

Letters from Readers



Civil Rights Main Issue

GREENVILLE, S. C.
Editor, Daily Worker:

Attacks on our press and the Communist Party are a violation of a free political discussion of issues facing all Americans in the fast moving march of human progress in the world since defeat of the major roots of fascism in 1945.

Civil rights will remain the major domestic issue in our country till more of us recognize, endorse, and use our American Bill of Rights and Constitution. It appears, that even the Democratic Party can't have a free and open discussion on civil rights—even though this is the major discussed problem in the land.

How can the so-called Department of Justice and the Republican administration intensify their attack on such workingclass leaders as Ann Burlak? The State of Georgia threatened her with death in the electric chair in 1930 during the starvation in the midst of plenty depression for organizing the hungry of both races and asking for food. And now, in the name of the American people and democracy the D. of J.'s act is in disharmony with the social progress of the times and one which all believers in democracy, freedom of conscience will have to challenge in justice to themselves and others.

Sending ten dollar contribution along with this to the Emergency Committee for a Free Press.

J. M.

Says U. S. Needs A People's Lobby

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

Regardless of how the elections turn out, what America needs is a national, non-partisan, people's lobby. It should have an office in Washington, D. C., in each state capital, and in every other city. Its base would be meeting of neighbors in their homes (weekly), town meetings in public schools, recreation centers or churches (monthly), annual conventions in each city followed by a state convention and perhaps a national convention.

Suggestions for government action (city, state or federal) might originate in a neighborhood group or a town meeting. If approved by the majority, they would be forwarded to the city office (if the suggestions were for action by city council, or the mayor). If approved by the city office, all groups and town meetings would be notified and vote on them. If the majority approved, the city office would notify each group of a plan for city-wide action, that is, large groups would visit their councilman, or the mayor, or write to them.

Similar lobbying would take place on a county, state and national scale.

Trade unions, Negro, progressive and liberal organizations could be a source of many active workers.

This lobby could write its own platform and ask political candi-

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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

Socialism Is Today a Universal Issue— Requiring New Methods of Work and Program

By MIKE RUSSO
(New England District Organizer)

THE historic developments associated with the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are subjecting Marxist movements everywhere to the sharpest scrutiny and most searching criticism in years.

Nowhere are dogmatism and a doctrinaire approach to Marxism more in evidence than in the theory and practice of organization. Our tactics, party forms of organization, concepts of leadership and methods of work are the outgrowth of a mechanical application of the Leninist principles of organization to the United States.

American Marxists, from the earliest days, have suffered from an inflexible attitude toward principles of party organization. We based our practical activities on the belief that the principles formulated by Lenin were universal and immutable, applicable everywhere without reservation.

This mistaken notion was greatly reinforced later by the more authoritative re-statement of these principles by Joseph Stalin in the "Foundations of Leninism," and other writings on the party, themselves the product of particular circumstances. It was also greatly strengthened by the decisions of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928. The aim of these decisions, to put it plainly, was to transform every Communist Party into a carbon copy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Dogmatism blinded us to the fact that Lenin's tactical concepts and principles of organization were not conceived in the abstract but in a concrete historical setting. Both the international situation and political conditions in Russian exercised a decisive influence in shaping the character of the party, concepts of leadership and methods of work.

Because of this, many of these principles were inevitably limited in their application. If this

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.

In this issue we continue to print articles that have been received.

The discussion now being initiated is, of course, not entirely new. For some time now, there has been intense debate in the

ranks of the Party on all phases of our work. A profound process of re-examination is going on. There are differences of opinion within our ranks on a whole host of questions. There is nothing alarming about this. For only an open, frank and vigorous discussion in which every member honestly and frankly states his or her position, can guarantee that we will emerge with a stronger party and one more capable of truly serving and advancing the welfare of

the American people and the cause of Socialism.

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 full participation in this discussion.

DISCUSSION COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY

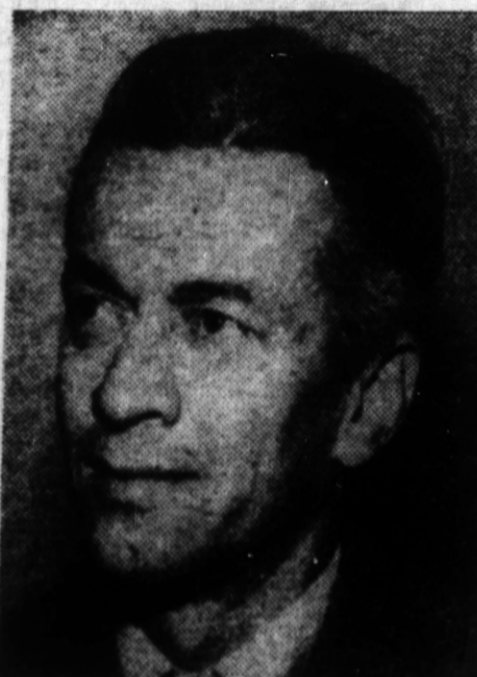
was not readily apparent in the early formative years of the Communist movement, it should have been later, especially following World War II.

