

## Letters from Readers



### Leaders Should Come From Workingclass

York, Pa.

Dear Editor:

Although I have let considerable time pass since reading Alex Leslie's letter of the 5th, I find myself still in anything but a normal frame of mind and still mad as hell.

I'd like to begin by stating that I have nothing but the deepest respect and admiration for the party's leadership; that they are competent and next to brilliant in respect to theory I certainly have no quarrel. Neither could anyone in their position within the past ten years display more courage and sacrifices than our leadership. The point I am trying to make is that they cannot put their theory into practice accurately—in respect to the working-class—unless they themselves are of the working class.

When I said in my last letter that our leadership is divorced and isolated from life and people, based on my own experience since I have been in the party, I meant just that.

Here I suppose an effective argument could take place in respect to the history of the Soviet Union relative to the role Lenin, Marx and Engels played in the formation of the first Socialist state. It cannot be denied that Lenin played a decisive role on the Russian scene, although I have always felt that his importance has been exaggerated and the importance of the people minimized; the people did the suffering and dying.

The reasons I feel the leadership should be of the working class are many, however, I'll confine the reasons into the two most important. (1) The leadership makes decisions based upon the membership, which, of course, is as it should be. However, my guess is that the membership of the party today is composed—at least 75 percent of the membership—of people like yourself, professional and small business people. Accurate conclusions cannot be made, in respect to the working-class, by  
(Continued on Page 7)

## Statement of The Committee

Some weeks ago, this committee announced the opening of a public discussion on the report of Comrades Eugene Dennis, and Claude Lightfoot and Max Weiss to the National Committee of the CPUSA and urged the fullest participation of all Party members and organizations.

We trust that this discussion will mark a new stage; in that it will help further deepen our understanding of the past, both in its positive and negative feature, as well as increasingly bring forth much more thinking with regard to future perspectives.

We urge upon everyone fullest participation in this discussion.

DISCUSSION COMMITTEE  
COMMUNIST PARTY

# The American Road to Socialism

A special Section Devoted to Discussion of the Past and Perspectives of the Communist Party and the American Left. Edited by Discussion Committee, Communist Party

## Time for a Changed Outlook on Youth

WE WOULD like to contribute our thoughts on the youth question with the hope that this will initiate the widest discussion throughout the Left and will lead to a proper application of Marxism-Leninism on the youth question. As a collective, we are not entirely satisfied with our contribution, especially in relation to our discussion on youth issues and a party program for youth.

Where do the youth stand today? The organized youth movements have taken very good positions. On nearly every major issue of the day—civil liberties, jimcrow, peace, etc. Unfortunately since these organizations (U.S. Assembly of Youth, YWCA, National Student Association, Methodist Youth Federation, etc.) are all relatively small, have very little influence among the mass of youth, and are based mainly around the church and the campus.

What about the mass of youth—the unorganized youth who are mainly of the working class? We feel there are two distinct groups of youth.

FIRST, the teen-ager, who feels many of the worst aspects of capitalism in the U.S.A., 1956,



For example, teen-agers feel the most direct impact of the cold war; the draft. They are directly affected by the central and most explosive civil rights issue: school segregation (especially Negro youth). Also, they are subjected to the intense racist and nationalistic propaganda against intended enemies; they are on the receiving end not only of what the rest of the population gets, but all day long in school as well. These are only a few of the problems that teen-agers face, including the traditional one of becoming an adult.

These objective conditions have aroused tremendous ferment among the teen-agers, most of it unorganized. We feel encouraged by the fact that so small a percentage of teen-agers has become involved in destructive activities despite these crushing problems, headline-hunters notwithstanding.

SECOND, the young adults (20-30) today tend to get married in their late teens or early 20's (as contrasted with the 1930's). Young adults, therefore, assume at an early age the same responsibilities (the family) as adults and tend to become identified in the shops as "regular workers." However, they retain their youthful interest in sports and recreation, in on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs. They have special youth problems due to lack of seniority

and have a great degree of militancy. Young adults have a two-sided relationship to life: youth and adulthood.

Young adults today are not in motion as they were in the 30's and for obvious reasons. The first reason being the general prosperity (let's face it) in America today, which results in many of their needs being satisfied. The second reason: the McCarthyite repression of any decent, progressive youth activity. While this question affects the teen-agers, its main blows fall on the young adults because of their responsibilities.

We conclude, therefore, that the interests, problems, and organizing possibilities differ considerably between the young adults and teen-agers. We also conclude that the youth today are faced with a multitude of major problems, that the way these problems are solved, both by the American people as a whole and by the youth themselves, will go a long way in determining the American road to socialism.

WHAT HAS been the Party's approach to the youth question?

We feel the Party's approach has been mainly a "hands off" attitude. It is no accident that with all the healthy discussion around re-evaluation of Party work and re-examination of perspectives, the youth question has hardly entered the discussion. In our opinion, the two major reasons for this are:

1.) The Party does not have a basic Marxist-Leninist position on the youth question and therefore has a vague, unorganized youth program which has led directly to practically no Party youth work. 2.) Party youth are not, therefore, in the

mainstream of Party life, are in general shunted aside and treated in a paternal manner.

