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## CONTENTS

Don't Scuttle the Ship.....	3
Some Conceptions .....	6
Some Thought Can Solve Our Problems.....	11
Situation Among Our Cadre.....	13
Peaceful Coexistence, Peaceful Competition and Peaceful Transition .....	15
Resolution By Film Club.....	24
Critical Relations Strengthen Socialism.....	25
Issues in the CPSU and CPUSA.....	28
Resolutions.....	32

## Dear Reader:

We have heard some mutterings of writers to PV who are put out because their articles don't appear in print immediately. Since writers are so valuable to a magazine, as well as to our Party, we offer an account of how our magazine gets put out:

We are now in the enviable position, as editors, of having a backlog of articles, as we pointed out in our last issue. That has meant that we have had all the material for number five issue, for instance, before number four appeared.

That means that if you submit an article when issue number four appears, your article can, at the speediest, get into issue number six. In fact, by the time you read this, the next issue is already set in type.

Secondly, articles for an issue go to the printer at least four weeks before the magazine comes out. First the type is set, then the proofreading of the type at the print shop and by the editors. (We know, we know: lots of errors still get through.)

Then the errors are corrected. After that, the articles, etc., must be made up to fit the 32 pages. After the "dummy," as it is known, is ready, the print shop makes up page proofs. These must again be proofread, checked, and problems of articles not fitting, too few or too many words on a page must be adjusted.

Then final proofs are made. After these are checked, the whole business is printed on one big sheet. It must then be sent to the bindery, cut, stapled, folded, and delivered.

It's true that, after all this, we should have a prettier magazine. All we can say is that we put out a bigger magazine than any other Marxist publication. We have no full time editor; and we are amateurs. We are anxious to hear from our readers as to how we can improve PV. Please send us your ideas.

Even with our comfortable backlog of articles, we are proud that we have been able to print everything that has come in, that was not printed somewhere else. With one exception: we rejected an article calling for factions that had dubious quotes by Lenin which we could not verify. If the writer, S.E.S., will get in touch with us, we'll discuss it with him or her.

\* \* \* \* \*

PV urges all its readers to support Mrs. Leona Thompson's plea for medical parole for her husband, Bob

Thompson. As a result of the splintering of his skull by an anti-Communist in West Street jail in 1953, Bob almost lost his life. He has since had a metal plate instead of the badly shattered quarter of his skull.

He has just had to have another brain operation to remove the plate and clear up an infection that had developed under it. He must have another operation in three months to replace the plate.

It seems to us that any decent human feeling demands that Bob be released from prison, and allowed to be cared for at home. His life is in constant danger from any blow on the head, no matter how gentle, until the plate is in place, and is grown into firm attachment. Even then, any blow is dangerous.

Speaking of Bob (our N. Y. State Chairman), which we enjoy doing, calls to mind others with whom he is associated. He was a lumberjack, like Bill Foster, Gene Dennis, Gus Hall. He fought in Spain, along with Johnny Gates, was a machinist like Johnny Williamson, worked in the Young Communist League with Gil Green. And like Henry Winston, Gil and Gus, has a long stretch ahead in prison.

The hard life of a Communist leader has taken its toll of him. Younger than the Communist leaders who have heart disease (Foster, Dennis, Stachel), Bob's head injury and the brutal seven-year sentence are obviously not a tonic. Almost everybody in the national and state leadership grew up in the kind of poverty that takes a physical toll to start with.

And these tough years have added to that toll. 160 of us indicted, many jailed, some of us going through unavailability, trial and imprisonment, and many, many more leaders and rank and filers going through years of unavailable life, with all its hardships.

We think that the time has come to put an end to the McCarthyite persecutions. The Pittsburgh victory in the Smith Act case—we congratulate Steve Nelson, Ben Carreathers, Jim Dolsen, Bill Albertson and Irv Weissman—shows that it can be done.

### PARTY VOICE

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

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## DON'T SCUTTLE THE SHIP

By A. MARINE

UNDER the present discussion our Party appears much like a ship in a storm. Each succeeding wave of the discussion sends our craft rolling. Amongst some of the officers the cry of "abandon ship" has gone up. Others claw at the wind in search of answers and a way out. While in some sectors of Party leadership our science of navigation (Marxism-Leninism) has been discarded.

I think the time has come for every member to take his stand in defense of the Party. So far the main trend discussion and some of the proposals coming out of it have been most harmful. Instead of having armed our Party membership with a fighting spirit of achievement at having survived every vicious attack of the enemy, during these trying years, there has been a blanket of gloom spread in our ranks by some irresponsible leaders. This has created havoc in the ranks and instead of strengthening the morale of the Party it has weakened it. Such being the situation there is but one course and that is the complete exposure and rejection of such views.

Let me generally outline my views:

1. I believe our Party is at a historic juncture in its life. We must take the only way out which is the correct application of *Marxism-Leninism* to our own nation. Any other roads lead to a betrayal of the American working class, the international working class.

2. I believe there must be changes. Life can never be the same after these trying experiences of the last six years. The lessons of the 20th Congress are yet to be mastered. We need to clearly spell out what the changes have to be in the light of a Marxist-Leninist analysis.

3. I reject the proposition that our errors are mainly of a left sectarian character only.

4. Finally I think that to a large extent the discussion so far has been conducted in a loaded atmosphere. From all appearances it would seem like a free-for-all, but in reality we have been subjected to an intense campaign, led by the New York District leadership, that tends in the direction of accommodation to the bourgeoisie and capitulation. This is further aggravated by compromises for "unity" at all costs by most of the National Committee.

### Tilt the Balance in Favor of the Working Class

Our Party is some 37 years old. We have cruised through some rough waters in those years. In examining the record we must be objective. We must see the accomplishments and the defeats. In balancing them we cannot be mechanical, as would a scale or a mathematical deduction, but rather we must be dialectical.

During the most intense offensive of the McCarthyites and pro-war forces the Communists stood fast in defense of the most basic interests of the American and International working class. The selfless devotion of our membership, who were up against overwhelming odds, is nothing to be ashamed of. Yet to a large extent many of the reports and discussion articles have tended to overlook these realities. It would be understandable if rank and file members expressed subjectivity, they have long been subjected to the bureaucratic practices of the leadership, but when leading comrades begin to castigate the membership for their own blunders, then it is time to call a

halt. I agree with those who demand that criticism be constructive, not destructive. The purpose of the whole discussion and examination is to strengthen the Party—not scuttle it.

I was amazed to see the extents this subjectivism has gone in our ranks. At a meeting of the New York Industrial Board eight comrades got together to exchange reports on the state of the discussion in their respective areas. Six out of eight present expressed themselves in favor of dissolving the Communist Party in one way or another. Such arguments as: "We are bankrupt"; "We are a compromised Party"; "Marxism-Leninism has outlived its usefulness"; etc., were given. Only the representatives from longshore and maritime voiced strong opposition. Most of the State leadership was not present nor were other key industries.

Could it be an accident that such thinking has spread so far and wide in our Party? I don't think so. I believe this is the logic of the positions expressed in the Schrank Report, the Sam Coleman articles; the Montgomery dissertations on "National Pride" and the Chick Mason strategem. Countless other examples, (such as Russo; Blumberg; Joe Clark's positions) could be given; all pointing to an extremely rightist trend that has, under the guise of combatting the "left" danger and "pockets of left resistance," initiated a pendulum swing to the right.

What are the reasons for these constant shifts from left to right? I don't think there is one member that has not asked himself that question. In searching for an answer to this question I recall the problem that comes up in the steering of a vessel. Especially in rough waters, when the



wheelman gives the ship too much "wheel" the ship tends to require ever more wheel to the point where it becomes almost impossible to steer a straight course. That political instability has an explanation. It is to be found in the composition of our Party (in New York) and the ideology promulgated by its leadership. Let me elaborate.

Practically every Party in the world got its start from circles of revolutionary intellectuals, and middle class groupings who had the time, energy and means with which to learn of this science of *Marxism-Leninism*. These forces in history then proceeded to bring Marxism to the working class.

In the early stages of these Party's histories we see these forces in the leadership of their respective Communist Parties, but then a certain process takes place. The revolutionary intellectuals, by a combination of theory and practice become part of the working class, and in turn the best representatives sons of the workers emerge as heads of their respective Communist Parties.

To a large extent we are also undergoing such a process. Except that for a variety of reasons our Party has not completed that necessary turn in its course that will firmly root it in the working class. That I believe is the class source of our errors.

As long as we remain *predominantly* a Party composed of petty-bourgeois and middle class members, led predominantly by people without a base amongst the workers we will inevitably knock from pillar to post and reflect the instability and capitulationist tendency of the middle and petty-bourgeois class.

We need a program of, by and for the working class (revolutionary theory). We need people capable of carrying out that program into its practical everyday forms (revolutionary practice). Only the combination of these two essential elements produce results as verified by the histories of every Communist Party through-out the world. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin laid the groundwork many years ago and the correctness of their basic theories has been proven in life and we in America are no different from the working class



of other countries therefore these basic theories apply to us as well, as long as there are exploited and exploiters in our country.

### On Our Mistakes

It is asserted by both the Dennis and Schrank reports that our main errors in the last ten years have been of a left sectarian character. I would ask two questions of those who adhere to such a view.

1. If our last ten years have been marked by predominantly left sectarian errors—what were they "left" of? Since prior to 1946 we were in the mire of Browder's right opportunism.

2. In dealing with our last decades mistakes the sixty-four dollar question is "Where were you Comrade???" That most important question has been left unanswered by practically all.

My opinion is that the above two questions are very important in getting at the root of our problem. The first cannot be answered without taking issue with the idea that everything in the last ten years has been one big left error. The second is the heart of the matter.

The element of "self criticism" has been perverted to a situation in which the membership has been put on the carpet and the closest the leadership have come to self-criticizing themselves is by printing enlarged pictures of themselves in the discussion bulletins but not a word of what makes them tick so oddly, is given, by themselves.

### Some Lessons of Our Work In Maritime

In reviewing the critical period between 1947-50 in the Maritime Indus-

try many of us have noted that the same comrades who lectured us back in 1947 on "economism" and the need to "politicalize" the issue then are the same people who today write us off with one sentence (reports of Dennis, Schrank) as a good example of "left sectarianism."

At the time we layed aside many of our disagreements, in the interests of Party unity. If today that whole period is found to be one big error we too would bear responsibility, but it cannot honestly be said that the leadership in waterfront did not attempt to take into account the "realities of life."

We have taken note of the fact that it was the inconsistency and the top dealings with center forces in the unions by our national and state leadership, that cut the ground from under our waterfront section's ability to determine policy for the industry. Yes, we made mistakes, but to say that the mistakes were the cause of Curran going phoney or the reason for the breakup of the left center coalition in CIO verges not on self criticisms but on masochism. Our mistakes *facilitated* the enemy's ability to do a job on us but let us keep the record straight—we did defend the best interests of the maritime workers, it was not us who moved to the side of the shipowners and the State Department.

What then were our mistakes in Maritime? We made mistakes of both left and right character; for example, our inability to develop a proper retreat once the tables were turned is recognized as a left error. On many tactical questions we blundered badly in a leftist way. We also suffered from serious rightist errors which resulted in the formation of united front relationships inside the Communist Party. And objectively what was the situation in the Party. With the ousting of the left forces from the leadership in the unions, a whole new leadership in the Party had to be trained and thrown into battle practically overnight. Those of us in the leadership of the waterfront section today inherited a situation, with both good and bad aspects to it. We have tried to do our best, can those who helped steer us wrong now stand

judgement without seeing their major responsibility?

Or let us take the last period from 1951 to date. With the exception of a financial "piece-off" to conduct the work, we have not received one iota of political guidance, much less encouragement from our State leadership. I leave out the National leadership because since 1952 we have had no link with them on policy questions in Marine.

The only "political" guidance we have received (we have rejected it since 1953) was to the effect that all those forces screened out of the industry, should transfer out of the industry, should transfer out of the waterfront into whatever industry they earned their living at and leave behind a couple of people to keep touch with those who are still sailing we reject the view that says a man is washed up politically because he fought for the Party and got himself blacklisted.

I say that that denies the concept of a fight-back into the labor movement. The courts have ruled in favor of the screened seamen and it is not beyond the realm of possibility of defeating the blacklist in the industry.

Or take the mess that was created in our section by an investigation of the section that was conducted by the New York State leadership for over two years! Besides being conducted in a most unprincipled way causing many honest Party members to lose respect for the whole Party leadership, it served to tie our section up in a series of internal squabbles from which we are still suffering. The charges against our leadership were found to be without foundation, yet not one state leader has seen fit to come before the membership and square away the record!

These are just a few of the examples of our experiences, we know that any rank and file member could cite many more examples of such misrule and dishonesty.

### What Are the Changes Needed

No one is better qualified to spell out in detail the necessary changes for our Party than those rank and file members of our Party who have gone through the experiences of this most

difficult period. Yes, we must admit that the ruling class have made it even more difficult—but why do we have to help them?

### Eradicate the Cult of the Family

If we are ever to come out of the present state of affairs one thing has got to be eliminated and that is the "cult of the family." There is a conglomeration of Party leaders on all levels who have surrounded themselves with gracious admirers. These comrades are the perpetual full-timers who haven't worked a day in seventeen years, or more, and who have made careers of being "professional Revolutionists." They seldom express dissenting opinions but are the first to get up and throw bouquets at whatever report is on the floor for discussion. That family spreads from coast to coast and when they screw up in one area they are shifted to another and usually promoted to higher positions. Have they been elected by the membership? They are all things to all men. That nomad like tribe of people without any roots, who act alike, have the same background, support each other and seem to be in perpetual leadership must end!

We need people who think for themselves and stand on their own

merits, and not just during discussion periods when it is permissible to dissent.

### Eliminate Bureaucracy

Without a thorough re-organization of the section, county, state and national leadership, it will be almost impossible to make as quick a change as is necessary in this question. *What is needed is the immediate upgrading and elevation to positions of leadership of working class comrades who have following amongst masses, have a workable knowledge of Marxism and have stood fast in face of all the repression.* Every leading committee should be elected in a secret ballot with a clearly defined term of office, and duties to the organization. The practice of appointing people to responsible positions must be outlawed.

Unless some guarantees are made now for hearing the voice of the membership at the coming Convention we will not have fundamentally changed anything. *Security should not become a bar to membership participation at the coming Convention.* For that is the only guarantee that we will not emerge out of the Convention with a halfway measure, compromise that will lead to the liquidation of our Party.





# SOME CONCEPTIONS

By DON AMTER

"Theory becomes a material force as soon it has gripped the Masses."

—Marx

ARE THE American people interested in socialism? Sometimes I think we tried hard to see that interest or signs of it when it didn't exist. Sometimes we have tried to twist the facts to give us courage—to build enthusiasm for our tasks.

Some have pointed to the desires of students and other groups of inquirers to learn more about the Soviet Union and the views of Socialists. But this curiosity should not be confused with an active desire for socialism as the solution for problems in our country. There is good reason for such curiosity; socialism is a world wide power today and everyone hears of it constantly from all sides—it's in the headlines of current events. It is made an issue in so many occurrences in our own country. But there is no reason to believe an active desire for socialism exists among any important social grouping in our country today.

Some have pointed to the militancy of the American workers which has reached great heights, even pitched battles in defense of their interests. But we should not confuse such militant attitudes with radical attitudes.