CHARACTERISTIC of Lenin and his scientific method, only after a thorough analysis of the international situation and every aspect of Russian life did he proceed to determine the tactical means by which it would be necessary for the masses to come to power and to delineate the party structure and the type of leadership that would be necessary to fulfill the task.

Despite the fact that Lenin preferred a peaceful transition to power and sought always to exploit every possibility in that direction, however slight, he was realistic enough to know that under conditions that then prevailed, the chances for a peaceful transition were extremely remote if not impossible. As a result, his ideas on tactics, organization and leadership were inevitably and understandably influenced by this knowledge. This was the decisive factor upon which rested the entire tactical and organizational edifice of his party.

An imperative requirement flowing logically from this basic tactical view was Lenin's firm conviction that party leadership should be highly centralized and be invested with a great deal of authority.

Organizing the party around a



MIKE RUSSO, New England District Organizer.

nucleus of highly trained, devoted and selfless "professional revolutionaries," completely dedicated to the cause of the revolution, was another basic feature of Leninist organization that reflected the stringent requirements of the struggle under conditions of extreme Czarist oppression and terror.

Still another basic principle which combined the necessity of a highly centralized leadership with the practice of inner-party democracy was democratic centralism. This principle not only marked an important distinction between opportunists and revolutionaries, it also enabled the party to act with maximum

unity and effectiveness and gave it a high degree of tactical mobility, an important requirement in the conditions of struggle in Russia.

TODAY, of course, the situation is fundamentally different. In the place of a world universally dominated by imperialism we now have two worlds, the declining and crisis-ridden world of capitalism and the rising and flourishing world of socialism. Instead of being faced with the prospect of the inevitable outbreak of imperialist war, for the first time in human history people can now live with the prospect of a lasting peace.

The situation has greatly changed from the subjective point of view. No longer does Social Democracy represent the dominant influence in the world labor movement. Today there are great Communist parties in many lands enjoying wide support among the masses. Furthermore, the movement for working class unity has strong support in the ranks of the mass socialist parties of western Europe. All of this has created the necessary conditions for the peaceful transition to Socialism.

No less significant have been the changes within our own country in recent years, not to mention other important features of American life which we have grossly disregarded over the years. America, unlike Czarist Russia, is a nation with a great democratic tradition which American Marxists unfortunately have only lately come to appreciate. It possesses a high degree of organization, with the workers in basic industry comprising the decisive section of the trade union movement.

Still another important feature, in Czarist Russia it was the Social Democrats alone who championed the urgent needs of the workers and peasants. In our own country many organizations besides the Communist Party are engaged in the struggle to improve the conditions of the people.

YET DESPITE the vast differences that distinguish the United States from Russia of the days of the Czar and the enormous changes that have occurred in the world, especially since World War II, we persisted in the application of tactical measures, organizational standards and a style of work that were largely determined by Russian experiences in an entirely different historical epoch.

Among some of the more ob-

Let's Change Policy as Needed

By J. JOHNSON

CHICAGO.

JIM WEST'S letter in the July 19 Worker is a valuable contribution inasmuch as it shows a willingness to grapple with definite problems instead of repeating generalizations which will appear meaningless to the public at large.

With all due respect to the National Committee, its statement July 19, is not outstanding. Quote: "With renewed energy and devotion, the Communist Party of the United States will put forth every effort to rally the American people to end the cold war and to ensure peace and good neighborly relations between the peoples of the U.S.A., the Soviet Union and all other lands. We shall continue to work for greater economic security, democracy and social progress and for the end of anti-Semitism and racism in our country."

What else do they expect the party to do? To fan the flames of the cold war, to work for economic insecurity or to encourage racism in our country? Truly the party must do what the National Committee says it will do. But the whole United States expects the party to do this it should not be necessary to reiterate it.

West's article goes a step further. He shows the danger of jumping from one extreme to another. While a certain condition may necessitate a tactical reversal, the danger is that the party will remain reversed even when the condition which caused the turnabout has disappeared.

BOURGEOIS forces are quick to change their policies. F. D. Roosevelt promised the country that "your sons will never go to war." Faced with a situation which called for a reversal of this policy, the government did not hesitate to strike out in a new direction.

The party, however, if truly guided by dialectical materialism, should be able to anticipate coming changes and to some degree foresee what is ahead. The organization would then avoid the pitfalls of Jim West's "main dangers." Dialectical materialism teaches us situations will change into their opposites; we have the "negation of the negation," to use the language of Marxist philosophy.

