



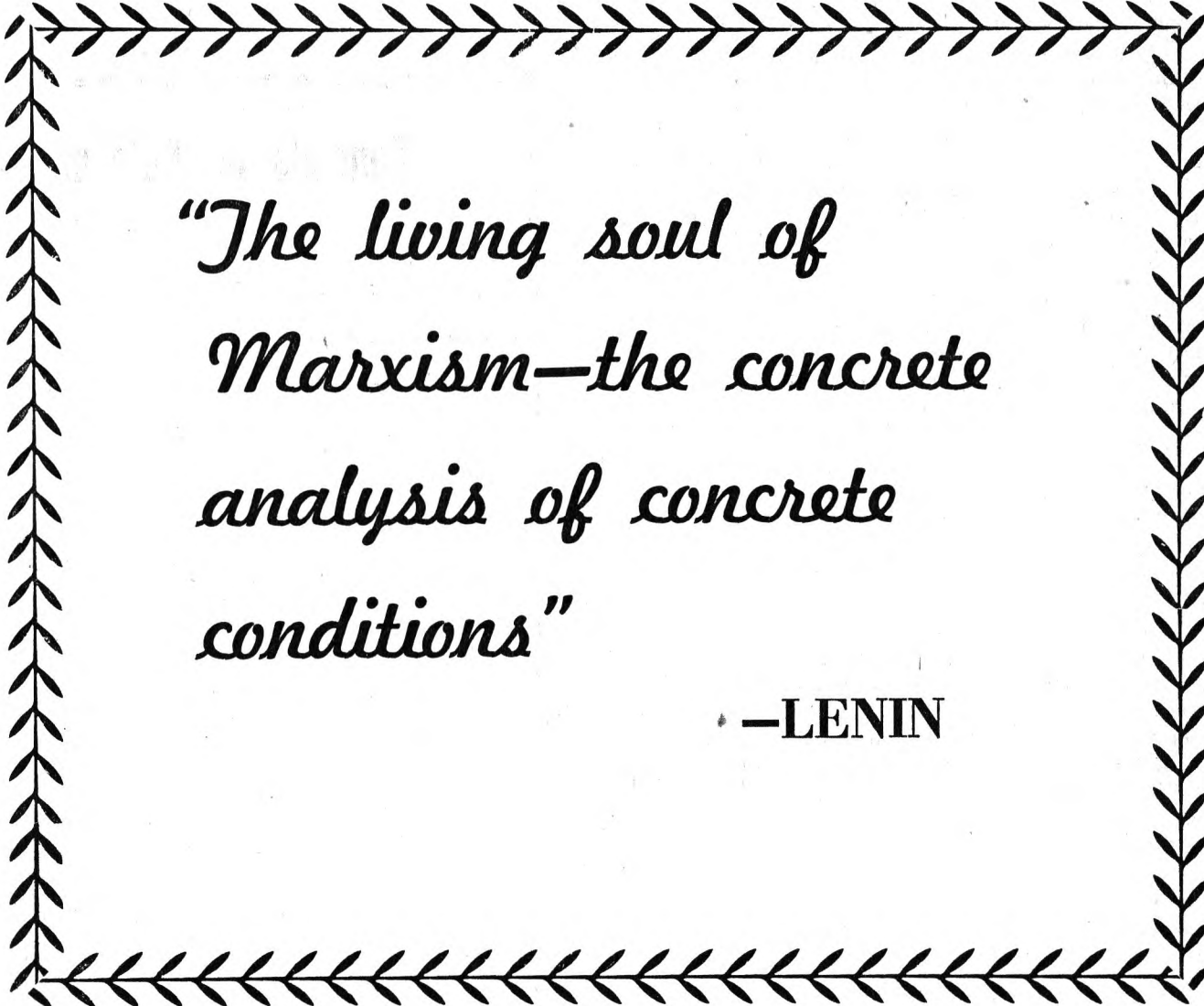
A BULLETIN
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PARTY VOICE

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FOURTH
DISCUSSION
ISSUE



*"The living soul of
Marxism—the concrete
analysis of concrete
conditions"*

—LENIN

Dear Reader:

We received the following letter from our artist of last month's cover:

Dear Editor of PV:

Because a number of people have made comments on last month's PV cover—the housecleaning picture—I feel it necessary to write a few words.

The housecleaning generally expresses my, the artist's firm belief that the banner of Socialism has been stained—here, there, in different places and ways. This is a serious period, involving a lot of soap and water, dustpans and mops. What will be repolished, what will be repainted, and what will be discarded is the collective decision of all of us. The welcome mat is out, of course, for the socialist minded workers, Negroes, and others to join us.

The absence of Lenin's head among other leaders expressed my questioning today of the validity of the Czarist-period type of Party structure and line applied to the American scene.

The absence of Lenin's head is *not* dumping Leninism. Much of Lenin's development of Marxism is of universal value—and indispensable for scientific socialists.

The drawings in PV are the individual contributions by this artist to the discussion and like written articles, are and should be subject to comment and criticism.

Fraternally yours,

THE ARTIST

We hope that our readers, in their discussions on the draft resolution, will also comment on our artist's letter and point of view.

* * * *

The Editors of PV continue to be impressed with the way the pollsters are affecting the current important election campaign. Thus, one pollster reported that Eisenhower's strength came from the belief of many that he was responsible for the end of the Korean war. Stevenson has since started to fight to get rid of the tag "war party" and is developing increasingly advanced positions for peace, while dragging along much of the cold war baggage. This is a democratic advance: so long as the pollsters report the sentiments of the voters accurately, and the candidates base themselves on these sentiments.

* * * *

To mix H-Bombs with the Dodgers—there is the old tale of the writer who tried to figure out what the different headlines in the New York press would be if scientists were to announce the imminent end of the world. We don't remember what the other newspaper headlines were to have been. But we do recall what the Daily News was supposed to have said.

SERIES OFF — NO WORLD!

* * * *

In connection with the draft resolution, we have several comments to offer, both as editors and as participants in the discussion.

As editors, we ask that you, dear reader, your club,

and/or your committee put down your thoughts, ideas and suggestions on paper and send them in to PV. We would like to urge that you address your ideas to the resolution itself, which we consider a good basis for a more specific continuation of our discussion.

We are in the unprecedented position of having a backlog of articles now. We want more. We would ask, however, that if you are in a position to type your articles and letters, please make it easier for us and the linotype operator by doing that. If you can triple space it, good. If you write it out in longhand, that's fine, too. We'll type it up.

Having recently received a forty page document, and another of eighty, we also ask, please, be briefer than that.

The draft resolution again reminds us that one of the finest contributions to the present discussion is still Gil Green's book: "The Enemy Forgotten." Though written before the XXth Congress, the book stands up very well, and is not only interesting and provocative, but makes profound additions to our thinking. It did and still does for us, at any rate. We would again urge our readers to buy or borrow a copy and read it through.

THE EDITORS

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PARTY VOICE

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TOWARD NEW SOCIALIST ALLIANCES

This article was submitted by an active trade unionist. It was written in consultation with Communist and non-Communist trade union leaders.

The Awakening

It is always a sign of progress when sharp and critical discussions take place in search of a correct Marxist program. Undoubtedly, the present evaluation of past Communist policies will lead to a reappraisal of all Communist thinking and activities in this country.

Although the discussion is in its initial stages, many Communist trade unionists have already begun to examine—and change—their conduct, activities and attitudes. Of even greater significance is the broad scope of the discussion—reaching and embracing Socialist ranks, liberal groups and even religious circles. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Socialist trade unionists are beginning to show new life, new interest in the subject—the Socialist Road for America.

The challenge of the present, dynamic stage of history—the 20th Congress projected but a few of the perplexing ideas of our epoch—is not only affecting Communist thinking, but all progressive America, particularly those who strive for Socialism and justice.

The discussion so far is only dimly reflected in the Socialist and trade union press. Deep reflection has not, as yet, permeated the ranks of all those concerned with finding solutions for American Socialism. This is particularly true of the Socialist trade unionist, who was pushed into anti-Red crusades, instead of anti-capitalist activities. The Communist trade unionist, who functioned in an illegal (and in many cases, in a dogmatic) fashion among his fellow workers, needs renewed courage and broader perspective in order to express his

ideas and proposals. Both have been under attack from left and right. What is needed is confidence in the future, confidence in a way out of the present dilemma. Then watch the discussion blossom!

Some Questions

The full impact of the revelations of the 20th Congress (some shocking, some inspiring, some perplexing), has, as yet, not found coherent expression. Some Communists are too shocked by the evils revealed and unable to discern anything else. Others are forever busy explaining how it all happened. Still others try to minimize the shocking revelations, as if nothing extraordinary happened. Marxists, of course, cannot ignore any of the ideas enunciated at that historic meeting. Socialists and Communists the world over will study and reread the Congress declarations and evaluate their own programs and activities based on the new estimates of national and world problems. For the profound ideas expressed at the Congress truly affect the thinking of all humanity.

Outstanding among these questions are:

1. Will the horrible and evil actions, stemming from the "cult of the individual," be quickly and completely eradicated? Will a truly Socialist collective administration—that values human lives more than political formula—be inaugurated? Will the first Socialist State become the shining example of human freedom, human dignity and human justice?

2. Will the Socialist countries prove, in the very near future, that Socialist economic and political life is superior to that life in the advanced

capitalist countries? Will science and culture flourish to unprecedented heights—overshadowing capitalist society?

3. Will the Marxists of all lands have the vision and foresight to formulate such plans that will unify the working class around a Socialist program based on the particular conditions, historic traditions, aspirations and customs of the people in a given country? Will they successfully emerge as the champions of the majority of their peoples and win an orderly and peaceful transition to Socialism?

4. Will dogmatic concepts be banished from Communist and Socialist thinking and will scientific Socialism inspire advanced ideas for human progress?

5. Will international fraternalism be honorably cultivated and inspired among the Socialist countries without one dominating the other? Will the Communists and Socialists promote international fraternalism and solidarity, while maintaining their own national independence? Will this new world Socialist-Communist cooperation lead to and inspire ever greater social progress in a peaceful world?

These are some of the ideas emanating from the 20th Congress. Surely, no Socialist or Communist can close his eyes and mind to these important questions. They represent—in a broad sense—the dreams and aspirations of all humanity.

Critical Examination of Communist Work

It is inconceivable that anyone who seriously delved into the recent events—and who was not thrown into a complete state of shock—would refuse to

think in terms of fundamental changes. Any thorough examination of Communist activities must take into consideration that all values have changed; that mistakes of the past are not merely items to be recorded for possible correction. No, the manner of evaluation must be directed toward change—toward fundamental change; otherwise, the old, dogmatic "way of life" remains in force.

Certainly, no Communist can seriously believe that he could ever be effective if he continued to function in the same illegal and sometimes almost "conspiratorial" fashion. The Communist trade unionist has had to cope with this question for the past ten years and his only solution was to deny his association and forsake his friends, or give up his position of leadership. Rarely has a Communist—in recent years—commanded any respect from his fellow workers, unless he dissociated himself from his Communist friends and his own party. Many a known and respected Communist trade unionist felt the anguish that comes from being spurned, forsaken and isolated. And many a fine program suffered the "kiss of death" because it came from the lips of a Communist.

Even if there had not been a 20th Congress, even if no fundamental changes had taken place in the world, this situation in America called for a drastic change.

It appears to us that the all-embracing questions for the American Communist—particularly those active in trade unions—are as follows:

1. How to emerge from illegality or obscurity (or both) and openly join the stream of working class activity;
2. How to participate in creating an alliance of all Socialist-minded people in his union or industry; and
3. How to formulate—jointly with Socialists—a program of aims and activities, that can be openly advocated and discussed in trade union circles;
4. How, as a result of these alliances, a new Socialist organization would come into being that would vigorously promote the interest of the American people in all phases of life.

Isolation and Obscurity

Unless the Communists resolve on such a course, their fate is sealed—they face further isolation and eventual complete obscurity. The once active fighting C.P. will become a relic of American social history.

Some think that emerging from isolation is a bid for respectability. Even if this were true, the emergence carries at least the promise of vigorous life; not the eventual death inherent in the isolated, illegal existence. But the attack on respectability stems from a sectarian approach to life. Certainly, no self-respecting militant trade unionist will acquire respectability from the anti-union employers. But he must win the respect of his co-workers, if he is to serve in any leading position. This type of respectability is essential for the Communist before he can play any role; otherwise, he becomes either a hopeless hypocrite or unprincipled careerist. To serve his union, a leader must first be accepted on the basis of his ideas; for workers like to boast about the fine ideas of their leaders.

There are some who fear that emergence into the open—under broader banners—will dilute the pure Communist theory, that it will diminish the effectiveness of their tightly-knit organization which they cherish so much, and that *new*, untested, inexperienced people will direct the new movement. The obvious answer is that any movement that has vitality and power must be open to the broad masses; that any movement based on scientific Socialism must make adjust-



ment on the basis of changing conditions—otherwise it turns into dogma. Any growing movement *must* produce new leaders, who at first will be inexperienced, but will be far more effective because of their ties with the workers.

For any Communist to wait patiently until the workers are ready to accept him as a leader (vanguard) is to betray the very fundamentals of his own teaching. The march toward a Socialist America will proceed—perhaps a bit haltingly, perhaps somewhat waveringly—but it will proceed, whether the self-anointed pure Marxists (the Communists) join or stay on the sidelines. And book-learning—important as that is—will not arouse the respect and devotion of the workers who want to march.

It is not enough to be able to quote from the classics; it is not even enough to repeat over and over again that Communists must be "rooted in the shops"—it is necessary to translate the quotations into American idioms and participate openly in all shop activities.

Furthermore, Communists have no monopoly on good trade union or shop programs. Others have shown ability and imagination to devise practical plans. What is more, these other trade unionists, many of them Socialists, can and will unite with some Communists, if they are certain of honorable cooperation. There should be no hesitancy in working out joint programs and activities. Once this is started, Socialist ideas can be projected into the open. Workers are ready for explanation about capitalist profits and how simple trade union victories can and will—in time—lead to more fundamental changes in society. And thus the ideas of a Socialist America could be discussed—without fear that the workers will single out the Communist for so-called "conspiratorial" activities.

No Whimpering

It is also inadmissible to bewail the past role of the American Communist Party, to bemoan its fate and characterize the lives of the Communists as "wasted." This would be a distortion

of history and do injustice to the courageous and loyal fighters for militant trade unionism and Socialism in our country. The indisputable facts prove beyond doubt that the C.P. did blaze uncharted paths which have become broad channels of American life—unemployment insurance, industrial unionism, rights of the Negro people, etc., etc.

The mistakes and weaknesses of the C.P. during that period—its blind acceptance of theoretical and political estimate without taking into consideration sufficiently American democratic traditions and customs—were the results of immaturity and political backwardness. But, at least, it entered the main arena of struggles and proved its worth in the loyal, self-sacrificing manner it fought with the workers.

The C.P. can be justly proud of its record, and American history will give it due credit for the role it played during the '30's.

The C.P., however, failed to meet the test as a Marxist organization during the difficult period following the great anti-fascist and liberation war. It did not take the necessary steps to strengthen the bonds established with millions of trade unionists, Negro people, youth, during the war. Instead of carefully analyzing and interpreting national and international events and adjusting its tactics to American conditions and guaranteeing continued mass activities, the C.P. fell into a sectarian swamp that nearly choked it to death.

No amount of rationalization—blaming prosperity on one hand and McCarthyism on the other—can or will detract from the fact that the Communists did not lead or inspire a single mass campaign during this period.

The C.P. became so isolated and so engrossed in its legal defense that it failed to note the growing sentiments for trade union unity. The AFL-CIO merger came as a complete surprise to the C.P. which, needless to say, played no constructive role whatsoever.

Perhaps the most tragic failure is among the Negro people. Despite its role as champion for Negro rights, the C.P. made no contribution to the



present historic fight by the Negro people.