Such militancy in the labor movement, the Negro peoples movement, etc., do not raise the concept of revolutionary change. Of course isolated examples can be found to refute this, but they remain isolated examples and play no role today. Even during the tremendous struggles of the '30s the vote for socialist groupings was small compared with the Debs vote of 1920.

I feel that an honest appraisal will show that the active desire for socialism in our country has decreased and the following is an attempt to search

out some of the reasons and suggest what they indicate for our party.

1. The workers and popular movements throughout the history of our country have been able to win substantial gains over the years, both economic and political.

2. Many socialist trends brought over to this country by European immigrants gradually died down under new conditions.

3. Relatively good economic conditions throughout the history of our country leading to a comparatively high standard of living. The fact that the theory of absolute impoverishment of the working class cannot be applied in our country.

## Unique Development of American Capitalism

Because of the special conditions under which American capitalism and the working class arose it was possible for the latter to win improvement in conditions far beyond that of the European workers. A whole series of historical factors made this possible, such as the revolutionary beginning of our country, the possibility of expanding over a whole continent, etc. The blood, sweat and tears of millions of Negro slaves helped lay the foundations for further economic advances.

In later years with the advance of mass production in industry, the trade unions grew and sharp class struggles wrung more concessions. This class struggle rose to a new high after the '29 crash and forced a whole series of measures which the New Deal exemplified.

All this means that the idea of revolutionary transformation of the economy (socialism) was not seen as necessary in order to make further gains. This was in contrast to the problem in most of the countries of Europe where there were powerful roadblocks to progress.

In countries such as Russia where the Czars ruled there were such absolute blocks in the way of social change. The Czar and his state power personified the enemy: the ruling classes who held sway for hundreds of years. Under such conditions it is easy to see how the concept of revolutionary change could become widespread. Marx saw Russia as ripe for revolution already back in the '70s. Socialist minded immigrants brought to our shores these concepts of class consciousness and revolutionary change.

The American people, on the other hand, consider 1776 as having been that breakthrough which destroyed roadblocks to progress. They have had no reason to feel the necessity for any further such revolutionary change. Nor do they now. They do not identify the government with the real enemy: monopoly capital. The Civil War had a revolutionary content—but it did not go beyond 1776 in its aims.

The socialist movement in this country was supported by succeeding waves of immigrants fleeing oppression in other countries. This explains many of the mechanical applications of old thinking to new conditions where it could not bear fruit. This explains why so many socialist trends among the national groups while clinging more tenaciously have also tended to dissipate.

This it seems to me, explains why so much of our literature reflecting itself in policies—always pitting revolutionary directions and demands against "reformist" positions have been considered way out in left field by the workers of this country.

## On the Law of Absolute Impoverishment of the Working Class

For close to twenty years, the war time and since—the working masses

of our country have been able to steadily improve their conditions. We can conjure up many arguments to try to explain it away, such as installment buying, easy credits, government guarantees of mortgages, profits, people going into hock, etc. Or we said the basis was being laid for a big crash. But there it is anyhow. People have been enjoying their refrigerators, cars and television sets all over the country. Some will be able to point out those sections of our people who earn less than \$2000. a year. What such arguments obscure is the fact that much larger sections of labor have been able to win round after round of wage increases to the point where in some struggles the wage issue was not even the central demand. The Negro people are not centering their struggles around economic questions. But on social and political issues: no segregation; the right to vote.

No one could tell the workers that their economic conditions have been seriously worsened over the years and expect to be taken seriously.

How then are we to understand Marx's writings on absolute impoverishment of the working class? Briefly, I feel that what Marx was saying is that capitalism tends to squeeze more and more out of the workers. In Marx's day the main way to increase profits was to increase the direct exploitation of the worker. But with modern mass production methods and machinery which was undreamed of in Marx's time, technology becomes the main method of increasing profits. One outgrowth of this is the great increase in the skilled and semi-skilled workers who generally have a higher standard of living.

Further this tendency to squeeze more profits from the workers is meeting increased resistance from an organized and educated working class. So while the tendency to absolute impoverishment of the working class exists, other forces tend to operate in an opposite direction, counteracting it.

Marx was also referring to the general consequences of the capitalist system, such as unemployment, crises and wars. Since Marx's time we must include imperialist exploitation of

the colonial countries. Raised in this way it has application to us. But it does not refute the foregoing.

I would conclude from this that it is incorrect to talk about absolute impoverishment of the American people and still more incorrect to base our political line or thinking on such an approach.

I am not saying that the American people are completely satisfied. Far from it. But we misconstrued the cynicisms and legitimate anger of the people over their real problems as a willingness to accept *basic change*. This was unfounded. The overwhelming majority still feel that "our way" is better than any other in the world. This comes from mixed feelings, patriotism, the economic standards of this country, the extent of personal freedom and the effects of big business propaganda against communism. I conclude from the foregoing that the American people are ready to fight for economic and social improvements but firmly believe it can be done within the present political system.

## The Big Lie

The effects of the propaganda in this country must not be minimized. The big lie in America has been a 37 year campaign organized from the top, starting with the Palmer raids in 1919, carried out by all avenues of ideas—a lie unparalleled in history.

Do the American people believe this propaganda against communism? They have been sold a real snow job on it. Even though you will find a certain healthy skepticism about what they read, they tend to accept that "where there is smoke, there is fire." In other words the reasoning goes something like this: "even if only a part of what they say is true, communism must still be a bad system."

Unfortunately the difficulties, failings and mistakes made in socialist lands have been used to the hilt by the reactionaries and this has only helped to reinforce the distrust of communism. So have our own errors.

Sooner or later, of course, these false and mistaken beliefs about communism will have to go. But I do not think that for a long time to come it will be possible to dispel them with

experiences within this country. Because the type of experience necessary to bring this about can only take place when the American people are *already* preparing for socialism!

Some of the false beliefs will be dispelled by the growth and development of communism on a world scale. But we cannot wait for that day. There is a lot of socialist work to be done before that.

I conclude from this that we must find ways of developing concepts of socialism in this country that do not necessarily collide head on with the anti-communist prejudices prevalent in our country.

## An American Concept of Socialism

Does this mean that the concept of socialism plays no role in our country? In my shop even conservative thinking workers I have talked to admit that if there was another big depression "the country might go communist." Not that they wanted it. Even now workers generally recognize that "under communism workers are never out of work." But their rejection of communism is on other grounds—"no freedom." They have yet to see the possibility of guaranteed security without the loss of personal freedom. I have heard a shopmate say the original idea of communism was good but not what has been done with it.

The impact of socialist ideas here as elsewhere in the industrialized parts of the world is indelibly imprinted. As Marx said: "all the powers have entered into an alliance to exorcise this specter" (communism). This attempt to stigmatize communism has itself helped to create an interest in it and in any case there is not a man or woman in the country not familiar with the idea of communism, twisted though it might be. However most of this thinking is quite distant from the conditions and problems around which our peoples struggles have to move.

But there is a more direct channel through which socialist ideas are developing. As Marx pointed out, the growing socialization of the means of production and therefore actually all of society, inevitably generate in the



realm of ideas the concept of socialization or socialism. These ideas and concepts are reflections of the conditions in which our people live.

The complex growth of industries, cities, a maze of inter-relationships and people's needs has brought about many forms of centralized controls, functions and measures taken over by the government.

Some of these measures have been in the interests of capital and property. But also many have been won by the workers, farmers, Negro people and middle classes. For this reason these reforms have inevitably gone hand in hand with centralization. I am thinking of such government-run things as TVA, public schools, hospitals, libraries, public housing, and all the popular measures of the New Deal period which have become permanent features of our country.

#### The Trend Toward Centralization

I feel we have grossly underestimated the importance of these measures and trends toward centralized functions and controls. We tended to say that this only served the purpose of bolstering capitalism. But Marx made the point that growing socialization of industry *even in the hands of the capitalists* ripened conditions for the complete socialization that must ultimately follow. This complete socialization of course, means the transfer of social production to society. Naturally the capitalist class can be expected to use all the means at its command to try to prevent this. But right now I am concerned with the effect of these increasing controls and centralized functions on the *ideology* of the American people. The high degree of centralization in our social and political life is a reflection of the high degree of socialization of the means of production. This is reflected in science fiction literature which projecting into the future, almost always sees all of society and the economy as publicly run. Even Eisenhower has been forced to campaign on the basis of declaring himself the inheritor and continuator of New Deal institutions!

In an earlier day Dr. DuBois was said to have held that the introduc-



tion of street lights in Harlem was a step toward socialism. But itself street lights are pretty far from socialism.

But how many of us realize the tremendous network of public controls and services that run through every aspect of the life of our country! The pure foods act and inspection which have reduced food poisoning to a minimum. The medical controls over doctors, dentists, hospitals, medications, ect. The licensing requirements for a thousand different professions affecting public services.

Industry itself—the base of capitalism—is subject to fire inspection, safety inspection, health inspection, neighborhood zoning, labor inspections and in many cases even their products have to be inspected! And since the Wagner labor relations law we have regulations concerning the rights of workers and even to a certain extent governing wages, hours, holidays and working conditions.

In the building construction field everything has regulations from the steel beam in the foundation to the light switch on the wall. Public places have a maze of regulations to follow for the safety of the public. A modern city can't exist today without an incredible degree of government controls.

Please bear in mind that I am not singing the glories of free enterprise! Not all these things are carried out in the interests of the people. But let a crowded dance hall burn down or a shipment of bad milk get distributed or a mine disaster strike and a public outcry demands action AND A TIGHTENING UP OF CONTROLS.

#### The Concept of Socialism

All these things are not socialism. But an American concept of socialism must grow out of an extension of this trend. Let an emergency strike, a flood or disaster—the government is expected to step in and take over. And the needs of the community so stricken take precedence over all. In emergencies the American people already *accept* and *expect* this. In the polio snafu of last year Eisenhower was forced to sack cabinet member Oveta Culp Hobby—a backhanded way of admitting that the government has a responsibility for the health of the people of the nation.

These are all steps in the recognition that central controls and a planned economy are necessary for the welfare of the people. There is no major country today where some elements of planned economy is not an accepted practice of government. Even the Republicans are in the swim on this. These steps if carried far enough lead to a qualitative difference; some form of nationalization. Of course the monopolists will stop before this. But the people will be quick to grasp the necessity of this qualitative step in an emergency situation—that is, where the welfare of the majority of the people of the country is at stake. In some bourgeois countries including former colonial areas this practice has already been accepted. **THE AMERICAN PEOPLE MAY ACCEPT SUCH A PATH EVEN BEFORE THEY ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM!**

Lest I be accused of day dreaming I want to cite an experience that corroborated this. In a discussion with a Catholic worker in my shop I led him along the above line of reasoning. In less than ten minutes he changed his position from a belief that the future will be based on private property to seeing the likelihood of centrally run and publicly owned industry.

What conclusions do I draw from this? It seems to me that we must change emphasis of our propaganda for socialism to a simple statement on the **DIRECTION** in which the economic life of our country is mov-

ing. That is, change our propaganda from a concept of something radically new and rupturing with the past, to a view of a process already developing and that must be carried to its logical conclusion. We must further these existing rudimentary ideas that flow in the direction of socialism.

#### Our Wrong Concepts and the Classics

Some of our wrong concepts flowed from a mis-reading of the classics. Many of these have already been discussed. I would like to raise a few I think are important for us.

Why, for instance, have we so often in the past posed reformism against revolutionary policies? The real enemy is capital.

Marx and Engels, as founders of scientific socialism had to show, from a long range historical viewpoint that only socialism could solve the contradictions of capitalism. Reforms could not. Therefore their task was to polemicize against reforms and for socialism. Prior to the existence of socialism anywhere in the world it was necessary to focus on this distinction.

In Lenin's time, the masses took the revolutionary path. Many generations of oppression built up to the inevitable explosion. The task of Lenin and the Bolsheviks was not to unleash this force but to guide it clear of dangers. The *main enemy* was already clear. Therefore the central task was to warn against the misleaders—the right wing Social Democrats. Once again in this situation it was necessary to polemicize against reformism.

This became crystallized into a general principle in Stalin's Foundations of Leninism. (P. 90)

By now this is generally recognized to be outdated and incorrect for the present relation of forces. But the concept persists in a grudging and super critical attitude toward reforms which the American people have won, toward the possibility of their winning more substantial reforms and toward those who lead the fight for them.

As for reforms themselves, I see three reasons why they are valuable levers in the class struggle. First it buffers the masses against some of the

worst effects of the capitalist system. Second, the masses learn how to organize their struggles in the process of winning them. Third, the inevitable *link* between these reforms and the centralized government operation or supervision of them develops toward the concept of complete centralized control and operation of economic life—that is, socialism.

#### Socialism

Take the concept of socialism itself. Sometimes in the past we talked and wrote about socialism as if it were a physical thing you could pick up and turn around in your hand. A country is like a box. You took capitalism out and put socialism in. Either a country was socialist or it was not. The two states of being were mutually exclusive.

This kind of thinking led some of us to mistaken notions about things that occurred in the Soviet Union. Everything that happened there must be the socialist way. Now we have seen weaknesses which were not the socialist way. But then what were they? Were they carry-overs from the capitalist system? But why only the capitalist system? Russia was semi-feudal when the revolution took place. What ever it was it shows that on a base of a socialist economy contradictory elements of social development *can* take place. In other words socialism is only another stage of human development in which problems must be solved. An important step—but nevertheless one in which social development in the right direction is not immediately inevitable. The guarantee is that the same human resources which brought about the social change in the first place will continue to fight for it.

Engels said: "In the beginning, however, each social revolution will have to take things as it finds them and do its best to get rid of the most crying evils with the means at its disposal. (Housing Question P. 83)

Even if only in a negative way, this indicates that some of us had rather rigid beliefs as to the monolithic way in which socialism must develop. The basic thing that distinguishes socialism is that it removes the economic contradiction inherent in capitalism

which prevents any great social and economic advance.

If we strip away preconceived notions it seems to me the economic essence of socialism could be applied to our country with the following concept: the people should democratically run the government and the government should democratically run the economy—at least the biggest sectors of it, in the beginning. In the depression of the thirties I feel we could have made powerful use of the idea of the government taking over industries when the owners shut down and refused to run them. Here is an idea that could have caught on like wildfire!

#### Democracy and the State

Another theoretical proposition that needs thought is the state and democracy. A basic Marxist theory is that the state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class. And since state power is exercised thru repressive organs of force, this force must be met and overcome in the transition to socialism.

In recent years we have been working on the concept of peaceful transition to socialism. Max Weiss, writing on the path to socialism in our country poses it as coming about through the pulling of the fangs of the ruling class and preventing them from striking back. I agree with this way of posing it.

But how does this square with Marxist teachings on the state?

I think the problem to be dug into is the relation between democracy and the state. Lenin, in State and Revolution says "We must also note that Engels quite definitely regards universal suffrage as a means of bourgeois domination." ". . . the wrong idea that universal suffrage is really capable of expressing the will of the majority of toilers and of assuring its realization." (p. 14)

Here two propositions are stated as absolutes and we have generally gone along with them. But a little reflection on history will show that this is not so today.

Bourgeois democracy came into being in the struggles against the feudal state powers which were ab-



solite. In order to win a mass following the bourgeoisie had to raise slogans and make concessions. It is true they made as few concessions as they could get away with. But as the modern workingclass grew and made greater demands, economic and political, along with other oppressed sections of the people this posed a dilemma for the bourgeoisie. Either to give in all along the line and face the loss of their power or strike back in the form of fascism. But how can they strike back?