Armed with this understanding, the party would be in a better position to maintain harmony in its ranks.

The witch-hunters maintain their activities today to isolate the party from the socialist forces and the socialist forces from the working class. Against this we can set the common sense of the mass of the people. A Communist Party orientated along the lines Jim West sets forth would be acceptable both to the working class and the masses and end the party's isolation once and for all.

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The American Road to Socialism

THERE IS A KEY ISSUE

Organize the South! Oust the Dixiecrats!

By C. L.

SEATTLE, Wash.

AMIDST the raging debate on almost everything under the sun, it might be helpful to remind ourselves of some elementary facts in order not to become swamped.

First of all, what happened on the main tasks which we set ourselves since the '50 convention? We set out to give leadership in and to help in developing a broad movement that could repulse the threat of fascism and prevent the outbreak of a major war.

The fact is that considerable progress has been made in reducing the threat of fascism and that the prospects of peaceful coexistence are very much brighter today than five years ago.

If these things are so then our debate and criticism has a foundation of positive accomplishment and success.

Without taking the lion's share of credit, we can claim on the record a notable contribution to this. It does not go too far to say that our contribution was one among several indispensable ingredients.

So with respect to the main tasks we ought to be criticizing our mistakes and weaknesses by the test as to what extent a better performance by us could have resulted in a stronger, broader, more united, and advanced movement for peace and democracy. On the main aims of the mass line the chief test is NOT what happens to the party, but what happens among the masses. Not to see this results in confusion, and negative and pessimistic attitudes in the present case. It judges life by a narrow party yardstick.

NEVERTHELESS, a great problem before the party as such is that while the mass movement advances more or less rapidly along the lines advocated by us, we, on the other hand, suffer losses in numbers and in direct contact and influence. This is the real life contradiction which must be solved by us.

The effects of intimidation, harassment, legal blows, expulsions from unions, the intensive propaganda of the ruling circles are the hard and bitter circumstances which objectively give rise to this condition. The still continuing though not invulnerable or stable economic and political strong points of U. S. capitalism fortifies it.

The much criticized left sectarian mistakes detracted from the correct main line of the party and intensified these negative effects, increasing the number of losses and the degree of isolation in addition to the mass effect of slowing up the growth of struggle.

However, there is an added question, not much mentioned which ought to be considered. Did we set as an important aim during this period the task of replacing inevitable losses, by new recruits, by stronger ties with old and new friends, by increasing the number of adherents of socialism?

In a word did we seriously work to build the party and its ties under those adverse conditions, or did we conclude that only defense and organizational conservation was possible and in effect liquidate for nearly five years the very concept and task of the growth of the party? Has this something to do with the development of new socialist forces mostly outside our ranks



and direct influence during this time?

I feel that with the notable exception of comrade Foster, on the question of socialism, that this is the case. The recognition and correction of this error will not detract from the struggle against leftism, but on the contrary is the only means of enlisting the wholehearted support of those for whom the basic objective of socialism remains the foundation stone of their sup-

port to the party. And before the people, what can be more absurd than a party of socialism which frequently finds itself maneuvered into a position where it feels it must concentrate on hammering away that socialism is not the issue? Something is wrong here, too much defensive, not enough positive.

BESIDES the mass ties which arise from building the party and winning new support for social-

ism, and in addition to the unquestioned necessity to be among the people and understanding and participating in the struggle where and as it is, and not just as we might wish it to be, there is another vital question.

In the face of all the disadvantages and penalties, why should, say, an active militant worker, or a Negro fighting for full freedom wish to work with us? What have we to offer to outweigh the woes reaction threatens for such collaboration? We have no monopoly on our general line of defending democracy and peace, praise be!

Speaking of the majority who do not yet see socialism as a main aim worthy of struggling and sacrificing, how do we answer this?

We have seen quite a few cases where devoted and active people both Communists and non-Communists not noted for leftism, after being fingered by a stoopigeon or by the FBI direct, have been separated from jobs, unions, mass organization and without being able to develop very wide support against this victimization.

While no self correction can change this overnight as it is a reaction not only to us but to the political climate, it seems to me that our mass line and work can help greatly to speed the change.

In the past people have braved persecution to work with us because we have championed issues and led campaigns which met their needs in such a way as to bring the response, this is the way, this is how we can win, and these are the people who will help us to see it through.

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Democratic Centralism Is the Traditional American Way

THE ARTICLE by A. B. Magil (July 22), urging a new look at democratic centralism, was a welcome contribution to our discussion. Our most urgent task, it seems to me, is to change some features of our organization. Until this has been accomplished we can make no headway toward other desirable objectives which are now given priority by too many of us, both members and leaders.

