that is valid in a concept, as I am to the blind doctrinaire application of the letter of the law.

Our experiences (and we should judge primarily on this basis) in my opinion, have both proven the value of democratic centralism, as well as indicated certain inadequacies and the need for certain modification.

On the positive side, I think it has enabled us to bring to bear the unified will of the Party, that is obviously recognized and even often exaggerated by our enemies. This served to impart such vigor not only to our party, but thru it to every

movement in which Communists participated, that Communists were regarded as the most dedicated, most devoted, most hard-working, most self-sacrificing participants whether it was in the unemployed movement of the difficult depression days, the organization of the unorganized, the great struggles for Negro rights or the fight for peace and democratic rights. But bitter experiences have also raised challenging questions.

How can the atmosphere of freer expression of opinion prevail as a constant feature of our Party life, rather than result from explosions due to accumulated, pent up outburst released by a succession of costly experiences? How can differences with the party line on any of its aspects in between conventions be expressed? How can we overcome the bureaucratic relationship between higher and lower bodies? How can we develop a greater check upon and a more democratic choice in leadership? How can we provide better safeguards for the rights of party membership and protect them from the harsh, arbitrary and unjust disciplinary actions that destroyed, drove away and embittered countless people?

Our Party must above all come up with convincing, satisfactory answers to these questions if it is to restore and regain the confidence in the Party on the part of many and weakened on the part of most.

No set of answers can provide a blue-print or a built-in guarantee, for involved in these questions is a permanent struggle for democracy within the party, and against the influx of bourgeois influences, against constant bureaucratic pressures. But involved in it is also a necessary search for more suitable principles and forms of organizations. Based upon our experiences, we should, all of us, engage in socialist competition in providing the most adequate answers.

It is in this sense that I offer the following proposals for consideration as additional party rules:

1. Free expression of opinion must not only be permitted as a constant feature of party life, it must be *encouraged* and *protected*, provided it is not in conflict with the party's

basic aims and principles. There must be no disciplinary action taken against any one merely because of opinion. Disciplinary action should follow action harmful to the party, or the interests of the working class and nation. Anyone, any Party body, or any party leader using the weight of authority to stifle expression of opinion shall be called to account. In order to provide a medium for the constant expression of opinion, special party discussion bulletins (such as P.V., P.A.) shall be permanent features.

2. The right to differ and express that difference on basic party questions in between conventions, shall be restricted, but not eliminated. It shall be restricted in the sense that it will not be made a party-wide discussion question, unless it is the opinion of the higher bodies of the party or a certain agreed upon percentage of the membership that it should be reopened for general debate, in the case of which a special conference or convention may be called. However, individuals may continue to hold and express their views *within* the party, provided they abide by the decisions of the party conventions and do not attempt to mobilize the party against them. Party bodies and party members whose experience has led to their questioning the estimate or line of the party on any particular question, shall be permitted to request re-examination of the question. It shall be the duty of higher bodies to provide them an opportunity to air their views at a meeting of the higher body involved.

3. The decisions of higher bodies shall be binding on lower bodies in all cases involving basic party line as determined at conventions and on all broad matters of policy encompassing their jurisdiction. They shall not be binding on questions involving specific problems particular to the area, industry or organization involved. In the case of differences on the implementation of the line of the party, unless they are of such a decisive nature as to threaten the line itself, it shall be the decision of the particular body most directly involved that shall prevail.

4. All meetings of party bodies shall require a given quorum. Minutes and records of decisions and votes on questions shall be kept and made known to the party bodies concerned. In the case of the higher bodies, the essence of their deliberations and the views and votes of its members shall be made known to the membership (with discretionary measures permitted when it is in the party's interests).

Agendas will be organized as to guarantee sufficient time for discussion and questions to leaders making reports. All leadership on all levels shall be elected by secret ballot. No leader elected by open ballot shall be recognized. No slates will be issued, although the incumbent leadership shall be publicly introduced and identified and their records and voting on questions, activity, etc. be made available to those involved in the choice of leadership. Leaders will be responsible to the particular bodies which elected them and it

shall be the right of those bodies when a sufficient number are of that opinion, to raise the question of removal or recall of any particular leader.

No member may be deprived of his membership or in any way be disciplined unless he is guilty of proven harmful acts against the party or the interests of the working class or nation. In accordance with our concept of justice, the burden of the proof will rest with the accuser. No action shall be taken without a fair trial before the body in which the accused is a member. It shall be the duty of higher bodies to check any disciplinary actions for infraction of just procedures and to correct all of them promptly. Members shall have the right of hearing which must be given in the quickest possible time.

Any party body having unjustly dealt with a member shall itself be held to account and the name of the one unjustly disciplined be cleared before the party.



On the National Committee Statement

I would like to comment briefly on one or two aspects of the resolution of the National Committee of the CPUSA, known as "U.S. Communists View on Soviet Statement," adopted at its meeting held July 19th.

The statement of the Soviet party that the U.S. national committee commented on, was a reply to criticism offered by brother Communist Parties, with regard to events in the S.U. as revealed by the 20th Congress, and the subsequent speech made by Khrushchev at an executive session of the congress.

The resolution of the national committee of the CPUSA correctly points out,

"They, (the enemies of the S.U.) are trying to fish in what they believe to be troubled waters of the International working class movement hoping to sow discord and strife between the Communist and workers parties of different countries."

It is not surprising that those who sought and worked for the death of a socialist system, since its birth, will use current events to "prove" the superiority of the system of exploitation and oppression. One must expect that the enemies of socialism will muster all at their command to "prove" that the violations of civil liberties in the S. U., under the Stalin era, are an integral part of a socialist society.

Yet, there are those of us who are genuinely troubled by events in the Soviet Union. We seek but cannot find the answers to-day. Whether one accepts fully or not the answers of our Soviet comrades, one finds it difficult to explain the silence of the Soviet leaders on the atrocities committed in the field of Jewish culture. Questions are raised. Doubts created. Doubts, questioning the character of society existing in the Soviet Union, today.

To close one's eyes to these facts

is childish or plain ignorance. Yet, in our bewilderment and mental torture it is well to remember the words of Palmiro Togliatti:

"Socialist society is not only a society composed of men, but a society in the process of development in which objective and subjective vestiges continue to operate and it is subject to vicissitudes of history," and further . . .

"But whatever the answer given to this question there can be no doubt that *there can never be any justification for concluding that a return to the capitalist organization of society is necessary.*" (Emphasis mine)

Thus, in our anxiety to get answers, we true believers in socialism, must guard against falling prey to professional anti-Sovieteers.

We must guard against a feeling of despondency and disillusionment in socialist society. Thus, the resolution of the national committee correctly warns against the hopeful dreams of the enemies of socialism.

So much to the good.

Now, it seems to this writer, that the national leadership of the American C. P. does not yet fully comprehend its relationship to Communist Parties in socialist lands generally and to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union specifically.

In its anxiety to "balance" matters the national committee in its resolution referred to above, fails to take note of serious concern among true friends of the S. U. relative to the Jewish question.

For instance: Pravda published an article by Eugene Dennis. The references to the Jewish question, in this article, are omitted. Why? Yes, many true friends of the S. U. want to know—WHY?

The statement of the Soviet party makes no mention of this question. So . . .

What does the resolution of the

American party say on this matter?

"In connection with the questions analyzed in the CPSU resolution, we believe, will receive further study and discussion. Among these, the happenings in the sphere of Jewish cultural institutions and their leaders."

The world is aware, and friends of the S. U. troubled, because the Soviet leaders have consistently by-passed and ignore this question.

Would it be wrong for the American Communist leaders to question a brother party, on a crime committed, alien to Marxist ideology?

Does the national committee of the C. P. truly believe that by stating, "we believe that the Jewish question will receive further study and consideration" it departs from past practices in which the American party refrained from criticism of the party of the Soviet Union?

Obviously, it is not a question of criticism for criticism's sake. Neither is it a matter of showing our "independence" by criticism of the Soviet party.

It is a fact that people are disturbed because the Jewish question has been ignored by the comrades of the Soviet Union, at least publicly.

True friends of the Soviet Union have a right to expect of the national committee a display of sensitivity, which questions sharply why this matter is ignored.

Does the national committee truly believe that by expressing a hope that the matter will receive further study and consideration, allays doubts, and enhances its prestige?

If so—then the national committee, I am sorry to say, lives in a vacuum, oblivious of the realities of life.

If the national committee feels it does not answer the needs of the moment—then why say it?

To whom is the national committee paying lip service? Let's get something straight.

This writer, like many others, is aware that only the leadership of the Soviet party can answer this question. We do not expect the answer to be given by our leadership.

Nor does one expect the leadership of the American Communists to launch an attack on the party of the Soviet Union.

One does expect the leadership of the American party to call sharply to the attention of a brother party, in this case the Soviet party, that the destruction of Jewish culture and the barbarous murder of the flower of Jewish writers in a socialist state—calls for an explanation. *It cannot be ignored.*

One does expect our leadership to make it clear to the party of the Soviet Union that the deletion of the section dealing with the Jewish question, in reprinting Dennis' article, poses serious questions for the American party, plays havoc, and feeds the enemies of the Soviet Union. The memories of persecution of the Jewish people are too fresh, the wounds too deep. When such acts are committed in a Socialist state, the pain is so much greater.

Because we believe in the ultimate goal of socialism, because we believe the Soviet Union is a socialist state, because we have witnessed steps taken by Soviet Union to correct the evils of the past, we have the right, nay the duty, to question, to prod, to insist that this matter not be ignored and an answer given.

The leaders of the American Communists may not be able to answer this question, but these same leaders, have the obligation to make the Soviet party aware, that by ignoring this matter, publicly,

They, (the Soviet leaders) accentuate the agony of thousands of souls, both Jews and non-Jews, who truly believe in socialism.

By ignoring this matter, the leadership of the S. U. lend themselves to the charge of disregarding the feelings of the American Jewish people. It feeds the professional anti-sovieteers, it undermines confidence in the Soviet Union, it undermines socialist

thought in America.

One expects the national committee, to say this, or something to that effect to the leaders of the Soviet party.

To say it in a spirit of friendship, a spirit of concern, a spirit of international working class solidarity in a spirit of equal relationship between two brother parties.

To say, we believe this question will receive further study, is to say nothing. It would be better left unsaid.

After a consistent ignoring of this question, after failure to confirm in the Soviet press, the news published in the Warsaw papers, in the statement by the Soviet party, for the national committee to say what it did is to abdicate its responsibilities.

It is a hesitation to express criticism of a brother communist party, it is a tendency to perpetuate a relationship between two parties, which has proven not to be very constructive, to say the least.

It is a fear to open new avenues of thinking. To be sure it is a paralysis of thinking.

There are those who argue that the reason this problem is so acute in New York, is because the bulk of the New York membership is Jewish. Aside from the fact that it is not wrong for Jewish communists to feel keenly about this matter, the comrades who argue thus, prove, "the poverty of their philosophy."

The commonly referred to as the Jewish question, the destruction of Jewish culture and the killing of Jewish writers is alien to Marxist ideology, incompatible with decent human behavior, Jew or non-Jew. It is a replica of Barbarism.

One need not be Jewish to feel sharp pain at such acts in a Socialist state. To cite the Jewish membership as the reason for crisis, is as insulting as it is un-Marxian.

The resolution of the national committee further believes that

"The origins and effects of past violations of socialist law and prin-

ciple, will receive further study."

No doubt. As a matter of fact since the 20th Congress the Soviet leaders have taken a number of steps to correct misdeeds of the past. (This writer is among those who believes in the ability of the Soviet government to restore socialist law and individual civil liberties.)

But, here again, the national committee, as expressed in the resolution, seems to be oblivious of the profound disturbance within the left.

Surely, the national committee must be aware, that the character of Soviet society is questioned:

1. Can all the violations of socialist law—be attributed to one individual?

2. Were the crimes committed a violation of socialist law—or a departure from socialism?

3. If the present Soviet leaders were helpless to correct the situation—yet, why did they continue to build Stalin as the Demi-God?

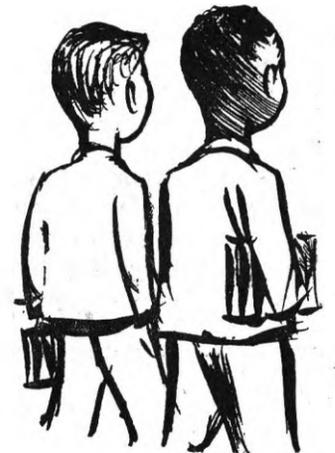
4. Why did the brother parties learn the content of the Khrushchev speech, made in executive session, through the medium of the U.S. State Department?

5. Is the economic mode of production sufficient to characterize a society as socialist—if in the same society the people are deprived of their liberties for a long time?

These, and many other questions are raised today in the left.

Again, one does not expect the national committee of the CPUSA to answer all those questions.

One does expect the national committee to pose some of these questions,



to explore, to do some thinking of its own.

One does expect the national committee to urge the leaders of the Soviet party, in a spirit of comradeship, to speak out, to explain, how in the world was it possible for a socialist state to depart so much from its course.