A reflection of the Party's attitude on the youth question can be seen in the sparse educational and agitational material available. As bad as this is, it is even worse when it comes to work-



ingclass youth, the relationship of youth to the trade union and vice-versa. Furthermore, youth's contribution to America's heritage has been virtually ignored by Marxist historians. (It is worthwhile for us to note that the last French CP convention spent roughly one-third of its time on the youth question.)

WE FEEL that a basic change in the outlook of the Party on the youth question is on the order of the day. Certainly, any discussion around building the Party among the youth will be largely academic until we fight through for a

Party program for youth, which will reflect not only the economic, educational, and cultural needs of youth, but also the understanding that through the struggle for recreation, youth faces most of the major issues of the day. (Jimcrow, athletic facilities vs. war budgets, trade union support, etc.) It is through such struggle that youth will join the Party.

The proper organization of the Party to tackle the youth question is the only guarantee that this question will be handled swiftly and in a correct manner. Here at random are some of our opinions on this point.

We feel that the Party must guide its youth, for where else will this guidance come from? This means that youth have to receive guidance along natural lines for instance, in a shop a youth should not get submerged in general trade union work, but should be doing youth work, i.e. (depending on the shop) recreational work, special economic demands, influencing the union on the youth question, etc.

The Party has to provide the opportunity for collective discussion of youth problems from the club to the National Committee.

There should be Party specialists in youth work (not ne-



cessarily youth) as there are in other fields of work. This will make practical the use of accumulated experience in the youth movement and will do away with the practice of cadre disregarding the fruits of years of experience among youth upon entering the adult movement.

Party cadre should consider youth work as a major field of Party work, and Party youth cadre should be considered as Party cadre.

WE WOULD like to submit the following proposals for adoption by the Party in the field of youth work:

1. National Party conference on youth work (including participation from the youth leaders in the districts.)

2. A major Party theoretical and historical effort on the youth question, including the placing of the youth question as a major one in the Party.

3. A Party youth program.

4. The taking of proper organizational steps to ensure Party youth guidance.

5. The establishment of a Youth Commission to provide the proper leadership and follow-up for the whole youth program.

A GROUP OF CHICAGO WORKING CLASS PARTY YOUTH

## The Party Taught Me About Brotherhood

WE ARE in bad shape to the degree that we are late in realizing it and slow in correcting our errors. It knocked me in the teeth when Dennis' report said what we had long refused to face: we've been going years without really thinking for ourselves.

The new sense of individual responsibility and independence is a terrific relief, but this will be little more than a heady sensation unless we put the new democracy at work constructively. It is for this reason that the adamant position of the National Committee members is so unforgivable and destructive. No one wants a witchhunt among heroic, long-suffering leaders. But suffering, risk, and heroism do not and cannot substitute for effective leadership, for courageous encouragement of the members to develop a thinking and creative party.

Our refusal to do our own thinking encouraged among us self-righteous and rigidly sectarian attitudes, mutual suspiciousness because we picked on one another in our isolation, and the attitude that nobody but ourselves had principles. These can be corrected only by broad and wide-open discussion and democracy among ourselves.

It is morally wrong to stay in the organization if we fly the banner of the vanguard but re-

fuse to grow, if we fail to encourage democratic and constructive critical discussion by the membership, and if we are incapable of self-analysis and re-composition necessary to meet the challenge of new world and national developments.

I SAY that because I love what the party has taught me, not it or any other organization for itself alone. It was in the party that I learned what real honesty and brother-trust mean in practice. It was among our people that I, as a Southern white, was introduced to Negroes as brothers and sisters in the midst of my other fellow-Americans, brothers and sisters whose ideas and personalities I had allowed myself to be denied the pleasure of for years. I found out what breadth and richness of life I had missed, until now I oppose segregation as much for what it denies me as I do for what it denies others.

In more recent years, in our fight against sectarianism, the party led me to appreciate the positive and human qualities of many Southern whites in spite of the prevalent infection of prejudice and ignorance. What other approach would give hope or incentive to try to win them to new understanding toward bettering their own lives and in seeing that their own well-

(Continued on Page 11)



# The American Road to Socialism

## Marxism and American Class Struggle

By MARTY

WORCESTER, Mass.  
**FOR A MASS PARTY** of Socialism in the United States the first question arises out of the split that took place in the world socialist movement during World War I. We must ask ourselves: has the economic and political setup of world capitalism changed, and if so, have the changes been of such nature as to make the political differences that split the socialist movement merely historical issues of the past? It may well be that in that bitter split, because we were so bitterly antagonistic to certain people, we condemned too sweepingly all of their thoughts and works.

For example, in our own country, can we say that Browder was wrong in everything? Because he came to very wrong conclusions, should we discard everything the man said and did, and damn these as "Browderism"? For the same reason should we condemn everything the man may say or do in the future and hold him simply to be untouchable?

Here we are using Browder as a figure of speech, really, we are not attempting to raise, in that regard any particular theoretical problems. The point I am raising, and which I think very important in our country is that we must not discard everything of a certain person's thoughts or deeds because that person came to wrong or harmful conclusions. Similarly, in terms of Socialist thought or deed, we must not simply discard because of a label.