In some countries where the traditions of democracy reached a high degree of development the relations of class forces is altered to the degree where the bourgeoisie had not moved in that direction. I am thinking of such countries as England, Norway and Sweden, Mexico and Denmark.

On the other hand in countries where a more reactionary ruling class has prevented strong traditions and practices of democracy from developing, the ruling class strikes back in the form of fascism.

Therefore the extent of democracy does seriously restrict the ability of the ruling class to impose its will.

And in a country where fascism is set to strike there would be no perspective of any successful resistance unless we see it through democratic processes. That was the meaning of the peoples front in France.

A peoples front government cannot be considered an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie! The repressive organs of state power are not controlled by the capitalist class directly but are in the hands of the government. This implies the possibility that a peoples coalition government in this country where the democratic traditions and processes are highly developed can bridle and neutralize these repressive organs. This is the basis for the peaceful, parliamentary path to socialism.

But we can't see this unless we see how a powerful democratic tradition can alter our concept of state power today.

It is necessary for us to focus our attention not on the general truth that the state is an instrument of the class in power but on what happens as society approaches a transition!

What can happen when the power of the ruling class is approached in strength by that of a new class? Engels in the Housing Question discusses what happens when an equilibrium is reached between the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And that "real governmental authority lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials."

Under modern conditions where an educated and organized working class has a strength undreamed of in Engel's time, suffrage means infinitely more than just the right to vote. Today workers can be run for office, can elect officials and reach not just an equilibrium but together with their allies, an overwhelming electoral and therefore legal strength over the bourgeoisie! Governmental authority in the hands of such a peoples coalition, when the conditions are ripe for it would be an irresistible force—and all within the framework of the bourgeois state!

#### How This Affects Our Party

Just as the concept of revolutionary change based on the old European conditions is unwarranted in our circumstances, so a party based on a model Lenin developed for that revolutionary situation is incorrect for us.

The Russian Communist Party forged its unity between the 1905 revolution and the First World War, and before that war was over it had already achieved power. All that in the space of about twelve years! Our party has based itself on the same model for 37 years and there are no indications of a revolutionary transformation in the near future. For many other countries where the problems are a little closer to that in Czarist Russia, the principles of the party of the new type may apply. It is conceivably possible somewhere in the future it could apply to our country. But to pattern our organization, tactics, etc., on a future that was over half a century away in 1919 was utopian to say the least. Utopian because it tended to squeeze Marxist

thinking, activities and organizational forms into the dimensions of the distant (and not even certain) future.

To the extent that this tendency became dominant our contacts with the masses were weakened!

This tendency reflected itself in a false concept of the vanguard role. We led—with theoretically precise positions and explanations of everything—always far in advance of the masses. We are now beginning to see that some of our positions and theoretical explanations have been wrong. But even if they had been "right" there were times when it would have been better to compromise on a not so "right" basis.

I believe this is the crux of the matter in our failure to learn the lessons of the united front. On the one hand, there were the issues and struggles around which the workers, farmers, the Negro people were rallying; on the other hand a "correct" Marxist position, left centers and—no mass following!

In the last few years since the Draft Program our party has begun to take steps to overcome the resulting isolation.

This same tendency I mentioned above was also reflected in the tightly knit organizational forms and functions our party used which made maximum demands on members but a minimum of flexible questioning discussion on ideological questions.

What is indicated it seems to me, is a broader more flexible party run by parliamentary manner usual in an American working class organization and with less centralized authority. Real changes are necessary in our party's form and mode of existence.

Lenin said: We can and must begin to build up socialism not with the fantastic human material created by our imagination but with the material bequeathed us by capitalism. (*Left Wing Communism*, p. 34.)

The American people have developed many loose, open organizations which nevertheless play a powerful role. Right now I am thinking of the growing role of the NAACP in recent years. This is so in spite of the fact that in some sections of the south I

know this organization is illegalized. This has not caused it to move toward a tight-knit "semi-military" form of organization.

The masses in Czarist Russia backed Bolshevism but knew little of scientific socialism. In our country changes must be accepted by wide masses of the people. This is so because of the powerful democratic tradition backed by a high level of education and the wide dissemination of ideas.

An organization of scientific socialism in this period in our country, in my opinion cannot be based on a concept of winning elections and political power, that is, a party. Rather it must be a gathering place for socialist ideas while it lends the force of its membership to the popular struggles.

This loose organizational form (I leave it to others to spell it out) may make for less efficiency but winning a mass following is a thousand times more important than efficiency.

Socialism cannot advance in this country by countering the American democratic traditions of looseness and the right to dissent. On the contrary it can only advance by utilizing it, by recognizing that it has been a native instrument in the class struggle. By recognizing that underneath apparent disorganization powerful mass forces can be at work as for instance expressed themselves in the movement against McCarthy and the protest to our being involved in war with China around Quemoy and Matsu.

When the time comes that a party of scientific socialism can play a leading role in our country I am confident that American Marxists will be able to make those organizational adjustments necessary to carry out its historic role; participating in the socialist reorganization of society.

To those who say there is no outlook for a mass organization of socialism in the near future, I would answer that therefore there is even less outlook for the party of the new type with its advanced concept and structure. We cannot skip the necessary stages in the development of socialist consciousness or its organizational forms anymore than we can skip the stages of history.

# SOME THOUGHT CAN SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS

By M. G.

**M**ARXISM-LENINISM is the science of Socialists. It clearly and accurately traces the development of society and points out the self-interest of the working class in its development and struggle for Socialism. Marx and Lenin would be the first to reject dogmatism and doctrinairism immediately upon its detection.

The great contribution of Lenin to this science is his recognition that the 20th Century world was no longer the same as in the days when Marx wrote. World capitalism had embarked into an era of Imperialism such as could not have been envisioned by Marx. Lenin therefore developed his thinking on imperialism not as a revision of Marxism but as an added body of laws of this science befitting the new period in the development of society. This was necessary or else it would have been impossible for 20th Century Socialists to know how to combat the bourgeoisie. The correct application of Marxism-Leninism by many Communist Parties under favorable objective conditions brought about the present world division. One third of the world lives under governments that are oriented toward building socialism. Roughly 1/3 of the world constitutes newly established states who were formerly known as the colonials. These states too, due to the nature of the historic period in which they emerged are driven in the direction of socialism. The balance of the world still is under the yoke of the imperialists.

A quick glance at our present day world reveals immediately the changed world conditions as compared to both Marx's and Lenin's days. What is missing is the emergence of a new single great social scientist who can in this period do what Lenin did 50 years ago, namely develop the science of Marxism for the present complex period. The writer does not overlook

the fact that there are today powerful Communist movements in many countries of the world who have in their ranks many able Marxists. The recent revelations about Stalin, however, have sort of shaken the confidence of a great many people. In due time this confidence will be easily regained as Socialism advances and no doubt new additions and the further development of Marxism will be on the order of the day.

Marx and Lenin did not live in the period in which the world's two greatest powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., each possessed the atom and hydrogen bombs. They did not live in the period in which two great world wars were fought and many revolutionary struggles occurred. They did not and could not foresee this period when it is possible for the majority of the world's people to intervene successfully for the maintenance of a long period of peace. Obviously the thinking, the program, the approach and the tactics of Marxists in such a period cannot be rigidly the same as when the world was entering a period of wars and revolutions. The new situation requires new thinking, a new program, a different approach and the development of new tactics to meet changed world conditions. Does this mean a negation of Marxism-Leninism? On the contrary it means an extension of this science.

Can the American Communist Party, plagued by serious left-sectarianism, residing in the most powerful capitalist country, dispossessed from the ranks of the organized labor movement, make the change that will regain its status as the party of socialism in the ranks of the working class? To say that we can't is to admit



that we are a party of dogmatists, doctrinaires who have learned Marxism by heart and have never learned to apply Marxism to a specific condition.

### Serious Thought, Not Factional Struggle

To be sure, the present discussion in the party around the Draft Resolution is already revealing some serious weaknesses on the part of none other than the chairman of the Party, William Z. Foster, who represents a trend of thinking that can only stifle any future development of a vital and energetic Marxist movement in our country. The obstinate refusal to recognize the effect that the Party's errors had on its development is itself un-Marxian. The failure to recognize what kind of discussion is necessary in the ranks of the American Party today is to say the least tactless. This is not the 1920's. No one is ready to enter into a period of factional struggle that would in the end destroy the strongest Marxist group in America. Upon reading Foster's article in the October P.A., one gets the impression that what ails the Communist movement in America is simply the emergence of a few slick operators whom he dubs "the Rights." Drive these from the Party and all will be well. But all is not well and these so-called Rights have just lived through

together with the rest of the Party the most serious period of repression in the history of our country. Obviously these so-called Rights have the interest of the working class and its Marxist ideology at heart. What is needed is the most frank, democratic and serious discussion of ideas. Patience and tolerance toward one another can help arrive at sounder conclusions than all the name-calling that one can engender. Very many people both inside and outside the Party recognize and talk about the great need for changes in the American Marxist movement. Differences arise as to the degree of change and the speed with which some changes can be carried out.

### Don't Rush the Discussion

I think it would be a mistake for us to assume that at the coming Convention all the needed changes can be carried through and we will witness the emergence of a perfect Marxist organization that fits the bill. What is the rush? Haven't we rushed so many times before to make changes without coming up with the perfect fit? Fortunately we are living now in a period in which the objective conditions make it possible for Marxists in America to take a little longer to think out and debate various ideas. There are no long lines of American workers forming with application in hand to join whatever kind of Party

the convention decides upon. The important thing is to retain those who are now in the party and that cannot be done on the basis of a sharp factional struggle. It can be done only by accepting some changes now and holding out the prospect for additional changes in the future that would make it more possible to advance Socialist thinking in America.

Marx and Lenin would judge the Draft Resolution not by the same yardstick as does Foster. They would not turn to their books, rather they would look to the American scene in the context of the present world situation. I don't think that Lenin would get overexcited if the American Communist Party were to become a Marxist league even if his name were not attached to the title. The trouble with us is that we are rigid cultists rather than creative Marxists-Leninists.

The whole future of mankind depends upon sound Marxists. The constant and rapid growth of socialism everywhere and more particularly the growing ability of the Soviet Union to compete under peaceful conditions with the most advanced capitalist countries will no doubt help develop a lot of thinking and good will in the ranks of the American working class. Will American Marxists be ready to "make hay while the sun will shine? My guess, my hope, and my ambition is that they will!

We urge all clubs and committees to send their resolutions in to Party Voice. Please identify the club, section and county.

We will print a special State convention issue to include all resolutions that arise out of the discussion of the draft resolution. Resolutions must state what club or committee or commission has passed them, and by what vote.

The deadline for the submission of all resolutions for the State convention issue of PV is January 3, 1957.



The New York State Board strongly supports the current financial campaign of the Daily Worker, and urges all its readers, and all Party clubs and committees to organize financial support to enable the Daily Worker and Worker to continue publication, so needed in this great period of ferment and change in the Communist world movement.

# SITUATION AMONG OUR CADRE

By M. D.

## PART I

A serious situation as regards cadre is in process of development which we can ignore only at irreparable cost to our party. Comrade Foster in the concluding remarks in his book History of the Communist Party USA correctly characterizes the "creation of a solid, indestructible core of trained Marxist-Leninists as the most vital achievement of all" by our party. In our proper critical examination of everything and especially ourselves, this above all should not be underestimated. For this is not only the cadre of our party, it must form to begin with the basic core of the cadre for the broader mass party of socialism. What is happening to this cadre? What is its "state of mind"? This question requires a thorough-going examination. I here only want to make some observations based upon my personal considerations.

The present cadre, to varying degrees and on different levels has formed the leading core of the party for a considerable period of time. A good number for from ten to twenty years and a not inconsiderable number for even a longer period of time. It is a more tested, more mature cadre, richer in experiences than our party ever had. It is also an older, more tired, smaller group of leaders. It is moreover a leadership which is basically not being replenished. It more than anyone else reflects the strengths and weaknesses of our party. A good part of it, literally grew up, matured and developed as inner party leaders, although of these many originally entered our party as mass leaders, or played a role as mass leaders in their early days. The recent years placed the severest burden upon this cadre. It was called upon to suddenly fill posts of leadership for which it was not prepared under the most difficult conditions our party faced. A sizeable number left their homes and were separated from their families for a period of two to five

years. It seems to me a combination of pressures are at present simultaneously affecting a considerable portion of them.

a) *The problem of personal as well as political readaptation.*

The decrease in the size of our party, the dwindling in the role of left-led organizations, as well as the correct orientation of merging with the mainstream, requires a re-shifting as well as re-training of many of our leaders. The party no longer requires nor can afford as large a core of full-timers. The carrying out of the mass line of the party calls for a much larger group of our cadre directly participating in its implementation, testing and re-shaping at the point of production, especially in industry. To many this means a period and process of difficult readjustment personally as well as politically. It means learning a trade at a relatively late age. It means learning to work in a new way. More, it means our entire party and in the first place its leadership, learning to work (as it should have a long time ago) at a pace and in a way that makes it possible for workers and especially industrial workers to play a role as party leaders and live, play a role as party leaders without paying the price of isolation from their shop-workers and union brothers.

For a long time many of our party leaders sometimes for reasons beyond our control, more often as a result of sectarian concept of what party leaders should be like, lived an abnormal, untypical family life. The struggle against dogmatism and sectarianism, the greater consciousness of the need for finding an American path to socialism, the growing personal as well as political stock-taking of ourselves, has led to a greater awareness of ourselves as people, with the problems and needs of ordinary people. Added to this is the pent-up desire for normal, every-day living, the pressing problems of learning to make a living at a time when most workers have al-

ready passed that stage.

Merely noting these indicates the scope of readjustment. Under ordinary circumstances they would present us with serious problems of readjustment.

b) But, all this is taking place under anything but ordinary circumstances. In the first place while there is a general advance in struggling to maintain and retain democratic rights, the harassment, imprisonment, persecution of a considerable section of our cadre continues. Many are adjusting under the cloud of momentary imprisonment or constant threat of imprisonment. Moreover, the critical evaluation of our present isolated position and what brought us to it, has focussed a great deal of attention (most of it negative) on the role of party leadership.

The healthy, long-pent-up resentment and revolt against the bureaucratic, undemocratic sectarian methods of leadership, the holding to account for the errors in estimate that compounded our difficulties and objectively aided our enemies in isolating us, has released a torrential wave of criticism, in the first place directed at party leadership. The healthy core of this which must not be lost sight of despite all the excesses and extremes with which it appears, is the demand for *change more on the part of than in leadership on all levels.* It is a demand for a democratic, warm and comradesly relationship between our leaders and membership, it is a cry for a leadership that *listens* more and *tells* less, it is an insistence upon a leadership that *knows* America as it is in order to learn from it what it needs, is ready to do today, as well as the path to socialism it is ready to trod. But the essence, no matter how it may be distorted is *for not against leadership, for strong clear, convincing leadership—not "strong" in the old "here's the line—to it" sense, but one which makes one exclaim, "This is it."* It is a demand for leadership to *refresh itself and for it to be re-*



freshed with new blood. It is a demand that must be met.