The resolution of the national committee, of course, does nothing of the kind.

This writer parts with those who seem to believe (they never admit it) that the way to convince the American people, that ours is an American party, and not subservient to a foreign power, is to assume a supercritical attitude toward the Soviet Union.

Such an attitude would serve no purpose and be wrong besides. In the first place it would convince nobody. Secondly, as true socialists, who accept Marxism as a science and a guide in the struggles of the working class for emancipation, we are proud of the achievements of the first socialist state. We should not be critical of the Soviet Union just to prove our independence, or to satisfy those who will never be satisfied, unless they live to see the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Thus, criticism, per se, of the Soviet Union, would negate our own socialist principles, it would negate the historic role played by the Soviet Union in the progress of humanity, it would negate the role of the Soviet Union, in helping to avert war today, it would tend to weaken our own belief in the superiority of the socialist system.

After this is said it should be stated, that because of our own stupidities, millions of Americans, unfortunately do believe that each time the Soviet party sneezes we get a cold.

We should welcome comradely criticism from any Marxist source—from any part of the world. We should be equally ready to offer comradely criticism (when in our opinion such criticism is justified) to other Marxist organizations, including socialist lands.

This the resolution of the national committee does not do.

Gaps Between Leaders and Members

REMARKS BY K. OF DISTRIBUTIVE REGIONAL BOARD
AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE BOARD

THE discussions that have been launched at all levels are the first steps in the direction of curing many of the major ills of the past—beginning with the correction of the serious error of by-passing the lower echelons of the Party when fighting out policy and line.

In my opinion this has been one of the most deadly errors—and tended to keep the lower levels imprisoned in a practicalist approach to problems, with little or no application of theory—as opposed to the approach on the top levels of 'pure' theory divorced in the main from concrete day to day practice in the shops (since the majority of these comrades have not been in shops in years). Summed up, this became the straitjacket of doctrinairism and dogmatism we have all experienced.

The tremendous gap in the levels of our Party reflected itself, for example, in the disagreements with the top 65 union leadership. The decision of whether, when and around which issue to break was made solely by the top levels of the Party and handed down to the lower levels to be ACTED upon (without question or discussion) much as orders are issued to privates in the Army.

"Theirs not to reason why—theirs but to do and die"—that old rhyme describing the fate of the rank and file in the military, was the order of the day. This contemptuous attitude toward the thinking, experience and suggestions of the rank and file, reflected itself throughout the entire struggle prior to, and for sometime after, the break with the union leadership.

This finally culminated in the writing and publication of the now infamous '53 PA article dealing with the 65 leadership, without prior consultation with the 65 Party organization.

Again it fell to our lot to take the brunt of the attacks—losing numerous friends among the workers in the shops, losing our jobs, and finding all manner of difficulties placed in

our path by the union leadership in order to drive us out of the Union.

The article provided the union leadership with a hatchet on a silver platter. They used it without hesitation. The bosses could not have helped them to accomplish what this article did.

Instead of a thoroughgoing, self-critical evaluation on the part of those responsible for the article, which has never been forthcoming, we find the tendency still exists to dump the major burden of these serious errors upon the rank and file.

Certainly we paid dearly for this refusal to encourage and permit frank and creative exchange of thinking and experience between the lower and top levels of the Party in this situation.

Very often new forces were placed right along with our old forces way out in left field at membership meetings, crew meetings, etc. This added to the targets provided the 65 union leadership. Many fine forces were handicapped for years, as a result, and have only begun to come into their own in the past two years. Some important forces were lost to us completely.

In the past three years the 65 comrades—slowly and painfully—have searched and found the ways and means—by gearing our program to grievances and economic issues in the shops—to rebuild ties with the workers. We learned that our clubs were the key, the very nerve center, without which we could accomplish nothing. We have slowly and steadily made important progress in raising the status of our clubs to one of honor and respect. If we were to keep up a steady pace of building ties with the workers, learning from them and in turn, studying and interpreting what we learned in order to work more correctly, we found we needed to consult constantly with our comrades in the clubs. We, therefore, took the path of building our clubs into the

ideological leaders—the policy makers for their markets and industries—where they function in constant consultation with the workers. As a result recent union-wide elections indicate an impressive increase in the number of militants and progressives elected to stewardship.

There is, of course, a long way yet to go. It seems to me when we in 65 cease to be a phenomenon in this respect, and the whole Party apparatus is oriented upon the club, with the greatest emphasis on the industrial and shop club, then and only then will we take giant strides.

An integral part of this question is inner party democracy, a sturdy bulwark of which should be our Party constitution. This has fallen into disuse for a number of reasons that certainly bear detailed examination. Among other things it seems to have been a victim of our rigid dogmatism and over-estimation of the danger of fascism.

How many of our comrades know what the Constitution of the Communist Party of the U.S. contains, requires, guarantees them as members?

In my nine years in the Party I have never participated in, nor witnessed, a secret ballot election of leaders, either to club positions, or other posts of responsibility, although Article VI, Section I of the Party Constitution clearly states this as a RIGHT of membership. I have questioned many oldtimers as well as new members regarding this. Invariably they express amazement that this section exists at all. Certainly a thorough reading and discussion of our Party Constitution is a must for all comrades. Yet neither the National Committee Report nor the State Committee Report even so much as mention the existence of such a Constitution.

Not too long ago membership dues were increased. Resistance to this was widespread. Here again directives were issued to the cadre on lower levels. The question was placed in such a way that to object became tantamount to disloyalty to the Party. If this type of thing had occurred in our Union we would not have hesitated to raise questions of constitution, and properly so. How are we to justify this to non-Party people, let alone Party members? Surely this ab-

sence of a constitution in practice could hardly persuade them of the democratic character of our Party. I am sure other comrades could give many other examples. I should like to see a draft resolution forthcoming from the National Committee as well as the State Committee on this question, so that the comrades could discuss it, make suggestions for changing and strengthening the Party constitution, so that it can be properly dealt with at the forthcoming convention.

Finally, on the question of examining and studying the American scene—

In the past, we had the habit of jumping to conclusions on all manner or subjects, and then forcing, pushing and squeezing the realistic square pegs of the facts of American life into the preconceived round holes we had already fashioned.

Today, in the process of trying to break with this most unscientific approach—we are still bound by the conditioning of the past, which will continue to crop up unless we are very vigilant. An example of this is a new phrase put forward in the National Committee Report and reappearing since in other reports and comments of comrades. This is the phrase 'ebb and flow.'

To me the use of this term is correct when applied to the tides of great amorphous bodies of water—oceans, seas, etc., which are completely subject to the gravitational pull of the moon. In an ocean, one drop of water is identical with another.

The people of the United States however, are no amorphous blob or mass, identical with each other, and subject to the gravitational pull of one single unified body. On the contrary, in examining our errors we are beginning to see that refusing to recognize the differences among the people and their leadership—contradictions, stresses, strains, etc.—prevented us from making a proper estimate.

'Ebb and flow' doesn't represent a new look at the situation, but rather flows from the old error of seeing everything as the same, at one extreme or another, with no shadings, no contradictions.

Lenin's theory of the zig-zag development among the people, it seems to me, continues to hold true, and

more accurately reflects the varied levels of movements forward, and retreats, some partial, on the part of the people of the U.S. In this instance, only harm can be done by phrase-making for the sake of a new look.

On the other hand, in examining the special conditions in the U.S., our LACK OF EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE of Social Democracy as it is expressed right here in the U.S., has cost us dearly. It is this that, in my opinion, led us into the trap of lumping all labor leaders together, and made it possible for us to accept lock, stock and barrel the definition in all its aspects of the "criminal nature of Social Democracy" as it flourished elsewhere. This prevented us from seeing just where and how we could move forward on common areas of agreement. A thorough study of Social Democracy in the U.S., its source, history and growth has yet to be made and quickly. Without such clarity we run the risk we cannot afford: of floating to and fro like flotsam and jetsam—from one end of the world to the other—without a clearcut compass to guide us on our course in the United Front we are correctly projecting.

In the same way, we need a thorough analysis of the Farm question in the U.S. We have neglected this question despite the developing crises on an almost daily basis in the farm area—yet surely a real grasp of this question would help us for example to determine its relationship and potential as an ally to the question of organizing the South; would lend additional clarity to the militant upsurge of the Negro people in the south.

While arguing for close examination of the American scene, surely we should be able to avoid the kind of mechanical parallel made in the State Report which compares the recent period through which we have come with the famous march of the Chinese Army. These are by no stretch of the imagination the same, nor in my opinion, is there any basis for comparison. To mention just a few obvious facts: a) we have not participated in an armed uprising; b) we have not moved as a military force

(Continued on page 12)

The Jewish Mass Movement

By A MASS WORKER

Schrank's report opens up a great many avenues of thought concerning past policies and actions. The one I am particularly concerned with is the fundamental position that has been taken with relation to the Jewish question and the question of Israel, if indeed it can be called that.

Schrank does not mention it in one single instance, yet by inference and inference alone, can the reader see the broader implications concerning basic policy.

Mass membership organizations, fund-raising organizations, cultural and educational organizations, and political organizations, all devoted to the Jewish sphere exclusively, have been, it seems to me, neglected or shunted aside from the mainstream of our work. Here and there have some of our people undertaken activity in some of the Jewish organizations, but nearly always in those few where they could find friends, or where they could find the closest unanimity on ideas concerning some basic policies that were being carried out.

We had numbers of our co-workers in certain Jewish organizations and helping progressives in organization and membership work. Nevertheless, while these actions were important, the Jewish field itself, en masse, was neglected to a great extent.

Zionist bodies were almost completely forgotten. The meaning of Zionism itself was not even put under evaluation with a completely changed scene since the establishment of the State of Israel. The *raison d'être* of the various Zionist bodies was forgotten. The political struggle between the various Zionist bodies was not even thought of or known about in many instances. The links between Jewry all over the world, including the socialist countries, and Israel were not analyzed nor assessed. The study of socialist movements, that is the counterpart of the socialist parties of Israel, in this country were seldom mentioned or analyzed.

Grievous error and mistake is made

when we realize that the counterpart of Mapam in this country—Hashomer Hatzair and the Americans for a Progressive Israel, are true friends of the Socialist states and sufficient areas of agreement exist to form coalitions and work together on any number of projects, and where our thoughts and beliefs may be projected and promulgated.

In another area, has anyone of our own people attempted an analysis of the upswing in Jewish consciousness that has prevailed these many years? The tremendous number of Jewish centers built, Hebrew taught, Jewish literature produced, etc. The significance of this phenomena, the reasons for it, and its potentialities? Have discussions on these questions really been analytical and have we been appraised of it? I don't think so.

We have had plenty of writings on Israel in certain political aspects, but have neglected others as regards the cultural and spiritual ties between Israel and the Jews everywhere else in the world. New definitions of Zionism and renewed aspirations have been coming up since the end of the 24th World Zionist Congress. Have these been discussed?

The thought has been ventured that there is such a thing as a Jewish National Liberation Movement. I don't doubt that these few words can indicate and of themselves provoke a tremendous amount of discussion. Has there been one, is there one, can there be one? What role does Zionism play in these thoughts. Is it pure nationalism or is there something a bit more far-reaching? What is our role in these mass organizations (those of us that are there) and should more of us be there?

Another question that bothers me is the one, "Is there such a thing as a Jewish vote?" If there is, to what extent and what kind of role can be played in the formation of a mass political line there?

The leaders of the Jewish organizations can be lumped together un-

der the various headings of liberals, social democrats, Democrats, Republicans, socialists, reformists, etc. Nevertheless, the rank and file of most of these organizations can be swayed and moved in the direction that they themselves are seeking and *seeking they are!*

Our left sectarian mistakes are and have been opened up glaringly to the light of day. Our practical work in the Jewish organizations has hardly been touched. We have many, many allies there. They are making valuable contributions to the forces of peace and democracy. We cannot let this field go neglected or we shall miss a golden opportunity.

Within the Jewish field, the problems of civil rights, segregation, foreign policy, peace and political activity are brought forth in no uncertain terms. We must be part of this field and work actively in it. The methods and practical application will follow as a matter of course.

GAPS BETWEEN LEADERS AND MEMBERS

(Continued from page 11)

to establish ourselves in another part of the country with the aid of a hard pressed peasantry; c) illiteracy was not a major obstacle to us.

Let us draw the all important lessons we must, without this type of comparison, which subtly but surely adds to the confusion.

If we must have our picturesque similes, let us draw them from the rich store of folklore and history of our own people, Negro and white, worker and farmer.

I am confident we will emerge from these discussions a healthier, sounder and more Marxist Communist Party of the U.S.

K.

Distributive Regional Board

ON THE VANGUARD ROLE

A campaign for Negro representation in our area was recently reviewed. A sharp difference as to its correctness was revealed in the leading party committees. The Negro candidate was badly defeated. The Negro community did not unite around the candidate, and the white voters, who were necessary for victory, were not won away from the incumbent, white, labor-backed candidate.