Or let us put this in another form: because certain leaders, at a certain period are "in the saddle" does not mean that everything they say or write is necessarily true. Comrades Foster or Dennis, or any others of our leaders—and I have great respect for their knowledge—do not know and cannot know every



area and every crevice of American life.

To avoid the "cult of the individual"—and I would add, the cult of the Party—involves more than a one-way street approach. We cannot destroy such cults unless we destroy all avenues that lead a body of people to accept such a state of affairs.

I believe it was during the Browder period that the slogan was raised: "Learn and learn—study Marxism." Maybe there were some organized movements towards accomplishing this in the larger centers. But I think that through the country as a whole this was only a momentary slogan, and many sections were busy trying to put the "cart before the horse," in keeping up with national directives.

We were not really getting anywhere. We were like a starv-

ed man, suddenly thrown a lot of different types of food, and knowing which to grab first, not taking a bite out of one and then another morsel, but not really eating anything in particular.

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**WE REALIZE** that all socialist movement in the U. S. were weak in membership and in mass following. We know that when certain issues developed mass support, the two-party system in many cases did bring on economic and political reforms—enough to prevent any national struggle from developing further. The truth is that the class struggle in our country has resulted in many advances without an advance in the socialist movement, but we should not lose sight of the fact that even the Right-wing in Labor, even the

Catholic workers, have adopted thoughts and actions that were born in the socialist movement.

Both the farmer and the worker have been making certain political and economic advances due, to a large extent, to Marxist thought, although on the whole they do not accept the Marxist approach. They accept what they think applies at the moment; in any new approach to a mass socialist party our leadership should take this into consideration.

The American worker, in his class efforts, will not be moved by any doctrinaire or dogmatic line. To apply Marxism in our country, I think it must be very flexible; we must avoid a fixed Party line. I do not mean that as a Party, without our own organization, we become loose and flexible. But to carry into the class struggle itself a socialist dogmatic line is like driving a car with the brakes on.

We have the task of not following rigidly or one-sidedly the experiences of Europe; we must look again at the theoretical differences that arose in a past age, and the resulting splits, etc. Atomic energy and automation, the development of science on a very high scale, is bringing forth a new world. Unknown problems will not only face Marxists, but all people. All classes will be swung into action.

Rather than spending so much time dwelling upon the past and reviewing our gains and setbacks. I believe we should think more in terms of seeking to apply Marxist principles, without Old World attachments of the past. The problem is the applying of Marxism to the American class struggle now.

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**THROUGH** the years, in many tasks that have faced the membership, I have often thought that the Party was putting the cart before the horse. To build socialism in the U. S., our main concern should be the American class struggle. It is true that in the early days we aided the  
 (Continued on Page 10)

## Letters from Readers

(Continued from Page 6)

this type of member. The leadership, being isolated themselves from the workingclass, can come to only one conclusion relative to policy and program—the wrong one. (2) It is my firm belief that unless you FEEL and experience exploitation first hand, wavering back and forth becomes common and capitulation sets in, which incidentally, is what has taken place within the party the last few years.

In conclusion: I just want to set Alex Leslie straight on a few things attributed to me by him. (I am the letter writer from North Carolina). At no time did I ever, or would I call the leadership egg-heads. Neither did I say that the present leadership LOUSED UP the Communist Party. As to paralleling the "intellectuals" of Meany, Woll and Beck as against Robeson, O'Casey and Aragon, you are being ridiculous and irresponsible. What really burnt me, however, was your inference that any new idea; any controversial subject that you yourself may not approve, in good old "bureaucratic left - sectarianism fashion," you immediately classify as McCarthyism.

I certainly wish it were possible for you and I to come face to face Leslie. I would be extremely anxious for the both of us to re-count the last ten years in terms of our experiences and our sacrifices; sacrifices in terms of human suffering that included the works.

Don't get me wrong Alex Leslie; I'm not crying but it's an unforgivable insult to call me and my family—McCarthyites. You are typical of the ivory tower theoreticians who always have your "profession" to turn to. I only have my hands Mr. Leslie, and believe me—that makes all the difference in the world.

A READER.

I am unable to sign my name).

### Want Direct Representation

Dear Editor:

At our last section membership meeting the following resolution was unanimously passed.

We propose Direct Representation (as opposed to the former method of electing delegates) from all sections of the party to the forthcoming National Convention.

A BROOKLYN ELECTRICAL SECTION.

### Says Dr. Virchow Is German

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

In today's article on "health" the writer mentions "the Viennese" Virchow.

Virchow has never been Viennese. His entire scientific and political activity was spent in Germany, which is not the same thing.

A MEDICAL FRIEND.

30-hour demand when this simply is no issue in the contract struggle. We have heard much talk of our past sectarian trade union work. Here again we are projecting a line which at the moment is still pie in the sky as far as the steel workers are concerned.

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**WE** mention here only two of the major disagreements we had with the Onda article. Actually, we sent a seven-page typewritten criticism to the commission. The failure of the Steel Commission to discuss or publicize it and their action is merely ignoring our differences is a most flagrant example of disregard for the thinking of the membership and leadership within the steel industry. This is a sharp example of undemocratic practices in the most important area of our party's work.  
 STEEL SECTION STAFF.