However, while it is my opinion that this is the underlying demand in the present outburst "against leadership," it is not quite as simple as that. There are other complicating factors. The shocking revelations around Stalin, merging with the serious criticism of the weaknesses of leadership severely shook the confidence in the principle of leadership. That should be understandable, even if incorrect and harmful. The correct criticism of a system of leadership that relied too heavily upon "full time leadership" as well as the weaknesses of that leadership has tended to undermine the concept of full time leadership, to stress primarily its negative features and even throw it into disrepute. Rather than an objective examination of a system of leadership in the context of the kind of party we should be, in which the role of a full time leadership, its relationship to other forms of leadership and to the membership is considered, there has tended to be a sweeping, subjective, one-sided view of this question. All these factors are complicated and aggravated in a situation in which the very concept of a Marxist party in our country is undergoing critical re-examination. For the question of what kind of a cadre is needed is indissolubly linked with what kind of a party is needed. The cadre is not sure what it should be like because it is not yet fully clear and united on what the party should be like. That is why the posing of the dissolution of the party, feeding doubts as to the ability of the party to make the necessary changes disorients, not only our members, but our cadre, as well. If not checked, it can weaken their ties with our party, feed all sorts of moods of placing primary emphasis on personal needs and problems.

It seems to me the greatest concern and aid in the problems of re-adjustment both political and personal must be given in an organized and conscious fashion.

For it is not only a matter of personal readjustment—our entire party is in the process of readjustment, a vital aspect of which is what happens

to its invaluable cadre.

This is no appeal for a halt to or a blunting of the sharp criticism and even necessary removal or replacement of party leaders on all levels. The strongest leadership capable of themselves making and leading the party to bring about a vital change in our party is needed. But I think we would be precisely endangering our ability to do this if we failed to note and fight against certain defeatist moods that are disorienting our leading core as well as our members. That is why the frank and open placing of questions, sharp but comradesly discussion and debate, the united resolution of issues is so decisive.

One final question. There are those who confuse sectarianism with the spirit of dedication. We could make no more fatal mistake. One letter in the Party Voice inveighed against a party of "dedicated revolutionaries." It is one thing to eradicate concepts that view the party as a narrow, exclusive sect of professional or near-professional revolutionaries. It is quite another to eradicate the spirit of dedication, that is the essence of being a Communist. God help us if we do!

What is it that in the last analysis has made it possible for Communists to withstand the ordeal they have gone through, particularly of the last few years, if not a spirit of dedication, not in any religious or idealistic sense to an abstract ideal, but a spirit of dedication greater because it is dedicated not alone to a beautiful goal but a realizable one as well. What will motivate our party in the struggles ahead?

No movement in history of any class was able to achieve any of its aims without a mass spirit of dedication. The working class and people of our country, notwithstanding the widespread influence of "everyone

for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "dog eat dog" concepts, has been and is capable of such a spirit. It has also evolved the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all." It demonstrated it in its own way, not in the way or on the level of the Russian workers as we too often measure them by, in its militant strikes, its heroic and brotherly fight against hunger during the depression days. Certainly the inspiring struggle of the Negro people in the South for full freedom, reveals the true capacity of the Negro people.

It is not that the American people are incapable of a spirit of dedication and hence what is needed is a lifeless, purposeless amorphous movement. You tell any worker, you have as your aim so great and difficult a goal as socialism and eliminate the dedication, devotion, struggle, self-sacrifice, discipline that is required to achieve it and he will correctly view it all as a beautiful pipe-dream, of ineffectual dreamers. What the American workers and people have rejected in our party is its alienness, which has tended to feed and substantiate in their eyes the slanderous charge of foreign agent.

This has been cleverly used by big business to smear socialism as something foreign and subversive. The essence of our task today is to free both our party and its goals from such popular misconceptions and to do it in a way which at the same time maintains and strengthens our bonds of international solidarity with fraternal movements.

How to do it, while many things will have to be shed? We must never lose or allow anything to weaken its most priceless quality of all its spirit of dedication. On the contrary, rescued from unreal, alien and sectarian forms, attune with the spirit of our own class and nation—we must strive to spread it on a truly mass scale.



# PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, PEACEFUL COMPETITION AND PEACEFUL TRANSITION

By ALAN MAX

I  
MONOPOLY capitalism in the United States made its debut as a world force just as the first socialist state was coming into existence. When, almost three decades later, U.S. monopoly capitalism achieved top place among all the capitalist powers and surpassed in strength all previous aggregations of capital, an entire zone of socialist states—14 in all—was coming into existence.

This is the new fact of American capitalism in our time. It is the major fact that has faced the American Communist Party, whose own existence, not by mere coincidence, covers the same period.

Since capitalism and socialism are opposites, it might appear that they would be irreconcilable and lead to collision when they exist side by side in the same world.

But this is not the case. It is groupings of monopoly capitalism, when they exist side by side in a world without socialism, that are irreconcilable and eventually lead to war. Such was the world in 1914 in what Lenin described as the imperialist stage of monopoly capitalism, with all of the various groups driven by the same internal contradictions to limitless expansion and with all of them in varying and uneven stages of development. World War I was as inevitable as the crash of two locomotives heading for each other on the same track and with no brakes. Newly developed German imperialism was challenging the older British and French imperialism. The two latter were determined to strike down the upstart. It did not matter, therefore, whose arch-duke might be demolished by whose bomb.

In November of 1917, a country for the first time was wrenched out of the world capitalist system. In what had been the empire of the Czars, the first socialist society was established.

The vast majority of the people, the dispossessed, became the possessors. The minority, the possessors, were dispossessed. Despite the distorted development of a bureaucracy, despite the most serious violations of socialist democracy and legality, a society was built in which the productive forces and the relations of production were harmonized. This was done through the social ownership of the means of production. Anarchy of production under capitalism was replaced by planned production. An economic system was created which not only was not driven inexorably toward world-scale expansion and domination. The new system, for its development, would always require peace and never war.

By its very nature, therefore, this society would generate the conditions for peaceful coexistence between itself and the capitalist states.

These conditions included the character of the socialist system, the physical strength of that system, the peace policy of the system and the effects of socialism and its peace policy upon the colonial and semi-colonial countries and upon millions in the capitalist countries. With these conditions for peaceful coexistence generated by the Soviet Union itself, would merge at various stages the anti-monopoly forces brought into being by the workings and policies of monopoly capitalism.

The irreconcilable opposites were not socialism and capitalism in different states, but the economic domination drive of monopoly capitalism and the conditions making for peaceful coexistence.

As a matter of fact, these conditions making for peaceful coexistence inserted a new element in the relations among the various monopoly-capitalist states. There developed a tendency among these groups of monopolists to solve the contradictions among themselves by uniting against the socialist

state. At the same time, this tendency to unite against the Soviet Union ran smack up against the conditions making for coexistence.

The significance of the appearance of the first socialist state was dramatized by this fact: there was no force existing which was capable of preventing World War I; but the establishment of Soviet Russia was at the same time the means of taking one of the big powers out of the war, of arousing anti-war sentiment everywhere and of hastening the final peace.

It is true that this was followed by an invasion of the young socialist republic by 22 capitalist governments, including our own, in 1918. On the surface, this looked as if the existence of a socialist society was a new cause for war—if only to secure the extinction of the new type of society. But the defeat by 1920 of the interventionists and of the civil war which they organized, signaled the deeper effect of a socialist state upon world affairs: the creation of the conditions for coexistence, not the least of which was the ability of the socialist society to defend itself against seemingly overwhelming odds.

## WORLD WAR II

While rival imperialists at the beginning of the century drove relentlessly toward the collision that was World War I, the course toward World War II was quite different. The policy of collective security sponsored by the lone socialist state won the support of millions within the capitalist countries and came pretty close to preventing the war. Had there been still other socialist states at the time, there might have been no World War II at all! Unfortunately, a belt of socialist countries did not exist in the '30's. But it did in the late '40's and it does today!

When the war at last broke out,  
(Continued on page 18)



(Continued from page 15)

it was not—at least at the outset—between capitalist states and the socialist state, as many capitalist leaders had hoped. The war started as a war of the fascist-capitalist states upon the democratic-capitalist states. It is significant, too, that the United States, one of the interventionists of 1918, found itself 23 years later in the highest type of unity with the Soviet Union. This was the war-time alliance which submerged, although it could not eradicate, the very real contradictions between a monopoly-capitalist and a socialist state.

Although the two world wars were different in character, they had somewhat similar effects upon monopoly capitalism in our country. The inner contradictions of capitalism had propelled American capital onto the world arena in the form of participation in World War I. This participation, in turn, increased the strength of American capitalism and also its inner contradictions. But the close of the war also confronted monopoly capital with a new contradiction—between the drive for world economic domination and the conditions making for peaceful coexistence. World War II vastly increased the strength and inner contradictions and hence the economic ambitions of American capitalism. But the same war resulted in the vast expansion of the socialist sector of the world. The conditions for coexistence were generated on an unprecedented scale.

Compare the situation at the end of World War II with World War I. In 1918, the United States was only one of several leading powers—and not the first of them by any means—which organized the war of intervention against Soviet Russia. In 1945, of the capitalist powers, the United States was so far out in front that it did not even have to consult the others. In military and economic strength, the United States was probably greater than all the 22 interventionist countries of 1918 put together. But this time, there was no war of intervention against any of the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe! There was no war of intervention against the Chinese People's Republic after the success of its gigantic revolu-

tion! The intervention got no further than the 38th parallel in Korea and the island of Formosa-Taiwan.

## THE COLD WAR

It is inconceivable that in any other period so much military might could have been assembled, so many threats uttered, so many war plans actually plotted, as by the Pentagon and State Department after 1945, without the result being a world-wide holocaust.

But, then, in no other period of the world was a drive for economic domination so beset by contradictions that its every move eventually boomeranged.

When Wall Street insisted that the undeveloped and uncommitted nations line up with the "West" against the socialist countries, this momentarily created new threats to world peace. But at the same time, it aroused the peoples of these countries to the danger—from Wall Street!—to their peace and independence.

The Pentagon's monopoly of the A-bomb forced others to break the monopoly. The resulting Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb race between our country and the Soviet Union has created the danger of a cataclysm of inconceivable horror. But it has also helped create the conditions for abolishing the dread weapon altogether.

Korea ended up not in World War III but in the historic conference at Geneva. The Cold War did not become the Hot War long awaited by anti-Sovieters. If it created the danger of that war, it also generated the forces of its own undoing. The relaxation of the Cold War is not a passive matter. On the contrary, it is a sign that the conditions for coexistence are beginning to get the upper hand in their struggle with the drive of monopoly capitalism.

Hindsight makes it easier now to grasp the dialectics of the present period than at the height of the Cold War. The Soviet Union itself seems for several years to have underestimated the full possibilities in the situation and on more than one occasion met the Cold War of Washington with Cold War moves of its own—for example, when it too denounced neu-

tralism and insisted that everyone must take sides. After the death of Stalin, the Soviet government took a new look at some aspects of its foreign policy. By latching on to the contradictions in the Cold War, the Soviet Union managed to unfreeze it in a brief time and to an astonishing extent.

## COMMUNISTS IN THE PEACE FIGHT

American Communists, of course, were in no position to take bold diplomatic moves against the Cold War. Their job was to help arouse the American people to the dangers that lay in the Cold War, to stimulate a struggle against every step of Wall Street which, if unchecked, could mean war, and to work for the only solution to the tense situation: peaceful negotiations and a relaxation of the Cold War.

What the Communists did in this field was heroic, self-sacrificing and unquestionably had some immediate positive effects. On the other hand, if the party had had an understanding of the real character of the present era, the immediate effects of their effort would have been far more positive. And, even more important, it would have been possible to avoid those negative effects of the party's work at the time which isolated the party organization and its members and resulted in the critical situation it faces today.

During the war itself and under the impact of the war-time alliance and of the Teheran agreement, American Communists had a vision of a post-war world in which peaceful coexistence would triumph over the forces of disunity. It is no discredit to the Communists—then under the leadership of Earl Browder—that they had such a vision. Quite the contrary.

But Browder's view of the post-war world bordered on the visionary as against the scientific, upon the utopian as against the Marxist, upon the mystical as against the dialectical. He saw an Age of Reason. Sometimes, it is true, he downgraded it to the mere possibility of such an Age. In this Age of Reason, the inner contradictions of monopoly capitalism

would virtually disappear and the class struggle fade into the background.

It could be said that during the war American Communists saw post-war coexistence but did not see monopoly capital's drive to dominate the world, while after the war they saw the drive to dominate the world but did not see coexistence. But this would be over-simplified. In both periods the Communists failed to see that the post-war would see a new stage in the contradiction between the world-domination drive of monopoly capitalism and the conditions for coexistence—the new stage being the enormous, new strengthening of the conditions for coexistence. The same error was common to both periods although the approach in the two periods was from opposite directions.

The negative side of the Communists' work in the post-war period flowed from just this false understanding of the situation which viewed the war forces as ready to plunge the world into a cataclysm just as soon as they were strong enough.

It was said they could be stopped only if the peace forces became stronger than the war forces. But, it was added, when the war forces saw this happening they would strike even sooner in desperate adventurism. An Age of Reason, mistakenly predicted by Browder, was replaced by another mistaken concept, an Age of Madness.

Despite any current denials that World War III was viewed as imminent or inevitable, only such a conception could account for the party's work at the time.

This false conception was something like this: A united capitalist class and its lieutenants in all walks of life . . . it was implied . . . would sweep every organization of labor and the people, every intellectual, into an irresistible whirlpool of Cold War, hot wars and fascism. Even "weaker" members of the Communist Party would succumb—so what could be expected of everyone else? There was no longer, then, any basis for the old united front relations built up over the years with so much care and hard work in the labor move-

ment and elsewhere. Any planned retreats in order to maintain these relations were useless since the organizations of the people would have to be rebuilt on an entirely new basis before there could be any advances again.

These views provided a field day for every deep-seated and latent tendency toward self-isolation. The invaluable lessons of the 7th and last World Congress of the Communist International of 1935—the Congress of Dimitrov and the People's Front—were considered out-dated. Resurrected was the fatal philosophy of the 6th World Congress of 1926—Social-Democracy is akin to fascism and the most insidious form of social-democracy is Left social-democracy!

Of course the Cold War had negative effects upon various sections of the population. But what was not seen was that the contradictory process in which the Cold War was involved was laying the basis for a counter-action among the American people and, when the Cold War relaxed, for a new march forward in which, the Communist Party unfortunately would be left behind.

## WAR AND PEACE

The question of war and peace in our era can be summed up in the following schematic but, I believe, valid way:

- In an all-capitalist, capitalist-dominated world, war is inevitable (1914).

- In an all-socialist world, peace is inevitable (the future).

- In a socialist-capitalist world, war is no longer inevitable, although peace is not yet inevitable (the present).

It must be added that the existence of a socialist-capitalist world did not immediately make for the non-avoidability of war. This did not come about until the present post-war period. In the same way, the inevitability of peace will probably not have to wait until a socialist world actually exists. It will, in all likelihood, begin with some turning point of struggle in the present socialist-capitalist world—a point which, of course, has by no means been reached.

It is inconceivable that the conditions for coexistence should have such a sharp effect upon the world drive of American monopoly capitalism without at the same time affecting the workings of monopoly capitalism at home. It is true that at the present time the domestic effects of coexistence are less marked. But they are present just the same. They are growing and at a later stage will probably become dominant.

## II

Even when there was only one socialist state in the entire world, the effects upon the domestic affairs of our country were considerable. This was true even though American capitalism was playing only a small role on the world stage compared with its role today.

The most dramatic effect here of the existence of a socialist state many thousands of miles away, came with the economic crisis of 1929.