The comrades who defended the campaign readily admitted some errors in judgement—but felt strongly that it was correct for the party to have supported the candidacy from the beginning to the end. While the other comrades felt that once again we had run out into left field.

I agree with the latter—we were way out (and not in front!)

But I think the basic fault lay not with the comrades who fought for this particular Negro candidate, but with the original concept which we all shared prior to this—of the "vanguard role" of the party. There was also a mechanical acceptance of Negro representation as such, regardless of candidate, position of labor, conditions of Negro-white unity, etc.

It is a one-sided view at best, to conceive of the vanguard role of the party as mainly that of initiating an advanced program and then pressing for it with everything we have. It ignores all else that is necessary in order for the party to play a vanguard role.

The classical definition from Foundations of Leninism—even if we accept this as applying to our Party, in our country, and at this time, means much more—"detachment of the working class—closely bound up with it by all the fibres of its being . . . the Party would cease to be a party if the distinction between the Party and the masses is widened into a gap. . . . The Party cannot lead the class if not connected with non-Party masses, and if these masses do not accept its leadership." (my emphasis)

I feel that this answers the argument that the Party would have been *tailing* if it waited for the Negro peo-

ple and leadership to be united, if it waited for the labor movement and the white voters to support a Negro candidate. And I cannot agree that the Party would betray its role if it failed to support every Negro candidate.

Why do I think our one-sided view of the vanguard led us astray?

First—the Party was not in a position to *lead*—the basic condition of leadership is *acceptance* of its leadership.

Second—I do not think the Party should contribute to dividing the Negro people from labor—in this case supporting a candidate not only without labor support—but against a labor-backed candidate.

Third—I do not think that this was the issue to unite the largest sections of the Negro people or build Negro-white unity. The demand for a candidate for this office did not flow out of the rising tide of the Negro liberation movement, out of the great organizations, the NAACP, the Urban League, the many others.

The white peoples organizations which had begun to move on the desegregation struggles had not moved in support of the issue of Negro representation in general, let alone in support of a particular candidate.

And last of all—when already in the early stages of the campaign it became obvious that all this *necessary* support was not forthcoming at this time, we did not alter our course, nor shift the emphasis. We did not even help make it a good educational campaign for the future.

The Chinese Party long ago learned something about vanguardism. Their idea of learning starts with learn-

ing from the people. The practical experience of the people comes first—then the generalizations, to quote "correct leadership can only be developed 'from the masses to the masses.' This means summing up the scattered and unsystematized views—then taking the resulting ideas back to the masses, explaining and popularizing them until the masses embrace the ideas as their own—stand up for them and translate them into action and thru the action—their correctness is tested—then once more summing up and once again taking them back—and so on over and over again, (!) so that each time their ideas emerge with greater concreteness, and become more vital and meaningful." This is patience and modesty!!

I think our Party should not *wait until*, but *work until* support for Negro candidates is developed, without our setting a timetable either. Many ways can be found to reach the voters of our community well in advance of a specific campaign, with material that will popularize the gains from increased Negro representation, and how it would advance the interests of white voters.

In the meantime, patient work in the mass organizations, in the labor movement, should proceed to develop support for such issues. Many who cling to the "vanguard role" of the Party contradict themselves in that they would object to the Party issuing material in its own name on an issue they were "leading" on. I for one don't see an unknown, unnamed vanguard. Until things change a bit, I think we can safely lay aside the idea of "vanguard" for some time to come.

BILLIE GREEN



A New Situation and Perspectives

By GEORGE MARTIN

In my opinion, the most significant thing about the discussion we are now having in our Party, and for that matter which all Communist Parties are having around the twentieth congress, is that a new qualitatively different world situation confronts us today. Such a new situation calls for a new approach in our methods of work and a reevaluation of old concepts. Certainly one of the things which some of our full time functionaries could do in contributing to the general discussion would be to start to make a study of the new economic and political developments in the world.

Generally speaking, three outstanding features meet the eye: the further development of productive forces with the advent of atomic energy; the changing relationship between world capitalism and world socialism and the beginning of a large scale break up of the colonial system.

The obvious effect of atomic energy is in its military application which coupled with the adaption of electronics to guided missiles raises for the first time in the history of man the possibility that a full scale war would result in the complete destruction of life upon this planet. Secondly, the peaceful application of atomic energy will further intensify the basic contradictions within the capitalist economy. Thus the advent of atomic energy points anew that the capitalist relations of production which by its very nature strives toward war and profit is in complete disharmony with the forces of production. The coming into being of atomic energy as a productive force sharpens the contradiction between the relations of production and the forces of production. Atomic energy which was brought into being by the capitalists themselves as a weapon to further perpetuate their system has turned into a force which intensifies the necessity to abolish capitalism.

In November nineteen seventeen the first victorious socialist revolution took place bringing the Soviet Union

into existence, and breaking the front of world capitalism. This historic event brought a new contradiction to light in the development of society, the contradiction between world capitalism and world socialism. At that time world capitalism was very big and strong while world socialism was very small and weak. World capitalism was the principle aspect of the contradiction and dominated the scene. But even then the small but growing force of world socialism was already exerting a profound effect upon the world. After the second world war a new wave of socialist revolution rocked the world. The people's democracies of Eastern Europe as well as the People's Republic of China, Korea and Viet Nam came into existence. This has changed the relationship of forces between world capitalism and world socialism appreciably. Though world socialism is not stronger than world capitalism at the present moment, world capitalism has ceased to be the principle aspect of the contradiction. The two systems we might say have reached a point of approximate equilibrium with world capitalism still enjoying a slight edge. However the significant factor of all this is the effect of the new influence exerted by world socialism. It is this new strength which makes possible the idea of peaceful coexistence and prevention of another war as well as the possibilities for new and peaceful roads to socialism.

BREAK-UP OF COLONIALISM

The third aspect in the new situation is the breaking up of the world colonial system. The development of this trend has only really started with the end of the second world war and its full influence will only be felt in the years to come as it matures and grows. However we have already been experiencing the effect the neutral, anti-imperialist nations have been having on world affairs. One of the factors making a large scale break up

of the colonial system possible is the growing strength of world socialism. It must also be remembered that the growth and development of the colonial nations which will free themselves will be taking place in a world strongly influenced by world socialism. They thus are not developing along classical capitalist lines and are a very important force in the prevention of another war. As the colonial system begins to break up the source of super profits for the imperialists will disappear and the contradictions of world capitalism will further intensify.

A major war must be averted if life is to be preserved. The new strength and influence of the socialist world together with the colonial nations and the determination of the peoples of the world generally makes it possible to avert such a war. The growth of world socialism also makes possible new roads to socialism for the working class in the capitalist countries.

World capitalism has suffered tremendous losses and the contradictions of the system have intensified greatly. However it is still very powerful and dangerous. The danger of war is still very great. We are confronted with the great responsibility of preserving world peace and fostering peaceful coexistence. Great battles for colonial liberation and titanic class struggles in all capitalist countries loom on the horizon.

ANTI-MONOPOLY STRUGGLE

The general direction of this struggle in the United States will be toward an anti-monopoly coalition. Though there is a lot of confusion on this subject our country has been traditionally anti-big business. Even the Department of Justice has to go through the motions of trying to enforce the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. During the New Deal period anti-big business moods were especially strong. Big business has always been looked upon with the fear and as some-

thing which should be controlled, particularly in the field of politics. The struggle of the workers, poor farmers and the Negro people as well as that of the city middle class and small business groups continuously run up against big business as their major enemy. Eventually these forces must unite in a struggle to curb the power of American big business. Out of such a struggle we hope to see a major political realignment in this country. It is also through such a struggle that the conditions for a broad mass party of socialism based on a Marxist approach to American conditions will emerge.

PARTY'S FUTURE

What role will our Party play in these events? Today we find ourselves weakened and isolated from the mainstream of American life. What steps can we take to change this situation, to insure that we play an increasingly important role in the struggles to come? We believe that the role of the Marxists is indispensable in the development of these events. How are we going to guarantee the role of the Marxists?

In order to have an influence upon the future the Communist Party must take steps to strengthen its organization, its ideology and its prestige. This article does not purport to have the answers to these questions; no one person does. However several ideas are put forth as a part of the general discussion with the hope that they will help to strengthen our Party.

One of the things that has marred our past activity has been the lack of real discussion and criticism involving all sections of the Party, particularly when related to questions of basic policy. This has deprived the entire Party of the benefits of the experience and thinking of the bulk of the Party members, especially those engaged in trade union and mass work. The Party leadership must constantly take the initiative in guaranteeing an atmosphere of discussion and criticism. Such an atmosphere will be a check against bureaucracy and will insure that the Party will be aware of what the American people are thinking.

The main direction of the work of the Party should be in the trade un-

ions and the various mass organizations. This will help our members break their own personal isolation with the American people; helping them to understand what the people are thinking and doing and instilling a respect for the ideas of other people. The sad fact is that many members of our Party have been living in their little private worlds and have no real knowledge of what is going on around them in their own communities. The extent to which the Party will be able to play a leading role on the American scene will certainly be changed as the activities of our members become a part of the mainstream of American life.

In developing an American party our educational department faces an important task. This is the job of developing a Marxist understanding of the American scene. An intensive educational campaign must be carried out in the Party to give our members an understanding of American history and the history of the American labor movement. Such a campaign must help our members to become familiar with the works of our great American writers. We must

strive to use language that is not only geared to the understanding of some few in the Party but must be expressed in a way that any person could read and understand.

Finally the Party should find popular ways of bringing itself and its ideas back into the public eye. This is necessary in order that we may combat the foreign agent slander, and as a part of the struggle to win acceptability and recognition. One of our big weaknesses has been the substituting of Party action for mass action. We have held rallies, forums, picket lines, demonstrations and boycotts, and have hailed these as public acts led by the Party, while in reality they were merely actions carried out almost exclusively by Party members and some of their friends. In most cases these acts alienated us from our fellow citizens. If we are to play our role of raising the consciousness of the American people, and of showing them the correct path, we must win their confidence. The Carnegie Hall debate was a good step in the right direction. Public moves by the Party must help raise public consciousness but must not alienate itself by not considering the level of the people.



SOME PROPOSALS

The Communist movement in the U.S. is faced by two great phenomena:

1. the great increase in strength and area of the world socialist sector.
2. the devastating blow which came like "a bolt from the blue" on the revelations about Stalin, the cult of the individual and the excesses in the S.U.

Facing up to an evaluation of these two phenomena is a huge task for all of us. The great increase in the strength and vitality of the communist-socialist-"neutralist" sector is a fact of great promise and hope for the future. The revelations about Stalin's excesses and brutalities will take a long time to forget. It is a sordid story of twenty years in which all of us unknowingly participated. A whole generation of Soviet communists grew up with the idea that Stalin was a great, idolized leader. Many of them went to their deaths in battle against Fascism with the name of Stalin on their lips and all of us looked to him as the leader of the world Communist movement. It is with great sorrow that we have to face up to the cruel awakening to the truth as brought about by Krushchev's denunciations and it will be a long time before we lose that feeling of betrayal of our faith in one man.

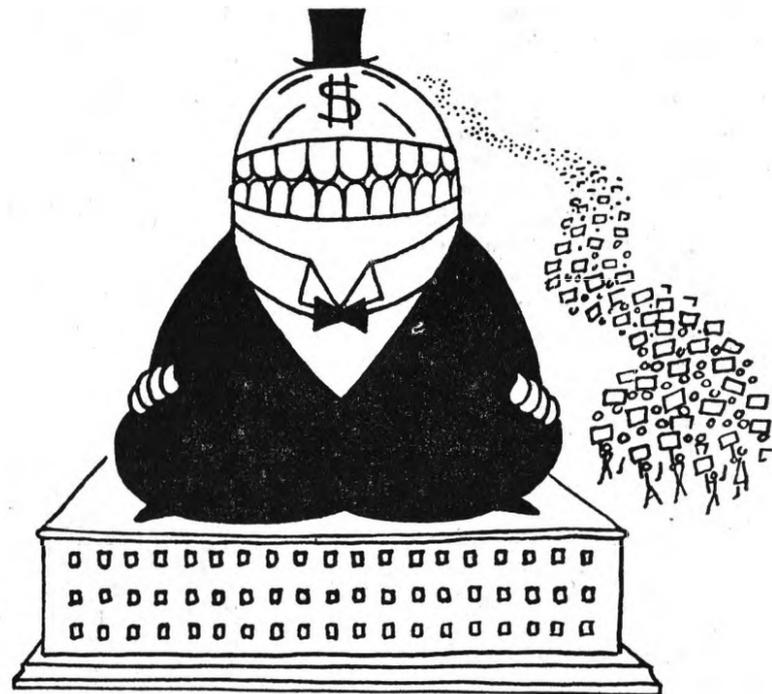
* * *

I think that while there is much to be criticized about our struggle against Fascism and war in preceding period, all was not as dark as some comrades make out. For after all, the full force of the *strongest class of monopoly capital in the world* was thrown against us. While many comrades, in their letters and articles, make mention of this fact, in their criticisms of this period, they tend to minimize or forget it. The truth of the matter is that we suffered huge losses, mainly because the capitalist class succeeded in driving a wedge between the communists and the rest of the people. They brought all the weapons they had, including war, to their aid. This has been the experi-

ence of all working class parties in periods of darkest reaction as was the case, for example, of the Bolshevik party after 1906 in Russia.