## Views of Steel Shop Workers Ignored

**COMMUNIST** shop workers in our area played a modest but noteworthy role in the recent steel strike. Based on a line developed in our section, we find ourselves at the conclusion of this action in harmony with the outlook of the great bulk of the workers, free of sharp antagonism on the part of local union and district leadership and carrying a little more respect and influence in the industry.

Unfortunately, we feel called upon at this time to bring forth certain strong criticism of state and national party leadership during this strike. We raise these criticisms:

First, lack of full appreciation of the steel strike and lack of attention to the party's role in this struggle of 650,000 steel workers. The main contribution of state and national leadership seemed to consist of articles and stories in *The Worker* and *Daily Worker*.

Our section found itself in sharp disagreement with many important formulations in the most significant articles. We refer particularly to *The Worker* Flyer written by Andy Onda, which we will go into a little later, the article by Emmanuel Blum in the July 17 *Daily Worker*, and George Morris in the July 22 *Worker*. In both these articles, part of which we agreed with, we found the formulation that

the strike has been determined mainly by excessive inventories of steel and consequently the unequivocal desire of the industry for a work stoppage. It is true that large inventories provided a strong card in the hands of industry negotiators. However, to overestimate the importance of the inventories neglects certain basic facts.

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**1. The UNION'S** demands for wages, premium pay, supplementary unemployment benefits, paid hospitalization, etc., constituted the most powerful and expensive demands ever made on the steel industry.

2. The June, 1955, inventory was estimated at 16 million tons. The 1955 strike lasted 12 hours. The June, 1956, inventory was 21.5 million tons. A difference of 5.5 millions of tons was not an overwhelming difference. Within these figures we find certain vital types of steel in acute demand, including plate, structural and pipe.

3. To characterize the strike as simply an inventory lockout brings the logical conclusion to many that there is no hope or need for action until such time as the inventory is used up. We understand this happened in some sections of the party in Pennsylvania, and had to be corrected.

4. The inventory lockout approach supplied some tactical advantages designed to obtain

unemployment insurance, federal surplus food, welfare assistance, a Congressional investigation of the steel industry, and to help mold public opinion favorably. As such this approach was utilized by McDonald and Meany. Objectively, the inventory condition was neither the sole basis for the strike nor the main barrier to a settlement.

Outside of the articles and stories our section received virtually no concrete help from either state or national leadership. The National Steel Commission did not meet! The member of the Steel Commission from our area met only once with our Section Committee in the period up to and including the strike. Although there were clear differences of policy between ourselves and the national commission, no attempt at resolution of the differences was made. No officer of the steel leadership felt the strike was important enough to meet or consult with our section.

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**SECOND,** we feel that a sectarian line was projected by the National Steel Commission in the Onda article. Although our section committee unanimously refused to distribute *The Worker* flyer with the article and wrote a long detailed explanation of our disagreements, we have as yet received no acknowledgment of the criticism from the



national commission, nor has the Steel Commission publicly indicated the differences which exist.

Specifically, the Onda article projects the 30-hour week as a key demand the steel workers should make. The steel union leadership does not have this outlook of fighting for the 30-hour week now, nor did any significant section of the membership believe the 30-hour week should be a demand in this contract. Further, the Onda article projects the idea that a guaranteed annual wage is of no value unless the 30-hour week is won together with it. Based only on these two points, our party policy must lead to the conclusion that even with the attainment of all the demands of the International Wage Policy Board, we could only look with disfavor on such a settlement.

We find Western Pennsylvania Party issuing an entire leaflet during the strike stressing the



**GIL GREEN**

(Continued from Page 9)  
 cess of industrialization, therefore, leads to a more rapid concentration of capital in these areas, to the formation of new capitalist groupings, and to the growth of both the working class and the middle class.

THESE developments have a double impact. They tend to soften some regional differences and to make regional solidarity less easy to attain as class differences emerge to the fore. This is true, for example, of the Middle West, where powerful monopoly groupings strive to utilize sectional feelings and differences in order to win mass support for their own war against the dominance of Eastern capital.

The shrill outcry of the Chicago Tribune is an example of this. It incessantly inveighs against "Wall Street" and "Eastern banking interests," but represents not the anti-monopoly interests of the people of that region, but the special reactionary interests of mid-west monopolies.

It is also seen in the South. The Dixiecrats use sectionalism as a means by which to continue to oppress the Negro people and to keep the white masses divided. The recent industrialization of that region limited as it is, is helping to break up this reactionary Dixiecrat sectionalism and to sharpen class differences and struggles within the South.

The other side of the uneven economic development of the various regions is the continuation of regional disparities and differences. Some of these even become more aggravated, for the more the growth of the outlying regions, the more the appetite for further growth. An example of how conscious these regions of the menace of Wall Street domination can be seen by the intense controversy stirred up over the Dixon-Yates TVA power deal.

This contract had a dual purpose. It aimed to destroy the public and cooperative-owned power which developed since the 1930s and which, by competing with monopoly-owned power, brought about the faster rate of rural electrification of this past decade. The second purpose of the Dixon-Yates deal was to help reestablish, through a series of holding companies, complete Wall Street domination over the electrical power industry.