One of the first acts of President Franklin D. Roosevelt upon taking office in Jan. 1933, was to recognize the diplomatic existence of the Soviet Union after 15 years of its actual existence. It must be remembered that at this period the biggest capitalists were supporting the Roosevelt Administration and were not to break with it until sometime later when the low and most dangerous point of the crisis had been passed. Recognition of the Soviet Union was a very practical matter. American factories were idle, warehouses were glutted. There were virtually no buyers anywhere since this was a world capitalist crisis. Recognition of the Soviet Union, therefore, was a way to promote a customer.

## THE EFFECT OF THE SOVIET UNION

But recognition had vast implications. With it, the government of our country was officially acknowledging a fact of tremendous significance. This was that while practically the entire capitalist world was ravaged by economic crisis, in the one society organized on the basis of socialism, everyone had a job.

During the months of 1930, 1931



and 1932, this fact had already begun to burn deep in the minds of a large section of the 16,000,000 unemployed. It strengthened their insistence that from here on the federal government had to assume a brand new type of responsibility for the public welfare. When President William Green of the A.F. of L. tried to stop the Communist-led struggle for unemployment insurance by crying "Moscow importation!", this did not keep the struggle from being crowned with success. Nor did it discredit Moscow in the eyes of the American workers.

The New Deal movement, which had its start in the epic struggle against the suffering and anguish of unemployment, had a profound effect upon the course of American life. It was the most successful and most lasting of all the anti-monopoly reform movements since the start of the development of monopoly capitalism in the '70s.

Naturally the New Deal was brought into existence primarily by domestic factors—the worst crisis in the history of American capitalism, the counter-resistance evoked from almost all sections of the people, the formation of a coalition, including even sections of business, arrayed against the "Economic Royalists." But one would have to be blind to fail to see the effect exerted upon this movement by the existence of the first socialist country with its planned economy and full governmental responsibility for the well-being of the people.

Marked as this effect was at the time, however, it was only a portent of far greater developments still to come.

Fascism is the most concentrated and virulent form of monopoly capitalism's opposition not only to democracy but to peaceful coexistence as well. The ending of World War II, therefore, with its triumph over fascism and with the ushering in of an entire chain of socialist states, multiplied the conditions for coexistence many times. These conditions had existed only in a formative state from World War I to World War II. Now they suddenly reached maturity and the world would never be the same again.

## COMMUNISTS FIGHT AGAINST McCARTHYISM

It was inevitable, therefore, that the conditions for coexistence would have a new kind of effect here at home upon monopoly capitalism's drive against the rights and standards of the American people themselves.

Let me give some examples.

If the Cold War was the instrument for increasing the profits everywhere of America's newly strengthened capitalism, McCarthyism was given the assignment of doing the dirty work on the home front—to divide and weaken the workers and the rest of the people.

But the people abroad—with Joseph Goebbels fresh in their memory—looked upon the rise of McCarthyism here with fear and disgust. McCarthyism actually made it more difficult for Wall Street to pretend to the peoples abroad that American capital was penetrating their lands as a Good Samaritan and a friend of peace. The Cold War was set back and so, inevitably, was its domestic version—McCarthyism. I am not overlooking the fact that the coup de grace to Joe McCarthy was delivered by the American people themselves, as were also the main blows to the "ism" associated with his name. But it is unquestionable that the growing conditions for coexistence played an important part.

McCarthyism has been one of the darkest pages in America's history. The courage and dignity with which the Communist Party and its members stood up to the most savage of its attacks is one of the brighter pages in that history and played a considerable part in holding down the virus of fascism here. But the Communist Party cut down the effectiveness of its work on this front by some wrong concepts.

There was not only the initial error of seeing American imperialism of the 40's as a repetition of German imperialism of the '30s and of confusing the strength and flexibility of the former with the desperation of the latter. There was not only the underestimation of the powers of resistance of the democratic-traditioned American people which was decisive in

blocking McCarthyism. There was also an inability to foresee the international blows in the making against McCarthyism. In fact, the theory was advanced that where Wall Street imperialism might suffer setbacks abroad, it would "take it out" upon the Communists, the Negro people, and the working people here at home. (You just can't win, no matter what!) It was right to see that monopoly capitalism, set back in one place, seeks to break through somewhere else. But of even greater importance is the fact that monopoly capitalism, set back anywhere, is set back everywhere. This elementary proposition is crucial for the period that lies ahead, as we shall see when we come to consider the transition to socialism.

## THE NEGRO FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Another example of the domestic effects of coexistence is the issue of civil rights. It was not enough to see that the Cold War was a cover behind which the rights and standards of the Negro people here in the United States would be attacked. It was also necessary to see that Jim-crow at home would be an obstacle to the Cold War against the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The attempt to win them for an alliance against the Soviet Union, was hobbled by crimes of segregation back in the States. The people of Asia and Africa saw in the Soviet Union a multi-national state where once had stood the Czarist "prison-house of nations." And now they also had before them the inspiration of the Chinese people's Revolution.

Jim-crow at home actually proved to be a liability to Wall Street's ambitions abroad. One consequence, for example, was that the Negro people in their historic fight against school segregation in the South, received a powerful assist from the people of Asia and Africa. Not only did the party fail to see the possibility of such a major advance for the Negro people in the midst of the Cold War as the unanimous Supreme Court decision on desegregation. It failed to see, too, that the Cold War itself was objectively stimulating the very con-

ditions that would hasten this victory of the Negro people.

## PEACEFUL COMPETITION

Let us take a look, not at the future, but at some of its various possibilities.

1. If and when the struggle to end the Cold War is successful, coexistence will gradually advance to a new form: peaceful economic competition.

The new leaders of the Soviet Union have already called for such a competition between socialism and capitalism to see which can better assist the undeveloped countries and raise higher the living standards of their own people. Specifically, this would mean a contest between the leading socialist and the leading capitalist country.

A contest like this should be a walk-away for our own country. With our much bigger productive plant, larger skilled working force and higher productivity, it should not be hard for us to excel both absolutely and percentage-wise in providing our people with new housing, schools, pensions, wage increases, shorter hours, longer vacations, medical care, etc.

Walter Reuther says "science and technology have given us the tools of abundance that will make it possible in the next 12 years to double the living standards of every American."

But the leaders of our country have not jumped at the proposal for peaceful economic competition with the Soviet Union in raising living standards. It is true that they have found it necessary to begin to compete on aid to undeveloped countries, at least in the case of India. But when it comes to competing on raising living standards here at home, most government leaders are strangely silent.

Monopoly capitalism has no objection to an arms race. Quite the contrary. But a race to improve the living standards of the people and assist the undeveloped lands does not square with that insatiable hunger for the highest possible profits. Monopoly profits reach their maximum through exploiting, rather than as-

sisting the undeveloped regions, through increasing, rather than narrowing the gap between the take of the monopolies and the take-home of the millions whose productive labor creates both the take and the take-home.

The "tools of abundance" of which Reuther speaks, require, if they are to accomplish their utmost, a system of abundance. A profit system, however, is not a system of abundance. When abundance and profits conflict with one another, scarcity will sometimes replace abundance in order to maintain the rate of profit.

But if a union contract can be imposed on an anti-union monopoly, peaceful economic competition for higher living standards can be imposed too; of course, the anti-union corporation will overlook no opportunity to sabotage or even break the contract with the union. Likewise, the imposition of peaceful economic competition in the standard of living will be a continuing struggle waged against the monopolists.

2. In this struggle, it is not unlikely that non-monopoly sections of capital will break with the resistance of the monopolies and that the unity of the monopolies will be shaken. The new opportunities for trade abroad and social welfare construction at home—even though at less than the monopoly rate of profit—may prove a God-send to those sections of business which would otherwise face extinction in the economic war being continuously waged by the monopolists against them too.

## END POVERTY

3. I wrote above that peaceful competition in living standards will come with the end of the Cold War. Actually, it is more likely to begin before the Cold War ends and to help hasten that end, especially since a big obstacle to peaceful competition is the swollen arms budget.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson call for ending poverty in America. When the former First Lady urged the Democratic Convention of '56 to call for a program lifting to "the \$2,000-a-year mark those families who now live below that level and which comprise 30,000,000

people, she added that "this would be the best answer to communism." This evidently is Mrs. Roosevelt's way of proposing economic competition—or of recognizing that a challenge is being presented to our country which cannot be evaded.

Whether or not the wiping out of poverty for 30,000,000 Americans will "answer" communism, it will certainly be the best answer to the hardships and privations of this considerable section of our people.

The hardship itself provides the main impetus for any program to end this poverty—the hardship of 30,000,000 people and the depressing effect of their standards upon the standards of millions in the next higher brackets. But while such a program springs from the needs of the people and will have to be fought for by the people, a new dimension is added to that struggle by coexistence and peaceful competition.

But I hear voices saying: "What, end poverty under capitalism? We must not spread illusions. The most we can call for is to 'lessen' or 'alleviate' poverty so long as capitalism exists."

When Mrs. Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson call for an end to the poverty of 30,000,000, let the monopolists claim it is impossible. But let the Communists be the first to insist it not only can, but must be done!

As a matter of fact, lifting 12,000,000 families up to the \$2,000 a year level, is a small thing for a country as rich as ours. It is also a practical matter. Even if the entire job had to be done through federal assistance, it would amount to about \$9,000,000,000 a year—or only 20 per cent of the present arms budget. The last fact, moreover, emphasizes the direct relation between ending the Cold War arms race and promoting peaceful economic competition.

Western economists predict that Soviet production will equal American production by 1970, although equal per capita production would not be reached until some time later because of the larger Soviet population. If Mrs. Roosevelt already sees in the abolition of poverty an "answer to Communism," it is easy to picture the weight of her argument



as, with each day, 1970 draws nearer.

Rising standards in the lands of socialism will provide irrefutable arguments for the fight to end this poverty. While no such struggle against the monopolies was ever won by argument alone, these arguments will help enlist allies for the struggle from other sections of the population not so immediately involved.

Socialist-capitalist competition, in fact, may provide the margin which would mean the difference between victory and defeat in a struggle against poverty which otherwise might be highly doubtful, to say the least.

#### ANTI-DEPRESSION STRUGGLES

4. In an age of atomic energy and automation and peaceful competition, let us not speak with too much finality of just what cannot be accomplished within the limits of capitalism. Let us insist, of course, that nothing can be done without a struggle against the monopolists and not through a "partnership" with them, as Reuther suggests on occasion. One need only think of the struggle required by the most powerful unions to get a few cents increase each year to try to keep up with living costs. Let us insist, moreover, that the bigger the goal, the more massive an anti-monopoly struggle will be necessary. If any particular struggle carries the American people through the boundaries of capitalism and into socialism, this will not be either surprising or painful to Marxists.

The more ambitious the goals which the working class sets for itself in the coming period, the more important the part which peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism will play in that struggle. Of these goals, the most ambitious is labor's determination to prevent another serious depression and economic crisis.

We know that the laws of monopoly capitalism lead to depression and to crisis. On the other hand, the government has been taking measures for several years—particularly through the arms program—to prevent a crisis. It has a whole series of plans in readiness to meet another depression. These plans have been drawn up in part un-

der the pressure of labor and in part by business itself, which fears the political effects of another 1929 in a new period where a considerable part of the world will be socialist.

All such plans are bound to modify another depression to some extent, although exactly to what degree, we cannot be certain. To the extent that the plans are shaped by the monopolists, their main purpose will be to hold up the rate of profit and put the "carrying costs" of the depression upon the working people in the form of reduced living standards. This would only aggravate the situation in the long run.

On the other hand, to the extent that the anti-depression program is shaped by labor and is carried through at the expense of profits, it is bound to have considerable effect, although again we cannot now say how much. One thing is certain: it will meet with the strongest resistance from the monopolists.

#### CLOSED FACTORIES

The monopolists might even attempt to close down their factories. But this time, if they attempted to close down the factories in order to sabotage labor's anti-depression program, or—and this cannot be excluded—because crisis conditions got out of hand despite all counter-measures, the workingclass would undoubtedly insist on the most drastic steps—such as that the government take from the monopolists the power to close down factories. If a people's government were in power, the government itself would be likely to take the initiative in moving against the monopolists. With production moving ahead in the socialist zone of the world, support, which otherwise might be absent, would roll up behind a program to move against the monopolists—particularly if in the preceding period peaceful economic competition had been in progress. In preventing the corporations from closing down their factories, the workingclass and its allies would be nearing the limits of the capitalist system and would be setting the stage for transitional steps to socialism.

5. The question rises: if the so-

cialist states start outdistancing our own country in living standards before peaceful competition has gotten under way, then what happens—will American capital of its own accord try to catch up and overtake?

In the first place, it can be expected that the American workers will do their utmost to see that our living standards continue to surpass all others—certainly that will be the aim of American Marxists and they will not be alone. But if our country lags behind, then what? It is possible in that case that three tendencies would be found among the capitalists and their representatives. One would be to make some concessions and try to make up for the remaining gap by a new spurt of anti-socialist propaganda. A second would be to attempt to forestall the action of the masses by a wave of repression. The third and probably weakest tendency would be engage in all-out competition to raise living standards. It would be up to the workers to force the third tendency to be the major one.

#### HIGHER SIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

Outlined here are merely some possibilities for the future—not blue prints. But even if they are only possibilities they show the likely trend of the anti-monopoly struggle in the United States in the period ahead. The people will be setting their sights higher in this coming period than at any time in the 80-year old struggle against the monopolies. Just as the Negro people have set themselves the goal of "Free by '63," the working people are also taking on big projects, such as to make automation and atomic energy boons instead of menaces; to end the poverty of the below-\$2,000-a-year families and to raise the standards of everyone else; to turn the farm surpluses from a threat into a source of relief for the hungry anywhere; and to fight off another major depression.

This will be the economic content of the anti-monopoly struggle in the period ahead, whose political form will be a democratic coalition and a new realignment.

If the goals will be greater than ever before, it will be because of the widening gap between living standards and the almost astronomical profits (in 1955, for example, General Motors handed out \$90,000,000 in bonuses to executives—enough for a 10-cent an hour increase for every GM worker.) Another reason will be because the best defense against the anti-labor drive of the monopolies, is to take the offensive.

But there are also reasons that are completely new and which spring from the very character of the present period.

On the one hand, there is the fact of the incredible technological revolution now on its way in American industry. It is a sign of the times that whereas the AFL leaders in 1929 were attacking the demand for unemployment insurance, today an AFL-CIO economist says that to keep automation from being a curse instead of a blessing, purchasing power must be kept up and hours shortened. Among the proposed measures are a full year's leave of absence WITH PAY for veteran employes after a specified number of years of service! Thus the very strength of the monopolies is forcing the labor movement to consider counter-measures never before dreamed of.

On the other hand, these new goals are being advanced because there is at hand the power to achieve them. There is, in the first place, the unprecedented strength and unity of the labor movement. And to this must be added the factor which, as time goes on, will become ever more crucial; the ascendancy of the conditions making for peaceful coexistence and the replacing of the Cold War with peaceful economic competition between socialism and capitalism to raise the living standards of the people.

It is in just this kind of future for our country that is rooted the definite and very real possibility of the peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism.

#### III

The possibility of peaceful transition to socialism in the United States looms as the climax of an extended period ahead. This period would be featured by greater struggles than ever before against the monopolists, by the winning of considerable gains by the workingclass and its allies, by the strengthening of their organizations and their political power; by the expanding of the democratic processes. And, as we have seen, this would all take place, if the struggle to end the cold war succeeds, within a world marked by peaceful coexistence and by peaceful economic competition.