I firmly believe that with all of our mistakes of left-sectarianism and isolation, in the main, an isolation forced upon us by sheer weight of numbers and persecution unparalleled in American history, we have gained much in courage and experience. So, in taking a backward look, let us not forget the heroic, selfless conduct of our top leadership who stood up fearlessly and staunchly confident against the class enemy—let us not forget our fight for democracy and free speech and the right to peaceably assemble around Union Square, our Peekskills and our staunch and principled struggle against the murder of the Rosenbergs and against the cruel betrayal of the American people by monopoly in foisting upon us and the world the war against the Korean people.

We must quickly but thoroughly find the correct orientation, as Marx-



ists, on the following questions:

1. Our relationship with Liberals, progressive Democrats and Republicans and socialist-oriented groups.
2. Our relationship with the working class and the organized trade union movement. I believe that, in the quickest possible manner, leadership cadres must be developed of our people who are in the *larger* factories. They should be brought into all levels of leadership from top to bottom.
3. Our relationship with the Negro people and a reexamination of the theoretical concept of Self-Determination of the Negro People in the Black Belt, which reexamination is long overdue and sadly lacking.
4. An *organized*, systematic study from top to bottom must be made of the economic situation in the U.S. both immediate past, present and perspective for future.
5. A study from top to bottom must be made of the American road to Socialism and how we can concretely apply the lessons learned to the present and period immediately ahead.

Our branch is seriously tackling some of the above questions.

A Letter

Dear Editor:

With the Daily and the Worker becoming better daily, with more clearly phrased news and editorials, more active participation by the readers in "all kinds of criticism," self-criticism and constructive criticism, our paper is becoming more enjoyable to read through.

We're missing the boat. The 20th Congress was based on world events that have already become a fact, in spite of some of Stalin's errors and wrongs in his later years and the "cult of the individual" business. Socialism on a world scale is moving ahead in influence, very rapidly. But we American progressives here are doing very little except beating our breasts and praising those who do the best criticism of the Soviet Union.

We American Communists have got to present a program to the American people. That means to Communists, non-Communists and even anti-Communists; the labor movement generally and the most important ally of labor and the Negro people. The Negro people are fighting all over the Southland for the completion of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. And it's just as true today as when Marx said it that labor in the white skin will never be free as long as labor in the black skin is enslaved.

Unless labor supported by all progressives including the middle class go all out in support of the full rights of the Negro in the south to full equal citizenship (also voting rights by removing the Poll Tax and all other voting restrictions and that's very important) we will never have full democracy, neither for the Negro people or the mass of poor whites in the South, nor will we have much of it in the North.

Let's analyze it. During the recon-

struction period after the civil war, the Negro people were the majority in the South and supported by the poor whites elected many Negroes to the City and State Legislature as well as to Congress. There it was that Universal Education was passed. A wholesome democratic law for all citizens. Before true democracy had a chance to flourish much further during that period, organizations such as the K.K.K.'s came into being supported by the deposed land and plantation owners with many of them taking active part, in the terrorization, killing, shooting and mass lynching of the Negro people as well as the "poor white trash" who supported the Negro peoples struggle for freedom and equality. Democracy in the South was strangled at birth. (The Poll Tax came into being later when in spite of all harassment, lynching, etc., the Negro people continued to go to the Polls.)

In order to get, first of all, true economic democracy in this country, we must see to it that the Negro people have full democracy in every sphere of the country's political and economic activity. To do that the whole progressive North with labor as the base, sparked by the left, must institute a campaign for the removal of the Poll Tax (which is a number one must!) With the Negro people having the right to vote and along with the poor whites going to the

polls together, it will not be long before the Eastlands, etc., are removed from the political scene. How much easier it will then be to get progressive legislation passed. How much easier will it be to get a \$1.25 or higher minimum pay bill passed through Congress! How much harder will it be for reaction to pass "State's rights" bills! And with the active political struggle of the Negro people in the South along with labor and poor white supported by all labor in the North along with all progressive forces and small middle-classes with the participation of a united left. We will then have a mass base for an American democratic movement, democratic people's movement or whatever the people want to name it. And believe me, with nuclear energy becoming a part of the second industrial revolution, etc., we better get a move on or we will miss the boat.

I may be up a tree comrades, but as I see it, the way to Socialism in the U.S. is as Dennis and many other comrades, such as Max Weiss and other contributors to the Daily and Worker pages have stated. A struggle for a full flourishing democracy, with the first must—the removal of the Poll tax and full citizenship and integration for the Negro people.

Yours,
Comrade



Errors in Trade Union Activity

By S.

WE ARE confronted by a seeming contradiction. On the one hand we are witness to a basic shift in relations between the pro-peace and pro-war forces, in the direction of a relaxation of tensions. On the other hand, we find the terribly frustrating situation, in that our Party was never less able to participate in and influence the course of positive developments in our own country.

Yet our Party has made modest contributions on the fight for peace, in the fight for Negro rights, in the struggle for democratic rights, and in the field of wages and working conditions. Why then is our Party in this terribly frustrating position of being unable to be fully a part of and exercise influence on the powerful progressive currents within our country? Despite our positive, nevertheless modest, contributions of the past decade, our errors have been of such a far reaching and decisive character, that they have resulted in our isolation from the main currents of American life. Fortunately, this fact is being recognized, to an ever increasing degree by our membership, and to a lesser degree by the leaders of our Party. The sharp, critical and searching examination of our status and previous work now pervading our movement, given a powerful impulse by the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the recent revelations on Stalin, if carried to their logical conclusion, must result in basic changes in our policy, our organizational forms and in our leadership bodies.

One must welcome the appearance of the Dennis Report "Communists Take a New Look" as a beginning, but only as a beginning. In reading the report, one is struck by the listing of errors. Without an attempt to list those errors which were mainly responsible for greasing the skids

to the isolation of our Party. In the opinion of this writer the period from 1946-1948 was decisive in this respect.

The end of World War II brought to the surface, the conflicts and contradictions that had been smouldering within the camp of the United Nations. The independence movements in the colonies, the establishment of socialist state power in a number of countries, coupled with the great weakening of world capitalism on a world scale, impelled the dominant capitalist nations (the U.S.A. in the first place) to launch the cold war. This offensive of world capitalism had its immediate reflection in the internal policies of these countries.

In the United States, this struggle resulted in serious stresses and strain developing in the left center coalition that had long existed in the leadership of the CIO. Policies adopted by the CIO during the war, in order to win the war, were quickly thrown overboard by them in the course of the cold war. As the left led unions within the CIO pressed for the continuation of these policies, and others of a similar character, the coalition within the CIO (As within the World Federation of Trade Unions) quickly went to pieces; the isolation of the left had begun.

Rather than the left continuing to press for policies which had been rejected by the CIO (and most important, rejected by the *Rank and File*) the left should quickly have asked itself the burning question: Where do we go from Here?

The cold war was pressed by the U.S. relentlessly. The center leadership of the CIO mainly supported these policies. The members of all unions (left led included) influenced by the hysterical cold war propaganda,

supported these policies. The isolation of the left began to take on menacing proportions. *The time had come for a strategic retreat.* But rather than retreat, the left, including our Party, put forward policies that heightened the conflict, (and isolation of the left) in the CIO; Third Party, opposition to the Marshall plan, continuing beyond reason the struggle against signing the Taft Hartley affidavits.

At the outset of this period (hind sight now teaches us) our Party should have made a sharp distinction between two questions:

- 1) seeking to influence the thinking of the rank and file, thru discussions in the shops, issuing of printed material, at all times displaying the greatest patience.
- 2) The urging upon union leaders the adoption of positions and resolutions on highly controversial questions.

If after a long period of effort, the rank and file of a union had been won, firmly, to a position, the question of an officially adopted position or resolution becomes a formality.

But when a position is adopted before the *majority of the rank and file* have been won to the support of this policy, particularly when it is against CIO policy, highly controversial, then we find ourselves where we were in the left led unions in the years 1946-1949.

In one union, which had a long history of adopting positions without consulting the rank and file, and in most cases against their sentiments, a convention occurred in 1948. The struggle within the CIO, had hastened the development of a powerful right-center coalition of rank and file forces against the left leadership. The composition of the membership of this union, particularly at this time,

was most unfavorable for the projection of policies in conflict with CIO. This had been made amply clear in membership sentiment expressed, in many ways and forms, prior to the convention. But the left totally disregarded this. They recklessly projected policies on the Third Party, Marshall Plan and Taft Hartley, that flew in the face of the sentiments of many of the delegates, and the vast majority of the membership. The writer sensed that we were going off the deep end. But the prevailing atmosphere of the Party brooked no questioning of these policies.

After the convention, where the sharp split between the left and the right-center grouping—had become painfully obvious we attempted to "sell" these policies to the membership. They, most emphatically, rejected these policies. We, still, did not stop to ask what could be wrong. What this writer had considered serious doubts at the convention, had now become strong conviction that we were very wrong. The Union began to disintegrate before our eyes. Raids by other unions took advantage of and hastened the process. The union was almost completely destroyed. The writer must say that he did not have the courage to say how he felt. There must have been others. Had the leadership of our Party, in view of this and other similar situations, called a halt to continuing these policies, and asked the party rank and file to help find some badly needed answers, perhaps we might have avoided the almost total catastrophe which followed in most of the left led unions.

There could have been an alternative. We have often heard the phrase



"firm adherence to principle coupled with great tactical flexibility." On looking back to 1946-1948 one would have to say that the overriding principle was *preserving the unity of the labor movement.* Rather than see this, we raised (improperly of course) tactical questions; such as Third Party, Marshall Plan, to the level of principled questions. Knowing well the prevailing sentiments of the members of *all unions*, we should have tried to maintain a neutral position on questions of a highly controversial nature. If we failed in this, the leaders of left led unions, would have to go along with policies of CIO. No matter what the left leaders would have had to do in adjusting policies to meet the situation in CIO, nothing prevented, rather the situation cried for party members carrying on a struggle on controversial political issues in the shops. In this way, by winning support for correct policy, we could have laid a firm, indestructible foundation for a shift in union policy *when the membership was prepared for this shift.*

We have long believed that our methods of work, including the constant use of self-criticism and criticism, contained built in self-corrective machinery. Why then were not these errors caught and overcome in good time?

Firstly, the party membership was totally unable to participate in the formulation or correction of policy. Though in leading Party bodies debates and struggles around Policy were frequent and unrestrained, differences in lower Party bodies, were, in effect prohibited. Policies were handed down, not for discussion, not for debate, but for implementation. Leaders attending meetings of lower Party bodies "fought for the line." They did not come to listen to the voice, opinion or suggestions of the rank and file. Policies were formulated in total disregard of the thinking of the masses, with whom our rank and file Party comrades were in daily contact. In practice, the matter of "testing and rectifying our policy" did not exist. If criticism and self criticism existed at all, it was only in leading bodies. In lower Party bodies, in practice, it was frowned upon. If people were critical, they would be



criticized for the improper form of their criticism, for the negative context of the criticism, for the bad tone of their criticism. The important thing, the essence of the criticism, was disregarded.

With the prevailing atmosphere of dogmatism and rigidity in our Party, with such an approach to criticism, it is regrettably understandable why our membership had very little voice in policy questions.

Our leaders are loyal, devoted and courageous people. Many are in jail, going to jail or soon coming out of prison. But the question must be asked: how could they have put forward with such devastating consistency, erroneous policies. In addition to the inability of membership to influence policy, the fact that our leaders have been out of the shops for too long a time could not but have a negative effect on their sensitivity to the moods and thinking of the people. Many leading bodies are staffed with people who have been Party full timers for decades. Tho this has positive aspects of training people, it has the negative aspect of people living in a world of their own, removed from the reality of the shop and union halls.

Thus, we had a devastating combination of factors which, almost inevitably, gave rise to the present situation. We had a long entrenched bureaucracy, the inability of the members to influence policy, and a leadership long removed from the day to day struggles in the shops.

Why was it possible for that vile slander that we were the agents of the Soviet Union to make such head-

way amongst the American people? Our uncritical view of the Soviet Union and its policies; our blind defense of everything the Soviet Union, did certainly, in the eyes of many, gave substance to this slander. It is this uncritical view of Soviet policy, which in large measure, undermined our ability to defend the rights of our Party, to public advocacy of its views, before the American people.

The articles in the "Daily Worker," its editorials, the letters to "Speak Your Piece" in being sharply critical of this above attitude certainly move in a direction of helping to regain much of the respect we have lost in the eyes of the American people.

Tho we have long and correctly combatted the theories of "American Exceptionalism" our Party has made the gross error of disregarding the exceptional things in America.