The C.P. dwindled to a fraction of its size and organizationally as well as ideologically became but a hollow shell. The C.P. itself pronounced a just and fair verdict on its failures in the Dennis report. The only trouble with that report is that it came at least one year too late. History had marched ahead—the 20th Congress and its revelations became known—and Dennis' report was valid no more. The C.P. was thrown into a discussion without a perspective for the future. Perhaps the best that could be said about that report, and its endorsement by the N.C. is that the Communists at least were facing up to the painful admission of their failures and their inadequacies. For that they deserve commendation and respect.

Where Do We Go From Here?

It is inconceivable that American Communists, who by their deeds proved to be champions in so many labor battles, now should be relegated to mere observers and outside the main stream of trade union struggles. The perplexing problem is how to make it possible for the Communists to serve again; how to prove to the workers that these champions of yesterday can and should participate in today's battles.

To answer this question requires

first an understanding of some of the issues facing American labor.

The Issues

In the united labor movement there are a host of problems that require the wisdom of a Marxist and the qualities of a Debs.

1. The new organizing campaign in the South could be so much more successful if the most devoted organizers—the genuine progressives—were involved. Certainly, the Communists fit into this category.

2. A new vigorous trade union educational campaign is being advanced. The need for statisticians, writers, pamphleteers, speakers, organizers, etc., grows enormously with the unfolding of this program. The student of American labor history can serve best in this field. Here again the Communist fits the qualifications.

3. The peace movement has reached national proportions. (The main issue in the Presidential campaign will be the issue of peace.)

The AFL-CIO has come out with a program which—despite anti-Soviet statements—calls for disarmament and for a durable peace:

"To the workers of America, the preservation of peace and freedom constitutes the most important issue of our time. Without peace there can be no hope for constructive progress. Without freedom, life would not be worth living."

Coupled with this, the AFL-CIO has taken a firm position on Cyprus and Algeria. Imperialism is breaking at its seams, and the former colonies are winning greater independence. Here is a fundamental issue—peace and freedom—most popular in all walks of life—that needs millions of volunteer organizers. Certainly Communists should be among those most devoted and loyal adherents to this cause.

4. The growing anti-monopoly sentiments in this country have already registered considerable advances. One after another, farmer, Negro organizations and labor have aligned themselves against American monopolists. What is needed is a crystallization of all activities into a unified, concerted drive. The finest organizers and executives are needed in this field. Surely some Communists can fit the qualifications and become part of this anti-monopoly crusade.

The same is true on the issue of income taxes. There is a growing revolt against this fraud perpetrated on wage earners; a mass movement is in the making.

Or take the issues of civil rights and civil liberties. I quote from the text of the statement submitted by President George Meany of the AFL-CIO to the platform committee of the Democratic National Convention.

(Labor's Daily, August 11, 1956)

"Labor will not accept any evasion of federal responsibility to protect the civil rights of all American citizens. There is no greater threat to the internal security of this country nor to the maintenance of effective American Leadership in the global struggle against totalitarianism than the denial of liberty, justice and equality of opportunity to our own citizens."

"In the matter of civil liberties, we feel that effective measures can be taken to safeguard our nation against espionage and subversion without weakening in the slightest the fundamental individual freedoms inherent in the American way of life."

American labor is greatly disturbed by automation and its effect on employment. There are a host of new

booklets on the subject; but there is no plan as yet on how to benefit from automation.

The American standard of living has deteriorated despite the much-publicized high wage. American labor exists on overtime, and all the struggles for the shorter work-week have been negated by the need to supplement the regular income. Needless to say, the minimum wage law is completely inadequate.

The American people have come to recognize that the Federal government bears responsibility for the welfare of the people—whether in the form of pensions, health insurance, disability, or youth training. Programs are in the making on these issues. The same applies to the questions of schools, housing, etc. And most of all, the Socialists and Communists could help promote COPE into a political arm of organized labor.

On all these issues facing America today, people are needed who will unselfishly devote time and energy for the promotion of the various campaigns.

It is obvious that American Communists could and should play a valuable role in every phase of the present many-sided stream of activities. Many progressive groups recognize this and are eager to share the burdens with Communists, but they fear the consequences. It is not unusual for progressives to seek out Communists for consultation and advice. By right the Communists should be there shouldering the burdens with other progressives.

But can this be done?



What Is To Be Done?

There is an old saying, "It is far better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." This is our objective—to light a candle here and there and everywhere—to encourage the formation of a Socialist alliance group in one industry, then another, and another.

But first, we must point out, the Communists must prove themselves; they must show by some deeds that this attempt to unite with Socialist-minded workers is not a maneuver in order to "capture" positions of influence. It should be understood at the outset that some Communists have justified the suspicion of everyone they have worked with in united front organizations.

The projected Socialist alliance is not a united front organization—it is the organization which will develop and grow into the basic Socialist organ in this country. All the more reason why Communists must be careful to prove their sincerity before they even join it.

It must be also remembered that some Communists were accustomed to set all the rules and expect others to play the game accordingly. They seem to possess a magic formula which makes them experts in organization. It is best that such Communists stay home, in their tower of magic, until they learn how ignorant they really are.

The same applies to the self-styled prophets who insist that they can predict the outcome of any and all economic and political events. It appears that by some divine power such Communists can foretell the exact future. The Socialist alliance can get along without such genius.

But, most of all, Communists must determine in advance that they will not hold fractions to determine policy, personnel and every phase of activity. Perhaps it would be best of all if the Communists just look, listen and learn.

With all these precautions, we can now discuss the possibilities for formation and development of such new organization.

The first prerequisite is to seek out all Socialist-minded workers, par-

ticularly the most active trade unionists. Whether on a shop or industry basis, the search will produce a group of honest, militant trade unionists who are groping for a way to express Socialist ideas. It should not surprise anyone that the AFL, particularly the unions where the Socialists were prominent, will show the greatest response. In a test case, that is precisely what happened. And it was one of the old-timers—a Socialist—that was honored with leading and directing the group. This is as it should be; the most respected man with the broadest contacts among the workers should hold the most important position.

It is quite possible that some of these Socialists will set the rules, including tests for admission of Communists. Perhaps this is also as it should be, although tests are rather dangerous. But so many Communists have been the cause of the breaking up of organizations that no one can be sure of their pledges. Simple rules or tests may be desirable.

It has been our experience that once the first hurdle is overcome—the first gathering where a simple democratic organization is formed—the militant trade unionist and oldtime Socialist take over. There seems to be no end to the stories about the Socialist exploits under Debs or the lessons of militant trade union activities. There is no harm in all such reminiscences; they can lead to greater understanding and activities.

The younger unions—with no Socialist background—present a problem, but one which can be solved. Here, also, the main reservoirs will be the active, militant trade unionists. The method of unifying them into a group may vary—some will want a Debs society; some will want a Jack London forum; others will want no name until they know what they want to discuss or do.

Efforts directed to formation of such groups are bound to increase general activity; and for some Socialists it may mean returning to life itself.

We cannot, obviously, decide on a blueprint for activity. Each group will have this task for itself. But there are certain generalities that might be noted.

For instance, every group will strive from the very beginning to seek out the common denominators. Some may decide to hold free-for-all forums for some time. But sooner or later they will want to plan a program or determine a set of principles. These may include such elementary Socialist ideas as: the class divisions in our society and the desirability of a Socialist America; this may take the form of numerous exposes and studies . . . to demonstrate the idea.

Others may want to concentrate primarily on trade union activities, although Socialism is accepted as a goal for the distant future.

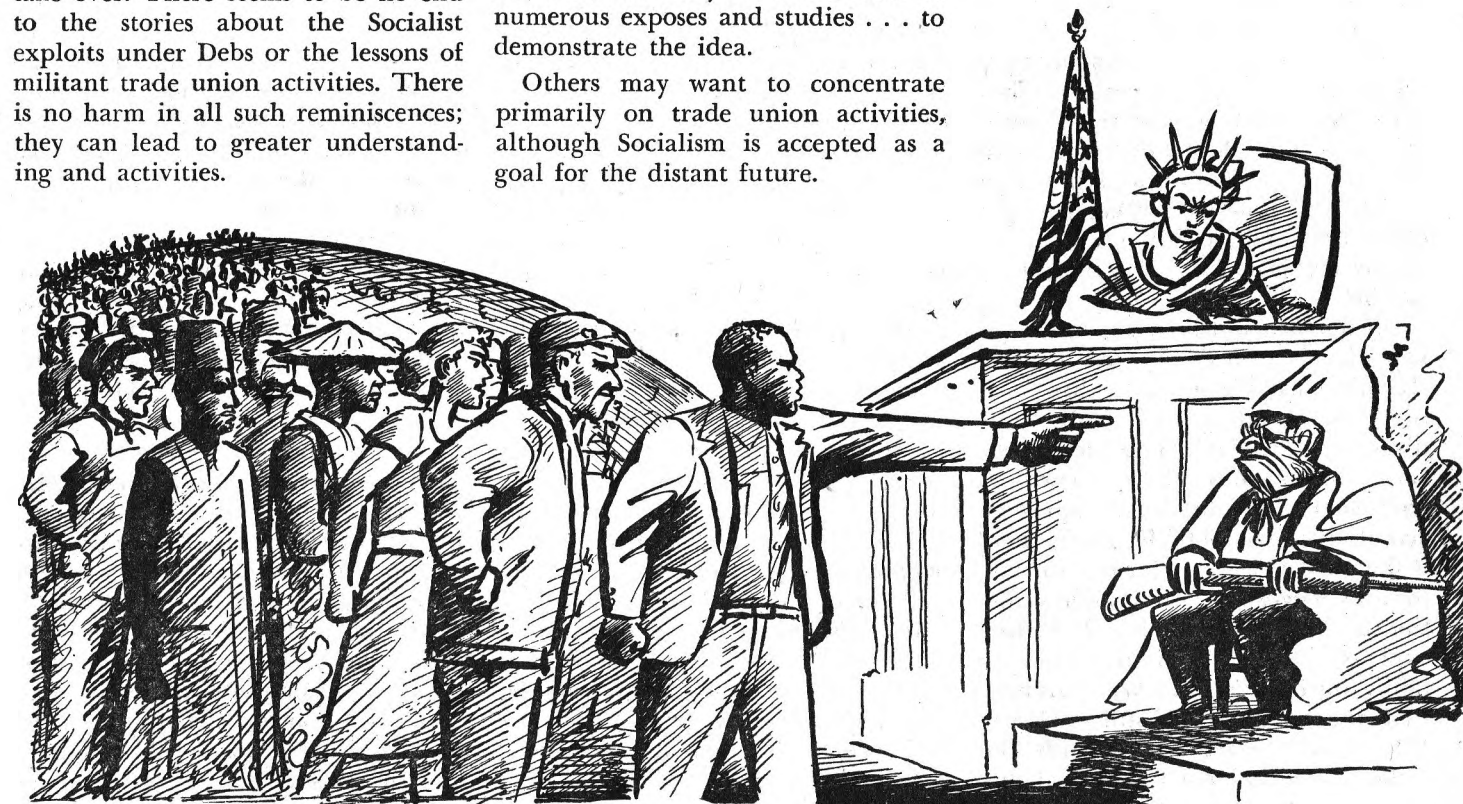
Some groups may question the happenings in the Socialist countries and want to debate issues of foreign policy. Still others will insist that all programs start with the premise that America is a democratic country and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are the finest democratic documents.

It is obvious that all such concepts are necessary in order to bring American Socialists and Communists together and test their abilities to discuss and get along.

The process, of course, may be slow and painful. It is impossible to overcome a decade of distrust overnight.

It is natural that activities will gravitate towards the unions. The greater the harmony on union issues, the greater the bond of friendship. Here again, the program will flow out of the very problems in each union, in each industry.

This is as far as we go now. It would be presumptuous on our part to predict what will follow. We do not know. But this appears to be a start—the single candle—may it light up the road to the future.



ROAD TO SOCIALISM

By GENE P.

OUR thoughts since the 20th Congress of the CPSU have had some new, fresh qualities because the methods of thinking are unlike methods we've used since the victory of the Socialists in Tsarist Russia. Lenin had taken the method of Marx and Engels and used it to dissect and examine imperialism and the state apparatus and the tactics of struggle with particular reference to his own country. His analysis had been classic and served excellently to arm socialists for ideological struggle. The 20th Congress, however, disaffirmed two theses of Lenin in the present world set-up. One concerned the inevitability of wars under capitalism. The other states that the transition from capitalism to socialism cannot be a peaceful one. These two contradictions of fundamental Leninist thought arise because the world of 1956 is very different from the world in the first half of the century. Today there exists a multi-national system of socialism. Absolute capitalism occupies the smallest part of the globe. Today, also, there exists a new relationship between colony and imperialist with a majority of the world lying in a "neutralist" zone somewhere between capitalism and socialism . . . yet clearly moving in the direction of socialism.

These, in a nutshell, are a pair of key ideas advanced by the historic Russian Party Congress. In this sense, the "downgrading" of Stalin was distinctly secondary. The tactical errors which Stalin was supposed to have made grew out of his failure to accept these facts of life. Here, then, is the ideological basis for the attitude towards Yugoslavia, the underestimation of India and Gandhi. This, too, explains the rigidity of Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War. Granted that the subjective hostility of the U.S. State Department towards Socialist USSR has not diminished one

whit since Geneva, nevertheless, it is quite apparent that the interchanges today are different from what they were a few years ago. But, if one were to accept as correct the idea that wars are inevitable and that a war today is quite likely to become a war between socialist and capitalist states, then rigidity in foreign policy would be a logical consequence. It is only when you believe you can really avert war that you can enter serious negotiations.

I should like to make a couple of things clear. I do not believe the Soviet Union is primarily responsible for the Cold War. Quite the contrary, my point is that with a different theoretical premise to move out from, the Soviets and Marxists could have undermined war-like U.S. foreign policies more effectively more quickly, as indeed they have done recently. Secondly, I am not attempting to document the conclusions of the 20th Congress. I only seek to state that if the two propositions are to any degree reasonable, then the resulting conclusions must affect our thinking drastically.

Re the second premise: If Socialism can be brought about peacefully then we must place a completely new construction upon day to day struggle. With one outlook the day to day battles are momentary tactics designed to achieve the most favorable lineup for the final showdown. With a different outlook the day to day struggles are an indispensable part of the whole in which the final shift is also a part—albeit a decisive one. Obviously the same line, methods and organization do not work equally well under such differing conditions.

It is my contention that until we tangle with these ideas we will skate on thin ice. It may or may not be true that we made errors. If errors were made, what was the source and essence of the error?

Source of Errors

Did we err by saying it was five minutes to midnight when we should have said it was only half past eleven? Or were we looking at the wrong clock? This same question might be posed in relation to two Soviet foreign policies. Is the essential difference between the "Krushchev line" and the "Stalin line" one of the degree of rigidity or flexibility? It is true that Soviet foreign policy is more flexible today than when Stalin was alive. But the essence of the difference is much more fundamental. Both affirm the inherent contradictions between capitalist and socialist states. However, the "Stalin" policy rested on the ideas of two diametrically opposed world camps in a period during which wars were inevitable. It envisioned a Chinese wall between bourgeois and socialist democracy and made allowance for no neutralist camp.

If we accept the premise advanced by the 20th Congress then we cannot define the correctness or mistakenness of our line simply in terms of degree. To do so would be to mask that which in the long run will prove much more decisive. It requires far more experience and research than I can command. But I submit that this should be a demand upon the leadership of our Party which, if it will permit itself, can do that kind of a job.

I would, however, like to touch on three propositions which are of great concern and have received considerable attention during the present discussions: 1) economic crises, 2) the twin dangers of war and 3) fascism.