The other side of the picture would be the weakening of the power of the monopolists. Peaceful competition would strengthen the relative position of the people socially and politically against the monopolists, even though extended East-West trade, for example, would be profitable for all parties to the transaction. Peaceful competition would strengthen the national welfare of the American people, the national interests of our country and therefore our country itself. While a policy of peaceful economic competition would help many non-monopoly sections of American capital, such a policy could be adopted only in struggle with the trusts and the big banks.

To speak of peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism at a moment when the Dixiecrats use force and violence to rob the Negro people in the South of their constitutional right to vote, may sound unreal. Actually, the present struggle of the Southern Negroes is a part of the struggle for the conditions in which peaceful transition would be possible.

It is true that the struggle in the South reveals that an extended period of time will still have to elapse before any transition to socialism. It also reveals that only by the broadest kind of participation in the most vigorous kind of struggles—and in a whole series of them—will the conditions for the peaceful transition be brought about. On the other hand,

such struggles as in the South today, if successful, will strengthen constitutional democracy, loosen the grip of the reactionaries upon Congress and other organs of the government. When a majority of the people decide on fundamental social changes, they will be better able consequently to prevent the monopolists from attempting to invoke unconstitutional force and violence against them.

This is a different kind of outlook than Communists have generally held in past years. Even when the concept of a peaceful transition has been advanced, it has usually been seen in the traditional terms of the struggle for socialism—the struggle against war, fascism and the ravages of economic crisis. In the new conditions of the world today, however, we see the possibility of a whole series of SUCCESSFUL struggles against policies which would lead to war, SUCCESSFUL struggles against the tendencies in the capitalist class toward reaction, repression and fascism, SUCCESSFUL struggles to prevent economic catastrophe for the masses of people.

As against the concept that the masses would turn to socialism solely as a result of disillusionment with the horrors of capitalism, we now have the possibility of a new outlook. This is the path of successful struggles for peace, democracy and economic security, climaxed by the successful struggle for the revolutionary reorganization of American society.

William Z. Foster pioneered in this post-war period on the possibility of peaceful transition in the United States. The present discussion in the party discloses, however, that not a few Communists have disagreed with Foster on this question or believed that he was only advancing it as part of a court fight against the Smith Act. Actually, there was nothing legalistic about it—it was a matter of high principle. But if some Marxists were unconvinced this can be attributed to the fact that it was usually associated with an outlook of near-certain war and near-certain fascism. The possibility of peaceful transition did not follow from such a premise—in fact,



was in contradiction with it.

It was noteworthy how Khrushchev dealt with the subject at the 20th Congress, where he generalized from the views developed over the preceding years by various Communist parties. After observing that the path of parliamentary transition had not been open to the Russian Bolsheviks, Khrushchev then gave as the principle reasons for the possibilities of the present period:

"Since then (1917) however, the historical situation has undergone radical changes which make possible a new approach to the question. The forces of socialism have grown immeasurably throughout the world, and capitalism has become much weaker. The mighty camp of socialism with its population of over 900 million is growing and gaining in strength. Its gigantic internal forces, its decisive advantages over capitalism, are being increasingly revealed from day to day. Socialism has a great power of attraction for the workers, peasants, and intellectuals of all countries. The ideas of socialism are indeed coming to dominate the minds of all toiling humanity."

It might be added here that the first of the "radical changes" in the "historical situation" was the success of the Russian Revolution itself and the establishment of the first socialist state; the second such change was the leap in the size of the socialist camp in the first post-war years from 160,000,000 people to the 900,000,000 of whom Khrushchev speaks.

It is also significant that the same report which revises some long held Marxist principles on transition, saw Lenin's thesis of the inevitability of war also revised. For the outlook for peaceful coexistence and peaceful economic competition increase the possibilities of peaceful transition.

In bringing Lenin's thesis on war up-to-date, Khrushchev cleared up the ambiguities in Stalin's statement along the same line at the 19th Party Congress in 1953. Khrushchev himself, however, left his propositions on peaceful and parliamentary transition ambiguous when he said:

"In the countries where capitalism

is still strong and has a huge military and police apparatus at its disposal, the reactionary forces will of course inevitably offer serious resistance. There the transition to socialism will be attended by a sharp class, revolutionary struggle."

But "where capitalism is still strong," there will be no transition to socialism of any kind, neither peaceful nor violent. Let us assume the continued validity of Lenin's theory that there can be no successful transition to socialism except in a revolutionary situation. Lenin gave as the first of the outstanding signs of a revolutionary situation:

"... it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their power unchanged; for there is a crisis 'higher up,' taking one form or another; there is a crisis in the policy of the ruling class; as a result, there appears a crack through which the dissatisfaction and the revolt of the oppressed classes burst forth. If a revolution is to take place, it is usually insufficient that 'one does not wish way below', but it is necessary that 'one is incapable up above' to continue in the old way. . . ."

This is by no means a picture of a "strong" capitalism.

Furthermore, Khrushchev's statement that in the situation which he has described, "the transition to socialism will be attended by a sharp class, revolutionary struggle," seems beside the point. Even under conditions where a peaceful, parliamentary transition is achieved, it would still be accompanied by a "sharp class, revolutionary struggle"—but the capitalists would be prevented from resorting to force and violence in the struggle.

It should be noted that the ambiguous section in the Khrushchev report which was widely quoted in the American press as excluding our country from the possibility of peaceful transition, was absent from the article subsequently written by the Soviet theoretician A. Sobolev, published in the May 1956 issue of "International Affairs." Sobolev described the condition under which

peaceful transition would not be possible in the following logical manner:

"When the bourgeoisie offers exceptionally great resistance, force must be applied. When the bourgeoisie, after being overthrown, attempts to restore its mastery by force, the working class is obliged to resort to arms in order to suppress the resistance of the exploiters."

The possibility of peaceful transition in our country cannot be defended—as it has sometimes been—with the argument that the United States will be the last country in the world to adopt socialism. No one can say for sure which country will be the last to make the transition. Furthermore, if being "last" is a condition for peaceful transition, then we no longer have a generalized possibility but only an exceptional possibility—for only one country can be "last." Finally, there is an implication in this argument that socialism may somehow be imposed on our country by a surrounding socialist world.

In the United States, the possibility for peaceful transition is based on an outlook of a successful struggle by the workingclass and its allies against the monopolists—combined with a favorable outcome to the struggle between the drive of monopoly capitalism for world domination and the conditions making for peaceful coexistence and competition.

The question of parliamentary (in our country, constitutional) transition is not the same as peaceful transition. It is possible for a transition to be peaceful and yet not parliamentary. It is also possible to conceive of a parliamentary transition in which the capitalists nevertheless would have the ability to resort to violence. For our country, we speak of the possibility of peaceful AND constitutional transition, as called for by Eugene Dennis at his first public appearance after his imprisonment some week before the 20th Congress in Moscow.

The question of parliamentary transition requires a considerable re-

vision of the Marxist concept of the state, as developed by Lenin on the basis of the teachings of Marx and Engels and on the basis of experience in Lenin's time.

Lenin recognized the possibility of peaceful transition—at least in exceptional cases. In fact, as is well known, there was a period of a few months during 1917 when Lenin saw the possibility of a peaceful revolution in Russia—until the Provisional Government closed the possibility by embarking on a course of counter-revolutionary repression.

But this possibility of a peaceful transition did not include the possibility of parliamentary transition. Transition was conceived as a possibility only through the Soviets (Councils) which had developed parallel to the regular organs of the government, and through which, of course, the October revolution was in fact carried out.

On the basis of previous Marxist teachings, combined with the Russian experience, Lenin made his famous generalizations on the nature of the state. These generalizations precluded the possibility of using the capitalist state machinery either for the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie or for the retaining of workingclass power afterwards and the laying of the foundations for socialism. What part of Lenin's generalizations on the state was valid, what part was valid at the time but later became invalid, and what part may have been invalid from the outset, is a subject for the most careful collective study.

A look at some developments in our own country may be of help in a preliminary way. In his famous *The Origin of the Family*, Frederick Engels wrote of the state that "it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft in irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, may not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society becomes necessary,

whose purpose is to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly separating itself from it, is the state."

And further:

"As the state arose out of the need to hold class antagonisms in check; but as it, at the same time, arose in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by virtue thereof becomes also the dominant class politically, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class . . . the modern representative state is the instrument of the exploitation of wage-labor by capital. . . ."

Turning to America, we find that Marx at first believed that the form of government here and in England and possibly Holland permitted the parliamentary transition to socialism in these countries. But then, with the development of capital into the monopoly stage in our country and with the bourgeoisie thereby increasing its hold directly upon the state, Engels came to the conclusion that Marx's early judgement was now out of the date. Later Lenin developed his generalizations on the state as a universal law of society in the period of imperialism.

Certainly, the developments in our country for example, in 1894, gave full substance to Engels conclusions. That was a period of the great Pullman strike on the railroads, led by Eugene Debs, where the Federal government, at the demand of the rail magnates, called out the federal troops and waged virtual civil war against the striking workers from one end of the country to the other until the strike was smashed.

Now, let us move forward some forty-five years to 1937. The scene is Flint, Michigan. The auto workers have engaged in the most daring, most militant action in the history of American labor—they have taken possession of the General Motors plant and refused to leave until the open-shop company would recognize their union. The auto magnates, supported by most business interests everywhere

and by the newspapers, demand that the governor of Michigan, elected by labor votes, turn the National Guard upon the sit-down strikers, drive them out of the plants and "restore the property" to its owners. The governor, under pressure from labor, refuses to do so, and shortly afterward the giant corporation surrenders and the first union contract in the industry is signed in the governor's office—one of the signers for the union being, by the way, the Communist Wyndham Mortimer.

When the following year the auto magnates succeed in defeating the governor for re-election, he is elevated by President Roosevelt to the United States Supreme court where, as Justice Frank Murphy, he writes the majority decision in the *Schneiderman* case of 1938. In it the Court absolves the Communist Party of the accusation of advocating the violent overthrow of the government and points out that the Communists have held that where a revolution required force it would only be in answer to the force invoked by the minority of capitalists against the will of the majority.

None of this disproved the basic contentions of Engels on the state as quoted above. In fact, his profound insight of one of the functions of the states as being to "moderate the conflict" between antagonistic classes and "keep it within the bounds of 'order'", is borne out by the great class battle in Flint and the action of the government.

Nevertheless, the analysis of Engels would not prepare one for the possibility of the Flint developments. While the state is the means whereby the dominant economic class acquires "new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class," and the "modern representative state is the instrument of the exploitation of wage-labor by capital," the state can also and at the same time become in a democratic form of government an area in which the class struggle is fought out on a political plane.

The development of the modern bourgeois-democratic state lies in the unfolding of the contradiction between its basic aspect as an instrument of exploitation and its second-



ary aspect as an arena in which not only conflicting groups among the capitalists but also capital and labor itself wage their struggles. Through these struggles, it is possible for the workingclass and its allies to penetrate in some degree or other the organs of the capitalist state.

While in its role as instrument of exploitation, the state serves the capitalist class, on the other hand as the conflict between capital and labor sharpens, as the workingclass becomes stronger and more militant both outside and inside the organs of the government, and as it makes use of the conflict between the other groups in society, the ability of the capitalists to use the state as exploiter necessarily lessens.

When the contradiction between the state as instrument of exploitation and its secondary aspect as an arena of class struggle battles becomes too sharp, the trusts try to resolve the contradiction through repression and, as the extreme measure, fascism. Under fascism, the arena aspect is abolished and the state as exploiter has full sway.

But so long as the forces of democracy maintain the democratic forms and processes in a capitalist state, there is a constant change in the relation of forces struggling in the arena, and hence the state's role as exploiter grows and ebbs. At times, it may even grow and ebb simultaneously on different levels of the state—for example, the year 1937 which saw the historic Flint sit-down victory also saw the Memorial Day Massacre of Chicago steel workers at the hands of the city police.

One of the conditions for the constitutional transition to socialism, is that the workingclass forces and their

allies shall have reached their peak in strength and in the quality of their participation in the arena of struggle within the organs of the state and shall have succeeded in penetrating the state structure to a greater extent. A condition for this, in turn, is that the struggles in the legislatures, etc., shall be accompanied by unprecedented mass struggles.

Furthermore, having reached this point, the working class and its allies will be in a position to make those changes in the structure of the government which will be necessary for carrying through a program of socialization. These structural changes will themselves be based on the Constitution of the United States which provides the procedures for making whatever changes would be required.

Constitutional transition to socialism in the United States must be recognized as possible, desirable and to be advocated and fought for. But if the constitutional form of transition is now considered possible for our country, then it was an error in the past to have ruled it out for all time as a possibility. To answer that conditions have changed and have made the impossible the possible, is only to beg the question. For it was claimed in the past that UNDER NO CONDITIONS was constitutional or even peaceful transition possible in this era.

It is true that the actual conditions for constitutional transition have not always existed in the past. For that matter, they do not exist at the present moment. But what have always existed in America have been the conditions for a struggle to bring into being—no matter how far off in the future—a situation under which constitutional transition would be a defi-

## RESOLUTION

treatment be accorded all posted or transmitted written resolutions to the conventions as to those resolutions offered by committees or delegates in attendance at the conventions.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolutions passed by the National Convention subsequently be submitted to a referendum vote of the entire party membership.

That only as a result of an affirma-

nite and real possibility.

The conditions for the possibility of constitutional transition have been more or less real, more or less remote, at different points in our history. At the close of World War I, just when constitutional transition was ruled out for all time, because of the existing situation, its possibility became less remote than at any time since the rise of monopoly capitalism in America and its gaining a grip on the state. This was due to the fact that now a socialist state itself was already in existence, thereby creating a new historical situation.

With the close of World War II and with the coming into existence of an entire zone of socialist states, with the consequences that have been discussed in this article, the question of constitutional transition assumes a still more concrete form. While the actual conditions that would make this transition possible are not yet here, the pre-conditions are all around us. They are real and tangible. They cry out—to guarantee further development—for the participation of a strong Marxist organization.

In discussing a world that would be featured by peaceful coexistence and peaceful economic competition, we must never forget that these are not only possibilities but dire necessities as well. For under conditions still marked by the existence of a powerful monopoly capitalism operating in a thermo-nuclear age, the alternative to genuinely peaceful coexistence is H-bomb existence, with possibilities too horrible to contemplate.

This question and the question of the past and future role of American Communists, will be discussed in the concluding section of this article to be published in the next issue.

tive vote by a majority of the membership in such a referendum vote will these resolutions be considered to be in effect and binding. And that, in order to accomplish the above, the National Convention, before entertaining or voting on any substantive resolutions, adopt a procedure whereby such a referendum vote is constitutionally and otherwise possible.

# CRITICAL RELATIONS STRENGTHENS SOCIALISM

By E. S.

THE CPUSA is in the process of undertaking the most critical examination of its role and philosophy in its history. I would like to make my contribution to that discussion. Before doing so, however, I believe it to be of importance that certain general agreements be made as to the type of discussion held.

One such general agreement would be that discussion be from the viewpoint of advancing the interests of socialism (i.e., the system whereby the people own the means of production and determine what shall be done with the fruits of their labor, rather than a system which allows a narrow group to own and control the means of production and forces the working class into continual struggle to get a share of their own labor's results). If one is to discuss *within* the CP—the need for agreement on such a point is so obvious it hardly needs further elaboration.