Marxism teaches us that what is important in a particular situation is its difference from other situations, *certainly not its similarity to other situations*. Too often, in developing policies, we have done the very opposite. We have disregarded the peculiarities of our country, that which makes it different from other capitalist countries, and have seen only its similarities to other capitalist nations. Can it be said that our Party, in its line, its outlook, its methods of work, in its organizational forms is peculiarly an American Party? We have looked with pride, on the French and Italian Communist Parties as parties which truly reflect their national scenes. They have fully absorbed the traditions, heritage, thinking of their peoples. Not so in our case. What beginnings we made were thrown out with Browder in 1945.

Certainly, we must take into account the exceptional features of our people, Negro people, trade unions, democratic traditions and heritage. These matters must be fully taken into account, in the making of policy, in methods of work, in organizational forms. The right to dissent, to differ, is part of American thinking, and is so cherished by our people, despite the attempts to rip the guts out of the Constitution. But this has not been the case in our Party. We must establish, within our Party, the guar-



antees for the right to dissent, for the fullest, freest, frankest discussion; for the strong winds of public opinion to be aired in our discussions.

The American people face crucial days ahead; filled with enormous opportunities for Marxists, if properly led, if deeply rooted in the traditions, the heritage, and mass organizations of the people. The growing relaxation of international tensions is helping the labor movement refocus attention on the "forgotten enemy"—monopoly capital. Powerful sentiment is already developing for a drastic cut in government spending for arms. The recent call of the AFL-CIO for a reduction in payroll taxes is but one reflection of this growing sentiment. American capitalism is fast coming to a crossroad. This mass thinking will quickly be transformed into irresistible pressure to cut spending for arms. But this spending is one of the major props upholding our economy. Where will the capitalist class turn? The steel strike is one indication of their answer. They will stubbornly resist labor's demands for pay increases. The struggle between the unions and bosses must sharpen; it will reach the level of an all out battle between organized labor and the National Association of Manufacturers, who will seek to have labor pay the price for the difficult economic days ahead. This must give rise to an intensified struggle on the political front, with growing poten-

tial for a new political realignment. Labor will wake up from its long political slumber and move in the direction of greater political independence. The future is laden with opportunity for the Marxists. But where will the Marxists be? In large measure the answer to that all decisive question lies in the discussions now going on in socialist minded circles in our country. Our Party has its contribution to make, providing we have the political courage to fully recognize our errors, admit them publicly and thus begin to regain much of the respect we have lost.

Certainly we must have a leadership that is tied to the shops and mass organizations. We must have a leadership, from *top to bottom*, that consists in its majority of shop workers who are respected mass figures. This is one major guarantee that our policies will be truly reflective of the needs, desires and sentiments of the workers and Negro people.

History has never seen our Party at such a low ebb, in terms of prestige, influence and mass ties. Far from this situation being irretrievable, the proper corrections in our policies, organizational forms, leadership bodies, and the institution of full democratic practices in our work, will enable our Party to fully participate and begin to exercise growing leadership in the massive struggles now shaping up in our country.

COMMENTS ON N.Y. STATE REPORT

By A GROUP OF SCHENECTADIANS

THE main line of the Dennis & Schrank reports would have us believe that the reason for the Party's isolation from the main stream of American life over the past ten years is because of subjective reasons. That is: because of the left-sectarian line and left-sectarian mistakes. Our belief is that the *main* reason for our isolation is due to the objective situation, which is that, over the past ten years, the strongest capitalist class in the world was determined to completely destroy the numerically weak Communist Party, operating within a working class that is in the main not class conscious.

We feel that the purpose of the seven months of discussion around these reports is the search for the truth. We feel that to arrive at the truth it is necessary to take a careful factual view of our past activities. We feel that in the past one of our most serious errors was in accepting a line uncritically, and making it apply to our particular situation by even ignoring the facts if necessary. This we no longer intend to do. The Schrank report says that we spoke on non-inevitability of war, but acted as though it were always imminent.

We believe that the Party membership took a more rational view. We heeded Foster's many warnings as to the *possibilities* of a desperate U.S. imperialism plunging us into war. But being aware of this possibility and acting as though it would happen tomorrow are two different things. We think it can be categorically stated that most of the Party membership did not act as though war was inevitable or that fascism would begin tomorrow, even though we looked with suspicious eyes at McCarthy and MacArthur.

Having just come out of a period when we saw the horrors of fascism before and during World War II, would we not have made more serious attempts to protect ourselves, knowing that the first target of fascism in power is the Communists? It is true that the leadership made these efforts in regard to themselves by, leaving their homes, but it is not true that this happened in any degree to the membership, nor were we asked whether this course was correct.

INEVITABLE WAR?

It is our opinion that we paid a great deal of heed to the non-inevitability of war as expressed by our leadership and not so much heed to what Schrank calls the *acts* which he says nullified this opinion.

Did we underestimate inter-imperialist contradictions? The Schrank report believes we did, but it was not reflected in P.A. or D.W. Who has forgotten the constant attention paid to the differences especially between the British and American imperialist interests, but also to French, Dutch, Canadian and even German imperialist interests as opposed to American? Did we not agree with Stalin in his Economic Problems of Socialism that the contradictions between the imperialist nations were greater than between the imperialists and the Soviet Union and that the immediate danger of war was greater among the imperialists than between the imperialists and the Soviet Union?

If we really believed war inevitable, why did we work so hard in a hopeless cause, whether correctly or not? Were we so foolish that we did not realize that when war came, the hardest fighters against it would be

the first to get it in the neck, or were we simply foolish people anxious for martyrdom? I think most of our people were hard headed realists who were convinced that war could be averted and thought less of the consequences of failure than of the possibilities of success. To illustrate this point, when a group of prominent people visited the Polish delegate to the U.N., they were told that if the people in the United States could keep those who wanted to make war, from doing so for a period of five years, the peace camp in the world would be so strong that it would be impossible for the imperialists to make war. We feel that this generally expresses the feelings of the party membership throughout this period, even though all of us were not convinced of the non-inevitability of war.

Quote from Schrank Report: "Seeing only a united imperialist world, seeing a united monopoly class, seeing a united American people following along behind Wall Street, we could not but develop pessimism and doubt about wars not being inevitable."

Who saw "only a united imperialist world, a united monopoly class, a united American people following behind Wall Street"? Perhaps the State leadership, but certainly not the main "bulk" of the Party membership. Did we not have a column in the Daily Worker devoted exclusively to spontaneous expressions for peace from non-left people? Did we not show that especially among farmers, Puerto Rican and the Negro people there was not unanimity behind Wall St.? Who can forget the anti-war demonstrations in Puerto Rico during the Korean War? As to our

estimate of the scope and tempo and the level of fascism" at a certain time, the Foster article on "Are we in the first stages of Fascism" effectively stopped this kind of thinking. As a matter of fact we were convinced that fascism would not come to the U.S. when we saw the concentration camps were not being filled, that brown or black or silver shirts did not appear, that there were no mass demonstrations for McCarthyism, that fascism had certainly not caught the imagination of any large section of the American people.

LEADERSHIP'S MISTAKES

How did the rank and file act in respect to the war and fascist danger here in Schenectady? It is true that in the first few months after June '51 a series of left organizational mistakes were made by the local leadership which smacked of fear and desperation. But it is also true that these mistakes were made under the pressure of our state and national leadership. But more important it is also true that we soon changed our organizational forms and began realistically to struggle. Did the people in Schenectady see only war and fascism? I can only answer this question by showing how they acted: 1. We did not run. 2. We continued in the main to receive the Daily through the mail. 3. We openly and consistently struggled for peace (peace petitions, peace council activities including delegations to Albany and Washington). 4. When McCarthy and Kearney began the series of hearings here progressives did not break and run. Practically to a man they bravely and with confidence in our democratic traditions fought the menace of McCarthyism. There was little evidence of panic or belief in the inevitability of war and fascism.

THE MAIN BLOW

Quote from the Schrank Report: "So that we directed the main blows not at monopoly, the real enemy, but at the Social Democrats, reformists and liberals, or the leadership of our



class allies."

"Did we not consider the center forces in the labor movement the biggest danger in the post war period? Didn't we pound away on all Social Democrats, reformists? Didn't we give up or contemptuously dismiss the liberals as a force that had merged with the cold war, with American imperialism?"

I can safely say that we are not the most highly skilled people in applying tactics. However, for the Schrank report to say that the net effect of our tactics gave the impression that we deserted the fight against McCarthy to concentrate on Meany, or that we deserted the fight against GE to concentrate on Jandreau, or that we deserted the fight against Ford to concentrate on Stellato, etc., is absolutely contrary to the facts.

I am sure that we could quote many instances where our application of line was not the best, but to say that we directed the main blows against the Social Democrats rather than against monopoly is just not true. This again is an illustration of the gap between what leadership sees and what membership did.

If there was criticism leveled at Social Democrats for this or that act, or at reformists for holding back people's movements, must we agree that this was the main trend rather than the fight against monopoly? Those who were fired from GE, were they known mainly as anti-GE fighters or anti-Jandreau fighters?

The impression left by the Schrank report on this point is an absolutely negative one. On the one hand, one is led to believe that we did not strike the main blow at monopoly imperialism and on the other hand that we should not have criticized our friends, the Social Democrats. I think that we would have fallen into the rankest

right opportunism if we refrained from criticizing the Social Democrats, reformists and certain labor leaders when they were not acting in the people's interests, because if we did not who would? Refraining from criticism would have meant agreement. (Silence is consent) Should we have agreed with their red-baiting? Should we have agreed with their tailing behind the imperialists? Should we have agreed with what was in many instances, a sell-out of workers demands? Would we not have been contributing to hysteria instead of tenaciously fighting it? Our continued fight on grievances in the shops was a criticism because we did not go along with the sellout policies of some labor leaders. Should we have abandoned the fight on grievances? Then we surely would have been isolated from the workers. On the other hand, this was never our main blow.

In GE, it was always made clear that the enemy was the company and not trade union leaders. In all fights with the IUE progressives always made it plain that their policy was unity with all elements against GE. It seems to me that the Schrank report would have us forget the class struggle in order to refrain from criticizing certain people taking part in it. In my mind there is a great deal of difference between attacking leaders of our class allies and criticizing them.

LEFT CENTERS

Quote from the Schrank report: "It was wrong in my opinion to agree that our comrades participate in the establishment of these left-led mass membership organizations. Perhaps in one or another case a committee could have been sufficient . . . but to go into the fields of civil rights, peace, the labor movement, the Negro people's movements and set up left wing mass membership organizations, was in fact a parallel dual structure in opposition to the main stream organizations of the people."

Who initiated the fight for the Martinsville Seven or Willie McGee? Who brought out 2500 people to

Peekskill to protect the right of Paul Robeson to sing? Suppose that the Left had not organized the fight for the Rosenbergs, for civil liberties, against McCarthyism, etc., would the Social Democrats and the democratic traditions in the United States have filled the gap left by the Lefts relinquishing leadership on these questions? Perhaps the Forward would have initiated the fight for the Rosenbergs? Perhaps Dubinsky would have rushed to the defense of those accused by McCarthy? What leadership the Social Democrats did give was generally given after it was "safe" to give such leadership.

However, there is some truth in what Schrank says. We feel that the L.Y.L. is an example of this, and perhaps the N.L.C.

But this does not apply to any and all fields. There were situations in which these movements were necessary, where indeed the Left did fill a vacuum, where the early struggles gave courage and impetus and served as a foundation for these "democratic traditions" to come through. Does it mean that we worked incorrectly, because those that later carried on the fight in many or most instances would not acknowledge our part in these struggles and that coalitions were not possible? In our opinion as Marxists, NO.—Our objective was to stop McCarthy. The results were that he was stopped. As for us, we are proud of the role we played in this struggle and see it as a positive role in the over-all picture.

We did not see a situation possible, at the height of McCarthyism, where organizations such as the labor unions, LWV, YMCA, YWCA, Jewish organizations and the NAACP were prepared to fight. These organizations felt the blows that were delivered by McCarthy and his ilk and retreated. If we say that we made left-sectarian mistakes in these organizations, and give that as the main reason for their retreat, let's be a little more modest and a lot more realistic; it was McCarthyism that did it.

There was, and to a lesser degree, still is, an attitude in these organizations which says—"we must be pure and respectable." In order to be so, the organizations themselves, in many

instances, had their own red-hunts or turned their heads the other way when people were being pushed out. As an example, take the latest expulsion cases in the N.A.A.C.P. Progressives put up a tactically correct fight, retreated ideologically, and were on the verge of winning, but as a reaction to the red-baiting attacks on the N.A.A.C.P. in the south, Roy Wilkins sent a letter to all chapters urging a house cleaning of reds. This in our opinion caused the eventual expulsion of one progressive. Not left-sectarian errors, but rather a retreat of national and local N.A.A.C.P. leadership.

ON THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

On the question of peace; in spite of some very positive movements by the World Federalists and the Quakers, there was a definite need for an organization to consistently and dramatically raise the question of Peace. The Peace Council and the American Peace Crusade filled this need. In Schenectady some very positive work was done by the Peace Council. Many Ministers distributed its material and showed its films. 1500 Schenectadians signed a local petition calling for a peaceful settlement of the Korean war. No other local organization actively raised the question of Peace, and the actives in these organizations turned to the left because their organizations did



McCarthy

nothing. A broad delegation took these 1500 signatures to Rep. Kearney in Washington. The activity of the Peace Council was then at its height.