Most of us will agree that we overstated the case for imminent economic depression. Of course the doctor has to tear up the death certificate when the corpse blinks his eyes. But isn't this a case of looking at the

wrong clock not just giving the wrong time? Those factors which cause an economic crisis under capitalist conditions will exist, I think, as long as the system survives. A skunk can live without his sac but capitalism would no longer be capitalism if you removed profit and this is the heart of the contradiction. But the rhythm, scope and nature of the crisis is all important to the people of the capitalist countries. We have always stated that in the period of the general crisis of capitalism the cyclical crises will occur with ever increasing frequency, that each high point will be lower than its predecessor and each low will drop farther. From the facts that I have read this has not been true.

We have always stated that an economic decline in the U.S. would have world wide repercussions. But although the economy in the U.S. has had its ups and downs in the last 10 years, the effect on Western Europe, to say the least, has not been obvious.

The fact of the matter is that unemployment in the U.S. has been relatively stable despite rising production and employment. Yet theoretically, we have maintained that the removal of so much of the world from the capitalist market would inevitably cause spasms in the American economy. (We might also note paradoxically that the expansion of East-West trade offers a new and temporary lease to capitalism) I am well aware that war production, industrial devastation in Europe, fantastic expansion of consumer credit, etc. played a role in creating this "prosperous" economy (I'm using quotes because I am also aware of the unevenness of the prosperity). But we have hitherto stated quite categorically that the decline of capitalism would come with a metered consistency. Life has proven us wrong. The bourgeoisie has obviously learned how to distort and postpone these crises. It has demonstrated a far greater maneuverability than we were willing to allow.

While we waited for a repetition of the 1930's the trolley passed us on the other track. It would appear that to pass off our mistakes in political economy as simple overestimation is much too superficial.

The War Danger

A second area of examination has been: How big was the war danger? There's been a lot of talk which says we said it was 12 inches when it was really only six inches. Here again this approach seems to miss the main point. Why was there no attack on the Soviet Union when capitalism has a clear military advantage? Why wasn't the A-bomb used in Korea? It seems to be agreed to by many comrades that we made a tactical blunder in permitting the Marshall Plan to become a breaking point in the trade unions. If one accepts as correct the estimate made by our Party that the direction of the bourgeoisie was towards war during an epoch when wars were inevitable then truly it was a simple but important tactical error. However, if doubt is cast upon the basic line then it is much more than a case of zig instead of zag. Why did the Communist patriots of Greece, the Philippines, etc. change their tactics? Why did the North Koreans and the Chinese go beyond the 38th parallel while MacArthur was fired for advocating the crossing of the Yalu?

We could propound a whole series of questions which would cast serious doubt not only on the previous estimate of the size of the war danger but on its basic quality. Geneva was not a mythical turning point in world relations but the public recognition of certain facts of life which existed for some time prior to the famous conference. It is most important that we study the quality of that situation and not just the cumulative quantities.

Fascist Danger

A third area of discussion revolves around the danger of fascism in the U.S.A. All of the characterizations of the attacks on the left, the Smith Act, the Taft-Hartley Law, the hounding of the Party's membership, etc. all of the characterizations were correct except one and that one makes all the difference in the world. We called it Fascism. Fascism has come to mean some very definite things to the masses as well as to us and if we use it as a measuring rod



then we must be certain that our terms of reference are correct and conform to those of the masses and to reality. Dimitroff's definition was the synthesis of world experience with fascism; the brutal, open, terroristic dictatorship of the most chauvinistic section of finance capital. I will not deny for one minute the gravity of the McCarthyite attacks. But, it seems to me that fascism is made of much more substance. As a matter of fact, when the bourgeoisie embarks upon a fascist course it does not sneak up on it. Nowhere, has the bourgeoisie turned to fascism through legal, democratic channels. Yet the McCarthyite menace had to move through such channels. The essence of fascism in Germany and Italy was the destruction of bourgeois democracy. Yet it was precisely because McCarthy was compelled to wrestle with democracy that he failed. The traditions of our people were flexible enough to extend him rope but they would not relinquish the stage. This peculiarity is being demonstrated today in the south where large numbers of white people and even some leading Southern politicians insist on advocacy of the anti-democratic idea of segregation only within the framework of the legal forms of bourgeois democracy.

We cannot equate the advocacy of segregation with fascism any more than we can equate advocacy of the Smith Act with fascism. In retrospect this may seem clearer today than it did in 1950 when so many of us felt we were looking down the barrel of a cannon. But as leaders with more advanced, scientific ideas we cannot substitute our subjective position for the position of the masses. We tended to give over Eisenhower and the whole Republican Party to the fascist menace. We led the people to expect

many things from the Eisenhower administration which did not come to pass. Was this because of the intervention of the masses between 1952 and 1956? It is true that the masses did intervene, but if fascism was the course chosen by the bourgeoisie—was that intervention so forceful as to cause a change in plans? The McCarthyites, like it or not, submitted to the democratic processes and were defeated. It would seem to me that in our most earnest desire to rouse the people to the danger of McCarthyism we failed to take into account the whole history of our people which is repugnant to McCarthyism. A sounder appreciation of the democratic processes seems also to have been absent. This is one of the reasons a gulf developed between us on the one hand and the American people on the other. We chose at first to fight alone with the weapon of the third party. Next we moved to a point where, electorally speaking, the Democrats were the exclusive weapon. We must go further. Thirty million Americans voted for Eisenhower in 1952. Our weapon is the people and our democratic heritage. The Bill of Rights, the defeat of slavery, the New Deal, etc. are products of a whole people, not a portion. They come from many organizations and the struggle assumes many forms. Although it is true that the Democrats have become the main vehicle of the people fighting for their welfare—the struggle is intraparty as well as inter-party and on several levels. The fight of Wiley in Wisconsin, the Republican primary in Utah, etc. are not without consequence for all of us. To preserve and extend our democracy we have fought a revolutionary, a civil war, had bloody show-downs with bosses. Even McCarthy could not overcome these obstacles. But we tended to sell our people short.

This brings me to my last point: the Party. I would like to cite some of the reasons why I firmly believe (a) the Communist Party as it has existed must be drastically transformed and (b) why Marxism and socialist perspective can better be advanced by a new associative form with far greater freedom of thought and action.

Some reasons may sound unimportant to many present day Communists. We must remember, though, that our obligations are to a whole class and not a sect and also to the half million or more socialist minded who have been but are not now active in our ranks.

To "Legalize" the Party

One, not unimportant consideration, is the legality of this organization. The reverse suffered in the Charney case is an indication that the fresh winds which are blowing will not blow away the Smith Act, Supreme Court Decisions and the rest. As responsible people we must take all steps to try to preserve the security and integrity of our members. Changing the name and character of our organization is one of the steps which should be taken. There is nothing sacred about either. Many Marxist groups operate under other than Communist designations. As a matter of fact the appellation Communist arose after the convening of the Third Internationale and was intended primarily to distinguish us from the Socialist Parties which supported the imperialists in World War I.

Second, the idea of a Party is not a true description of our role past or present and will probably not be true in the future. In this country a political party engages in electoral struggles in the main. We have participated in the electoral scene to a negligible extent. We are not primarily an electoral organization and often when we chose to enter the political lists we did so under euphemisms: People's Party, etc. Our electoral intentions differ considerably from those of most political parties. To most Americans the title Party has a definite meaning. To us it has not had that meaning. And since we cannot get most Americans to understand our meaning, I think we should stop confusing them with what they consider a misnomer.

But these two elements, important in their own way, are not the main considerations. We have an organization which in its very conception limits itself unnecessarily to a small segment of our people. It is true that

many comrades left our ranks because they were not prepared to make the sacrifices which they were called upon to make or thought they were called upon to make. These are the people who have a common ideological bond with us but would not go as far as the hard core. They are the majority. We must choose between a structure built on the elite or one which offers the reasonable basis for membership to the hundreds of thousands who are not willing to make everything second to the party.

We also have an organization which exalts the individual. We do not have any one comrade in such a position but our whole leadership has acted on the basis of the infallibility of the individual leader in an authoritative position. Comrades who have no knowledge of the relationship of forces within a trade union have made policies for those trade unions. The same has been true in many other organizations. Comrades who never went to a Parents Association meeting decide on the tactics to be used in fighting for the Powell Amendment. Women who live in a world of fantasy write at great length on how washing machines enslave the housewife. Journalists become experts on psychiatry and so on. And we publish such views in our publications draped with the mantle of authority. (How many times has an SO acted as a marriage counsellor?) The fact that this or that individual occupies a position of leadership in the Party has tended to extend authority to all things under the umbrella of Party discipline. This "cult of the individual" is written into our constitution: Article VII, Section VII which gives the national committee authority to make any decision on any question between conventions and make it stick. We have belittled the system of checks and balances in the U.S. Constitution. I wish now we had learned more instead of scoffing. There are a few checks I'd like to use right now to balance some things out.

We have also had a vanguard concept. Let me give you a specific illustration of how this has worked. In a local union election the comrades of a club based on that particular

union decided that the leadership of the union deserved and had the support of the workers. One comrade felt otherwise and announced that his shopmates wanted him to stand for office. The club made a decision that he should not run. He violated the decision—and won the election! The question arises: are any principles of Marxism violated when Communists publicly express differences on tactical questions within a non-Communist organization and permit the rank and file to decide who and what is correct? Marxism is not an exact physical science which can produce only one answer to an equation. Even Sir Isaac Newton would have to have had second thoughts if a strong wind was blowing when the apple fell from the tree to his head. True, there is a need for the monolithic belief in socialism and the Marxist principles of dialectics. But we have extended the concept of monolithic unity and the vanguard approach to any and all questions. The unbroken silence of the national leadership in the face of a unanimous demand from the membership is not an absurdity. It is the logical extension of present principles of organization. I do not think that this idea totally demolishes any sense of discipline. Common sense can and will dictate reasonable voluntary discipline when the situation requires it. The strike discipline of a trade union for example is fully adequate without curtailing the general freedom of the membership.

Some comrades speak of introducing the right to dissent into our present structure. But this right and the actual exercise of it is the very antithesis of our present structure. It will, I believe, prove impossible to reconcile the two in life and one or the other will have to go. It is my contention that this right to dissent is crucial to the American socialist movement.

Many specific proposals are advanced to meet the dissatisfaction within our ranks:

1. Elimination of full-time leadership with the constitution allowing for the only exceptions.
2. Some form of leadership rotation.

3. Complete local autonomy on all local questions.

4. Submission of major questions to membership referendum.

5. The right to dissent at all times on any question.

6. Direct election of all delegates and leaders.

7. Creation of directly elected delegated bodies to decide policy between conventions and to review the work of leading committees.

One could compile quite a list of needed reforms. To institute these changes would require fundamental changes in our concept of the Party. To suggest that such changes can be made while retaining our Party's former shape and character is quite illogical. The core of most of such suggestions is the idea of shifting authority from the center to the mass of the party with individual elbow-room. But we are not like an overcoat that can be turned inside out for inclement weather.

It seems to me that we must first digest the true significance of peaceful transition, the preventability of

wars under capitalism. A true appraisal of the propositions advanced by the 20th Congress will undermine the position of those who feel that the mistakes which we have made were simply mistakes in the degree of a particular estimate. That same analytical approach will establish that our organizational weaknesses do not come from less democracy where we need more—but come from a fundamentally unsound form and concept of party organization.

(I don't know whether this parenthetic note belongs at the beginning or the end. I do not deny that we have made great contributions to American history in the past. I do not deny that the objective situation had a hand in helping to create our present plight. But I affirm this is no substitute for analysis. We are where we are whether we like it or not and I do not take a "balanced" approach because that balance occupies a lot of space and blunts the sharpness of our vision. And lastly, I don't think we should have to purchase the right to speak by making hosannahs to our past or its present leaders.)

A Letter

August 27, 1956

To the National Committee:
Copy submitted to the State Committee.

Whereas the Yonkers Section Committee feels that the Party is in a state of crisis, and

Whereas our discussions are seriously handicapped by the failure of the National Committee to participate in an open discussion with us, and

Whereas our long years of devotion to the cause of socialism demand and deserve of the National Committee recognition and respect, and

Whereas we subscribe to the principle that isolation from the masses and, in the first place, from the rank and file of the Party spells doom for the future of a socialist movement, we, therefore, make the following requests:

1. That you share with us your thinking, your problems, your differences, your entire discussion.

2. That the National Committee obtain through the organization of the Party reports on the thinking, the problems, the differences, the discussion of the membership so that its discussion reflects on the thinking of the National Committee.

3. That serious theoretical propositions relating to the future of a socialist movement in the United States be freely aired to stimulate and deepen our participation in such discussion.

4. That since the National Committee's statement of "ten years of tactical errors" is too vague, hereafter all analysis be specific and factual.

5. That this resolution be given prompt consideration by the National Committee.

Respectfully,
The Yonkers Section Committee,
Westchester County

Toward the Democratic Reconstruction of Our Party

By A BROOKLYN CLUB

WE members of an active functional club in Brooklyn have been engaged in a series of discussions concerning our party work over the past decade. Some of these matters have been festering in the party for many years; others are new and directly related to the impact of the 20th Congress. We have concluded that this period of anger, soul searching and confusion within the ranks of the party can either be the shock which clears our eyes and straightens our backs or it can result in the further deterioration of our organization. The time for planning and reconstruction is at hand.

Our discussions have all pointed to the conclusion that internal democracy is the key to the future of our party. We feel that the correction of past political policies can only take place through a democratic organization which will insure full membership initiative and participation. Furthermore, we believe that the ultimate cause of American socialism will be injured unless our party recognizes the priority of organizational and operational theory at this time.

BUREAUCRACY—THE SOURCE OF PAST ERRORS

It is certainly true that our party and its leaders have suffered great moral and political set-backs in recent years partly because of the overwhelming attacks upon us by the ruling class government and its press. But let us clearly recognize the fact that we are isolated from the great body of the American people largely because of our own obsession with political dogma as against the evidence and practice of life. For this failure, our leaders must share the guilt. It is obvious to us that the dogmatic policies of the past cannot be interpreted merely as "errors" in

political theory. Nor can they be corrected by purging the leadership and dictating new political theory as was the case in 1945. The basic trouble with our party, as we see it, is related to the system of deciding and testing theory in daily political practice. It is as much a question of form as it is of content. It is precisely the bureaucratic method of arriving at policy that has resulted in the failure and blindness of policy.

Unless our party creates the conditions whereby its major policy and tactical decisions are a product of total party discussion, and unless these decisions are exposed to the sharpest kinds of internal review, then the decisions will often be wrong and the errors will continue and multiply. We must recognize that democracy is not a sop thrown to the membership in order to give the illusion of participation. Most of all, it is not a luxury to be tasted only when times are good, a somewhat impractical if not "bourgeois" ideal. Real working democracy is the life force of an organization which facilitates the selection of the very best policies amid the struggle of facts and alternatives.

CURRENT TALK OF LIQUIDATION

Those who see the solution to our difficulties in the effective liquidation of our Marxist organization and the creation of a so-called mass socialist organization are not facing up to the problem. In fact they are running away from it—backwards. Is not this the kind of leftist thinking which has isolated the socialists in America? Either we are correct in stating that the major error of recent years was Left-Sectarianism (and such a mass socialist organization falls within this class) or, our current thinking about broadening our work in the liberal, labor and peoples organizations is false and we have learned nothing from past experience.

The fact of the matter is that we have in our party an organized source of political experience and talent on all levels which is unique in America. In spite of our mistakes, the Communist Party has made substantial contributions to the fight against discrimination, McCarthyism and the organization of peace sentiment in this country. Of these things we may be proud. To write these assets off and "throw the baby out with the bath" would be completely irresponsible. It might, in fact, set a truly mass socialist movement back for many years. This does not mean that we cannot think in terms of mutual relations with other socialist groupings. This is fine and necessary. However, is it not perfectly clear that we shall not be acceptable to other socialist groupings precisely unless we begin to show signs of democratic and independent activity? We feel that the very process of changing the bureaucratic character of our party will create new opportunities to reach millions of Americans including independent socialists.