What is not so obvious, unfortunately, is the need for a general agreement that political questions be argued on the basis of their political merit rather than on a basis of label, namecalling and mere statement of position. Now everybody agrees to this in principle; but in practice it is more often violated than not. The content of innumerable letters to the D. W. and discussion section that I have read, the content of innumerable talks, speeches I've heard, have at their core a repetition of words and charges such as: "Those are bourgeois views" or "the talk of the class enemy" or "liquidationist," etc. etc.—*all in substitution* for actual political argument and facts. Let us suppose, for a moment, that a number of readers of this article have irrefutable proof that I am nothing but a paid agent of the Morgan interests. If these readers could not refute my views on the basis of the merits or lack thereof as demonstrated in facts, then they should hang their heads in shame, shut their mouths, and stop talking.

What I consider to be at the heart of our present problems is what has been a major premise of 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—in such a way as to oppose 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 make up and of national politics, versus the traditional (or as some prefer to label—"bourgeois") *democratic approach*.

It is my contention that the traditional democratic conception is a necessity to a socialist party and a socialist country. Monopoly Capital has rejected the democratic approach. I hold it has been a basic mistake of the Communist left to similarly reject it. A number of articles have been written touching on one or another aspect of this question as it applies to "democratic centralism." In this article I would like to briefly examine some of the practice and results of the theory of "monolithic unity" as

applied to international working class relations and as applied to the internal political structure of the first socialist land, the USSR.

Since the birth of the Soviet Union we held a view that to be at all critical of the USSR was to play into the hands of those capitalists who wish to destroy that country. Certainly it was true that there were huge forces in motion bent on the destruction of the USSR. The wars of intervention proved that beyond all doubt. There was grave need to defend what the Soviets were trying to accomplish. But because of that need, we adopted an uncritical, blanket attitude which we now all recognize to have been wrong. Certain corollaries to the theory of "everything good, nothing bad" about the Soviet Union developed as a logical result. Namely: since the CPSU was the first to establish socialism, the CPSU was the wisest of parties and therefore the final arbiter of theoretical disputes; if you were critical of the Soviet Union, you were anti-Socialist; if you disagreed with a CPSU analysis you were splitting the unity of the international working class and aiding the Bourgeoisie. It was in such a context that the theory of "monolithic unity" of working class parties grew and flourished. It is essential that at a point where we are debating so heavily the matters of "unity," "independence," and "fraternal criticism," we give as careful an examination as possible as to what was wrong (if wrong at all) about these theories of unity" as they operated.

Obviously, such theories were wrong because they helped submerge the truth. That is as good a starting point as any. Certainly Krushev's report amply demonstrated that the truth was submerged. In fact, that truth and history itself were falsified.

If in refusing to consider any criticism of the USSR, we submerged the truth—it was a particular kind of truth we submerged. It was the truth



that there was something wrong. *When you hide a fact that is rotten you help that fact to grow in its rottenness and spread.* As we now know, Stalin's despotism grew from small beginnings to immense horrors. When you expose an evil condition to the light of world knowledge (in this case it was not general world knowledge, but the knowledge of the CP's that was lacking), you of necessity make it more difficult for the evil condition to grow and easier to cut out—as a cancer is cut out from an otherwise healthy body. Is it not easy to see that Stalin could not nearly as easily rule as he did if the foreign CP's were aware of his dictatorship and criticized it openly and heavily (and weren't enough facts available to the foreign CP's and ours?).

*Thus, in so uncritically defending the first land of socialism, our party and the other CP's actually did a disservice to that land. We thus bear a section of the responsibility for the dictatorship and all its tragic results. And this is one important thing wrong with our concept of socialist "unity" as it operated—we hurt the USSR.*

What else occurred as a result of our lack of independence, our false "unity" approach? We were and are a Party of the American working class, at least in our aspirations and our activity and program. As such, we had and have a responsibility to that class and the American people as a whole. This responsibility demands a truthful picture of how Socialism is working where it exists. We did not present the whole truth, we denied what was unfavorable.

Now this is not a good thing to do in itself, but it is a just plain stupid thing to do when the people you are talking to are being barraged by every unfavorable criticism in existence (many imaginary—but again, many real). And barraged by means far in excess of ours. So what happened? The American people looked at the way in which we denied everything unfavorable and concluded that they could not believe our picture of events and they could not believe us. Presented with terrific daily anti-Soviet barrage, presented with an absurdly uncritical defending group, much of

the positive and significant side of Soviet life was and is rejected by most Americans. The ability of the C.P. to convince around Socialism was greatly weakened as Socialism has become identified with the Soviet political system and its failures—and the American C.P. as an outfit fearful of the truth.

*So the second thing wrong about a concept of Socialist "unity" which not only doesn't see the importance of independence and criticism but rejects it altogether, is that it greatly weakens the ability to convince and damages the ability to build a socialist outlook among the American people.*

But the worst results have yet to be mentioned. Since the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. we have become keenly aware of the importance of finding our own path to socialism. We accept this need as a major Marxist doctrine. But the fact is, we long ago accepted and talked of this as an important truth. There is ample documentation of that. How then was it possible to have in theory recognized the need for judging specific American characteristics, American traditions and finding an American path—and yet so totally inadequately and supinely have dealt with this question in practice?

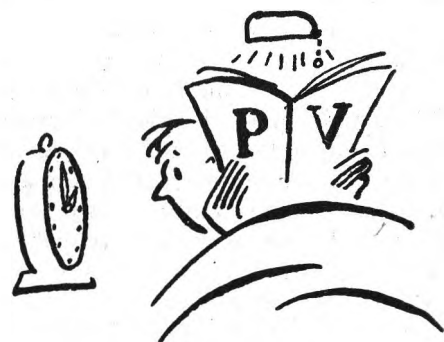
The answer seems to me to be that the highly rated theory of uncritical "socialist unity" was largely responsible. Such a theory tended to result in the most extreme glorification of everything Soviet. If the C.P.S.U. had all the answers, if everything they did was right, what need had we to struggle with finding our own answers—just copy theirs. And if you said no, why that's tantamount to criticizing their institutions. If Lenin said that the bourgeois state forms must be smashed and replaced with new ones—well Lenin had said that, the Soviets did that and who were we to say parliamentary institutions had a different significance in our country and the needs and problems of the Soviets were different from ours (why "American exceptionalists" of course, was the charge).

Of course, it is true that within the Marxist movement in America, the problem of failure to deal with American conditions have a long his-

tory. As in the case of the early German-American Marxists, the problem was sharp long before the existence of the U.S.S.R. It is also true, that much in American Socialist history was as native and as sensitive to American facts of life as was possible. So it wasn't only historical traditions of the Left that limited the C.P. here in developing an American approach. In large part, it was its failure to critically separate what was valid for it and what was not valid for it from the experience of the U.S.S.R. And further, to at least see whether there possibly were some new "universal" thoughts we could contribute ourselves. *The failure to have a legitimately critical approach towards the U.S.S.R. predetermined the failure to be a genuinely independent American socialist party.* How could such a work as Foster's "Towards a Soviet America" be written and at least temporarily accepted within a genuinely independent American party?

This failure to strike our own national path—related closely to our uncritical unity approach and glorification of things Soviet—not only made us a miniature Soviet party in both organizational form and domestic outlook—it seriously limited our ability to properly assess our foreign policy outlook.

Take for example the storm that arose within and towards the Party between the time of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and the entrance of the U.S.S.R. into the war. Were we right in our "hand-off" policy? Were we right to say hands-off during the time when Nazi armies were sweeping over France and western Europe, Balkan and Scandinavian Europe, and blitzing London? Was such a policy really anti-fascist? Was



it a service to the American workers to make all sorts of excuses as to why we didn't want to act against German fascism at a time when it was bloodily setting its iron heel upon the peoples of Europe? I hardly think so.

Neither did the Frenchman whose children were being murdered by Nazi troops, whose home was being dive-bombed. He knew well his own native fascists were betraying him and cooperating with Hitler. Was he indebted to our American party for pointing this out instead of helping him to resist? I hardly think so. French Communists knew better about the Nazi invasion for they were being murdered too. They were in the forefront of resistance by sheer physical necessity. *We needed the entrance of the U.S. into the war to want to fight.* We did a disservice to the workers of the world. Such was our unthinking, blind, slavish theory of "international socialist unity." We could not distinguish between what may or may not have been a valid national tactic of the S.U. to gain time for themselves, and the pressing need of workers and people generally to resist the fascist slaughter.

So the third thing wrong with our "unity" theory was that it hurt the development of an American path to socialism and it hurt the international anti-fascist contribution our party should have made. *In summing up points one, two, and three, the progress of socialist and democratic development in the U.S.S.R. was hurt, not helped by our blind approach: the progress of socialist thinking in the U.S. was hurt, not helped as well as the friendly approach of Americans to the S.U.; the development of an American path was prevented and the international contribution of our party limited.*

It is time we realized that truth, the full truth and genuine independence (not part truths with the hiding of wrongs, not imitiveness, not surrendering one's own need to think to the thinking of anyone else's) is a corollary to and need of genuine socialist and international working class unity. I subscribe fully to the definition of proper relations given by the Nat'l. Comm. C.P.U.S.A. on June 25, 1956: "These relations must



be based on the principle of serving the best national interests of each people and the common interest of all progressive humanity; of the equality of parties; of the right and duty of the Marxists of all countries to engage in friendly criticism of the theory and practice of Marxists of any country whenever they feel this necessary. *Far from weakening, this will strengthen international working class solidarity*" (my italics.)

Unfortunately neither the Soviet party, the bulk of foreign parties or our party has yet come to grips with the vital importance of practicing such relations. Is this statement true? Does, for example, the Soviet party fail to practice such relations today? It is true that in the discussions with Tito, the admission of their errors and the agreement with the Yugoslav leaders on exchanging socialist experiences—plus the whole theoretical dictum of the 20th Congress on this subject—much assistance was given by the Soviet Party towards the development of such a type of relations.

It is also true that their attitude towards differing opinions than their own on the sources of the Stalin monstrosities hardly support such a relationship. Read carefully the section of the June 30, 1956 C.C.-C.P.S.U. resolution dealing with various comments of foreign parties. Where the foreign statements support the C.P.S.U. approach that is fine. But directly preceding the part referring to "certain of our friends" (later identified as Togliatti) who are not "clear," a frightening lecture about "international unity . . . splitting the international workers move-

ment . . . weakening the forces of the socialist camp" and thus distinctly linking the type of "unclear" shown by a Togliatti or a Nenni or a Steve Nelson or Johnny Gates with giving aid to the enemies of socialism and splitting unity.

The great debate, Marxist exchange and birth of independent thinking that took place after the Krushchev report has suffered sharply since the C.C.-C.P.S.U. resolution. Instead of inquiry and examination, we have idle praise. I am shocked in particular by the quieting of Comrade Togliatti. The manner in which most of the foreign parties went into idolatrous praise of the C.C. resolution and dropped their own questions is very disturbing. Even our own national committee's resolution would have done much better if it had actually started examining "certain aspects of the origins and effects of past violations of socialist law and principle," rather than merely mentioning the problem as part of a statement of praise and solidarity.

The old clichés pour out from the mouths of innumerable members and leaders here. If one takes exception to the way the Soviet resolution places the problem—if one insists that only full political democracy is the proper needed supplement of economic democracy—if one attempts to deal favorably with such thoughts—he becomes "anti-Soviet," "weak-kneed," "aider of the bourgeoisie" and a "splitter of socialist unity."

Indeed, these twisted conceptions are very much with us. What is most unfortunate is that burning issues, such as the meaning of Poznan, are sidestepped by us here for fear of being labelled "splitters." The Polish Party has come to what I think most of us agree was a realistic, truthful and courageous appraisal of Poznan's significance. They did this despite an atmosphere of hysteria. They did this despite the comments of Soviet leaders which missed the heart of the problem.

We must finally repudiate these ridiculous conceptions of "unity" and begin practicing independent thinking in the spirit of the N.C.'s definition (and the N.C. must practice it too).



# Issues in the CPSU and CPUSA

By DAN HENRY

**T**HE following article is a condensation of two original articles. In the interests of the space available many of the original arguments have been reduced.

In conclusion to the second speech, Khrushchev states "and the fact that we present in all their ramification, the basic problems of overcoming the "cult of the individual" which is alien to Marxism-Leninism, as well as the problem of liquidating its burdensome consequences, is an evidence of the great moral and political strength of our party."

The basic problem of the Soviet Union is not the "cult of the individual." The basic problem in the Soviet Union is the crisis existing in agriculture.

What is alien to Marxism-Leninism is the attempt by Khrushchev to solve today's problems by blaming these problems on the unfounded mistakes of Stalin yesterday. Today's problems can only be solved on the basis of today's material conditions of life.

Political strength can only be gained by improving the material conditions of life of the Soviet people.

The material conditions of the Soviet people cannot be improved unless a large quantity of consumer goods can be made available to the Soviet people. A consumer goods industry cannot be built unless agriculture produces large quantities of raw materials, cotton, wool, leather, other industrial products and food products needed for the production of consumer goods and to feed the enlarged working population that would result from it.

The industrial products and food products cannot be produced by agriculture because of the present rela-

tions of productions in agriculture in the Soviet Union are in contradiction to each other and are stifling the further expansion of agriculture.

The contradiction of the Social ownership of the means of production, land and the implements (tractors, plows, combines, machines, etc.) and the private ownership of the products of agriculture by the collective farmers.

To expand production in agriculture this contradiction in agriculture must be eliminated and the relations of production brought into harmony with one another.

This can be done only by eliminating the private ownership of products of agriculture and raising them to public property, social property.

Khrushchev by attempting to put the blame for the crisis in agriculture on Stalin instead of tackling and solving the contradictions in agriculture is an opportunist.

An opportunist is a person who does what appears to be the easy thing. It looks easy to put the blame on Stalin for the crisis in agriculture but contradictions in the relationship of production have a nasty habit of not disappearing just because you blame somebody for them.

The contradiction in the relationship of production in capitalism can only be removed by bringing them into harmony with each other, the social working of the means of production and the social ownership of the means of production.

The same is true of the Soviet Union in reverse. The social ownership of the means of production must be followed by the social ownership of the products of agriculture.

One more question on the "cult of the individual."

Was Stalin responsible for the crisis in agriculture?

No, Stalin was not responsible for the crisis in agriculture. No one individual or group of individuals can be responsible for the development and operation of economic laws, which are outside of man's direct control.

The best that man can do with economic laws is to understand their development and operation and work with them. Working against them brings nothing but hardship and disaster.

Did the contradictions in the relationship of production in agriculture exist in Stalin's lifetime? Yes, they existed during Stalin's lifetime.

Did they constitute a block to the further development of the whole Soviet economy during Stalin's lifetime. No. They did not constitute a block to the development of the whole Soviet economy during Stalin's lifetime.

Why? Because the contradiction in the relationship of production in agriculture did not become operative until the basic means of production (heavy industry) had developed to a point where they could no longer expand without producing machines and materials for a consumers goods industry.

How? The economic history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1941 was a history of the incestuous reproduction of the basic means of production. Steel mills which produced steel mills, machines that produced machines which in turn produced the same machines.

This is the economic meaning of all the five year plans based on expanding the basic means of production in the Soviet Union. The base

without which the development of all branches of Soviet economy could not take place.

The contradiction in the relationship of production in agriculture existed throughout the major portion of this time, yet it did not come in conflict with the expansion of the basic means of production.