Kearney blasted the delegation in the headlines of the Union Star and the Gazette, calling it Communist dominated, etc. He listed the names and addresses of all the delegates. Immediately after this attack the Council again attempted to collect signatures, but were unsuccessful. The membership of the Peace Council began to decline and it was more difficult to talk to contacts. The objective conditions of the McCarthyite hysteria isolated the Peace Council organization, not errors. Peace became a dangerous word.

We agree with Schrank that we need a special discussion of the Negro question, the status of the Negro People's movement and our relation to it, the Negro People as a nation, etc. We cannot understand factually what happened just by putting a left or right label on our work. It is not that simple. We cannot fully go into this very important question today. We think a special conference is needed.

However, we disagree with the tone of the Schrank report that the decade under discussion was a total blank, that we made no contributions to the struggle for Negro rights, that we were isolated from the Negro people's movements, and that the isolation was caused by our left mistakes.

That we are isolated is obvious. But we can't rewrite history. We entered into the decade under discussion from the '30's when the Party led mass movements, when we were not isolated because we were filling a need no one else met. There isn't time to go into the major contributions that the Party made in that period. But it is important to see that our position at the beginning of the period under discussion was the result of a historical development.

NEGRO RIGHTS

During the past ten years the Party made important and lasting contributions to the struggle for Negro rights. Particularly was this true of the fight for Negro representation first in the Powell campaign which sent him to

the N. Y. City Council as the first Negro member of that body and later to Congress. Also the Ben Davis campaigns, the campaign for Judge Flagg, the Hulan Jack campaign, the campaign against discrimination in Stuyvesant Town, etc. We also call to mind the Willie McGee case, the Martinsville Seven, Mrs. Ingram case. We can say that the campaigns which broke down discrimination in restaurants in Washington were aided by groundwork done by the left.

Certainly the brilliant work done by the N.A.A.C.P. legal staff was influenced by Paterson.

Did we make left mistakes? Did we use wrong methods? Was there a lack of understanding of many aspects of the Negro people's movements? Definitely yes! However we cannot say to our membership, who have in the main fought valiantly for Negro rights despite all our mistakes, nor can we say to the Negro people, many thousands of whom have a deep love for our Party, that all this is wiped off the books.

These campaigns, together with similar activity with varying degrees of success, have resulted in a situation where the Democrats and Republicans are compelled to run Negro candidates. Is this not a major and lasting contribution to the fight for Negro rights?

Quote from Schrank report: "We underestimated the role and influence of Social Democrats, reformists and liberals as though they had outlived their usefulness."

This is quite a formidable statement to make. We can remember thinking on reading the statement made by Potofsky on peace, that we were praising too highly the simple statement he made. It seems that we always gave the greatest prominence to any statement, no matter how twisted and watered down, by any of the Social Democrats, liberals, or reformists, which in any way contributed to good relations between countries, to struggles for workers conditions, or anything else in which we were remotely interested, even printing those portions of the statements, such as red-baiting, with which we absolutely disagreed.

We always realized that what they

had to say had more influence than what we had to say. But what were we to do when they were either standing aside from, or attacking the ideas which we had to get to the American people? Should we have left a vacuum? Should we have left the field to the Social Democrats and reformists, when traditionally they failed to give leadership when they should? If we did this we would be neglecting our responsibilities to the American people.

When the Rosenbergs were charged with "treason," the American people were faced with one of the most serious attempts by American Imperialism to set a tone of political intimidation, which if successful could have led to complete silencing of dissent in America. Because of the implications involved no mass organizations were prepared to fight. It was left to some progressives to raise the dangers involved and this was done even though the Rosenbergs were murdered.

What happened to Huberman, I. F. Stone, Sweezy, DuBois and many others who did not uncritically accept the line from the Soviet Union, who did not commit the left-sectarian mistakes of which we are accused, who may have been as anti-Communist as Wechsler, and yet were as effectively isolated from the mainstream of the American people as we were?

If, as the Schrank report says, we were isolated because of our left errors, why were those who did not commit these errors, isolated just as we were? And yet, if we say that it happened because they were under our influence, we are being con-

temptuous of people, and immodest, saying that they could not draw their own conclusions, or make up their own mind.

Although the Schrank report is generous in its criticism of our mistakes, nowhere does it suggest what our course of action should have been, except to imply that it was not necessary that we give leadership, but that we should have left it in the hands of Social Democrats, reformists and liberals. I think this would have been right opportunism of the worst sort, and though it is fashionable to sneer at the contributions the party made, I think if we had followed Schrank's present advice, the danger of fascism in the U.S. may well have been greater now than it was in the 1950-1954 period, rather than less.

Comrades, in conclusion let us again reiterate that the purpose of this evaluation of our past work is not to hunt errors or victories, but rather to get a realistic picture of our past activities so we can better work in the future towards our goal of Socialism.

Swinging on a pendulum from the extreme of believing everything we do is right, to believing that everything we do is wrong, will not help us achieve Socialism. We need a scientific approach. Let us begin that scientific approach now.

If the Schrank report had not taken such a negative line and come to such negative conclusions, we would not have found it necessary to so sharply take issue with the points he make. The purpose of this article is, in the main, to combat the negativness of his report.



TO LEARN FROM THE PAST

By SAM COLEMAN

A CORRECTION

People who knew Ruthenberg say that he was wrongly bracketed with John Reed as a romantic in my article in the last issue. They describe Ruthenberg as a very down-to-earth Marxist, always interested in immediate struggles to improve the conditions of the working people.

I regret my error, and want to correct the wrong description of Ruthenberg. The point of the comment about the Left Socialists and the romanticism that was strong among them, remains.

* * *

ON THE 65 ARTICLE

In June, 1953, an article appeared in Political Affairs on the Fight Against Opportunism in Local 65. This article focused, as a lens focuses the sun's rays, many of the wrong concepts that have helped isolate us from labor.

First, the article set out to prove opportunism in the leadership of the union. It took certain generalizations of "corruption" of labor aristocrats, the concept that the Negro people are a nation, some of the false theories about Jewish bourgeois nationalism that were current then because of the Soviet campaign against Zionism and cosmopolitanism. The article then proceeded to make a case against the leadership of local 65 as opportunists by squeezing picked facts to fit the generalizations, and some false facts as well.

The article butted into union business: it was not written from the point of view of the union's problems, and to aid in the democratic solutions of these problems by the union leadership and membership.

FOUGHT ANTI-FASCISTS

The article was arrogant in tone. It was insulting to people who were the leaders of a militant progressive

union. This is not to say that they did not make mistakes, or do wrong things. They did. But their mistakes in no way excuse ours, or that very wrong article.

FOUGHT ANTI-FASCISTS

The article declared war on the union leadership, who were anti-fascists, and for peace.

In this, it illustrates one of our major errors. Our analysis was that we faced the threat of fascism at that time. The question here is not our estimate of the scope, tempo, or imminence of fascism, as Dennis makes it, although it is part of our error.

The question is, what is the classical Marxist response to the development of a fascist threat? Is it not the broadest unity of all anti-fascist forces, around the core of a united working class, for the overriding purpose of the defeat of fascism?

Did the 65 article promote labor unity, or an anti-fascist unity? It did not; it served a contrary purpose: it divided the anti-fascist grouping and sharpened a factional axe against the leadership.

Did we not do the same thing in our general line and policy? We separate ourselves on the electoral field off in the Progressive Party, well after the '48 election results should have showed us our mistake. We separated ourselves on the trade union field, so that, as Communists, we are now virtually illegal among the workers and active members. We separated ourselves from the gathering torrent of the mainstream of the Negro Freedom movement. Instead of finding agreement in the fight against fascism, we eagerly pressed points of division.

The 65 article vividly illustrates this violation of the general principles of the united front against the threat of fascism. Old timers can recognize

how it resembles the tragic error of the German Communists when they used the slogan of Social Fascists against Social Democracy, and contributed toward maintaining, rather than healing the split in the working class and anti-fascist movement. In Germany, the tragic error had tragic results.

"THIRD FORCE" ERROR

The 65 article accuses the leadership of 65 of seeking to pursue a "third force," neutralist point of view.

The attack on the 65 leadership for such a position illustrates an error of our Party in the fight for peace. That is, the rejection of all peace sentiment that placed any share of the blame for world tensions on the Soviet Union. We demanded that the fight be against "America's war drive." We regarded anyone who was for peace, but who held any anti-Soviet notions, to be a war supporter.

This theory was in part formed from the line of the Cominform, as I discussed in my last article.

BUROCRATIC PROCEDURE

The 65 article was written and printed without prior consultation with the Party committee and members in that industry. Thus, it added this fault of bureaucracy almost inevitably to its other faults.

In the years when the 65 article was written bureaucracy was strengthened by the system of leadership.

It is quite understandable, though it violates elementary common sense, that the article was written and printed without consulting the people in the industry. In the same way, I am sure, many decisions were made for the people in that industry by higher committees, and directives handed down.

This major error has been diminished a bit by our policy in our State, now, that local policy is made by the

comrades in the industry. But the general concepts, of Party organization, developed for another country and another outlook, still remain in our country, with its radically different outlook of peaceful transition. Bureaucracy, I think, is inevitable with these concepts, so wrong for us.

II.

I defended the 65 article vigorously when it appeared, and agreed with its arrogant tone, its errors, and the dogmatic way in which it brutally fitted facts to generalizations. Not knowing the specific facts, I thought that generalizations were enough.

Of course, I gave no heed to the problems that confronted the 65 leadership: their exposed position as an independent union in a period of reaction, their attempt to re-unite the union with labor's mainstream.

But months before the article appeared, I had questioned the policies that led to the expulsion of the left led union from CIO. I greeted the daft resolution, and before that proposed that in the '52 elections, left wing unionists stay with their Political Action Committees and LLPE, rather than separate themselves to support the Progressive Party.

Why didn't I see the 65 article for what it was, and see how it ran counter to some of my own thinking?

I was only at the start of a rethinking of our post war course, biting at some of the more obvious bad results of our policies, rather than at the heart of the policies themselves.

Many of us may do this: we are slow to make full reappraisals; we agree that some of the bad results of our policies were bad, but we angrily reject assessments of our past policies that go to the roots of the matter.

In New York State, where we carried many of the wrong policies of the past to extremes from '46 to '53 or so, events have forced swifter and more radical changes on the leadership and many, many members. Having made sharper mistakes, we were hit harder by the bad results sooner than many other places, which had not made such bad mistakes. The

Swift articles, the Draft Resolution and program greatly helped us make these changes in '53 and '54.

With many of us, subjective factors stand in the way. In some cases, we have deep commitments in what may prove to have been a mistake. It is painful to look at the idea that indeed some bit of our life may have been wrongly used.

But that is not the question. We have a proud record as Communists. We cannot be erased from the history of the labor movement, or of the Negro people. We helped somewhat to create the present breath-taking panorama of human history as it spreads before us—almost a billion people marching to socialism, the break-up of the imperialist-colonial system, the outlook for coexistence, the possibility that future wars can be averted.

In fact, the very new world, whose profoundly new implications are causing everyone to change their estimates and thinking, is something we helped shape. And this new world is forcing us to think through the new concepts, ideas, estimates, policies, outlooks, and organizational form based on these, to fit a situation unique in mankind's history.

That we have made mistakes is not the great tragedy. What would be

tragic indeed is if we should not learn from these mistakes; if, because of personal reasons for refusing to face the big problems of our Party, and to examine ourselves fully, we make only hesitant or grudging, compromise corrections.

Some of us identify policies with people, and are unable to see that people we do not like may make big contributions, just as people we like can be very wrong.

It seems to me that all of us must objectively look at the conditions of our Party, must look at the forward moving popular scene around us, must look hard at the enormous implications of the new world pictured by the XXth Congress, and must force our thoughts not only on that part of our life that lies behind us now.

We must force our thoughts to address ourselves to the problems and to the world. We must honestly state our own mistakes so that we can learn from them, and we must use what we learn from our past to make sure that our wonderful membership, trained, experienced, devoted to our class, and to socialism, can go forward to make fruitful efforts in the bright struggles before us.



SOURCE OF THE PRESENT DILEMMA

By CHICK MASON

THE Communist Party of the U.S. faces its greatest dilemma since its inception in 1919. It stands in a critical position, isolated from the people of America, its leadership isolated from the membership.

"Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party." All of us must help to reshape the Party in the honest, decent conception we had when we joined it.

Our leadership has at this time undertaken to take a "New Look" at the policies and practices that helped precipitate this dilemma. It is my contention that they are not examining the sources of our present disease. All they can do, all they have done in the "New Look" (The Communists Take a New Look—report to National Committee, C.P.-U.S.A. by Eugene Dennis) is to self-criticize the symptoms of our dilemma, but they have avoided the necessary diagnosis of the root causes of the symptoms. Often self-criticism is a pretense of humility in the face of historically exposed errors. Sometimes this humility does almost as much to hide the source of the errors, as did the previous arrogance. I said "almost," because it has the dialectic of making temporarily possible a searching examination of the leadership and its errors. An examination that can only be conducted by the membership which waves aside the limitations and rationalizations of the so-called self-criticism.