POLICY BY CRISIS

We have noticed that our party history can be roughly drawn in a series of cyclical crises. We have moved from "right deviationism" to "left sectarianism" and back amid the fury of recriminations, purges and a general decline of the membership. We can no longer afford to continue this pattern of leadership, making top-level decisions and then waiting for a new crisis to correct them. The old bureaucratic ways of determining policy are grossly inefficient and costly for two reasons. One, they are not based upon the experiences of the membership, those people who are directly in contact with political reality. And two, they are not tested and corrected through membership practice and so it takes too long, some-

times fatally, until the signal to change course gets up the line to the leadership.

In spite of the fact, for example, that our trade union policies were isolating us and endangering the entire progressive trade union movement, this information was not passed on to the leadership of the party. In those cases where it was, nothing serious was done to alter the situation. Clearly then, these are not matters of political content alone but are a direct result of faulty organization. A democratic organization would have forced a revision of political practice.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FAILURES OF THE PARTY

We list the following failures of party operation and organization which we feel must be corrected:

1. There has been insufficient membership participation in the determination and continuous evaluation of policy and tactics.

2. The top leadership has functioned in isolation from the experience and opinions of the majority of the membership. This has to some extent been responsible for the isolation of the party as a whole from the tempo and thinking of the American people.

3. There has been no public expression of dissent among the members of the National Committee when, in fact, it has existed. Policy statements have always appeared as unanimous.

4. Differences of opinion have often been construed as "anti-leadership tendencies" and outright "deviationism." Discussion in many areas has taken place in an atmosphere of intimidation not conducive to honest and critical evaluation.

5. Party personnel policies have resulted in a bureaucratic framework of leadership which aggravated the situations mentioned above. Middle and lower part-time leaders have too frequently been utilized as "errand" boys for the full-time functionaries and the use of their talents, experience and contact with the membership has been overlooked or minimized. Our party has been overstaffed

with paid functionaries who gave all of their times to organizational work and consequently have little time to work in the communities, shops and mass organizations. This has further increased the isolation of which we have spoken.

6. The top leadership has enjoyed an almost unlimited tenure in office having never been exposed to the healthful process of election. This situation in which leadership is perpetuated until mistakes of such magnitude force an embittered turnover is part of the organizational system which moves from crisis to crisis. Furthermore, this kind of bureaucracy is bound to deaden the urgent sense of responsibility to the membership which is so basic to a democratic organization.

PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION AND CHANGE

Our club submits the following proposals intended to act as the basis for correcting the failures listed.

1. A system of two-way communication between top leadership and the membership should be established. This system should facilitate the gathering of membership opinions and proposals with respect to all significant questions of policy. Within the framework of a continuous and organized flow of information and draft membership resolution, local, regional and national conventions should be held regularly. These conventions should be composed of delegates who systematically represent the position of the membership on matters of policy and principle.

2. Differences of opinion among national and regional leadership should be fully publicized through the party press and within party channels of communications. The resolution of these differences should take place within the clubs and at the various conventions.

3. The right of the membership to reopen discussion on any policy matter considered questionable or unrealistic shall be respected. Too frequently the concept of "democratic centralism" has been taken to mean

that once a policy decision has been made, it must never be questioned as a matter of party discipline. Certainly majority decisions must prevail and the practical work of the party should not be delayed by continued debate. But if, after a policy is tested in the communities, the shops and the mass organizations, it is found to be wrong then the membership should have every opportunity to discuss this in their clubs and transmit proposals for change to appropriate higher organs. Leadership should, in fact, encourage the conscious evaluation of policy under the conditions of local political work. A continuous "feedback" of information concerning political performance is an effective method of avoiding the crisis-to-crisis fluctuations which have characterized our party operations in past years.

4. We propose that the number of paid functionaries be reduced considerably and that voluntary part-time workers from the communities and shops be introduced in their place. This is a further effort to eliminate the isolation of our party leadership.

5. We propose that the National Committee be elected by the membership from at least a double slate of candidates. Re-election of officers should take place at regular intervals. Tenure of office should be restricted and certain positions designated as single and multiple-term offices. The net result of limited tenure should be the periodic and staggered turnover of all of the leadership to make room for fresh thinking and to permit leaders to return to the mainstream of national life.

6. We propose that the periodic conventions mentioned earlier be utilized as a means of developing nominations for nationwide membership elections and that the nominations be based upon differences in approach to political questions. It is foolish to claim, as some have, that with a scientific theory of political analysis such as Marxism, there is but one correct policy and therefore, a single "correct" choice for leadership. This merely begs the question

of exactly how to determine which policy and leadership is in fact correct. It is our opinion that a collective decision is the best method of arriving at these conclusions. And what is a better collective decision than the balloting of thousands of alert, well-informed members.

The oft expressed fear that this sort of electoral system is a dangerous fetish, a cumbersome bit of formalism, is both arrogant and inappropriate. It is inappropriate in the sense that we Americans have learned to use this tool effectively and within the framework of our national traditions, we have come to respect its potentialities. Such a view is arrogant because beneath it there is the assumption that collective decisions should be limited to the collective leaders who are wise and more experienced than all the rest. To this we say that the "cult of leadership" is no more desirable than the "cult of

A CALL FOR FULL PARTY DISCUSSION

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the fact that these specific recommendations are most tentative. We understand that there are difficulties involved in many of them but we rather view this as an obstacle to be overcome rather than a conclusive counter-argument. We feel very deeply that the question of internal democracy is the key to our political future which will open up many new and exciting opportunities to the Party. It is fervently hoped that most of the leadership will see the significance of the general questions we have raised and will throw open the doors for complete membership discussion. It is further hoped that the membership will have an opportunity to discuss these matters prior to the release of any major draft resolutions or policy statements and certainly well before the National Convention next year.

There is no doubt in our minds that the coming convention will shape the destiny of our Party for many years to come and that American history will not forgive us if we fail to meet the democratic challenge of this time.

Proposals for the Convention, By "Writer"

On the business of democracy at the convention—I think we should face up squarely to the fact that circumstances which we cannot possibly control make it absolutely impossible to have the kind of fully-represented, democratic convention everyone would like to have. The very people who want most earnestly to attend are the very people who will stay away—and it would be entirely wrong to ask them to do anything else.

This means then that we will have to find other forms of guaranteeing full democratic discussion and decision—and I think that concerted attention should be paid to this question at once, without the slightest lament over what we cannot do. I think the membership should be told this bluntly and immediately. Only by doing so will it be possible to cut the ground out from under those who are loudly expressing cynicism and the belief that the leadership will not permit changes to be made.

The purpose of the convention is twofold: to chart a new course for the movement and to designate the leadership in charge of pursuing this course. Both purposes can be accomplished without a fully-representative convention.

What is required is, first, that all major matters be submitted to the membership in draft resolution form *for vote by the membership* before the convention. The convention then becomes the place where the votes are tallied and the adopted position registered. It seems to me that *several* draft resolutions are necessary, covering each distinct major phase of policy. If there were only one omnibus draft resolution then it would not be possible for the membership to express agreement with one aspect, disagreement with another, etc. The device of submitting several drafts on a number of points overcomes this obstacle and makes possible the fullest expression of opinion on a number of phases.

One of the most important drafts, in my opinion, is the one on proposed organizational changes. This should

be succinct and exact, preceded by a preamble which states why the committee preparing the draft feels the changes are needed. Others should be on matters of line and policy: the cardinal tasks facing the movement, the political situation in the country and internationally, the Negro question, the labor movement, the American road to socialism, youth, women, cultural work, nationalities, etc.

Separate Draft Resolutions

As quickly as these drafts are prepared, they should be published and distributed to the membership, which should be given a two or three month period to discuss them and vote on them seriatim. Votes should be returned through the apparatus to the convention committee which should record them on a numerical basis: so many members in so many clubs for—so many members in so many clubs against. Undoubtedly, many proposals for modification in language will be expressed. The responsibility for accepting or rejecting these proposed modifications should be left in the hands of the committee preparing the draft. The committee should be guided by the mass of expressed sentiment, though it should not feel bound to incorporate them, unless there is a distinct majority opinion expressed around a distinct formulation.

It seems to me that this type of procedure is the only thing that can satisfy the desire for the most democratic type of convention where the fullest expressions of views from down below can prevail. Actually—in a formal sense—it is even more democratic than a representative convention, although it is, of course, less efficient. I feel certain that if the leadership immediately adopts such ground rules for the convention and publishes them at once, it will satisfy the membership which has been brooding about the matter of a free convention and is becoming enervated by protracted, and inconclusive discussion.

Without doubt, a number of mat-

ters will come up at the convention floor that cannot be satisfactorily anticipated in advance, and on which it will not be possible for the membership to be consulted before votes are taken. The membership, as a responsible group, will recognize this, and will not have qualms about leaving to the delegates—so long as major matters which are anticipated are handled somewhat in the manner I've suggested.

Elections

On the matter of election of a national committee: I don't recall what the present basis of election is, but it seems to me that realism requires, first, representation on a state or region basis. That is, each state or region, as the case may be (and on the basis of exact membership as reflected in the June control) should be entitled to one or more members on the national committee. I don't see any

reason why such state organizations cannot have their member on the national committee *nominated and elected before* the convention. In practice, this will still mean that only public persons, willing to acknowledge membership, can be elected—but I don't see what else can be done. Here, too, I think the membership will recognize necessity, so long as it is given the formal right to nominate and elect.

Secondly, on this point, it seems to me that the national committee members designated by state or region organizations in advance, should meet at or after the convention and propose their candidates for the leading posts: namely, chairman, general secretary, etc., etc. Such candidates will, of course, have to be public persons, and undoubtedly will have to come, in the main, from the present core of full-timers. Here, too, there is nothing else that can be done, so

long as penalties remain hanging over the heads of full-timers. However, I feel that candidates for the leading posts should then be submitted to the membership for referendum type vote, so that, say, a month after the convention, the votes can be tallied and the new leadership duly installed. The proviso I would attach is that the membership should be permitted and invited to make proposals for such nominations in advance of the convention, so that delegates to the convention can feel themselves guided, as much as possible, by the membership's preferences before the actual nominations take place.

I don't offer this in any sense as the only course of procedure available, but I submit it as what seems to me to be a method of enabling the organization to hold a working convention that satisfies the desire for fullest democracy within the limits of the objective situation.

A Letter

FOR SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Dear Editor:

We have been unable to secure the agreement of two people in the same room on the meaning of terms like democratic centralism, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. We do not think it possible to vote anything up or down whose exact meaning is not definitively known.

We think it is disgraceful that after so many years, we do not know what we are talking about when we use terms like democratic centralism. Some say that it is the unconditional subordination of lower bodies to higher bodies in-between conventions. Some quote a piece from Lenin here or from Stalin there. Thus one quote from Lenin is said to describe democratic centralism as a semi-military form of organization to overthrow the autocracy of the Czar. Another quote

from Stalin describes it as a semi-military form, etc.

If we are a party of scientific socialism, we should use scientific methods in determining the meanings of terms like these.

A scholar like Aptheker, or a group of scholars (including bourgeois scholars maybe like Somerville) could perform a service to science by gathering together all references in Lenin to democratic centralism, etc., reproduce the quotation, explain the context it was used, etc. Thus everything Lenin said about democratic centralism, when he said it and under what conditions he said it, could be put down on paper and distributed. Only in this way could we know exactly what Lenin meant by democratic centralism and vote the issue up or down in our party.

In bourgeois college, this was the kind of scholarship demanded of col-

lege students when they reported on Milton's concept of fate, or Wordsworth's outlook on nature, etc., as the case might be. It seems to me it is long overdue that our party do some scientific work along these lines, particularly since we aspire to be a scientific party.

This happens to be my own view, but when I put it forward in a club meeting where we were trying to discuss democratic centralism, and again, no one could agree on terms, the club (tenants group, Upper East Side), seemed to go for the idea wholeheartedly. We meant to vote on it formally but, in the pressure of other discussion, neglected to pass a formal resolution. I do believe, however, that this expression is not simply my own but that of this club.

S. A., Org. Sec'y.

Upper East Side, Manhattan

Since the publication of the article, "Problems of Art and Literature," in the first extended discussion issue of *Party Voice*, several people have raised certain criticisms of it. These are, first, the question of the fairness of criticizing, in such detail, in the name of "Comrade X," a person who at the time was in no position to answer these criticisms. Secondly, it is pointed out that in giving so much space to "Comrade X," the tendency was to make him the scapegoat for the failure to stimulate creative Marxist thinking and cultural work, and to provide bold and forthright evaluations of this work. Actually these errors and omissions were the responsibility of the national leadership of the Party, for *Political Affairs* is the organ of this leadership, and "Comrade X," as one of its editors, worked under the guidance of the leadership.

In giving so much detail about "Comrade X," the intention was to provide some concrete examples of what otherwise might have been vague generalities. I believe that the main issues in the article were important to raise in *Party Voice*. However, I believe that the above criticisms of the manner of presentation are justified, and that this letter should be printed out of fairness to the person involved.

S. F.

August 9, 1956

To the

New York State Committee,
CPUSA:

Our club at its last meeting, after reading the "Resolution on the Conduct of the Discussion" by the East Harlem Club (*Party Voice*, No. 4), voted to endorse it.

We have written to the National Committee, pointing out our inability to get to the bottom of many questions (democratic centralism, party of a new type, mass work, etc.) because outstanding national leaders have thus far failed in their duty to guide the discussion.

While different viewpoints on the forthcoming Convention Resolution

are promised expression, we feel that the varying positions at the National Conference in May should still be printed, since these are valuable source material for discussion by the membership. We would then be in a position to judge if the Convention Resolution is another example of a compromise, watered down resolution that can only retard our work.

We pointed out that keeping us in ignorance of the differences in views in the leadership not only prevents us from participating properly in policy formulation, but keeps us from knowing our leaders — which ones deserve to be up there and which ones do not. We, the membership, should decide who our leaders should be; leaders should not be imposed on us from the top.

While *Party Voice* has printed the views of some State leaders, yet we feel that here too there is still a need for the presentation of the different views on varying aspects of policy, as presented at the State meeting following the National Conference.

Forbes Area Club
Manhattan.

To *Party Voice*:

The following proposals were made on the organization of the national convention by our club at a meeting on August 27th.

1) The convention should have the largest possible number of delegates consonant with security.

2) Arrangements should be made for alternate delegates and observers.

3) Representation from the trade unions must be guaranteed and from mass forces in other organizations of the people. While the club realizes that leading mass forces cannot be exposed to enemy view at an open convention, and does not like the idea

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of several conventions, they feel that without trade union and mass representation, the convention would not be very productive. They thought that perhaps certain individuals could be delegated to meet with key trade union and mass areas and to bring their views to the convention.

4) Section-wise, every club should nominate a delegate most representative of the club work, and this group of section nominees plus a member of the section staff should in turn elect that number of delegates to which the section is entitled. Electioneering for the final delegates should be done by persons appearing before the body of nominees.

5) All elections throughout the Party and for the convention and at the convention should be by secret ballot.

6) The club opposes election by slates and asks for nominations and elections, individual by individual.

7) All minority views from top to bottom to be made known.

Community Club,
Upper East Side,
Manhattan

Dear Editor:

To our Party, an important result of the 20th Party Congress is the theory of possible peaceful transition to Socialism. Our leadership points out that we have had this position for some years back. Our membership has written letters to the *Worker*, pro and con.

The acceptance of this theory demands drastic changes in the structure and line of our Party. As has been well expressed in other articles or letters, the wholesale import of Russian party structure and experiences to the U.S.A. was an error from the very beginning. Czarist Russia is not America. We started off on the wrong foot.

Some write that peaceful transition will never happen here. A curious transition toward Socialism took place in capitalist England after World War II when the Labor Party was elected into office. Without a barricade, without a shot fired, a number of "nationalizations" of industries, socialized medicine, etc., took place. For various reasons the follow-through was lacking and today the Conservatives are again in power.