It did not and could not because the means of production were busily engaged in reproducing themselves.

On the eve of the Second World War it seemed that this process was sufficiently advanced to earmark a larger portion (a small portion of the basic industry was always engaged in production for consumers industry) of the basic means of production for consumer production.

This plan was halted by the war. Halted in two ways (1) the diversion of the basic means of production to the production of means of war (guns, tanks, planes, etc.) (2) the destruction of the basic means of production themselves during the war.

The contradiction in the relationship of production in agriculture existed during the entire course of the war. They did not and could not come in conflict with the expansion of the basic means of production themselves because the basic means of production were busy producing the means of war.

In the post war period, the basic means of production were again engaged with the reproduction of themselves. Reproduction to replace the basic means of production that were destroyed during the war.

This period lasted from the end of the war until approximately 1950.

The contradiction in the relationship of production in agriculture existed during this whole time.

About 1950, this process was beginning to become complete where the expansion of the basic means of production by the reproduction of themselves could no longer suffice as an end unto themselves.

When an economy has reached a point of where it has an army of steel mills spitting out steel and a battery of machines producing themselves, this steel and machines must be given a new purpose and direction.

What new purpose and direction?

The purpose and direction for which the Soviet Union emphasized the expansion of the basic means of production in the first place. To enable the Soviet Union to expand all branches of Soviet economy.

This means first of all the building of a consumers industry in all of its ramifications. The building of electrical, automotive, building, clothing, food and transportation industries.

Why is this not being done? It is not being done because at this point the contradiction in the relations of production in agriculture become operative and form a block and are in conflict with the further expansion of the basic means of production.

The basic means of production cannot expand because the only direction in which it can expand is to produce for consumer production. A consumers industry cannot be built because many raw materials and food products needed are not forthcoming from agriculture.

Agriculture cannot produce these raw materials and food products because the contradictions in the relations of production are preventing the expansion of agriculture which in turn is preventing and throttling the expansion of the whole Soviet economy.

If the contradictions in the relationship of production in agriculture first became operative in 1950, why didn't Stalin project a program to overcome these contradictions and bring the relationship of production in agriculture into harmony.

There are two reasons: (1) the Korean war that began in 1950 again diverted the basic means of production of the Soviet Union to the production of the means of war temporarily putting the sharpness and clarity of the contradiction in agriculture in the background. It also blunted and obscured the full force of the contradiction's effect: (2) Stalin *did speak* of the contradictions in the relations of production in agriculture and proposed the beginning of a program in his "Economic Notes" to the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952.

In "Economic Notes" Stalin stated that the major task of the Soviet

Union in 1951 was the raising of the products of agriculture from the private property of the collective farmers to public property, social property of all the people.

Stalin stated that to achieve the economic state of communism, the differences between town and country, between cultural, town and country workers must be eliminated.

To eliminate the differences between town and country it is necessary to completely mechanize and industrialize agriculture.

It is necessary to transform the collective farmers into industrialized agricultural workers.

To eliminate the difference between cultural, town and country workers, it is necessary to revamp the whole economic structure of the Soviet Union.

Machines must do the labor of people in the Soviet Union and the people will have the leisure to have a poly-technical education, leisure that the Soviet people do not and cannot have with the present state of economic development in the Soviet Union.

These are the conditions that Stalin discussed in his "Economic Notes" for the state of economic communism. Stalin indicated these things in a few remarks because he had complete confidence in the ability of the leadership and people of the Soviet Union. Confidence that was misplaced on the question of the present leadership of the Soviet Union. Time alone will prove that his confidence in the Soviet people was not misplaced.

It would appear from the foregoing that the program outlined by Malenkov for the building of a consumer industry shortly after Stalin's death was a correct one and the final rejection of it and the failure to carry it out marked a long step toward the acceleration of the crisis now existing in the Soviet economy.

## The Second Main Point: The Problem of the American Party

To discuss problems it must first be determined what these problems are.



At first glance it would appear to be an easy thing to do. One has only to look at the isolation of the American Party and you have a problem. You have only to discuss democratic centralism, its centralist features and its democratic features and the constant struggle between them and you have a problem. You have only to review our past policies and programs and point to this "mistake" and that "mistake" and you have many problems. Yet are these problems the basic problem of the American Party, or are they but a reflection of the basic problem?

These many problems are but a reflection of the basic problem of the American Party.

The basic problem of the American party is its lack of ideological development, its failure to understand and apply the principles of Marxist theory.

This failure is so complete that there is confusion and misunderstanding on what is theory.

I have often heard and read in our press and periodicals when speaking of practice and theory make the following classification. Under theory and theoretical questions are grouped the following: all questions relating in any manner whatsoever to political questions. Examples, the Marshall Plan, Truman Doctrine, peace, elections, etc. and grouped under the heading of practical questions are trade union demands, wage, hours and conditions, housing, rent, etc.

This false separation of political and economic questions into theoretical and practical questions could only result from complete ideological bankruptcy.

Both political and economic questions belong in the field of practical work, they complement one another and are a reflection of each other.

All of Marxist theory and ideology is nothing but the application of Historical Materialism and the Dialectical Method to the material conditions of man in different periods and times. The application of these two principles to the state of the development of the productive forces, the relationships of productions, the ideas, thoughts and thinking and political institutions that flowed from them in

different periods and times. This and nothing more.

Have we applied the dialectical and historical materialist theory to changes which have taken place over the past two decades on a national and international scale? No. We have not.

A short review of the history of the CPUSA in this period reveals four major changes when we did not apply the dialectical and historical approach and were content to follow the lead of the Soviet Union blindly, to our detriment.

### First Change—1939

The Hitler-Stalin Pact. Was this a principled change in the policy of the Soviet Union? No, it was not. The Stalin-Hitler pact was a tactical development dictated by times and conditions existing in the Soviet Union and on an international scale.

In failing to apply the dialectical and historical materialist approach to this change in tactics, we failed to recognize it as a tactic and accepted it blindly as a principled change.

What was the result? The result was that we isolated ourselves from the broad anti-fascist front which we had arduously worked to build, with the slogan the "Yanks are not coming."

This period marked the beginning of our isolation from the workers and the broad masses of the American people.

### Second Change—1943

The dissolution of the Third International. Was this a principled change in the policy of the Soviet Union? No, again it was not a principled change in the policy of the Soviet Union but a question of tactics. Our failure to apply the Marxist dialectical and historical approach again led us to accept it as a principled change in policy.

What was the result? The result was Browderism and the dissolution of the Communist Party and the formation of the Communist Political Association. This was contrary to all

the Marxist teachings of the organized vanguard role of the Party.

The Communist Political Association further isolated us from the workers and the masses of the American people. It split the political, ideological and organizational unity of the Party itself, from which we have not yet fully recovered to this day.

### Third Change— Post War Period

The post war period was a continuation of the policy of blindly following the tactics (Titoism, etc.) of the Soviet Union without understanding the principles involved in these tactics.

The post war period was a further continuation and completion of our isolation from the workers and the masses of the American people. It was and is a period of the gradual disintegration of the Communist Party itself.

The loss of tens of thousands of members in a ten-year period cannot be looked upon in any other way. The objective conditions cannot be the sole explanation of this development. Communist Parties in other countries have grown to tremendous strength under less favorable conditions.

If the explanation cannot be confined to the objective conditions, where does the answer lie? It lies in our ideological and theoretical weakness, in our lack of understanding and the application of the dialectical and historical materialist approach to all changes.

### The Fourth Change

The blind acceptance of the results of the XXth Congress, the "criticism of Stalin" and the "cult of the individual."

The blind acceptance of this latest line from the Soviet Union is further confused by the American Party leadership's statements that we were wrong to follow the Soviet Union uncritically in the past.

If it was wrong to follow the Soviet Union in the past, it is equally

as wrong to accept uncritically the results of the XXth Congress, the "criticism of Stalin" and the "cult of the individual."

There are indications of differences of opinion and disagreement among some of the members of National Committee. What these differences and disagreements are, nobody knows but themselves because all we get after an enunciation of the adopted policy are statements that there was not full agreement on it without telling what the disagreement was.

As far as the leadership is concerned, the discussion of the XXth Congress, the "cult of the individual" and the "criticism of Stalin" is closed, they have adopted a policy of acceptance and are fighting for its implementation.

The leadership has in fact gone one step further, using the XXth Congress as a base, they are attempting to analyze the mistakes we have made over the past ten years and are at present formulating present and future policy and program based on it.

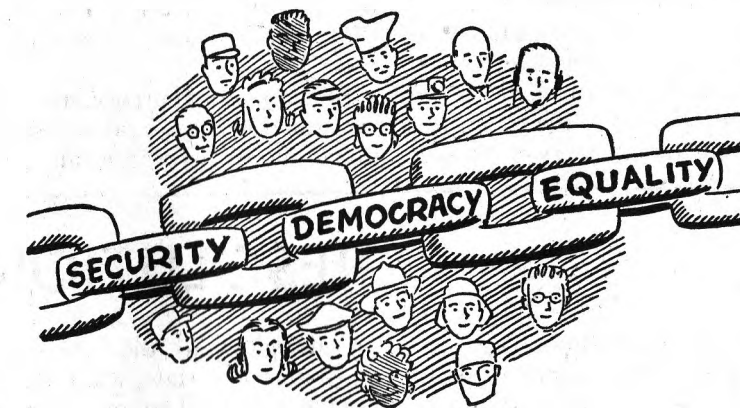
Opposed to the materialist concept and Marx's historical materialism is the ideology of idealism.

Idealism holds that the world and what takes place in the world is an extension and reflection of the mind. That the objective world exists only in the mind of man and outside of the mind nothing exists.

The world exists only because of the mind, ideas, thought and thinking will the world to exist, create the world. So says idealism. Idealism completely reverses the process of the concept materialism.

I would even say that idealism is the dominant philosophy of the leadership of the American party.

How? Because the policy and program we have followed over the past two decades has been a policy and program based not on the material economic conditions of life in the United States, not on the present state of development of forces of production and relationships of production of the United States and the ideas, thought and thinking that were a reflection of them but in the main were based blindly on the program, poli-



cies, ideas, thought and thinking of a society, a whole social epoch removed from us, a socialist society, the Soviet Union.

To believe that the program, policies, ideas, thought and thinking of the Soviet Union could succeed in the United States where the material conditions of life are different is an extension of the mind not based on reality and constitutes idealism.

Therefore it follows that the basic problem of the American Party is the lack of understanding and applying Historical Materialism and the Dialectical Method to the material conditions of life in the United States.

Because we have failed to apply Historical Materialism and the Dialectical Method to the present state of development of the productive forces, the relationships of production, the ideas, thought and thinking, the political institutions and political programs that flow from them, in the United States. We have been unable to adopt a program and policy that meets the needs of these things.

It follows also that unless we solve this basic problem, from which all of our problems flow, we will be unable to formulate and adopt a policy and program that will meet these needs.

What are the possibilities of the leadership of the American Party of changing its adopted policy on the XXth Congress, of changing its fashion of work of adopting policy and program without consultation with the rank and file, of changing its habit of suppressing views that are

contrary to adopted policy and program, of changing its habit of projecting and adopting policy and program on short-sighted expediency, blindly following the Soviet Union and adopting Historical Materialism and the Dialectical Method to the material conditions as they exist in the United States?

The possibilities are slim if not nonexistent for all the previous reasons given. The base just does not exist for it to happen.

The issue will be decided at the convention to be held in February and we know conventions and special meetings seldom originate new programs and policies but convene only to give force to policies and programs already agreed upon. The struggle around these programs and policies having taken place prior to the conventions and special meetings.

As we have seen, the policy and program has already been adopted with the opposition having no opportunity to struggle against them.

The issue will be decided also by the views of these who attend the convention and who can attend the convention.

Who will attend the convention? First of all it will be mainly the American Party's leadership who are all basically agreed on the present policy and program with minor differences.

Secondly, it will be the secondary functionaries of the Party who have achieved their status as functionaries of the Party not on their understanding and ability to apply Marxist theory in the class struggle but have achieved it mainly on the question of



availability and compliance with existing policy and program.

Very few rank and filers will attend the convention, not only because the existing organization and methods of work but also because the rank and filers are mostly where they belong,

among the workers and cannot afford the luxury of taking two or three weeks off without the risk of losing their jobs.

So the major representation will be the top leadership and the secondary functionaries who are all basically

agreed beforehand with but minor differences on the policy and program to be adopted. A battle of words shall rage around these minor differences that will represent nothing but a tempest in a teapot.

## RESOLUTIONS

We, a branch of Brooklyn Communists, know that certain party leaders are taking steps to liquidate the organization; i.e., dues are not being collected, groups are being cut loose from leadership, individuals are being discouraged from reaffiliation, individual officials are deserting their posts.

Whether or not we agree with the ultimate correctness of liquidation, we feel that it is essential that the party be maintained as a functioning organization until the national convention. Only in that way can our future policy be decided by a democratic discussion of the membership—and not by the unilateral action of a minority.

We urge that full organizational channels be maintained to encourage and allow all comrades to raise their points of view.

### FROM CULTURAL SECTION

The current discussion in the CPUSA has witnessed an unprecedented exchange and expression of views on the part of the membership.

In the course of this discussion it becomes obvious that the membership of our party is determined that methods and bureaucratic practices of the past, in which the will of the membership was ignored, shall not repeat itself. It becomes clear that our members are equally determined, in the interests of the party, to have their will counted, both with regard to policy as well as selection of future leadership.

It is felt that the present form of selection of national and state leadership does not fully conform with the democratic will of the members and is outmoded. Under the present system of electing a national commit-

tee, delegates to the national convention of one state, are called upon to vote for members of the incoming national committee of another state about whom and about whose record and background they know nothing. We therefore propose the following for the election of a national committee.

1. After establishing the size of the future national committee, the composition of the national committee shall be based on proportional representation from each state.

2. Special consideration shall be given to Negro representation and important industrial states where our membership is very small.

3. That each delegation shall determine the personnel for the national committee from their respective states. Only after each state delegation has voted for its respective representatives, shall the list of all states come before the general assembly of the national convention.

In his instances where a delegate from one state knows and has objections to a selected national committee candidate of another state, said delegate may raise objections on the floor of the convention. If the objection is sustained, the state delegation from which the selected representative was objected to, the given state delegation shall be charged with naming another member for the national convention.

4. National committee members shall make periodic reports to the members of their respective states through meetings, articles, news-letters, etc., on their work on the national committee and various issues that had come before the national committee and their own voting rec-

ord on the national committee and their activities as a national committee member representing their state.

5. In cases where sections of state membership are dissatisfied with the work of one of their representatives on the national committee, said membership may petition state committee with a request for a referendum for recall of said representative.

To recall a representative on the national committee, it shall require two-thirds of those voting.

### STATE COMMITTEE

The present practice for the election of a state committee is by state convention upon presentation of a slate by a nominating committee.

It is proposed that the state committee be elected on the same basis as in the case of the National Committee. Each county delegation shall meet in caucus and on the basis of proportional representation shall elect its members for the incoming state committee.

Again, as in the case of the National Committee members, state committee members shall report to their respective county membership on their work on the state committee, etc. Here, too, the county membership, when dissatisfied with a representative on the state committee, shall have the right to recall and substitute, based on two-thirds of county members.

The vote in each case for the national or state committees shall be by secret ballot.

Note: Clubs, sections or regions in different parts of the state of New York who may agree with the essence of this resolution, not necessarily wording, are urged to petition state and national leaderships accordingly.