On this fundamental question of reorganization, the National Committee has said nothing specific. Why must we wait from April to September before we discover what are the views of its members or whether they are even considering it? This failure to give us the benefit of their thinking until the committee as a whole has come to a decision is evidence of the fact, noted by Magil and several others, that the party is suffering under the handicap of too much centralism and too little democracy.

This no doubt explains Steelworker's conclusion (July 13) that "democratic centralism has shown itself to be no good." But, as Magil pointed out, it would be folly to discard democratic centralism unless or until a more effective form of organization has been found. Let us, then, concentrate our attention on democratic centralism with a view to discovering what possibilities it offers for improving our party organization within the

framework of American experience.

STATEMENTS in earlier letters to the effect that democratic centralism is the product of Tsardom and foreign to the American way of doing things are incorrect. There is nothing foreign or strange about democratic centralism except the term itself. The people of the United States are thoroughly familiar with this type of organization, having lived under it all their lives. Our national and state governments are organized on that basis. So are our trade unions. So are many other American organizations.

If we have failed to recognize this, it is because we have been content to use the term without taking the trouble to understand it. I confess that hitherto I had assumed that democratic centralism as a basis for organization originated with Lenin. After reading Magil's article, I began to suspect that I was mistaken. A little thought and investigation showed me how wrong I had been.



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dates whether they would pledge to support it.

The people are split by prejudice into more or less antagonistic groups because of color, religion, sex, political belief, national origin and other superficial differences. "Divide and rule" is the secret of the reactionaries' power. When the people can overcome their prejudices against other groups and agree to act together on their basic human needs and vote solidly—they can win every election, elect every good candidate, and have every good law enacted, that they desire. This lobby might be a step forward. Now might be a good time to start it.

P. O'M.

Undo Harm Done by Unjust Expulsions

New York.

Dear Editor:

I am shocked that the subject of unjust expulsions has been passed over so lightly as though it did not involve cruelty to human beings. The subject has been mentioned almost casually by the same leaders who can



so passionately and dramatically condemn the inhumanities of capitalism.

How are you ever going to reach the masses if you don't even care about those who may want to be reached—people who have already declared themselves on the side of socialism? Yet I have not read any intention to undo some of the harm by reviewing expulsions wherever possible, if only for the sake of honesty and justice.

Or is it that you just don't care about those sincere socialist minded people, many of whose lives were shattered by separation from a movement in which they believed. Do you expect me to be convinced by your fine intentions for the future? I am speaking directly to the leaders I knew, whose arrogance has committed so many injustices with an air of self-righteousness in the name of "inner party struggle." And now you want to write scholarly articles about the sincere mistakes "we" have made under the misguidance of some political deviation.

What about the serious harm wrought by snobbery, cliquism, fanaticism, and just plain corruption of certain people in important positions who disport themselves models of perfection before higher-ups, whose victims may never be heard from because they have been tossed aside or driven away?

A Victim.

Intellectuals Can Be Leaders Too

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

I don't know who Alex Leslie may be, but he quite rightly objects to that distortion of Marxism according to which anyone stemming from the working class is automatically more qualified to be a leader of the socialist movement than one who has come to the movement from a different class background. But he seems to be favoring another distortion—that intellectuals are apt to be

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All decisions, including those (Continued on Page 11)

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more qualified than non-intellectuals.

Take Aragon, whom Leslie says he would prefer to Meany, et. al. Great novelist, poet and polemicist thought he may be, Aragon is also one of the most dogmatic bureaucrats of the Stalinist type. Aragon's browbeating of biologist Prenant on the Lysenko affair, of physicist Joliot-Curie on the dangers of world-wide atomic destruction and of young French intellectuals in general (recall his famous statement that Communist Party members have no rights—only duties) may strike Leslie as more desirable than the politics of labor bureaucrats, but I'm not sure how much of a gain it represents.

But what is really at issue here is the validity of the concept of "working class hegemony." This has been incorrectly interpreted, I believe, as a preference for leaders springing from the working class, regardless of qualifications, with the corollary assumption that intellectuals are always wavering elements. Neither is true, but it is a fact that nothing can replace the experience of the working class in arriving at correct theory. Lenin once wrote how the workers raised the issue of bread at a time when the Bolshevik theoreticians, Lenin



included, could not see what slogan would set the masses in motion. But he was referring not to ex-workers being sounder than ex-bourgeois intellectuals, but that actual shop workers knew what issues concerned them better than party functionaries removed from the problems of daily life—and this went equally for ex-bourgeois and ex-proletarian party functionaries.

In other words, we don't guarantee contact with the working class simply by elevating people to positions of leadership who come from working class stock. Once out of the shops, their judgment is not necessarily any closer to what the workers are thinking than that of an intellectual devoted to the working class, though he may never have been in a shop. If we grant the scientific validity of the theory that the working class is historically determined to lead the movement to socialism, there is just no substitute for having at least a portion of our leaders actively in the shops, leading the workers in struggle, and accurately reporting their experiences. As for the correct assessment of such experiences — class background does not provide any God-given power to interpret correctly. Only "working-class intellectuals" of whatever background they may have, who have soundly mastered creative Marxism can do this—and then only if they are humble enough to stop talking when they should be listening.