In this lay the greater significance of the Dixon-Yates contract, and it explains the aroused furor which swept the country from the Tennessee Valley in the Southeast, to the Columbia River basin in the Northwest. And it is to the credit of this movement, which had the support of organized labor, that the Eisenhower administration was finally compelled to drop the Dixon-Yates deal as a political potato too hot to handle.

A regional struggle also takes place over such questions as who shall control and who shall share in the exploitation of atomic energy and the natural resources, as well as over the allocation of government contracts. And while the interests of various monopoly groupings are involved in one or the other of these conflicts, there is also a stake that the people have in entering these struggles in opposition to monopoly domination as such.

# The American Road to Socialism

## Trade Unionist Says — Rely On and Consult Membership

## Class Struggle

(Continued from Page 7)

American worker to organize into industrial unions; but too often we have acted on the idea that now that we have 15,000,000 strong, that was it.

It is true we have large numbers in the trade-union movement. But very few of this generation have the knowledge of the old-timers concerning the principles of trade unionism and the experiences of the old IWW and socialist days.

The fact is that many workers look upon the union as simply another form of "social security." To quite a degree, the trade-union movement is a big-scale one, but one lacking knowledge of basic principles of trade-unionism.

The main base of a mass socialist movement must be in the American class struggle. We must have a leadership in the communities which knows the particular situation on a local close level. Our members must be able to apply practical work in their shop locals, based upon their own conditions, not just trying to apply mechanically the answers they find in Political Affairs in terms of a certain big steel or auto union.

These answers are important for fully developed Party people, but we should concentrate on material that speaks more at the shop level, right to the worker at his own level, and not over his head. The development of Socialism must come from the class struggle, and the base of the American socialist movement must be the American worker and his problems.

This does not mean that Party people should ignore their full development as Marxists, and the international scene. But we must realize that for the millions we must give primary education, and boil down our Marxism or rather apply it to the actualities of the level of the existing class struggle in Detroit and in Boston and in Burlington, Vermont, and in the South.

For the Party this means more locally developed leadership, free to move within their own realm of reality, in terms of the workers in their own communities. It may mean a big change in the national system. How can an industrial section develop itself if, for example, it robs itself of funds which should be used for local work right at the bottom, to give to national drives, etc.? And later the section is asked about its political results. To build we must get that horse before the cart—robbing the base will never build the base.

I HEARTILY agree with that section of Max Weiss' report (pages 25-26) on Improving Our Collective Work and Inner-Party Democracy.

Six years ago, when I and several score other comrades in a union were clamoring for a Party evaluation of errors we had made in our union, we never received the benefit of such a discussion. It seemed that some top Party body had met and disagreed, and therefore the meeting the members wished was never held. Thus the differences were never resolved at top or bottom; errors were never evaluated; everyone had to depend on his individual or small group analysis; mistakes continued to be made and we did not learn from our mistakes. This is known as monolithic unity.

Now six years after the fact the errors are being evaluated without us. I, who was in the thick of a particular union situation for 13 years, find it difficult six years after the fact to recall events clearly and precisely. Yet correct and balanced evaluations have to be made on concrete, not general facts, union by union. Apparently the national and state committee members find the absence of concrete facts no great handicap. The little men who weren't there have figured things out by talking to themselves—without the trade union members.

OUR NATIONAL Committee figured things out so accurately that the Dennis report, in discussing the split in the labor movement, does not even mention the effect of Taft-Hartley, though in my union at least I believe this was much more crucial and immediate than errors around the Progressive Party and Marshall Plan.

Isn't the trade union primarily concerned with economic questions, and isn't Taft-Hartley the law that directly affected the union's ability to bargain collectively?

The kind of evaluation that makes a fundamental omission in the process of correction, reminds me of a piece Gus Hall once wrote in Political Affairs: about the section organizer who was the authority on politics but didn't know anything about the trade union contract; and the union party steward who didn't know anything about politics but knew the union contract inside out. In neglecting to take Taft-Hartley into account, how does the Dennis report differ from this characterization by Gus Hall? And how does our top leadership come to make such a mistake in the midst of self-correction?

I ASSERT that our top leadership, which has accumulated important experience over the years and is a more capable leadership than it was ten, twenty or even four years ago, has to learn a fundamental lesson that we in our party, including all lower echelons, must learn rapidly in order to survive and flourish.

We have to learn to rely upon and consult with the membership, particularly the trade union and other mass forces who can fill in the concrete detail, without which the dialectical method can only operate in a vacuum. Such mass forces must be members of all leading bodies in substantial numbers and on all levels

of leadership.

We have to stop thinking of unity as an absence of differences when we know that dialectics operates in a conflict of argument, and that Lenin's greatest works are those where he cuts his arguments against other points of view.

We have to learn that differences openly expressed and made known to all will not disunite or disorient our party, but are an earnest of our leadership's willingness to change undemocratic and un-Communist methods of work.

—Only thus will we win over

those active anti-fascist and pro-socialist friends of ours and ex-party members, who now say: "The Communist Party leadership cannot change; it is too deeply incrustated with bureaucracy and arrogance." Only thus, by a correct relationship and interchange between leaders and members can we hope to arrive at a correct policy and a united party.