Yet, here was a political party elected by the mass of voters making the beginning of a qualitative change in the ownership of the means of production through legal government action.

The democratic traditions of the U.S.A., the belief in the ballot, the strength of organized labor, all these call for a socialist party based on peaceful transition.

Our Leninist Party, with its democratic centralism, its immersion in Russian theory and literature was doomed to failure. While Russia's error is supposed to be "cult of the individual," ours has been "cult of the first socialist country," which is "cult of the individual" on a national scale.

For A New Type of Party

Based on the proposition that peaceful transition to socialism is possible and desirable.

The new party should be of a structure which will be completely democratic and open. There must be the right of dissent. Minority views must be given full publicity. All leadership must be elected by full membership. Elections should be based on individuals presenting platforms and debating issues in public. Regularly held elections of all posts. Fraternal relations with all honest socialist and social democratic groups.

Retiring of all foreign Marxist literature except for research and scholarship and replacing it with our

own books on theory and practice, drawing from the best of all other countries and couched in familiar American language using American historical experiences whenever possible. Haven't the windows and shelves of our bookshops looked like a store in Moscow?

Declare itself independent of all outside parties or methods. Publish its own press.

In the current exploration into reasons for errors or failures, some letters call for wholesale dumping of leading committees or else of individual leaders. Instead, let there be a maximum opportunity for all to express ideas, from the known leaders and the many lesser known ones. The membership should demand the clearest thinkers and not be satisfied with familiar names and faces.

The immediate future of socialist consciousness in America is hard to assess. Every evidence shows that it is small at the present time. The much sharper class struggles in Europe, developing socialist ideas among workers and those who came here as immigrants brought them along. And generally these socialist ideas died with the generation. It is above and beyond all else the stability and prosperity of the American economy that keeps the socialist parties so small. We are ahead of our time in a certain sense. There is too much breast-beating regarding our failures. During this present period the most brilliant of plans will not radically alter this situation. For a USA Socialist Party to be large would be contrary to the laws of dialectics—it would be a historical freak.

The decline of capitalism is uneven—on a world scale it is in crisis—here it is still on the rise. America is not smouldering with discontent, the people are not looking in other directions for answers—neither to the left or to the right or below or above. Otherwise all kinds of political groups

would be bobbing up here and there. While by tomorrow these facts will be obsolete—we can't wait for tomorrow—we've been talking gloom and doom for ten years.

Years ago, early Socialists could mount platforms and weave spellbinding visions of workers states, classless societies and the dreams of prosperity and equality, justice and peace forever. Today this no longer holds. There are two main ways the American people learn about socialism. One is what we promise and the way we act and what we fight for and the other, the stronger, is what they see of the Soviet Union. Russia is the showcase of socialism. The proof of the pudding is the eating and what happens there is of decided importance to the growth of an American socialist party.

In spite of the slanders of Press, TV and Radio, certain truths about Russia came through to our people. We know above all that socialism brought a tremendous industrialization to once backward Czarist Russia. While this has real meaning for underdeveloped and colonial peoples, to the American people who have just lately closed their frontiers and built a giant machine technology, socialism's successes have little meaning. American people are proud of their own technology.

The socialist peace campaign known to all the world is lost in this country due to the lies of the press, etc.

The bad-self-admitted record of the USSR regarding executions, prisons, purges, labor camps for political dissenters, the seeming domination of the Party, the curious quiet of organized labor, the lack of consumer goods, the secret police—all these things are dead albatrosses hanging around the necks of any would-be advocates of socialism.

When we extol socialism the American people say "I'm from Missouri—show me!" On the future performance in Russia, much will depend.

Between now and the time when the next inevitable crisis comes to the United States, we must re-tool our plant in order to be ready to give a hand in the path to socialism.

A. G.

Problems Facing American Marxists—A Fight Against Subjectivism

By GEORGE MARTIN

THE basic problem facing American Communists today is the question of isolation. As a party we have little influence on American life while our prestige has dropped to practically nil. Such a state of affairs cannot be attributed to objective conditions alone. A real party of the people can be diminished in size as a result of attacks, or have its role curtailed in periods of boom when the revolutionary tendencies of the people are at an ebb, but the experiences of other parties (Russian, Chinese, French, Italian, Brazilian, Indonesian) have shown that the party of the working class will not become separated from the masses unless it separates itself.

In the past thirteen years through the right opportunism of the Browder period followed by a swing to left sectarianism after it, our Party has succeeded in isolating itself from the American people, losing heavily in membership and prestige. These policies helped facilitate the isolation and destruction of many left mass organizations, the split within the CIO and aided the drive of the bourgeoisie to break up the loose New Deal coalition.

Why is it that a party like ours with over thirty years of experience, guiding itself on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, made such serious mistakes and suffered such severe losses?

During the nineteen thirties our party, basing itself upon the needs of the people formulated a generally correct policy. During this period our party grew in numbers and influence. However, our success led us to lose our heads. All kinds of theories and practices arose in the party which showed that we were losing contact with the people and their needs. We actually became contemptuous of the people. Thus our theory became subjective. Instead of reflecting the real-

ity of America our programs and organizational methods of work reflected our own subjective and wishful thinking. It was precisely such a state of affairs which enabled us to swing into left sectarian practices immediately after the correction of Browder's right opportunistic distortions.

It may be raised that since nineteen forty-five our Party raised many important and correct issues such as the fight for peace, for Negro rights, for civil liberties. It is true we raised these issues, and it is true that these were burning issues for the American people. But because we did not concern ourselves with what the people were saying and doing, and at what level they were at—nay—despite these circumstances, we raised these issues mechanically devoid of reality, with no regard to tactics, objective conditions or appropriate methods of organization. In fact on the question of Negro rights, we became so separated from the Negro people that we even raised slogans which were completely wrong. Thus we alienated ourselves from the masses.

Subjective Opinions

History has taught us that when we are among the people, when we study their needs and heed their thinking and base our program upon a careful study of reality expressed in the language and traditions of our country, we are successful. But when we separate our ideas from the thought of the people, when we interpose ideas not based on reality, but on our subjective opinions, we suffer defeats and failures.

This fundamentally is the basis for the mistakes that the Party has committed. From this abuses have arisen which are now being aired by Party members in their clubs and through the press, and do not need reiteration in this article.

These subjective methods have

permeated all our work. Beaucocratic methods and distortions in democratic centralism have stifled discussion and prevented the membership who are in closest contact with the people from helping to formulate policy and determine the correct way in which these policies should be carried into practice. In our united front policy we have been mechanical setting up all kinds of false barriers which made it impossible for others to join with us and showed our disregard for what other sections of the people felt. Our theories on the advance to socialism in this country must take into account that a new world situation is developing. We must become more familiar with how the laws of capitalism operate in this period. These theories must also take full account of American history and tradition. Most important—none of our program must be allowed to become separated from the daily lives of the American people.

Today a thorough re-evaluation of the party's activities is taking place. Our past methods have made us look ridiculous and foreign in the eyes of the people. The extent to which we will really correct the errors of the past and start our party back on the road to fulfilling its historical task of leading the working class of this country to socialism will depend upon the struggle against subjectivism in our movement. Only through such a struggle will we be able to build a real American working class party with indestructible ties with the masses.



STATEMENT ON THE RESULTS OF PRIMARY CAMPAIGN IN THE 10th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Issued by Brooklyn Staff, Communist Party, in consultation with section organizers

THIS statement on lessons of the primary campaign in the 10th Congressional District is being issued because of the vital importance of the fight to advance Negro representation and the need to learn all the lessons from this campaign in order to do this most effectively.

At the outset, it must be stated that, despite the new levels of united struggle by the Negro people everywhere for equal rights and the greater support among the white workers and people generally, the political machines in New York City denied any new advances whatsoever to the Negro people on the electoral front for 1956. For the first time since 1952, the year of the breakthrough in the New York State Senate heralded by the election of Julius A. Archibald, the first Negro State Senator, all Negro candidates for office seeking the Democratic designation were defeated or thrown off the ballot. Only in Buffalo did Leland Jones win the Democratic designation for Assembly, while in this generally Republican district the Republicans have designated a white candidate.

This denial of Negro representation is part and parcel of the shoddy compromise of both major parties on civil rights and adds greatly to the danger of a stay-at-home trend among the Negro people on Election Day. This in itself shows the stake the labor and people's movement have in working to force action on the civil rights front, especially in view of the critical events in the South.

It was in the context of seeking to end the denial of long over-due representation to the Negro people in Congress that for some years the Communist Party in Brooklyn has supported efforts to win such a post for a Negro. In addition, it has kept in mind the need to elect a Negro for State Senator, for there is still only one Ne-

gro Senator in the New York State Senate.

Such a movement is fundamentally in the best interests of all democratic-minded people in Brooklyn, Negro and white, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. Achievement of this goal this year would have immeasurably strengthened the fight for a civil rights program by both parties. There is no doubt that deep sentiment for political representation exists among the 375,000 Negro people in Brooklyn and that growing numbers of white people are ready to support this demand. Some reflections of this were found in the statement preceding the 10th C.D. primary contest when prominent Negro and white leaders of Brooklyn signed a statement urging the designation of a Negro for Congress.

Notwithstanding all these factors, the actual results in the 10th Congressional District were poor and must be characterized as unsatisfactory. (Kelly defeated Dr. Hodge by seven to one; and Cooke defeated Craig for Senate by around two to one). Unless a proper estimate is made of the causes for this unsatisfactory showing, Negro representation and democratic rights in general will suffer. The political machines are already spreading rumors that the promised Brooklyn Councilmanic seat to a Negro leader might not materialize in view of the primary results.

A very broad movement around registration for the 1956 elections is now under way which cuts across previous divisions in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area. All progressives should do their utmost to support this campaign. It will help advance the strength and unity of the Negro people's forces.

In addition, there are a great many questions in the ranks of our organization which must be answered, as

well as our responsibility to help unify the ranks of all forces so that victory can be wrested in 1957 for Council and the struggle for greater advances presented with even greater vigor.

In our opinion, the most fundamental reason for the unsatisfactory results was that the movement for Negro representation in the form of a demand for a Negro for Congress and for the State Senate did not have the united support of the Negro people's organizations and the major political groupings in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area.

There is no doubt that the Democratic political machine, recognizing the key importance of such united action, did all in its power to disrupt it through bribes, coercion and divisive tactics. The main responsibility for lack of unity is theirs.

However, the progressive and left forces also had to take this state of affairs into account, precisely because of the cynical and brazen refusal of the machine to budge on the question of official designation. Ideas that the new level of struggle for Negro rights made the need for coalition less important should have been combatted far more vigorously and tactics developed which would bring about the greatest unity.

Such unity might have been better advanced by a general agitation and educational campaign for a Negro for Congress, but specific concentration on the election of a Negro to the State Senate for 1956. (The Congressional District is about 25% Negro; the State Senatorial a little over 50% Negro).

In this connection, it should be pointed out that the National Election Commission of our Party was not sufficiently sensitive to the particular tactical problems faced in Brooklyn

and had a rigid policy which did not help develop the necessary shift in time to contribute to the overcoming of serious disunity among the Negro people's forces in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area.

At a later date, this error was recognized and efforts made to change the concentration point in the campaign.

The State Leadership was slow in intervening to help shape up a more flexible tactic, which it did as the campaign developed.

The conclusion from this must be a determined effort to help unite all the forces of the Negro people's movement who will participate in the struggle for Negro rights and to search out those demands for Negro representation which can register maximum unity.

This stress on the need for unity should not be oversimplified to mean that left and progressive forces should not take the initiative in posing more advanced issues or in helping to stimulate activity. However, such efforts must keep in mind what can be advanced in a mass, united way if they are to be successful.

The fight for the naming of a Negro to the City Council for 1957 has united support and should receive all possible assistance.

In addition, the demand for a Negro for Congress is fully justified and long overdue. Further study must be given as to how to develop this demand more effectively.

The second main reason for the unsatisfactory results was weakness in approaches to Negro-white unity.

There were many approaches to this key question during the campaign, and it would be wrong to conclude that the fight for Negro representation cannot be brought into and make headway in white areas. The election of Congressman Diggs, Borough President Hulan Jack, Judge Flagg, the Negro State Senator in Manhattan, and other experiences show that white voters will support Negro candidates when the issues are clear and the Negro people's forces are basically united.

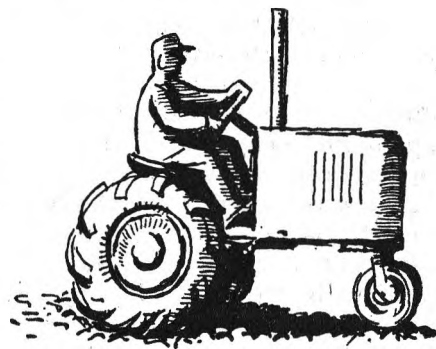
Under the specific conditions which developed in this campaign, however,

problems of Negro-white unity did not receive sufficient attention. As stated above, this is a district where due to gerrymandering only twenty-five percent of the voters are Negro. In addition, Edna Kelly, the present Congresswoman from this area, had greatly changed her status and relations with the District. In the past few years, she has emerged on the issues of Israel, foreign policy and civil rights. Her record in Congress has won support from the labor movement. The recent analysis of COPE gave Mrs. Kelly a high rating. Under conditions where there was no broad unity of the Negro people and no real chance of electing a Negro for Congress, the machine was able to pile up a seven to one vote against the Negro candidate. This showing is not one which helps Negro-white unity and shows that this is not the path for securing support from the white voters for Negro rights. In this same area, some very fine struggles for integration in the schools, enjoying broad support from the white as well as the Negro people are mounting. Likewise, many of the Jewish and church organizations have shown special concern for civil rights and strong solidarity with the Negro people's struggles over the past period.

Electoral contests involving such a gerrymandered district pose very difficult problems and require careful thought in order that the most satisfactory results can be obtained.

Here, too, united action behind a more limited objective for 1956 for a Negro for State Senate would undoubtedly have won more support among the white voters.

We wish to disagree vigorously with the idea, however, that the support for this campaign went in the



direction of Negro nationalism. It is not necessary to have the support of the majority of the white voters before initiative is taken by the Negro people to raise the demand for Negro representation or any other aspect of the fight for Negro rights.

Such initiative is necessary and an aid to the fight for the democratic rights of all, Negro and white.

It is necessary, however, to take into account the specific conditions in a given Congressional District in order that the strength of the Negro people is not dissipated and that Negro-white unity is extended rather than weakened.

It is all the more urgent now that the fight to end segregation in the schools and for the general advancement of Negro rights be carried out in the white communities, showing at all times the specific link between these issues and the needs and conditions of the white people.

* * *

Throughout the campaign, there was difficulty in getting the maximum response from the left and progressive forces. This is due both to the many questions which arose in the course of the campaign and because of the general problems which existed in our own organization in this period.

Members in the sections and clubs have felt there was insufficient consultation and discussion on policy. There is no doubt that the campaign was affected not only by the weaknesses outlined above, but also by past methods of work and approaches throughout the party; insufficient discussion with our members on policy questions. It is one of the purposes of this statement to open a channel for the expression of ideas and suggestions on how best to advance the fight for Negro representation as one of the major objectives of our Party as well as to learn from the new spirit of questioning and probing which is rising. Therefore, this statement does not attempt to answer all questions but to pose the main ones in the interest of more effective activity which is our common aim.

Source of Our Present Dilemma

By CHICK MASON

This excerpt from Mason's article concludes our printing of it.

Charge No. 1—

Possibility of Peaceful Coexistence

Now let us take point one in the charges against Browder. I quote from the Duclos letter:

"However, while justly stressing the importance of the Teheran conference for victory in the war against fascist Germany, Earl Browder drew from the conference decisions erroneous conclusions in nowise flowing from a Marxist analysis of the situation. Earl Browder made himself the protagonist of a false concept of the ways of social evolution in general, and in the first place, the social evolution of the United States.