—HANK.

The American Road to Socialism

Welcome to Inner-Party Democracy!

THE JUAREZ CLUB, Los Angeles County, CPUSA, expresses its confidence in our national leadership and commends that leadership for its wise policy of leaving wide open all questions of program and policy pending the fullest and freest pre-convention discussion. This, to us, is a welcome concrete expression of that inner-party democracy to which most of our leading cadres, including the national, have much too often in the past given only lip-service. At the same time, we do not consider that the national leadership is absolved from the obligation of taking part in that discussion.

The Juarez Club hails this democratic approach to the very serious and fundamental problems confronting our party in this critical period and demands that this approach be institutionalized and implemented to cover all phases of party life and activity to the end that bureaucratic centralism shall be replaced with democratic centralism.

The Juarez Club, recognizing that responsibility for the imposition of bureaucratic centralism upon our party does not rest entirely with the leadership, solemnly pledges to vigorously oppose any tendency, from whatever quarter, to continue or rehabilitate this utterly reprehensible and harmful practice.

To assure the fullest participation of the membership in the pre-convention discussion and convention decisions, it is necessary that the membership be kept fully informed on discussions in the national and other top committees. The Juarez Club condemns present methods of haphazard, distorted and diluted reports to the membership



on discussions in the national committee, etc. We demand that the membership receive adequate information on the thinking of the leadership, including dissident or minority views.

The Juarez Club, moreover, expects and insists that the views of the membership, as developed in the pre-convention discussion, shall be reflected in the decisions of the convention, in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism.

THIS CLUB also takes this opportunity to express its adamant opposition to any and all ideas and proposals aimed at the liquidation of the Communist Party, U.S.A. Our members are similarly opposed, with one exception, to any change of name for our party. It is our collective opinion, with the one exception noted, that the results sought by those proposing a change of name can be effected only by repudiating at the same time our basic principles and this, to us, is utterly unthinkable.

"A rose," as the poet said, "will smell as sweet by any other name." In the same sense, a Marxist party in mid-twentieth

century America will inevitably be red-baited and smeared no matter what name it adopts.

The answer to such attacks on our party is not to masquerade under false colors, but rather to sink our roots deep among the American people by the application of correct policies, tactics and hard work, and the utilization of the vast reservoir of good-will existing among many sections of the working class and the Negro people for our party, as a result of its relentless struggles for better working conditions, for the rights of the Negro people, for peace and decency, with a socialist America as its ultimate goal. We reject the contemptible thesis that our party stands today "hopelessly compromised, politically and morally."

This club fully recognizes the necessity for a searching reappraisal by our party of its program, policies and tactics, of frank criticism of past errors and determined efforts to correct those errors and guard against their repetition. We condemn, however, present tendencies to ignore all that is good and inspiring in our past.

We suggest that while there should be no diminution of principled criticism, no lag in our determination to root out bureaucratic methods, sectarian thinking and mechanical application of Marxist principles to the American scene, it is nonetheless high time that we discarded the sackcloth and ashes as a permanent garb and pried ourselves loose from the Wailing Wall.

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OUR PARTY has made serious errors, it is true; not the least being our uncritical attitude towards other Communist parties and the socialist coun-

tries. But our mistakes were honest mistakes, if still inexcusable. (How many groups can truthfully say the same of much of their policies since 1914?) And certainly we were not the consistently inept blunderers, the unmitigated fools and idiots that some flagellant comrades seem to take a masochistic delight in depicting us to have been.

We have many correct policies and achievements to our credit. We have written many a glorious page in American history, as an integral part of the American people. Our party has contributed greatly to the growth of the American labor movement and to the development of the now burgeoning freedom struggle of the Negro people. We have helped advance the cause of the Mexican-American people and other minority groups. We need no apology for our existence.

If we are at present isolated from these movements, that isolation can be overcome in time by the correction of past mistakes, the elimination of incorrect policies, tactics and approaches, and by hard work.

We already are making some small gains in the labor movement and there are countless ways in which we can actively help, and rally support to, the Negro freedom movement.

Let us, then, resolve to pry ourselves loose from the Wailing Wall and conscientiously and vigorously carry forward the necessary task of reappraisal and the wiping out of bureaucracy, sectarianism, doctrinarism — and right opportunism as well.

Long Live the Communist Party, U. S. A.!

Juarez Club,
Los Angeles, Cal.
CYRIL BRIGGS,
Educational Director.