Open up on those differences now!

S.A.

Organization Secretary,  
 Upper East Side, New York

### New Times Call for A Fresh Outlook

(Continued from Page 3)

stration took over, I have emphasized the POSITIVE position of many in the ranks of labor leadership whom in former days (and to this day in some circles) many of us denounced as "enemies." In fact we often picked them as the MAIN targets, forgetting that at all times it is the employers and their associations who are the main enemies of labor.

I have poured out an immense amount of copy in these columns in support of the AFL-CIO merger long before and since it was effected, in face of some progressives (fortunately very few today), who told us seriously the unity was desired by the State Department to get labor's united cooperation for a reactionary foreign policy; that the monopolies favor the merger because it will put labor in one basket under extreme reactionary control; that the merger would drown out the CIO and stifle expression of differences within labor; that the struggle for civil rights would be retarded by the merger; that progressives would find it harder to play a role in the main stream.

All those theories, happily, have been proved wrong, as we have said repeatedly in this column. The trend of events will prove them even more wrong. But if accepting steps in the right direction by labor leaders, even top leaders, at "face value" as "Arthur" calls it, is bad, then I should be condemned a thousand times.

THIS brings me to the MAIN point in "Arthur's" letter. He concludes:

"First Daniel DeLeon, then Lenin and later Foster, taught us that there is such a thing as the lieutenants of capitalism within the ranks of the working class. Skill and tact are required in exposing these gentlemen—but if we meekly take them at their honeyed words they will never be exposed."

The above reminds me of some ancient days in the progressive movement when the main task of a progressive was considered to be exposure of right wing labor leaders and the leaders of all political tendencies in the working class who are to the right of Communists.

AND what was the main test in those days of this policy of "exposure"? It was to expose those who are farthest to the left among the Right Wingers, or those who "conciliated" them. The theory was that these "left socialists" or "conciliators" with them were the "most dangerous" and "conceal" their reactionary character. I think this once prev-

alent (but still influential) policy has been proven historically wrong and has done a great deal of harm—especially in the days when fascism was a serious threat.

It is far more effective to welcome every step forward, no matter whence it comes, and build upon it with unity and rank and file activity. The emphasis should be on moving forward—not "exposure." Exposure comes in good time of those who back down from a step taken, be they right or left wing leaders.

ARTHUR couldn't have brought up a more appropriate name than that of DeLeon, for many years leader of the Socialist Labor Party and author of the characterization of labor leaders as "lieutenants of capitalism in the ranks of labor." DeLeon was brilliant. His influence for a period was very strong in American labor affairs. The SLP at one time was the major party of Marxism in America. But it was precisely in the period when American labor was rising and growing in strength that DeLeon developed the arrogance and sectarianism that cut him off from every labor leader and even from most of the progressive forces.

He cynically took the position that a "new" labor movement must be built on the "ruins" of the old and almost everyone who didn't agree with him was a "lieutenant of capitalism" in labor's ranks. His organization became known as a wrecker of labor, not as a builder, and as a splitting force.

By the time DeLeonism ran its course, the SLP was left a skeleton, an association of embittered dogmatists, totally separated from American life and labor, known for little more than as a sales agency for DeLeon's books and pamphlets.

Oh, yes; the SLP is still alive, probably preparing to celebrate a century of history soon. But its influence on American life and labor is zero minus. I refer "Arthur" to some of Foster's writings on DeLeon and especially Foner's second volume of the History of the American Labor Movement.

It is ironic, however, that while we are so clear on what's wrong with the SLP and some of the other groups, I think many of us are blind to a trend, showing up especially in the current discussion, of a "DeLeonization" within the modern left, including the Communist Party. That's what's worrying me more than anything else at the moment. And I think "Arthur's" letter reflects that dead-hand influence. Most of the live, progressive in America's labor



movement today want a serious re-examination of views and practices, rejection of outworn dogmas, and they want a program that faces squarely and realistically the conditions of America today.



Tells 'How to Get It Right'

# Exposer of Klan Submits His 'Bill of Wrongs'

By STETSON KENNEDY

WAY DOWN SOUTH where I come from there is a sign on a jook-joint wall which says:

Don't ask me neither, Because I don't know, neither, And if I did I wouldn't tell you, neither.

But me, I'm not so clammy. And since a lot of people inside and outside the USA are asking, and in spite of the fact that I may not know any more than the next one, I don't mind telling you what I think.

I could put it to you in classical Marxist jingo-lingo, repleat (sic) with umpteen clearlies, maximum citations, one unanimous conclusion, and five long-lives; but I ain't a-gonna do it. I'm going to tell it to you straight-out in plain ole American, and if any high priests have difficulty understanding they can find somebody in the congregation to translate.