"Earl Browder declared, in effect, that at Teheran capitalism and socialism had begun to find the means of peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the framework of one and the same world."

(Duclos article reprinted February 1946: "Marxism-Leninism vs. Revisionism," pamphlet)

Since it has been impossible to find in this post 20th Congress atmosphere an active opponent to "the possibility of peaceful co-existence," I must address myself to the reasonable argument I did find. The argument ran something like this: "It is one thing to now understand the possibility of co-existence when socialism on a world scale is equal in strength to capitalism. But when Browder advocated his theory it was premature, it would have the effect of disarming the working class at a time that monopoly capital was preparing its imperialist onslaught, preparing the opening of the Cold War."

Being only human, I can't resist the obvious comment that this smacks of the premature anti-fascist

who fought for Spain. But in spite of its apparent tendency in the direction, I hope that this is not a mere attempt to vindicate the Party or Browder. I hope that I am re-examining the history of that time to better understand the present dilemma.

In my opinion, our very projection of this post war possibility of co-existence during the course of the war was perhaps the most fortunate contribution that our Party made at that time. I contend that the projection of postwar peaceful co-existence did more to frustrate those elements in America who would have supported Churchill's anti-second front position, who would have emulated Churchill's "stacked guns" plan for readiness for use against the Russians.

Are our memories so short to forget the charges, only a few years ago, of Roosevelt's "treasonous betrayal" because he did not go along with Churchill? I said "fortunate." Consider the possible consequences if Duclos had written his letter and Foster succeeded in having our position reversed in '43 before the second front or in '44 while Roosevelt was still alive.

Perhaps Duclos' misunderstanding of what we were trying to do is most clearly expressed in this next sentence from his letter:

"We, too, in France, are resolute partisans of national unity, and we show that in our daily activity, but our anxiety for unity does not make us lose sight for a single moment of the necessity of arraying ourselves against the men of the trusts." (Duclos article.)

I feel humble in daring to discuss national unity with a representative of the Communist Party of France, which perhaps more than any Party has taught the world Marxist move-

ment the meaning of courageous devotion to national unity against fascism.

I must, however, point out to Comrade Duclos that there was a difference between the situation in France from that in the United States at that time, in regard to the "men of the trusts." In France, the men of the trusts had put in Petain. They were actively supporting Hitler's armies by making the munitions he was using to kill our boys. At that time a substantial section of our "men of the trusts" were supporting Roosevelt in his leadership of the "national liberation" war against Hitler and fascism. They were building the planes, the guns, the ships that were helping to bring defeat to Hitler. They were supporting Roosevelt's insistence, against Churchill, that the

"second front" must be opened. Was there a section of the "men of the trusts" that hoped to defeat Roosevelt? There was. What was their argument? It was that America must jockey for a position during the war to better prepare for the future inevitable war against Russia. How was this nefarious section defeated? It was defeated by convincing the nation that peaceful co-existence was not only a possibility but a reality. It is to our everlasting credit that we Communists helped in this "convincing" process.

It is said, "But you continued this peaceful co-existence advocacy after Roosevelt died, after Truman began to support the American century advocacy, after the men of the trusts showed they were just itching to start their drive toward imperialist domination of the world."

Our advocacy of peaceful co-existence was no assurance that we would succeed in defeating this process that began after Roosevelt's death. Who is the clairvoyant who can say now for certain that we might not have succeeded? Or am I the clairvoyant

who says that we could have succeeded. Certainly the estimate from abroad was that we could not succeed.

Maybe we couldn't have succeeded. But let us see what we did by withdrawing from this beachhead. By withdrawing from this fight, by completely reversing ourselves, we withdrew even the splinter obstacle we might have been to the plunging of America full scale into the cold war. This was wrong! It withdrew us from the active fight against America's drive to cold war and incipient fascism. It rendered us helpless in the face of atomic war. All we could then do, in effect, was hold hands and pray. (But it is to our credit that our martyrdom and courage, in spite of our mistake, helped turn the tide.) The Russians confronted with this unbroken line of American withdrawal from the wartime unity, became all the more justified in their own eyes for taking their own means of protection and security.

It was the duty of our Party to live up to its historical task, small as we were. We had a task different than the Communist Party of any other country in the world. We were the C.P. of the only country left strong enough to go to war. It was our duty to display the same courage that we did when we almost single-handedly brought Spain to the conscience of America. We were speaking to millions of Americans at that time. We could have spoken as the continuers of Roosevelt. Our task was to convince America that co-existence was possible.

Could we have won over large sections of the American people to the desirability of continuing the wartime cooperation between the U.S. and Russia? Could there have been developed a division, an "uneven development" among the capitalists themselves in their adoption of the cold war? Could there have been enough of a cleavage on this question to provide Russia the opportunity, if not the confidence, to make the necessary proposals or possibly concessions that might have accentuated the possibility for peaceful co-existence and collaboration between capitalism and socialism in the

framework of one and the same world?

The answer to "could we" implies clairvoyance. The kind of clairvoyance which assigns us the role of determining the outcome of the struggle in advance, the kind of clairvoyance which a few years later made us decide in advance that fascism was coming and assigned us, in effect, the role of digging bomb shelters for the Party.

The question is rather—was there a possibility of victory? There was. Did we have sufficient strength to conduct the fight? We did. Due to our self-sacrificing courage in the ranks of national unity for the conduct of the war, and our victories in the battle for the second front, we had the confidence of large sections of American people. Was the campaign we projected around Teheran and for peaceful co-existence popular with the mass of people around us? It was. This is testified to by the fact that in the few months of the projection of this campaign 22,000 new members joined our ranks. (John Williamson, Communist, June 44, and again Nov. '44.) In addition, it was receiving mass support among the tens of millions that were reading of it in full page ads in the newspapers. In addition, important spokesmen for Americans from all walks of life were speaking up for this program. Moreover, the Roosevelt heritage, which had laid the groundwork for such a campaign, was fresh in the minds of the people.

Is it possible that defeat would have meant decimation and so justified a retreat? (The following is hindsight of course.) Recent history has proven that we would have won at least partial victories. But moreover, even if the pessimists were correct, the very least we would have gained by this fight was the Roosevelt mantle in the fight for peace and democracy, and co-existence, a mantle which, as I will show, we helped drag in the mud.

Thus there was "revision" in this question. But contrary to the charge it was the "revision" of scientific Marxism into clairvoyant pessimism.

Charge No. 2—

Possibility of National Unity

We come to charge No. 2—the possibility of continuance of national unity in the post war period. It will be noted that I am tackling each charge on its face value as though the charges were not the rationalizations after the fact. The fact of the estimate from abroad that peaceful co-existence was not possible. Our policy was a stumbling stone to that estimate. The stone had to be squeezed for its drop of revisionism. Was this, or the next charge, or both, that drop?

"We shall have to be prepared to break with anyone that refuses to fight for the realization of the Teheran agreement and the Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition. We must be prepared to give the hand of cooperation and fellowship to everyone who fights for the realization of this coalition. If J. P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it, I as a Communist am prepared to clasp his hand on that and join with him to realize it. Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now except as they reflect one side or the other of this issue." (Earl Browder, Bridgeport speech, quoted by Jacques Duclos in his "letter.")



I am impatient with my urge to requote that famous Bridgeport quote, substituting the words "Geneva Spirit" for Teheran," and adding a Jr. after J. P. Morgan's name (if he exists). History mocks us Comrades! Are we listening! Or playing twiddle dee with our new divining rod which measures it for its relative degrees of right opportunism and left sectarianism?

What is important here? Important is that we had found the weapon with which to wage the battle for co-existence — National Unity. And equally important, we had learned the language necessary to make it understood by the people. This was the rub. Here was the very assurance that gave the lie to the estimate from abroad. Here was the assurance that our slogan for co-existence was not wishful whistling in the dark. That it had the possibility for success.

National Unity was the two-edged weapon. It cleared the atmosphere from the charge that we were supporting a war to help Russia. It clearly defined it as a war for national survival. Any support, anywhere, for the Churchill "stacked guns" plan was treason. Where did the danger of support for Churchill arise? Among the workers? No! Among the bourgeoisie? Of course.

To advocate or stress the class interest in the war would have provided the excuse for this "treason." "No, gentlemen," we said, "you have no excuse to promote your class interest during the war. If you try, you will be guilty of breaking the National Unity necessary to win this war of national survival." Did this

help prevent support of Churchill by the American bourgeoisie? It did.

Why did we have to project it into the post-war period? Because to place a limit on the National Unity during the war was to justify a jockeying for position at a critical time, before the second front, before the defeat of Hitler, before the meeting at the Elbe. It insured that the meeting took place, arms outstretched in joyous welcome, instead of at bayonet point.

But more important, as history has taught, it was the only insurance of the possibility of co-existence. Doubly important with the historical accident of Roosevelt's death, which left no bourgeois voice capable of whipping the "itching for the break" capitalist class back into line. Did the working class, particularly its left, take up the dropped mantle from the dead Roosevelt and issue the clarion call for the continuance of the wartime alliance, for co-existence as the only road to insure peace? No. The Left, particularly the Communists, abandoning any pretense at leadership, trampled the Roosevelt mantle deeper into the mud. It began an hysterical search for "revisionism." It substituted invective for program and began the piecemeal destruction of the Roosevelt coalition.

What was the mess of pottage for which the Party sold its soul? Was the new "class line" accepted by the workers? We were shunned. Did it bring us closer to those "abroad?" No. We were sneered at. We became the "untouchables," huddled together, suspicious of each other, hopping from "program" to "program" with

no direction, finally decimating ourselves in self-castigation. Our isolation became an end in itself, a reason for existence. That life remained at all, is one of the marvelous tributes to our will to live, to the glorious courage of our leaderless membership.

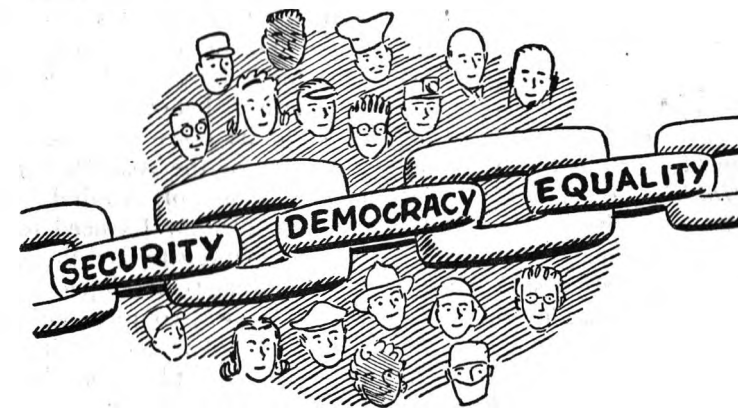
Thus we subjectively insured the so-called "objective" conditions for the acceptance of the Fulton, Missouri line handed down by Churchill to America. The "cold war" burst into full bloom. The prediction "from abroad" became true. And Russia's withdrawal into its shell became more justified.

Were we responsible for this historical tragedy? No! The evil, fearsome giant that faced us objectively, monopoly capital, was truly fearsome enough to shake the souls of men, to truly shake our confidence in each other.

Nor were we mature enough to resist the estimate from abroad. Our adolescence from our previous "infantile" leftism, sectarianism was hardly over. It was hardly more than a decade since we had divested ourselves of the leather jackets, and the cells, and had come into the broad stream of American life. It was natural for us to be suspicious of this new-found prosperity. Perhaps it was making us soft. And then again there were those social misfits among us, who couldn't stand this bright new day, who hankered back for the old days of comfortable cliches, the hard go-it-alone days of left organizations, the days when you had the right slogans and marched on the streets for your demands. The good old days when the cop was a "cosack," and the fight was something you could feel like a club. And you didn't have to think. You asked easy questions and you got complicated answers. But if you didn't understand, all you had to do was ask yourself, "What does the boss want me to do?" And then do the opposite.

Nor were we mature enough to resist those who seized the opportunity to push us back to isolation.

But most of all we weren't mature enough to realize that we had found the Achilles heel of the giant, "Mo-



nopoly Capital," or to have confidence that we had found it.

Charge No. 3—

Progressive Capitalism

We come to Charge No. 3, "Progressive Capitalism" or "the Economic Program" (sometimes called "doubling wages.").

The following quotation is completely Jacques Duclos' summary of what Browder had said on this question:

"In his report to the plenary session of the central committee of the CPUSA, Browder spoke in detail of the economic problems of U.S. postwar national economy, and their solution on the basis of collaboration and unity of different classes. Browder indicated that American business men, industrialists, financiers and even reactionary organizations do not admit the possibility of a new economic crisis in the U.S. after the war. On the contrary, all think that U.S. national economy after the war can preserve and maintain the same level of production as during the war.

"However, the problem is in the difficulties of transition from wartime economic activity to peacetime production, and in the absorption by home and foreign markets of \$90 billions in supplementary merchandise which the American government is now buying for war needs. In this regard, Earl Browder claims that the Teheran Conference decisions make possible the overcoming of Anglo-American rivalry in the struggle for foreign outlets, and that the government of the United States, in agreement with its great Allies, and with the participation of governments of interested states, can create a series of giant economic associations for development of backward regions and war-devastated regions in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

"As to extension of the home market, to permit absorption of a part of the \$90 billions worth of



merchandise, Browder suggests doubling the purchasing power of the average consumer, notably by wage increases.

"Marxists will not help the reactionaries, by opposing the slogan of "Free Enterprise" with any form of counter-slogan. If anyone wishes to describe the existing system of capitalism in the United States as "free enterprise," that is all right with us, and we frankly declare that we are ready to cooperate in making this capitalism work effectively in the postwar period with the least possible burdens upon the people. (*Teheran*, p. 21.)

"Further, Browder claims that national unity could no more be obtained by following a policy based on slogans aimed at the monopolies and big capital.

"Today, to speak seriously of drastic curbs on monopoly capital, leading toward the breaking of its power, and imposed upon monopoly capital against its will, is merely another form of proposing the immediate transition to socialism. (*Ibid*, p. 23)" (Duclos letter.)

Why do I quote this at such length? I do not argue with Duclos' summary. I will accept it. I am not even concerned with the fact that this is an oversimplification of what Browder

said. I am, however, very much concerned that we now understand this lesson in history.

History demands only of the Party that it raise the right questions at the right moment. It does not demand static answers. Because any answer will bear the seeds of its own wrongness at the very moment it is formulated. That is why the Party must embody within it varying trends of thought on all questions ready to test the answers as history moves forward. Therefore it is likely that the questions and answers embodied above would have had more need to be adjusted and redeveloped had they been allowed to flower, had they not been strangled at birth. Perhaps if it were not for this strangulation, the summary of Browder's position (as stated by Duclos, above) would have to be examined carefully for open, and hidden dangers. However, being faced with the fact that this economic program, and the projection of the means to achieve it, were aborted at birth, my main task becomes the establishment of its *essential* correctness.

What was the Achilles heel of the giant, "monopoly capital," at that point in history? Its need to quickly develop markets to feed the giant productive capacity developed during the war. This was coupled with the fact that a pall of fear regarding possible post-war unemployment hung over the working class and middle classes.

It was in this setting that Browder raised the question that the way to new markets was the road of co-existence and national unity. This was the key to making the situation possible! This was aiming at the "Achilles" heel that could weaken monopoly capital in its drive toward resuming the pre-war anti-Soviet machinations. This was the key to unlocking the coexistence-national unity drive.

Browder did more than that; he showed that at the levels of that time, 200 billion dollars of production insuring 60 million jobs were needed, and how co-existence and national unity could insure it.

However, it is in this very projection of an economic program to lay the basis for co-existence, that Marxists are treading on new ground. It is here that the danger of abandoning principle finds its greatest risk. For it is here that we are dealing with the new question as to whether a particular depression can be avoided under capitalism.