SOCIALISM A UNIVERSAL ISSUE

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vicious examples of this deeply ingrained sectarian tendency to copy the Soviet model are: the development of a bureaucratic concept of party leadership with an exaggerated view of the importance of full-time functionaries, the mechanical imposition of standards of party democracy not natural to Americans, the acceptance of certain forms of party organization without regard for their suitability to conditions in the United States, etc.

Today, the political struggle in the United States and throughout the world is on a much higher plane than it was in Lenin's day and the period before World War II.

Take the question of socialism, for example. Lenin and the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers and peasants to power with slogans that embodied the most essential needs of the masses — bread, land and peace. Socialism as the basic and ultimate goal of the October Revolution was an objective whose conscious attainment was limited to the most highly developed minority of the great masses of workers and peasants who took part in the Russian Revolution.

It was not the conscious demand of the masses in their overwhelming majority. It was only because the masses reposed great confidence in the Bolsheviks that they accepted their leadership and willingly followed them on to the path of Socialism. Under conditions that then prevailed the transition to power could not have been achieved otherwise.

But today the situation is altogether different. Socialism has become a universal issue. To accept the possibility of a constitutional transition to socialism in our own country is to imply that socialism will one day be a major issue, advanced by a great mass party enjoying the support of millions.

Since the United States will be among the last nations to make the change, one can readily imagine the profound effect that the continued expansion of the socialist sector of the world will have on the political situation in the United States.

In light of this, is it not clear that Marxists-Leninists must modify their program, tactics and organization and bring them in line with the new features of the present situation in the United States?

WE CAN DO this without in any way sacrificing the struggle for the more pressing issues and political objectives. If our tactical approach over the years, and especially since World War II, was not attuned to the attainment of higher political objectives and if we failed to give proper emphasis to our ultimate aim of socialism, is it not because we were influenced by a tactical concept of a "link to the masses" that grew out of an earlier period in history in another country where the conditions of struggle were very different than our own?

While there might have been some justification for the use of this concept in the period following World War I, in the days of the depression and even in the early period of the organization of the workers into mass industrial unions; it is seriously to be doubted if this concept adequately meets the requirements of the present day struggle in America.

There is an imperative need for Marxists to clarify and re-define their relationships to the trade unions and other people's organizations. Our aim should be to devise tactics, organizational procedures and a style of

work that reflect the new features of the political situation and correspond fully to the conditions of struggle in the United States.

The so-called crisis that presently occupies the attention of the Marxist-Leninists everywhere derives from the fact that political appraisals, tactics and organizational principles, especially in the United States, have not been wholly free from theories and ideas that were developed in another historical period, one that definitely came to a close with the end of World War II.

To the extent that these historically conditioned and obsolete theories continued to serve as guides, they brought our tactical line increasingly into conflict with the new political realities and seriously hindered our work.

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TODAY WE MUST rid our tactics, organizational practices, style of work and concepts of leadership of all influences that had their sources in obsolete theories and international experience having little or no meaning for us in the United States. Our program, tactics and organ-

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The American Road to Socialism

Call for Balance Seconded

I WANT to add a second to William Z. Foster's call for balance in evaluating the reason for the isolation of the left and the Communist Party in the U. S., which appeared in the Aug. 26 Worker.

In addition to the fact of his name being at the top of the article and his earned reputation for clarity and simplicity, Comrade Foster added to the likelihood of his article being read all the way through by keeping it exceptionally short and covering so many important points.

But in keeping it so short, I believe he mentioned only indirectly, and not specifically, two important points which need to

be given major consideration in any discussion of this subject. And this is even truer with reference to the subject out of which our present discussion grows: the particular American background in which we work and from which we must make our judgments.

The United States is a major industrial nation and in most ways the leader among capitalist industrial nations. But while every other major industrial nation in the world has taken large steps, in one form or another, in the direction of the ascendancy of socialist thought, the U.S. has lagged far behind. I believe this is attributable to

the following two reasons:

1. Approximately one-quarter to one-third of our country (the South) has been operating under more or less fascist political conditions for about three-quarters of a century. This has very decisively affected not only the political and economic development of the whole nation, but by indirection it has made it much easier for the forces that wanted to do so to keep people in all parts of the country in comparative ignorance.

The combination of Dixiecrat and GOP Cadillac Congressmen has been powerful enough to keep certain progressive issues—socialized medicine, rights of aliens and minorities, etc.—from becoming major national issues—except on the terms they set and as they saw fit. This is without taking into consideration the outlook of a venal press and communications media, who must, after all, sell papers and advertise products to the great mass of the people.

2. The second important factor which has made it easier to sell the American people "a bill of goods" is the fact that the territory of the U. S. has escaped the ravages of war for almost 100 years.

With this great good fortune added to the occasional bursts of prosperity which Comrade Foster speaks of, it has been possible to sway large parts of the population into smugness and complacency. This was much easier and for longer periods here than was possible in Europe or elsewhere.