"All I know is what I read in the papers. . ." is the way the late Will Rogers used to preface his remarks. But I've been luckier than Rogers & Company—along with other papers I've read the Daily Worker. The very first copy I ever saw—which was while I was a college freshman down in the sticks circa 1932—caught my eye immediately with a lot of straight stuff about the true progressive being a selfless self-sacrificing, unassuming champion of the people; that the progressive can function as such only so long as his roots are in the people and he maintains integral contact with them, learns from them, and remains sensitive to their needs; that within the movement the channels of criticism and self-criticism must be kept clear of all obstruction; that the movement must ever improve its methods of work with mass organizations and the masses themselves; that there is no place in the movement for the concept of an indispensable or infallible man; that the hero interpretation of history is a bunch of bunk; that socialist legality leaves behind the primitive concepts of penology as punishment or retribution, taking its stand on the higher plane of rehabilitation; etc., etc.

SINCE that issue came to hand 24 years ago a lot of others have gone to press—around about 8,760, I calculate. I can't say that I read every one of them, but I can't recall ever reading one that didn't repeat, in one form or another, that same theme song. Now we know—from reading the DW if from no other source—that even as the song was being sung, something was rotten in Denmark and beyond.



Stetson Kennedy posed in Ku Klux Klan robes when he tried to interest the House Un-American Committee, a few years ago, in an investigation of the Klan. Instead, he was ejected from the committee's office by Capitol police.

But recently I have been proud of the DW as I have not been for a long time. It is good that it has abandoned carte blanche acceptance of, and violent apologetics for, things that were patently bad, and has begun to exercise its critical faculties with traditional American irreverence for authority-gone-astray. It is too bad we had to wait for the Russians to assert that we (one and all) have as much right to be ourselves as they have to be themselves.

Considering that America is the most highly industrialized nation in the world, its public education most widespread, its workers endowed with a militantly class-conscious and socialist-minded tradition, one would think that the American progressive movement would be at the front end of the world movement instead of its tail. But if the American movement will abide by its new course of following the dictates of its own conscience, it may yet prove to be the tail that wagged the dog, and yet become that which it ought to be. To exercise independence within the frame of international working-class solidarity is not only a right but a duty; far from fracturing solidarity, it is the only sure guarantee of its realization and perpetuation.

NOW then, what's to do?

## About the Author

Stetson Kennedy, a native Southerner, was a well-known newspaperman when he joined the Klan in Atlanta, Ga., in order to discover the inner workings of the hooded order. His findings were published in a book Southern Exposure, and in the labor and Negro press. His exposure of peonage on plantations, in turpentine camps, and of mistreatment on chain gangs and in prison camps were made when he was a reporter for the Pittsburgh Courier.

As the American Negro has been saying all along to Mr. Charlie, "When you're wrong there ain't but one thing to do—get right!" That being so, it would seem that what this movement needs is a:

## BILL OF WRONGS AND GET-RIGHTS

**1. Look homeward!** No use to just gaze out across the waters to see where the big stink comes from—go look in the mirror too. You want to know how things could go so haywire overseas: the mirror on your wall can give you most of the answers. For while the American movement was not the source of infection, no movement had it worse. Cultism, sectarianism, dogmatism, snobbism, careerism, chauvinism—brothers, you've had the whole gamut of juvenile disorders, and had 'em bad.

**2. Dry up!** It is good to regret and repent, but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth will avail nothing. So you're sorry, so good, but what are you doing to do about it? Dry your tears, wash up, and see that it never happens again!

**3. Pipe Down!** You talk too damned much. Let's hear less talk and see more action. If you don't look out, some fine day a workers' delegation will call to inform you that they have at last come into their own—and they won't be able to see you because you'll still be in conference.

**4. Stop being such cry-babies!** Instead of wailing "Oh, woe is us!" every time you get a pin prick, forget yourselves and get lost in the fight for everybody. Ditch some of the Committees to Defend Us and Ours, and get going with some Committees to Attack Reaction and Promote Socialism. Not that the former have not performed historically necessary tasks; but times are changing, and people are tired of being eternally on the defensive. Besides, offense often proves to be the best defense. Sound a call to halt the retreat and go over the top, and see what happens!

**5. Communist chauvinism has got to go!** The know-it-all, holier-than-thou, political snob approach to the American people is dead wrong. To the laugh museum with the oversize horn-rim specs and all the other stage props of the self-appointed brain-trusters!

**6. Learn the language!** Stop babbling in that unknown tongue, that esoteric Marxist esperanto which you so little understand yourselves, and preach the gospel of socialism in the language of the American people. A little corn mixed into those highlander highballs you hand out would make them a heap more palatable to plain folks with unsophisticated palates.

**7. Bust the Trust!** A handful of guys and gals, some great and some not so great, have been running the whole show for a long time. Some, having done their duty according to the lights of their times, ought to be retired with full honors. There are others who do not

know, and do not want to know, how to activate and organize the hosts of progressives who long to take part in worthwhile tasks; these non-leaders must now be led. For the rank-and-file consists of people who are capable of doing much more than twiddling their thumbs during the intervals when they are not being called upon to applaud your sage reports. If you have no ideas, ask them.

The extra-extroverts in your midst are stomping multitudes of your best people into the dust; devise a mechanism to preclude this, and you'll have something worthy of socialist emulation the world over.

**8. OPEN the forum!** Granted, the working man's party can't afford to be a debating society. Granted, you've had periods of open discussion on some questions. Granted, you've got to come to decisions and unite behind them. Granted, you've got to delegate authority to central organs to deal with both policy and program in between the representative assemblies.