Also, in the projection of the possibility of National Unity around an economic program Browder runs the danger of intimating that the capitalists would change their stripes, and hand over wage increases. The fact that this was new ground, and that the program as it was projected needed watching, is testified to by the following cautioning note by Browder in his book, "Teheran." This was the other side of the coin in the projecting of the "possibility." It cautioned that there was also a "non-possibility," or as Browder put it:

"Of course, I cannot give any guarantee that labor unions will be accorded their proper place in post-war America. I cannot promise anyone with certainty there will not be a new 'open shop' and 'American Plan' drive to smash the labor unions after this war, such as took place in 1919-1921. It will be the capitalists themselves, in the final analysis, who will make this decision. And if that happens labor must be prepared to defend itself. I am not a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, and his doctrine of non-

resistance to evil will find no serious converts in the ranks of labor.

"I insist, however, upon the desirability that labor, in its own enlightened self-interest, shall take a responsible position on this question, that labor shall not passively and fatalistically drift with a tide that goes toward such major conflict, that labor shall make clear beyond all question that such conflict is not the desire or aim of the labor movement, that labor shall publicly do what it can to avoid such conflict. If a major class struggle in America is really inevitable after the war, to disrupt our hopes of peace and prosperity, let it be clearly established before the world that the responsibility does not rest with labor but with labor's enemies.

"In my own humble opinion this course is both the best way to avoid the struggle if it is possible, and to prepare to win the struggle if that should prove necessary."

("Teheran," by Earl Browder, paper ed., pp. 87-88.)



V. I. LENIN

Towards a Socialist Democracy

By E. S.

What I consider to be at the heart of our present problems is what seems to be a major premise of our Communist philosophy and practice as it has operated. This is the theory of monolithic unity as it has been opposed to democratic clash of ideas, free expression and inquiry. In the international field, this theory stood for the solid "unity" of all working class parties—on all questions—as opposed to a position of party independence and fraternal criticism.

On the inner party questions, it made the nice-sounding concept of "democratic centralism" in practice a concept of a "unified" party where opposition was mercilessly expelled instead of a party where opposition had a chance to come into the open, where members decided on the basis of fair judgement of different points of view. In the general political field, this theory stood and stands for a "unified, monolithic" society whereby everybody is of necessity in agreement and fundamental opposition is not tolerated, is considered harmful—rather than a society which encourages a clash of ideas, lets the majority judge, and protects the rights of the minority to hold and express their views. In short, it is a question of the monolithic theory of international working class relations, of party makeup and of national politics, versus the traditional (or as some prefer to label—"bourgeois") *democratic approach*.

The start of any discussion of what was responsible for the Stalin cult and what will or will not guarantee that such a thing will never repeat itself in a socialist land—and of whether or not it merits so much discussion and talk in the first place—must be, it seems to me, an estimate of how serious a thing it was that took place. Bill Foster asks it this way. "The first thing to get clear . . . is . . . a correct definition of just what category Stalin's unpardonable actions fall into." He answers, "This means that we have to class them under the head of revolutionary excesses. All bourgeois

revolutions . . . have produced such excesses. . . . The Russian Socialist Revolution has proved no exception." (July 2, D.W.)

Based on such an answer, to then conclude that its all a matter of eradication of the "personality cult"—that no major defects in the political system existed—are easy thoughts to arrive at. Which is precisely what both Foster and the Soviet C.C. do. The trouble is, Foster is dead wrong when he puts "Stalin's unpardonable actions" into this category.

The Nature of Stalin's Crimes

We all knew from the very first, that revolutions produce "excesses." We knew or should have known that in great social moves, there are individuals who suffer. If all Khrushchev did was factually confirm that this was true of the U.S.S.R. then who in heaven's name would have been so surprised and shocked.

I believe that "Stalin's unpardonable actions" fall into the category of a *profoundly counter-revolutionary trend, threatening the very accomplishments of the socialist revolution*. Political tyranny and economic democracy don't go hand in hand—they are opposites of one another. Sooner or later, one or the other must triumph. It is to the great hope of mankind that present steps indicate a long range political process is gradually replaced by political democracy—in which the vital living thing has been a triumph of economic democracy over political tyranny. But only a start has been made.

Now is it true to label what took place as a profoundly anti-revolutionary trend? Again and again the C.C.-C.P.S.U. resolution confirms this (without seemingly realizing it properly)—"the personality cult contradicts the nature of the socialist system" states the resolutions.

The proof of the need to so severely categorize what took place should easily be seen in the actual facts themselves. Look at what took place; a nation founded on principles of ra-

cial, religious and cultural freedom gave witness to unreasoned slaughter of Jewish leaders and mass suppression of Jewish cultural life in a way that among modern 20th century nations has been exceeded only by Hitler Germany. The S.U., home of nationality democracy, became the place where whole peoples—the Karachai people, the Kalmyk people, the Chechen people, the Inguish people, the Balkar people—became persecuted victims of mass deportation and terror. In fact, the reality that some of these people even existed was denied. "Genocide" is the term for this. Khrushchev jokes that the Ukrainians were spared only because they were so big in number, Stalin didn't know what to do with them. *So in truth, here is one major foundation of the socialist revolution that was in the process of being turned into its horrible opposite.*

And this "excess" is repeated in most every phase of life; agriculture (who can square Stalin's growing oppression of farmers as revealed in the report with socialist development of agriculture); cultural life; economic discrimination (who can square what was a growing system of privileged economic rewards totally out of line with economic contribution of certain population sections—with socialism. It is the opposite); creative initiative ("many workers began to . . . fear all which was new, fear their own shadows"—sounds like capitalism, not socialism); such was the monstrous system that the very leaders who today lead the U.S.S.R. would very possibly have been murdered had Stalin lived (Voroshilov, Molotov, Mikoyan, Zhukov, all are specifically mentioned by Khrushchev. "Stalin evidently had plans to finish off all the old members of the Political Bureau," he adds).

Now what is the sense of being so foolish and not seeing how profound an anti-revolutionary force the political system of the U.S.S.R. under Stalin had become? Who can be so shallow as not to see the difference be-

tween an individual case of excess and failure of justice—and a system where not only opposition meant extinction, but opposition for the very sake of preserving and extending many aspects of the socialist revolution was tantamount to a death sentence.

Why Did It Happen?

So I believe we should and must reject Foster's placing of the situation. The question of *why* did it all happen remains, however. The Soviet C.C.'s resolution of June 30, 1956 stands as their major pronouncement on the why of this question. Their resolution has been met with enthusiasm by most of the C.P.'s of the world. We should take a close look at this resolution.

The resolution makes a worthy contribution to understanding *how* the dictatorship of Stalin grew by examining the historical conditions ("the centuries old backwardness" of the economy inherited from the Czar, the tremendous problems of building socialism in one country, the fact of capitalist encirclement and ever-present possibilities of attack), as well as the incorrect theories ("Right" and "left" deviation, plus Stalin's incorrect theses concerning the nature of bourgeois strength in the S.U.). It is necessary to bear in mind the historical background of the problem. But it is another thing to claim, and this the Soviets do, that these historical conditions explain *why* the tyranny arose.

Unless you probe for a major defect in communist theory and approach you can say one or both of two things;

(1) *You can say the Stalin dictatorship was an inevitable result of the historical conditions referred to. And this extremely untenable theory is never said but nonetheless is of necessity implied in the C.C. resolution.*

—or you can say—

(2) *That within these historical conditions, the personality of Stalin was the decisive factor towards the creation of the dictatorship. This is directly implied again and again in both the original report and the resolution.*

The Khrushchev report states for ex-

ample "Comrades: The cult of the individual acquired such monstrous size chiefly *because Stalin himself* using all conceivable methods, supporting the glorification of his own person." And the C.C. resolution again and again refers to Stalin's personal weaknesses, Stalin's wrong theory on why security is so important, Stalin's overrating his merits—"The development of the personality cult was to an enormous extent contributed to by some individual traits of J. V. Stalin." The rest is an explanation of conditions. They say pretty much that with Lenin at the helm things were fine, but Stalin then took over and took advantage of conditions to do so much bad.

In its essence, the Soviet position boils down to an acceptance of the very thing they reject—a decisiveness of personality over political system—rather than an examination of the interrelationship between personality and political system (how the bad in one feeds and grows on the bad in the other), and rather than a search for the political error which allowed the personality of Stalin to get so out of hand.

If one cannot accept so superficial an examination of the problem—if one agrees with those parts of the C.C. resolution which reject the personality theory as decisive, rather than those parts which place it forward in the context of conditions—if one wishes to ask, could a different approach somewhere along the line have made it impossible for a Stalin to rise as he did—then what stares one in the face?

Was it the absence of collective leadership? This is a political result not cause. Collective leadership existed in Lenin's day and was preached and praised. Stalin was able to destroy it. A part of our problem is to find out what permitted Stalin to destroy this collective leadership so completely.

Was it the absence of a feeling for broad mass participation? The Soviets were conceived as, and originally functioned as, the most broad, most mass, most direct form of people's participation in Russian history. What was it then that enabled Stalin to destroy so much of the very

substance of the Soviets, while retaining their form?

What is obvious? Stalin crushed all opposition. And what is the outstanding defect in the Soviet political system which accounts for the fact that Stalin could take advantage of historical conditions and so destroy opposition, that he could create a personal dictatorship with all its results? *The defect is that nothing in Soviet Political life laid down the right to opposition as a basic social principle.*

Nenni writes that Stalin exploited "a fundamental error which prevailed in the Bolshevik Party after the death of Lenin. Having suppressed the other parties—and thereby democracy based on the plurality of parties—democracy within the party was suppressed. Having eliminated the other parties from the Mensheviks to the Socialist Revolutionaries, from competition with the Bolshevik Party, having eliminated the internal factors of the Bolshevik Party, utilizing the rivalry of his followers and oftentimes of his adversaries . . . it was easy for Stalin, who in the course of this operation had accumulated immense personal power, to eliminate democracy within his own faction, remaining the only legal force in party and state. . . ." (from "Avanti!" 6/3/56)

The Freedom of Expression

Of course! Once you deny the right to opposition—once you deny the right to freedom of expression—once those in power are the only ones to decide right and wrong, who can and can't speak—given difficult historical conditions, given the personal defects of Stalin—then indeed it would be remarkable if the tyranny didn't develop. (The only difference I have with Nenni's statement is that I believe the error existed before Lenin's death. In other writings, I believe Nenni has indicated this also.)

The right to opposition, the right to freedom of expression—speech and press—such rights guaranteed by law, imbedded into institutions—and learned by the people. Could a Stalin have arisen in a land with a socialist base and such rights as a political superstructure? Hardly. Could mass

deportations have taken place in a Socialist land where the Kalmyks could have told the whole people of their plight? Hardly. Could an agricultural tax so outlandish have been proposed in a socialist land where the farmers could have freely spoken their piece? Hardly. In a socialist country where workers had the right and duty to explore all laws and express themselves *despite* the position of the C.P.—could such a grossly unfair pension law have gone on for so long? Hardly. Could that long list of heroes, from Eikhe to Itsik Feffer have been murdered where there was an opposition and the actual facilities guaranteeing one the right to protest publicly? Hardly.

No laws, no legal rights, no philosophical pronouncements guarantee freedom and democracy. The people have to be aware of the need for democracy and practice it. But some laws hurt and make impossible such practice and some basic laws make it very possible and encourage it. Most important, in a socialist country, the C.P. itself must seek the most vigorous testing and clashing of ideas. The C.P. should and must encourage all opposition into the open, and place its ideas, and let the opposition place their ideas before the workers. No truth has ever suffered from criticism. It has grown only stronger in a fair clash. Only falsehood has suffered from criticism. *Throughout the years the C.P.'s have followed a path of branding ideological opposition to their pronouncements as intolerable. Where they have had the power, as in the U.S.S.R., the C.P. stifled the opposition and full freedom of expression. That is the error.*

There is nothing in socialism which is anti-democratic. Such a thought is a contradiction of itself. Socialism is the democratic control and ownership of the many over their economic life. It doesn't contradict, but it *needs* the democratic control of and free expression in political life.

The Soviets yet have to accept the right to opposition and free expression. They speak of "Marxist" criticism and deny the right of "Non-Marxist" opposition. The Hungarian and Czech C.C.'s follow them in this.

They are hurting themselves as well as socialism. How can the Soviets deal with pressing problems when every solution other than that accepted by the C.P.'s is deemed non-Marxist and therefore not accorded the right of expression.

The N.Y. Rabbi delegation has made serious charges concerning anti-Semitism yet existing in the U.S.S.R. The S.U. is mum on the subject. Evidently they think either it no longer exists or they are doing all necessary. But the N.Y. rabbis charge the Soviet government itself is yet conducting policies impossible to the freedom of Jewish religion and culture (read their report). How is one to know? If there is error still in the Soviet approach, how is it to come out except through open and critical discussion? Moishe Brodezon, the Jewish poet, just recently released from a Soviet prison states that the charges against him were that he thought and said that anti-Semitism exists in Russia (at a time when all sorts of Jewish leaders were being arrested and cultural organs closed). He said yes and so went to prison. Today, the N.Y. Rabbis state that the Soviets do not allow Yiddish newspapers in Moscow on grounds that this is incorrect national theory (they would also be required to let the Uzbeks publish their own paper in Moscow, they argue). Well, how does a Jew in Russia come out and attack such a theory? And how does one know whom to believe?

The Hungarian C.C. wants creative discussion, but not anti-Marxist—how do they propose to deal with a situation in which a major course they undertake is wrong and the workers suffer. How many more Poznan's must take place? Fortunately the Polish Workers Party seems to repudiate Bulganin's untimely advice that the role of the press is merely to propagandize Marxism and not be a debating ground of ideas and criticism.

Soviet Resolution Inadequate

There are contradictions and weaknesses in the C.C. resolution which are subsidiary to the main question of political democracy and yet im-

portant and relevant in considering the whole of the problem of truth.

For example, the report and resolution well place the tremendous harm Stalin's tyranny was doing socialism and yet they can gloss over it by saying "*the negative consequences of these mistakes were quickly made good by the colossal growth of the vital forces of the Party and Soviet Society.*" (my underline, C.C. resolution.) But this is a terrible underestimation, even if in the context of explaining how Stalin came to be accepted. Such were the "negative consequences" that they required and require total repudiation in Soviet society for it to continue to grow. This formulation of the C.C.-C.P.S.U. is important as it indicates the underestimation of these questions which led to a lack of struggle on the part of the present leadership and still leads to a certain misplacing by them. Essentially, the Soviets hold Foster's categorizing of Stalin's acts as the correct one, despite the bulk of evidence which they themselves give contradicting this position.

Or for example, take why the present leaders say they didn't struggle in the past. It was impossible, they say. But the C.C. resolution directly contradicts this position when it says "There were certain periods, for instance during the war, when the unilateral acts of Stalin were sharply restricted, when the negative consequences of lawlessness, arbitrariness, and so forth were substantially diminished." And then adds later, "After victory, the negative consequences of the personality cult re-emerged with great force."

Oh now! Impossible to restrict Stalin before the war because of war threats, etc.; during the most devastating conditions of war he's restricted; and then when victory comes and the "historical conditions" are in many ways less pressing—he re-emerges! *Such a statement shows it was possible to restrict Stalin when the need was most obvious.* One is led to suspect the present leaders didn't really feel the need to restrict Stalin so sharply as to want to act

in other periods. Certainly, after the war, with capitalist encirclement broken, should they have relaxed their restrictions on Stalin and let his personal dictatorship emerge most fully again? Things don't add up.

The C.C. resolution states, in line with its assignment of historical conditions as the determining force, "When the last exploiting classes were liquidated in our country, when socialism became the dominant system in the entire national economy, while the international situation of our country had radically changed, the framework of Soviet democracy immeasurably extended and is continuing to do so." In other words, when the historical conditions which made it possible for Stalin to create his dictatorship disappeared, the dictatorship itself disappeared.