THE EFFECT of these things has been not only to isolate the U. S. from its own left (a corollary of our usual way of proceeding) but also from the rest of the world. Almost every traveller, no matter from what part of the world, or of whatever political persuasion, has brought back reports of this.

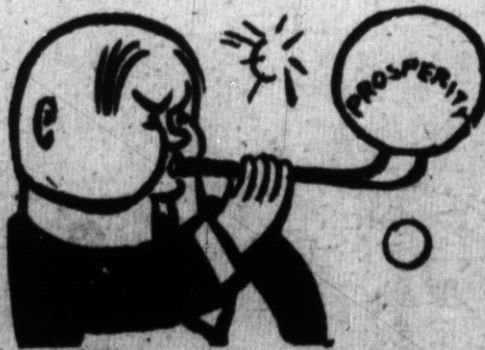
And although certainly the American people do not benefit directly, it is beginning to clarify a very murky atmosphere and this cannot help but redound to a reconsideration of progressive thought and feeling. This in turn will assist in the political education of the American people, as it is already having a major useful effect in world diplomacy.

In addition, the correctness of the struggle of the Negro people, the Communist Party and their allies is beginning to have a major effect on the political situation in the South and thereby will inevitably reverse many of the things spoken of above, including the isolation of the left.

We have lost much along the path we have followed, but there is yet much we will gain by continuing in those directions in which we were demonstrably correct and of which the people will learn little by little.

Wholesale and gross change in our program and recommendations would be warranted not alone by the fact of our having failed, to the degree that we have until now, but by our having been obviously and decisively incorrect. I do not believe this is so.

SAUL GROSS



Democratic Centralism

(Continued from Page 7) of the Supreme Court, are binding on subordinate bodies from the state on down, and a minority must accept the decision of the majority. The discipline required is that of obeying the laws enacted, whether or not they meet with our individual approval.

THIS, I submit, is democratic centralism, and it will be noted that in certain respects our party organization is below the national standard. Our leaders are not elected. An unanimous vote by delegates for a slate prepared without general discussion is very far from what we as a nation regard as an election. Furthermore, reports from the leadership do not air differences of opinion, as is done in congressional reports.

Lenin's program for a party based on democratic centralism (1907) went further in the direction of democracy than the program adopted in 1952. It called, among other things, for referendum to the membership of measures which would have a wide application, and the right to recall party officials (quoted by Magil). These are procedures which have been adopted by many states and cities in the



U. S. A., but not as yet by our national government, nor by our party, which might well do so.

Various correspondents have proposed wholesome changes in our party organization. Excellent suggestions were made by Magil and, in the same issue, by a group of California members who already had submitted them to their state board. It would speed us along the road to American socialism if all such suggestions were assembled by members from each group, beginning now and without waiting for the possibility of a printed summary.

Clubs would then be in a position to begin immediately what may prove to be a long discussion, and will be better prepared to consider whatever our national leaders have to say on the subject in the draft resolution or elsewhere.

An early start should make it possible also to come to a decision and submit proposals to the proper body before it is too late to affect the outcome. It is to be hoped that a constitutional convention along the lines proposed by P. A. Z. (July 27) will be strongly urged.

The necessity of raising our over-centralized and therefore too bureaucratic party to a higher level of democratic centralism is the most vital matter which confronts us. Our success in other fields of activity depends on our success in this one. If you doubt it, re-read with this in mind the contributions by Steelworker (July 13), Albert Blumberg (July 22), C. C. (Aug. 3), Lillian Gates and Carl Hirsch (Aug. 5) and, of course Magil (July 22).

T. V.

HEALTH

(Continued from Page 9) factors?

It seems to me that the present state of knowledge permits—in fact demands—a recommendation that we begin choosing the lean cuts of meat, and trimming off visible fat where feasible. Broiling and rotisserie should be substituted for frying and roasting where possible.

FRESH FRUITS and vegetables and 100 percent whole grain products in the diet should be increased. Substituting apples for apple pie ala mode and strawberries for strawberry shortcake seems desirable.

Vegetables need not be saturated with creams and oils.

Why do I say "where possible" and "where feasible?" Because the whole question of diet is a highly social question. The overwhelming majority of Americans will not stay on a diet year in and year out which sets them apart from their families, friends, and fellow-workers. Therefore, the rather mild dietary revisions mentioned above seem both practical and desirable in light of the present state of our knowledge.

It is true that there are unknowns in this picture. The fact is that no one knows what constitutes an optimum diet for optimum health over an optimum life span.

Meanwhile, the problem is in some ways analogous to cigarette smoking and smog. No one has proved these factors contribute to the alarming increase in lung cancer, but I am willing to do without them while awaiting the incontrovertible proof.