Granted all that, this thing called democratic centralism has been more central than democratic, in America as elsewhere. Until now, it has not become that which Lenin intended it should be from the day of its inception. What was the big idea, anyway? Was it not a structural form born of war communism, in a land which had never known the experience of voting bad eggs out and good eggs in (or vice versa)?

What does the American tradition suggest?—Mayflower Compact for the whole ship's company, the wide open town meeting? There is nothing in Marxist theory that dictates any universal form whereby working-class parties and societies must achieve unity in action Majority rule, yes. Unity behind decisions, yes. But even then, well-defined channels wherein every question may still be put to the test, new evidence presented, and reconsideration brought about as the situation warrants.

**9. Rubber stamps to the ash can!** The degeneration of representative bodies into rubber stamps is not unknown to the American body politic. The Pendergasts and Huey Longs have had theirs, but eventually came to sad ends. The American people don't go for the idea. The institution was unknown in the tribal councils of the original Americans, and those who came later from the four corners of the globe did so in large measure to leave such travesties behind. And while we're on the subject, what about this business of insisting upon doing all things by unanimous vote?

In a current Polish journal we read of the Polish Sejm (Slavic, parliament): "Beginning with the 17th Century, the practice of unanimous agreement became customary in Polish Sejms. . . . This contributed to a general laxness, and consequently to the fall of the gentry republic." In our time, is the gesture of the unanimous vote a real contribution to unity—or is it kid stuff? Does not the movement need record votes for future reference? Has not the unanimous vote ritual frequently been perverted to railroad the proposals of central organs without proper discussion?

Has it not resulted in the degeneration of many a representative body into a rubber stamp? If they are not to fail in their historic tasks, representative bodies bent upon socialism must be free to discuss, amend, accept or reject any proposal placed before it, regardless of whether the proposal is introduced by individual representatives or by central organs en-

trusted with tentative policy formulation.

**10. Get out of town!** American progressivism suffers horribly from big city (especially New York City) provincialism. It should stop sticking to the big towns and get into the sticks. More power to the mill-village proletarians and country ginks! Seasonal assignments beyond the palisades for those whose home base is the big city asphalt! This doesn't mean that metropolitan centers should be abandoned to their fate; it does mean that the top leadership is top-heavy with natural-born or self-made city slickers. This has resulted in chronic misjudgment of the state of the nation, and the adoption of policies, programs, methods, and tones that were not attuned to the American scene. Consequently there has been a lot of talk about masses & mainstream, when in reality we were but a handful up a creek. Fortunately, there are plenty of paddles within reach.

**11. Cure the cultists!** Now that the idol has been exposed as consisting of all too human clay, the erstwhile idolators must be helped to shake off the archaic ways, devout observances, and asinine protocol which have long held back the progressive movement.

**12. NEGRO Question?** Stop trying to do the Negro's thinking for him, and get into the thick of his fight with all you've got.



Your past mistakes in trying to dictate his Manifest Destiny will be overlooked, particularly since you neglected to so much as inform him of your decision. It's about time you figured out that self-determination means self-determination. And now, so you won't have to lose any more sleep over this question, I got news for you: the American Negro was self-determined long before you were born.—Self-determined to steer clear of odd pockets and separate paths, no matter what signs anyone put on them; self-determined to level all walls and open all doors that stand between his being just like any other American.

**13. Woman Question?** Ditto (they also have minds of their own). Some want to keep house, some want to work out. Socialism's task: to provide a free choice to do either or both under equitable and optimum conditions.

**14. Snap out of it!** Old Abraham (Lincoln, that is) said, in response to a question, that the key to success in politics is the ability to raise vital issues and then fight them through to victory. In other words, stop day-dreaming about a farmer-labor party and a new mass party of socialism, and hold on high the standards that can bring such parties into being.

**15. Liquidate liquidationism!** This is a time for new beginnings, not endings.

## Party Taught Brotherhood

(Continued from Page 6)

fare cannot improve separately from that of their Negro brothers and sisters?

For these things I am forever indebted to the Communist Party. Without it my life would have been a shallow, subjective mess. But if I am obligated to the party, how much more is the party obligated to carry on honest and effective work on behalf of mankind? How can it do this without broadest cooperation among the masses and their organizations? And how can we win their confidence until we prove we do our own thinking? And how can we do our own thinking until there is democracy in the party?

THE Zetkin Club called for open expression by the National Committee. I second this—not necessarily so much by individual name as by each issue, issue by issue and reasoning by rea-

soning.

We need more flexibility. We need a socialist alliance with a discipline deriving its strength from its very democracy rather than from arbitrary directives from a few infallible elite. Frankly, I doubt there is a single Messiah on our National Committee. If I am wrong, Jesus, please let me know: to avoid hell, I will be good and will let you do my thinking. Absurd? Well, that is the position the membership is in now.

A Communist does not evaporate his individuality, but deepens as an individual by virtue of his new strength and confidence in his comrades. If one or two do all the thinking, the rest go brain-numb. Then if the thinking is ruled out and change is made impossible, the members stop being comrades and begin being obedient members of a sect.

A SOUTHERN COMRADE.