Thus, the "New Look" leads us into a blind alley research which counts or weighs the relative features of "left sectarianism" or "right opportunism" on the head of the pin. Our leadership may find this a pleasant escape from reality but it has as much to do with our dilemma as has the aspirin which relieves the headache caused by a tumor.

Of course they are pleasant diversions in this "New Look" type ap-

proach. This is the entertainment provided by the speculation as to whether capitalists will or will not be allowed to preach a return to capitalism when socialism will have been achieved in America. I have no objection to this type of daydreaming, it hardly hurts anybody, as long as it does not interfere with a Marxist examination of our dilemma.

It is my contention that in order to understand our present isolation we will have to re-examine how we had once emerged from isolation, how we were beginning to learn to "walk in the sun," and what forces combined to stampede us back into the shell. It is my contention that a re-examination of that history will show, among other things, that our emergence from isolation was marked by the "open letter" issued to the Party in 1933 and that the stampede back to isolation was marked by the Duclos article in 1945.

I, also, contend that in addition to other factors that combined to make that stampede in '45 possible, it was precipitated by a sectarian, isolationist wing of the Party, headed by Foster. This wing (of the Party) had "champed at the bit" ever since our "open letter" emergence into the broad stream of American life. They seized the opportunity of the Duclos article to take over the "theoretical" leadership of the Party. They instituted the new theories which led to the symptoms described by the "New Look."

The following is my contribution toward this re-examination of the "sources of our present dilemma." It consists of re-examination of our period of emergence from isolation, characterized as the "Browder period" an historical "New Look" at the events and theories around the time of the Duclos article, and an examination of the new "theories" that were

developed at that time to justify the stampede.

Thus, I hope to prove my contentions in regard to the sources of our present dilemma.

Thus you have been warned, in advance, of the axe I am grinding.

The Emergence From Isolation (1933-1945)

1. A sharp turn from the leather-jacket, foreign speaking isolation of the Party is marked by the "open letter" of 1933. This "open letter" was a letter from the National Committee of the C.P. to the membership, which called on the Party to break with its old habits and enter the broad stream of American life.

2. Trade Union Unity—this was marked by the disbanding of the narrow Trade Union Unity League in '34. The T.U.U.L. was originally formed to advance industrial unionism and to organize the unorganized. When the T.U.U.L. was disbanded the "left" trade unionists entered the broad stream of unionism in the A.F.L. where the "organize the unorganized" campaign began to bear real fruit for the first time.

The "left" unionists were thus in a position to help develop the tremendous surge toward industrial unions which culminated in the Committee for Industrial Organization (later known as the Congress of Industrial Organizations). They were in a position to help develop the organizing campaigns in the mass industries such as steel, auto, rubber, maritime, etc. And the left unionists played a decisive role in the historic "sit down" strikes that developed. (The "isolationists" within the Party waged a bitter battle at that time, with open and passive resistance to the disbanding of the T.U.U.L.)

3. Another characteristic of this "Open Letter" turn was the scrapping

of the old "united front from below" policy for a real united front policy—the Socialist Party and other socialist-minded groups were approached organizationally. (Historically the Socialist Party destroyed itself by denying the offered united front.) Later, this "united front" policy was expanded into the "people's front" or "democratic coalition." And the slogan was changed from the negative "against war and fascism" to the positive—"for peace and democracy." (The above was greeted by the "isolationists" as "making peace with the reformists.")

It is important to note also that this new approach was accompanied by a "New Look" at some of the theoretical implications at that time. We recognized that fascism, "the open terroristic rule of the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie" constituted the main danger confronting America. The "New Look" was the recognition that the alternative to fascism was not Socialism, but Bourgeois Democracy. (Dimitroff in '35 said that the main error of the German Communists, which hampered their fight against Hitler, was their failure to understand that the fight against fascism was the fight for the retention of bourgeois democracy.) (Dimitroff—report to the 7th World Congress, Communist International.)

Flowing from this we developed a "people's front" approach to all elements in American life who were willing to fight for "peace and democracy." We went further because we realized that fascism had a demagogic approach to the unemployed and to the "declassed" middle class. (This is an important lesson for all those who think that a depression in America will automatically mean the "radicalization" of the American people, will automatically mean that they will be "ripe for socialism." Nonsense! We will have learned nothing if we fail to remember the demagogic, pseudo radical, appeal of Hitler and Mussolini, or fail to understand that a peculiarly American brand of fascism will develop its own demagogy, perhaps far more effective than Coughlin, Huey Long, or the particularly inept McCarthy).

4. How did we counteract this? We

developed an economic program that could lead America out of the depression. This included among other things unemployment compensation; we helped develop the first legislative bill in this field, social security, jobs for white collar unemployed. In this connection we helped initiate the first conference which later culminated in the W.P.A. (Do we remember the howls of "reformism" that greeted the development of this program?) Thus the "people's front" was committed to an economic program that pointed a way out of the depression under capitalism.

I must stress that this was a programmatic approach in which all elements of the program were actively organized for, in conferences—legislative assemblies—mass pressure, in union resolutions and organization, etc. It was a change from previous habits where economic demands were tacked on as slogans at the end of voluminous reports . . . or as slogans for mass demonstration, etc. (A characteristic of the isolationist wing of the C.P. is that it has always been in love with the "sloganatic" approach to our so-called "demands." Thus in 1946 the fact that around the question of China—"We issued the right slogans and held mass meetings of protest" was pointed to in praise of the National Committee's change from Browderism.)

I hope I may be pardoned this diversion—but when I read that phrase I get mental pictures of the bourgeois quaking in their beds in fear because we displayed the right slogans in Union Square.

I will never forget my first actual experience with this proposition. It was in 1936. I was invited as a leader of the unemployed section of a white collar union to participate in an enlarged meeting of the N.Y. State Committee of the C.P. The subject of the meeting was the growing problem of white collar unemployed. At that time there were only work projects for construction workers under the P.W.A. For close to an hour a few speakers had harangued the meeting with how "we must fill Union Square with hundreds of thousands in mass protest." They rang the meeting with the necessary slogans, etc., and im-

pressed everyone with their militancy. Then Charlie Krumbein, bless his soul, quietly addressed one of the haranguers without getting up from his chair. "Sam," he said, "have you ever stood on the outside and watched one of these demonstrations?" Sam blushed. Krumbein continued, "You see Sam the problem isn't one of letting off steam. The problem is how do we get jobs for the unemployed white collar workers."

The meeting then got down to the business of discussing how to get jobs for the unemployed white collar workers. Poor Sam had to save his pent up steam for some other occasion. It is history that what developed from this discussion was the initiation of the broadest conference of white collar unions, and unemployed around a program which later was basically incorporated into the W.P.A. white collar projects. Have I made my point?

5. Along with the economic approach, the Party restored to "progressive" America its revolutionary heritage of Jefferson and Lincoln. It helped make the "people's front" movement the inheritors of all the democratic traditions of America. It established that the Communist Party was proud to carry the American heritage into the new conditions of the 20th century. The tremendous cultural and historical renaissance that developed in and around the "People's Front" movement proved that this was no hollow gesture on our part. This became another major weapon against incipient fascism. (Is it accidental that all this was characterized by Foster in his current "History of the C.P.U.S.A.," by the way, the only such "History" now in circulation, as "the main theoretical error of Browderism in the Roosevelt period"—pages 337-339, as a matter of fact all through the book.)

6. We transformed ourselves from a party "interested" in the Negro people into a party of the Negro people. How? By our consistent efforts on behalf of racial equality, against Jim Crow and for the right of the Negro people to participate in all phases of American life—political, economic, cultural, social, on the basis of equality. By developing our Ne-

gro leaders as spokesmen for the whole program of the Party, not merely as spokesmen in the field of Negro rights.

This resulted in the fact that more Negroes became active members of the C.P. than in any other political party in the U.S. By 1944 one out of every six members of the C.P. was Negro.

How hollow is the charge that we sold out the Negro people in our C.P.A. period, 1943 and 1944, is proved by the fact that during the C.P.A. membership campaign this percentage was improved to the point that one out of every 4 new members initiated in that time was Negro. Roughly 5,000 new Negro members entered our ranks in the few months of discussion around the formation of the C.P.A. (Figures from John Williamson's membership reports in the "Communist," June and November 1944.) How hollow! . . . when we realize that in the last 10 years, the heyday of the Foster theories, we practically decimated our Negro membership, at many times the rate of other membership, and at a time, shades of "objective conditions," when the Negro people have proved to be perhaps the most courageous, most militant, least afraid of jail, economic or physical reprisal, than any other people in American life.

Incidentally, it was during the latter part of this period that we finally came to grips with the "illegal" conditions in the deep South (remember the post-Duclos charge, "the dissolution of the Party in the South"). We developed forms necessary to the building of Party influence in the deep South and changed from practically no Party at all to Marxist organization with growing mass influence. (And how we've corrected this "revisionism" to the extent of no Party in the deep South at all.)

7. We abandoned the concept of the Y.C.L. as a "training ground" for the C.P. (another supposed evidence of "Browder revisionism") and helped build in its stead the American Youth for Democracy. Need I dwell on the fact that this organization was on the road to becoming one of the large, influential and effective young people's movements in the factories, and in the schools. Had it

not been aborted so early in its development (only 2 years), it might even have begun to make inroads among the farm youth. But the post-Duclos madness deemed that an organization was needed closer to the image of the Party. (Well now there is the LYL. Where are the youth?)

8. Evidences of this emergence from isolation—1933-1934—were in every field, in every phase of work. Education—by 1938 we were publishing perhaps as many books, pamphlets and periodicals as any other publishing organization in America (over 10,000,000 not counting "give away" pamphlets in one year.) But what about classics? (Say some—we embraced Jefferson and Lincoln, but threw out Lenin.) In one two-month period we sold more "classics" than in the whole 10 years of "back to the classics." (*Foundations of Leninism*, still a classic in my book, sold close to a third of a million copies in a few months—of course if we mention "non-classics" like *Soviet Power* we begin to approach the figures of *Gone With the Wind*. Whole "Little Lenin Libraries" and "Collective Works" were sold like novels.)

Language—We began to speak a language that could be understood, at least by us. We began to speak a language that could almost be understood by millions of Americans.

Our attitude on women, religious freedom, the democratic road to Socialism, civil liberties, possible organic unity with other Socialists, was beginning to be understood and supported.

We began to establish ourselves as independent from, admirers of, not dotted "i" and crossed "t" emulators of the Soviet Union.

We were able to speak in "good" times—but also (shades of "objective conditions") in bad times (1939-1941). We were able to mount mass offensives against the policies of the Roosevelt Administration which at that time supported England's "imperialist" war. We were able to take up "The Way Out" in spite of going against the tide and in spite of the jailing of some Communist leaders. And our losses were negligible (in comparison to the last 10 years).

Other contributions to America dur-

ing this period, '33-'45, who could forget: Scottsboro, Angelo Herndon, Spain, Second Front. (Please, old timers, fill in).

This above sketchy recitation of our previous history was necessary as a reminder to our older members and as information to our newer members whose only knowledge of this period comes in distorted form through the "History of the C.P.U.S.A." by Foster, who checks off the items with a sort of score card "here we were right, but," "here we were wrong" and whose overall characterization is that this was the "breeding ground" for later "revisionism" in open form. Because of this distortion, it is now doubly necessary to re-examine these years '33 to '45 which marked our turn from an isolated group to a party with mass influence far outweighing our numbers, roughly 100,000.

Foster's general explanation for this growth is that the times were ripe for it. He claims (in his "History") that if it were not for Browder's neglect of Party building, and Browderism's neglect to advance the interest of the workers, the Party would have grown many times over. This theory excuses our lack of influence at present. But it is also curious to note that it says in effect that the Party will be large and influential when it is least needed. That it is condemned to ineffectiveness at the very time it is most needed, i.e., when the country is threatened with war, fascism and crisis. If "ripe times" are the only explanation for the growth of socialist movements how come the Socialist Party decimated itself during the very time that we grew.

I must reject Foster's explanation for our growth—yet, it is true that the times were ripe for it, but we helped create those times by the things I have enumerated. We grew because the main characterization of our work was a modest participation in every phase of American life that advanced the welfare of the workers, the Negro people, all national minorities. We buried the idea that our Party was a band of conspirators or putschists out to destroy democracy—(this was recognized by Roosevelt when he released Browder from jail as "an

act of national unity"). We grew because we proved that we deserved the support and trust of the American people.

We grew because we defended everything human and decent in American life. Hundreds of thousands of Americans were beginning to understand that we were not "foreign agents," that we were not out to "destroy church and family," that we had no desire to "nationalize women." They were beginning to understand that we were among the most patriotic of Americans. Of course, many of them preferred their own credo of Americanism, "My country right or wrong," to ours "My country make it right." But they could respect our credo in spite of their differences with it.