So! How square this with a major point of the report that Stalin first developed his use of force and terror in the middle thirties, when socialism had been built—when Trotskyism was already dead as a significant theory in the S.U. *How square that remarkable assertion of the C.C. with the fact that after W. W. 2 all the changed conditions referred to were met but the tyranny of Stalin re-emerged to assume some of its worst forms?*

The C.C. resolution says they tell "the whole truth, no matter how bitter." But they do not tell how they who wrote the resolution adulated and sickeningly flattered Stalin and thus contributed to the cult. They say all "is past." An objective observer must note the important changes for the better made. Indeed, such changes are a minimal necessity for growth in Soviet life. But if all is past why was the reference of Dennis to the murder of Jewish leaders deleted from the "Pravda" text? Why is it impossible to get a fully open discussion of this question in the S.U. and by the S.U., especially in view of the charges made by the N. Y. rabbis? What about the fairly well supported charges that a quota system on Jews in leading positions in the U.S.S.R. exists? These things don't add up.

I have cited these examples of weak logic and definite contradiction in the Soviet C.C. resolution because I feel they supplement my view that

the Soviet explanation is a superficial explanation and indeed, no explanation at all. I also feel such bad logic is a natural result of a position which is arrogant on the subject of truth, which feels it knows all and doesn't really want to listen to other viewpoints. The Soviet resolution denies a major source of error and inescapably relies on shoddy logic and contradictory assertions.

Ben Davis has come out with the claim that to use the Stalin "revelations" as a basis for major re-evaluation is to again place the S.U. ahead of the U.S.A. in our thinking. I am unable to make sense out of such a thought. The Stalin "revelations" show a major error was made in our thinking. The error involves thoughts which we American Communists must come to grips with. Political democracy is the right of the majority to rule (and change their mind), and the right of the minority to express their dissent. We have labeled too many ideas as "bourgeois" in the past only to have found they were truthful ideas, to ever again claim a sole priority on social truth for ourselves. Let ideas be tested against one another in the open air. Fight for our ideas and let the majority judge.

Democracy in Socialist America

The American C.P. has become identified with a future in which a man does not have the right to say what's on his mind. That is not the future I want. Socialism needs a future where the greatest personal freedom of expression exists. Such an atmosphere will aid socialism immeasurably. Let us end our hypocritical cant of being fervent fighters for political democracy today under capitalism and opponents of it under socialism.

We have never really been imbued with the democratic idea of listening to the majority. Again and again we have made tactical blunders of leftist nature—well enumerated by Dennis, if not developed by him—because we thought we knew it all and couldn't listen to others.

In supporting full democracy and expression I don't think I'm ignoring the class difference between socialist society and a capitalist society. I think I'm supporting a fundamental

law of growth for any society in today's world.

I don't expect the Russians to mechanically transfer our political institutions to their country. I expect them to move steadily in the direction of political democracy to give new life to socialism itself. I don't expect America to ever transfer Russian economic institutions here mechanically. I expect America to find her own path to socialism if for no other reason than to give life and meaning to our political institutions and rights (not to destroy them).

The Soviet Union has contributed much to mankind in its, in general, pro-peace and anti-colonial world policy. It has created a vast welfare system and it has instituted and propagated the idea of socialism. This will be to its everlasting credit. It has done much too, to distort socialism. The C.P.S.U. must realize and correct this.

American Communists have fought hard on issue after issue of great importance to the American people. These need not be enumerated here. Our fight against the economic royalist, for civil rights, for peace, stand in history. We have in our philosophy made a major, anti-democratic error. We should be men and women and admit that error and cast it off. By holding to it, we have greatly aided the "economic royalists" to divorce us from the people here.

Never before in history has the world had so much hope. Never before has everlasting peace been such a ripe possibility and in the hands of the people. Never—has the possibility for healing the split of the international working class and introducing socialism all over the world been so great. The people of America too have repudiated fascism and war. Those who understand the meaning of socialism and economic democracy, who wish to see a Socialist America, will either do so in terms of the deep wishes of the American people for a preservation and extension and a giving of meaning to what is good and democratic in American life, or they will be rejected. If the C.P. doesn't come to grips with this fact—others will and life, progress, socialists and democracy will go ahead and develop without us.

E. S.

Concepts of Leadership

By S. A.

I would like to deal with concepts of leadership that have guided our Party.

I am thoroughly dissatisfied with the simple acknowledgment that bureaucracy and arrogance exist, and we have to become more democratic. Unless we locate the roots, I doubt that bureaucracy and arrogance can be cleaned out. If I deal mainly with top leadership, it is because the top and its approaches have been a "model" to the lower echelons and have been imitated by them.

Various comments confirm my belief that no serious examination has been made of the causes.

Said one state leader: "Sure, there has been bureaucracy, and we have to get rid of it, but if we don't have a correct line, bureaucracy can exist too. Besides, we can have democracy but without a proper line not get anywhere."

Said another leader: Bureaucracy is a product of left-sectarianism.

Aren't these comments basically a cover up? Of course democracy as opposed to bureaucracy is not a virtue in itself but only to the extent that it contributes to an accurate viewpoint. But can the accurate viewpoint be achieved without democracy? This is the point.

To say that bureaucracy is a product of left-sectarianism is even less satisfactory. Bureaucracy was rampant in the Browder period of "right" error. So whatever errors were made, bureaucracy was always there.

I think that idealism rather than materialism has guided our concepts of leadership, and this is the source of bureaucracy and arrogance.

Let me say first that I think we do have a body of leaders more experienced and mature than they were years ago. I for one have no wish to dump leaders indiscriminately and start with a new batch which will then have to go through their own serious mistakes to get where the bulk of the current leaders are. Many of our leaders are capable, persuasive

and possessed of varied skills. Some, I imagine, are incorrigible. A key problem, however, is that they over-emphasize their own role, and what they can possibly give to the movement even as a collective of individuals.

Aptheker made a most important point in discussing ignorance and arrogance. The dialectical method, based even on a large accumulation of knowledge and experience, is just not good enough in a particular field. The particular field has to be mastered, whether it be history, psychology, Local 000 of the Steel workers, a given Congressional district, or the overall election scene.

It is sheer idealism for any small or larger group of individuals (the National or State Committees) to try to find a correct approach to problems via their own "intellects." As the Chinese Party says: the line comes from the masses. This should always be the starting point. This is the material base.

For Members' Participation

Before the National Committee should have issued a Dennis report or any other person's report, they should have called together groups in various fields (trade unionists to evaluate the split in the labor movement, for example). These trade unionists should have been brought together, union by union. The National and state bodies could have split up into a series of committees to meet with the separate trade union groups. Then, based upon the discussions in such bodies, the National Committee could synthesize and report its findings and formulate its views. These views could then go to the entire membership for discussion.

Let no one tell me that this would consume a great deal of time. Can scientific investigation be made rapidly?

I happen to agree that left-sectar-

ianism has pervaded our work since 1945 (and historically), though we started to change after 1952. But this generalization is of little use to me in my work, and certainly is even less help to the unconvinced person. If the leading bodies had discussed these questions with the trade union forces, union by union, prior to making its report, the report could have been concrete, persuasive and understandable to non-party as well as party persons. This business of "left" and "right" to most people even in the Party is so much gibberish.

The leading bodies could have gone back to the trade union groups a second time and showed union by union what was a left error and why. They could also have shown these "left" errors in relationship to the right opportunist policies that did exist and were pursued by many trade union leaders (five year contracts, unwillingness to tackle new organization). They could have helped to win over our own hard-bitten "leftists" by dealing with a lopsided struggle against white chauvinism in a union that had more Negro-white unity (Negroes on jobs at equal pay) than perhaps any other union in the country, etc., etc.

I say that the National Committee in trying to come to correct conclusions without the thorough-going participation of the people involved in the particular fields, is overplaying the role of leader and underplaying the role of the people. I would state it even more sharply. Nenni says of the Soviet Union (and there is a large element of truth in his statement, though he should not ignore the democratic base that developed via free education): What started out as a dictatorship of the proletariat became a dictatorship of the party, became a dictatorship of Stalin.

Dictatorship of Leaders

In our country, I state this over-emphasis on the role of individuals

has taken the form of a dictatorship of leadership no matter how well intentioned or benevolent.

Or to cite another example: What was it but idealism when we pushed for the Progressive Party in the unions? Of course this was intermixed with arrogance. Didn't we know that the trade union leaders were not unaware that the members didn't go for the Progressive Party. We were just so cocksure of our leadership ability, we figured we could convince our members via the processes of reason, regardless of the level of their experiences and the history of our country. We didn't just "overestimate the radicalization of the working class." We overestimated the role of leadership and our own leadership abilities.

Just as we substituted idealism for materialism, so we used mechanical methods instead of dialectics in our concepts of leadership.

Why has the National Committee been concealing differences not only in the past but currently? Again, this is a negation of the role of the people, but I wish now to deal with the mechanical aspect.

Does the National Committee think like this? "We meet and formulate and pass things down. Then they meet and formulate and pass things up." But should not the relationship between top and bottom be a continuous one, interacting on each other, not broken up by mechanical separation? As I recall dialectics, I remember words like "interpenetration," "interconnection," "interaction," not some arbitrary stops, placed there by an arrogant leadership enhancing its own role.

Under pressure the National Committee has spoken. It has said it will reveal differences next month (September). Why wait another month: Doesn't it enter those stony, bureaucratic heads that the meeting of the National Committee next month might be a better one, if the questions now under discussion and the differences now existing were brought to the members now; if the members grappled with these questions and differences, and the product of their discussions were brought to the National Committee meeting? This con-

tempt for the role of the members is intolerable, and, it is in this context that I said before some of our leaders are incorrigible (uncorrectable). Let us never forget: The line comes from the masses. (Let me add that so long as we are isolated from the mass organizations, our policies even in a democratic relationship cannot be too accurate, but at least it will be more accurate, and it will help to move our members into the mainstream).

A whole series of organizational aspects and attitudes reflect a lack of concern for material base (idealism).

1) The absence of mass forces, particularly trade union forces on leading party bodies. Only a body without a trade unionist on it (the National Committee) could have issued a report on the split in the labor movement without discussing the effect of Taft-Hartley. The most immature trade unionist who lived through meeting after meeting where the members were begging, pleading, roaring ever more insistently for compliance could not forget this fundamental fact and nightmare. The National Committee could and did.

2) The location of the national party center in New York instead of in the midwest (an industrial center rather than a commercial center; a center typical of a region rather than unique like New York; an important farm base). It is true that New York has many electoral votes and is thus important, but if we in practice regard the working class as decisive, we can not center our attention on New York. In the 1954 elections, it was Michigan, Illinois and Pennsylvania, heavy working class areas, which gave the McCarthyites the big one-two.

Attention to Industry

3) The lack of attention to industrial sectors. Six years ago industrial, then a single county, was broken up and attached to various counties in order to guarantee attention to industry by the whole leadership. I have recently learned informally (God forbid, this information should come through organized Party channels) that industrial sectors have been re-organized out of the counties into a single grouping. The reason given:

they weren't getting enough attention from Party leadership. Personally, I think the absence of guidance to industry is a political not an organizational question. We don't concentrate on the key material base, the working class. (This opens up a question in itself: are we a party of the working class, that is, do we direct our major efforts in this direction? How come then, when the steel strike rolls along, no one raises the question of what the communities can do to help the steel strike? And I bump into a couple of steel workers who maintain the Party isn't giving them any leadership).

4) Neglecting to examine the organizational base, our members. We cannot break our isolation while the bulk of our members are outside the mass organizations. How do we deal with this question? By saying the members are "left" sectarian. This is no help at all. While left sectarianism is a feature, how can we best overcome it? This is the question to debate. And besides, there are many other important aspects to know and detail before we can answer the question how to move our people into the mainstream. How many able-bodied forces do we have? If they are busy chasing after the *bulk* of our forces who are old and or sick and or inactive, not only from Party meetings (for years) but from any kind of activity, will the able-bodied have the time and energy for mass work?

In a given Congressional campaign, the County organizer, the County executive secretary, the regional organizer and the section organizer, were all present to give guidance to at most four mass forces. This is a lot of brass to guide a few people (again the overemphasis on the role of leaders). It would seem to me that at least one county force would have more productively spent his or her time seeing those able-bodied but inactive people whom we might hope to move into the mainstream.

The County estimate of the campaign, which was won, dealt simply with the politics of the victory. Until I raised it, there was no examination of how many members had participated in the campaign, how many had rooted themselves in an organi-

zation in the process, etc. The "hoch" politics attitudes of many of our leaders, reflecting an improper relationship between politics and economics and organization, has contributed time and again to bureaucracy and left-sectarianism and right opportunism (this too is another question).

5) The Saviour-leader. We used to make it a regular practice to send in a Leader for a campaign who was going to change everything, zip it up, and then vanish. Now we do it less. But we do it. A fine and capable comrade was sent into our campaign in the last month. Since he is staying on, he is now and will continue to make a greater contribution to our section. However, neither he nor anyone else in a one-month period can mobilize people whom others there for months have been unable to mobilize. People are very concrete and have to be learned. Again the over-emphasis on the role of the individual.

And, another aspect, the contempt for the persons there. There was a sizeable gain in membership participation, particularly in the lower end of our section. The county executive secretary gave credit for this gain to the saviour-leader. When I passed on this "credit" to a club, they asked: "Who is he?"

P.S.: The gain was mainly the work of a collective built up in that area by the org. sec. over a five-month period.

There are a lot of lessons to be learned from this small incident. How is leadership (cadre) judged and selected. Again, the judgments always come from the top exclusively.

Another question: if we bring people in from one area to another area, it may help win a campaign, but how does it help our people move into the mainstream and develop roots in their own area?

Although I have been in this area for two years, I am an exported leader. I have come to the conclusion that if I had spent the last two years digging into my own area, moving into the mass organizations myself, I would have much more productive results.

S.A., Org. Sec'y.

Some Resolutions

September 10, 1956

Dear Editor:

The following resolution was passed at a conference held in Schenectady on September 9th.

RESOLVED: that the theoretical foundations of the Party be thoroughly re-examined with a view to reorganization along the following lines:

FIRST: to create an organization suitable for objective research into American political and economic life.

SECOND: to provide the possibilities for a broader political coalition of socialist minded people.

THIRD: to develop democratic forms within the organization to encourage creative thinking in the ranks of the organization as well as at the top levels, with emphasis on rank and file majority rule as opposed to a monolithic approach.

It is our opinion that this procedure can best be conducted within the framework of the present organization and that no steps toward dissolution of the party be taken at this time or until such time as alternative proposals can be placed before the membership.

The following resolution was by one comrade, who voted against the above resolution, and it was accepted that this go in as the minority proposal:

"I am 100% against dissolution of the Party.

I feel that any changes which we feel should take place should be done within the framework of our present organization.

I feel this resolution (the majority resolution) is not satisfactory and not in the best interest of the working class and the fight for Socialism."

Comradely,
Schenectady, C.P.

August 21, 1956

To: New York County C.P.
New York State C. P.
National Committee

The Seamen's Branch of the Communist Party, at a regular meeting unanimously adopted a motion that we reject any and all proposals, ideas, or trends that go along with the proposition of dissolving the Party. All proposals or ideas in regards to broadening our Party, or changes in our Party structure should be made clear to eliminate the possibility of a smoke-screen to dissolve our Party. We are for the strengthening and mobilizing of our Party to play the vanguard role of the American working class, in our every-day struggles, and for Socialism.

Adopted August 14, 1956

by the Seamen's Branch of the Waterfront Section of the Communist Party, U.S.A.

RESOLUTION

At a joint meeting of two clubs in our area it was decided to send in the following resolution:

We feel that the issues under discussion in our Party now are of such critical significance and the period allowed for pre-convention discussion so limited that the differing views of the National Committee should be presented to the membership now.

In effect the clubs have already started this discussion and are hindered by the failure of our leadership to come forward frankly and make their positions known.

We urge immediate action on this resolution which we feel reflects the thinking of many comrades in the Party.

A Queens County Club