Dietary changes of the kind I have mentioned seem unlikely to cause harm and may well contribute to a further decisive advance in the health and life span of Americans.

The South

(Continued from Page 7)

Unemployment insurance, the Scottsboro case, industrial unionism, the fight to organize auto and steel, the initial anti-fascist and peace movements evoked such a response. Conditions differ, but such fighting concentrated campaigns are still important.

IS THERE such a key issue before us combining the needs of labor, the Negro people, the farmers, meeting the necessity of struggle for democratic advance and strengthening peace. I think there is. Everything necessary is found in two companion issues. Organize the South and oust the Dixiecrats! The Dennis report lists these two tasks.

On Page 44, "... The struggle for Negro rights and freedom North and South of the Mason Dixon Line has emerged as a general national democratic task upon the solution of which depends the democratic and social advance of the whole nation, particularly of the workers and farmers." (my emphasis).

I agree wholeheartedly. But if this is correct, it belongs not tucked away at the end of a section, "Put an End to Dogmatism," but expanded, elaborated into the central theme of the entire report. Either it is true or not. If it is as I firmly believe, the conclusions must follow. This is the big task of the present and the immediate future. The issue is ripe. The time is now. This is our vanguard role at this moment. Let us tackle this in ALL its ramifications and get to work.

I think the discussion must above all answer this. If not this, then what?



A UNIVERSAL ISSUE

(Continued from Page 10)

ization, in their entirety, must be brought fully into accord with American requirements and with the central idea that socialism will be established in the United States by Constitutional means.

Space does not permit a more detailed elaboration of all the factual and organizational changes that follow logically from the pivotal idea of a Constitutional transition to Socialism in the United States. Some have been indicated in Comrade Dennis' report to the National Committee. Others have been made in the current discussion.

I should like to pass on to a proposal which I deem to be indispensable to the more basic solution of the problems that confront us as a result of the great new changes in the world.

Comrade Dennis' call for the formation of a new and broad mass party of socialism in the United States represents a long term objective with which I thoroughly agree.

The attainment of this goal, however, is not contingent on future developments alone. A great deal depends on what we do now and in the immediate future to chart a course of action that will aid in its development.

Although one cannot foresee all the factors and circumstances that will enter in the formation of such a party, it may prove helpful if we try to envisage the course of its development, if only in broad outlines.

EVERYONE will agree that the likelihood of such a party being founded in the immediate future is extremely doubtful. It may be several years before conditions warranting its establishment come into being in the United States.

No one would suggest that such a party should be launched by the Communists alone without the approval and participation from the very beginning of other socialist-minded groups, including particularly an important representation of workers from the organized labor movement. No one would seriously suggest that we make the transition to this new party of socialism either now or at some future time directly from our present organization, the Communist Party.

If this is so, then it is obvious that there will be an interim period of indefinite duration separating the present organization of the Communist Party from the new party of socialism projected by Eugene Dennis.

The interim period, in my opinion, will witness the growth of socialist thinking in the United States through the development of a number of socialist trends, of which Marxism - Leninism will be one.

To foster conditions favorable to the development of socialism

and the eventual formation of a new party of socialism are some of the problems.

An important step in that direction would be the formation soon, within a year or so, of a non-party organization, political in character, whose chief purpose would be to advance the cause of Socialism in the United States.

By publicly proclaiming our readiness to dissolve the Communist Party and to join with other groups in the formation of such an organization, we would contribute greatly to the unfreezing of attitudes in the ranks of the left and help create important pre-requisites for united action and a common approach to the task of advancing the cause of socialism in the United States.

This act would underscore a determination to rid ourselves of an onerous sectarianism and encourage the search for more basic and indigenous foundations for a mass socialist movement in the United States.

Furthermore, at this stage of political development, the change to a non-party form of political organization is more suited to the major programmatic and tactical requirements of the political situation in the United States.

WITHOUT minimizing the importance of the struggle over immediate issues, I believe that Marxist aims—to help the working class develop its class independence and to imbue it with a socialist outlook—would best be served in this period through a political organization of a non-party type.

This change, in my opinion, would lend itself most appropriately to work in the two-party system for the development of a new political alignment in the United States.

These proposals do not spring from a mood of hopelessness and despair. Nor are they advanced because the record of our party is a catalogue of weaknesses and sectarian isolation. On the contrary, there is much in our record of which we can be proud.

But the struggle proceeds, subjective inclinations notwithstanding. These proposals are advanced in response to the demands that history places before us and the new opportunities that beckon.

One cannot properly appraise the party's status by abstracting it from the political setting and world environment and viewing it clinically. One must see current developments and changes as essential requirements for the next stage of the struggle for socialism.

We must act boldly and creatively. If we do this, we can speed up the process of building thought in the next few years solid foundations for a socialist movement in the United States on pilings sunk deep in American soil.