During this period we lost Bohemianism which was attracted to us in the leather jacket days of the late '20's as an ally. But we gained instead new allies, Humanism, and everything decent and forward-looking in America.

Well, after the Duclos article this was all dumped—but completely. This entire period, a glorious period in the history of the Party as far as I am concerned; a period that not only marks my youth but the progressive youth of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of Americans, was characterized as the "Browder period of Revisionism." All the books and pamphlets of this period were taken from the shelves and burned out of our minds in a wave of hysteria.

Foster and the isolationists seized the opportunity to stampede us into a self-examination for "revision." We began to look with suspicion at all aspects of our "broad approach." We labeled all references to our democratic heritage as "bourgeois nationalism."

We distorted our campaign for a "farmer-labor coalition," which would gradually develop toward an independent party, into a suicidal commando raid on the existing coalition, by helping to initiate a go-it-alone third party.

Instead of promoting the economic welfare of the workers and all the American people, we developed an "anti-Keynesian" theory which labeled all New Deal type measures as dan-

gerous pump priming. We labeled all those who sought to avoid a threatening depression as "apologists for imperialism." We substituted "predicting depressions" instead of working for prosperity. And more. . . .

We isolated ourselves in the unions and in the mass organizations of the people. These were inevitable results of the new theories developed in correcting the revision. When the mass of people rejected us, we bundled ourselves into "left" organizations to warm ourselves in agreement with one another. We insulted our Negro members and friends with our revival of the outworn theory of "self determination in the Black Belt." This theory inferred that the Negro people were less American than other Americans. When we were isolated from the Negro people's fight for equality and integration, we substituted a phrase searching, heresy hunt to prove that our hearts were pure. But this so-called "white chauvinism campaign" was also rejected by the Negro people because it inferred that they (our Negro members and friends) were incapable of educating their well-meaning white comrades who were still subject to old habits and stupid prejudices instilled since childhood. More, more.

Leaders of trade unions became "labor lieutenants of monopoly capital"; NAACP leaders, "agents of imperialism"; papers like the *Compass*, "worse than the *Journal American*, at least we know where the J.A. stands." Little wonder that when the attacks came, when the so-called "objective conditions" broke down upon us, we could see nothing but enemies on all sides. We could no longer even trust ourselves. We began our own type of heresy hunt. In a frenzy of fear and distrust we began to finish the job of decimation started by the bourgeoisie. We used expulsion and vilification against our own loyal members and friends. Our only defense against the oncoming fascism, which we predicted, was to bury ourselves.

These and lots more were the symptoms of a theoretical disease that had gripped us in the "revising of the revision" which was initiated by the Duclos article.

"All right," it is now, belatedly conceded, "we may have thrown out the 'baby with the bath,' but you can't deny that Browder was 'revisionist.' Look at Teheran and 'progressive capitalism,' etc. Besides in any case we're taking a 'New Look' and mean to correct the excesses. We mean to once again develop the broad approach, so why burden yourself with the events of '45?'"

Why? Because it is my contention that the seeds for our present isolation were sown in the "revising of the revision." Because, unless we re-examine the distorted "History" of that period, it will plague our every effort to become "creative Marxists" (remember that the "creative Marxists" of the early '40's became the "revisionists of Marxism" in the late '40's). Because truth deserves to be told. Because we owe it to all those who were with us during that period, but who are no longer with us, to re-examine whether they participated in "revisionism." Because we must fully understand the terrible consequences of the Duclos article in '45 so that we shall in the future have confidence in our own Marxist thinking, especially in regard to our own country. Because theory is developed from the re-examination of history.

Moreover, I intend to show that our wartime position, the so-called Browder position was essentially correct. This was the projection that the wartime unity between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had a possibility of continuation in a prolonged period of "peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the framework of one and the same world." It is my opinion that this position was at variance with an estimate from abroad; and that the search for revisionism was a cover for the attempt to change this position. In addition, I intend to show that the symptoms described in Eugene Dennis' "New Look" were a result of the diseased theories which were adopted in 1945 to justify this change of position.

It is also my opinion that the "left sectarianism vs. right opportunism" explanation for our dilemma, as advanced by the "New Look" represents an attempt to avoid thoroughgoing examination of these new theo-

ries which they helped develop or which they accepted; that we cannot once again emerge from our present isolation, unless we re-examine the theories that enabled us to emerge from our previous isolation during the period from the "open letter" of 1933 to the Duclos article of 1945. We cannot build tomorrow unless we fully understand yesterday!

If our emergence into the broad stream of American life was marked by a "letter," the "open letter" of 1933, our reversion to the previous dismal, dark shadows was initiated by another so-called "letter," the "Duclos letter" of 1945. What was the "Duclos letter"? It was an article that appeared in the "Cahiers du Communism" that purported to analyze the policies and practices of the Communist movement in the U.S. around the closing years of World War II. Operating from hindsight, it is now my opinion that this letter was an attempt "from abroad" to influence the course then undertaken by the Communist Party in the U.S. Why? Because of the alleged revisionism in the policy and practices of the American party? No! Because if "revisionism" had been at issue it would not have been handled in this unsubtle, emergency basis. The letter indicates that the American party was creating difficulties abroad. What were these difficulties? The alleged "revisionism"? Well, let's see.

I contend that the difficulties stemmed from a difference in estimates for the period. America and the Soviet Union were emerging from the war as the two giants. What was to be the relationship between the two giants which would determine also the other relationships between the nations of the world? We said that it was possible for the unity between U.S. and U.S.S.R., which was developed during the war and which had culminated at Teheran, to continue for a prolonged period in the post-war world. The estimate or prediction "from abroad" was that reactionary America, grown powerful during the war, would now seek to dominate the world, and that world Socialism must take its own means of protection.

This difference in estimates was important enough to justify the attempt

from abroad to bring our estimate in-to line. On what basis? On the basis of a discussion of the possibility of co-existence? Of course not! On the basis of "theory," which alone is the legitimate concern of Marxists the world over. Thus it is my contention that the entire search for "revisionism" in the American party was the rationalization after the fact. The fact was that it seemed necessary to bring the American estimate of the possibilities of co-existence more closely into line with estimates "from abroad."

This is my own speculation from hindsight. However, having stated it as a warning to the reader of my conclusions in advance, I will proceed as though this were not the fact. I will re-examine the charges of "revisionism" as though they were the "fact." Because we not only changed our estimate after our search for "revisionism," but we found the "revisionism" we looked for. But let us see whether now, when we are a little older, a little wiser, a little chastened by the cruelties of history, we would still call it "revisionism."

The Duclos letter indicated that the American party (particularly Browder) started from a "diplomatic" agreement among the representatives of governments, U.S., U.S.S.R., and Great Britain, at Teheran, and developed the following theories and practices:

1. Developed the "theory of the possible prolonged co-existence and collaboration of Socialism and capitalism in the framework of the same world."

2. From this he developed the possibility of the continuance of National Unity in U.S. in the post-war period.

3. Bred the illusion of reliance on "Progressive Capitalism."

4. All this was coupled with the liquidation of the Communist Party in the U.S. and of the substitution of the Communist Political Association.

This in brief was the basis of the charges of "gross revisionism."

Well, let's take No. 4 first. (Perhaps because I think this is the easiest.) If changing the word "Party" to "Association" constituted "revisionism," we had better be careful in this present period when we take a "new look" at organizational names and

forms. But I am sure that by now we are completely capable of dealing with this question. If we need additional arguments—Ho Chi Minh was head of a Marxist Educational Alliance—examine the content of the work of the CPA by reading the *Communist* during the entire period of its existence in 1944, especially John Williamson's discussion of work in the Clubs (*Communist*, Nov., 1944). See whether or not we wouldn't consider this a fair load of Marxist content for a "party" of Socialism in our present conception. And peculiarly, all that seemed necessary to reconstitute the Party was to delete references to Jefferson and Lincoln, etc., from the Preamble to the new constitution or as Foster put it, "The Preamble of the (new) Party constitution . . . broke with Browder adulation of bourgeois democracy and struck a clear note of proletarian democracy and socialism. It declared that the 'CPUSA is the political party of the working class basing itself upon the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism' . . . (*History CPUSA*, p. 436). Foster neglected to mention that this also deleted the references to Jefferson and Lincoln that were in the "Preamble" to the 1938 constitution.

(A note to learned jurist who may try Communist cases. The actual wording of the preamble of the constitution of the Communist organization in America is an accident of history and has validity only insofar as it reflects the hearts and minds of its members. I claim after listening to many, many general discussions that the following words more aptly flow from the whole of our scientific understanding that the Socialist movement is the continuation under conditions of monopoly capital, of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

I claim that they more accurately describe why we have joined and have remained in the Communist Party. For us it is an—

" . . . organization of Americans which, basing itself upon the working class, carries forth the tradition of Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, under the changed conditions of modern industrial society.

"It adheres to the principles of

scientific socialism, Marxism, the heritage of the best thought of humanity and of a hundred years experience of the labor movement, principles which have proved to be indispensable to the national existence and independence of every nation; it looks forward to a future in which, by democratic choice of the American people, our own country will solve the problems arising out of the contradiction between the social character of production and its private ownership, incorporating the lessons of the most fruitful achievement of all mankind in a form and manner consistent with American tradition and character."

(Taken from the *Preamble to the Constitution of the Communist Political Association*, adopted May 21, 1944.)

I am certain that in the next period we American Marxists will correct this error of history. Whatever name we choose, we will develop a preamble to our new constitution that describes our hearts and minds at least as accurately as do the above words.)

Shakespeare admonishes us: "What's in a name—a rose by any other name, etc." Yet I do think the question of a proper name for our Marxist organization is an important factor. It is especially important that it should not contain any elements that do not correspond to the reality of the organization. Therefore, I would like to discuss the desirability of deleting the word "party" from our name. These remarks are valid both insofar as the events of 44-45 and for our present "new look."

It is easily understood why a Frenchman would be less concerned with the other parts of a Marxist organization's name than adjusting the word "party." For it is probably of utmost importance that in France's multi-party system that the Marxist section of the working class be represented in the electoral scene by its own "party." In France, "coalition" or "people's front" takes place by uniting of individual parties for election programs or for government con-

trol. Thus a Marxist may participate in a broad electoral front while maintaining membership in only one "party." It is the coalition of various parties as a whole which make up an electoral front.

Is this the case in the United States? No. Most Communist Party members are registered for elections in another party—Republican, Democratic, Liberal, etc. Registering in a political party means becoming a member of that party voting for officers, candidates, etc. Of course, the word "party" in our name doesn't mean the same as "party" in the Democratic Party or Republican Party or a (future?) "farmer-labor" party sense. So there is no deceit involved in our dual membership. We participate in the affairs of the major parties in a similar way as does the ADA or COPE or others.

I can, however, understand why many Americans may think me deceitful in maintaining membership in two "parties." Not having become acquainted with the whole of Marxism, they do not understand that one of the "parties" to which I belong is not really a "party" in the sense to which they have become accustomed. It is merely a traditional part of our name that no longer has its original meaning and that has outlived its usefulness.

Therefore my suggestion in the "New Look" discussion is that the word "party" in our organization's name is the most dispensable part. It interferes with our participation in the primaries of major parties, it may interfere with our individual participation at the time when major elements in the working class, among farmers, and among liberals, decide the time has come to develop a new party.

So if Jacques Duclos should suddenly discover that after months of discussion, the American Marxist organization will have once again divested itself of the word "party" in its name, he should not be alarmed. I would suggest that before he is tempted to write another "letter," he carefully examine the content of the new

organization and that he carefully examine the facts of American life that are somewhat different than France.

I have beaten this "dead duck" question at such length for two main reasons:

1. To show we were on the "right track" in 1944.
2. To show how outworn concepts can actually hinder us now.

We have other outworn concepts in our organizational forms which also need a "new look." We would be burdening Lenin unfairly if we assume that he meant to infer that the organizational forms which he developed to fit the illegal conditions of feudal Russia in 1902-05 could fit the conditions of mid-century capitalist America: a capitalist America, whose bourgeois democratic revolution is one hundred and eighty years old, and whose political and theoretical atmosphere is influenced by the libertarian views of Jefferson, Paine, Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and whose people, in the overwhelming majority, honestly believe (whether or not mistakenly) that theirs is a "government of the people, for the people and by the people," a credo they get with their mother's milk.

One can almost feel Lenin's contempt and derision for those who distort the dialectic methods of his teachings by treating them like catechisms, or lessons in semantics, or huddle over them like Talmudic students oblivious to the real world around them.

In my humble opinion no student of Lenin ever expressed the "whole" of Lenin's teaching so beautifully as did Browder when he said:

"Our theory is valid because it is close to life, it comes directly out of living experience, and its purpose is to serve life and guide it to higher levels. It was in the writings of a pre-eminent theorist, Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, that I first found these words of Goethe:

'Grey my young friend, is all theory,
And green alone Life's golden tree.'

(From *Victory and After*, by Earl Browder.)

(To be continued)