

Letters from Readers



Much Criticism Is Wrongly Directed

NEW BEDFORD, Mass.

Dear Editor:

Inclosed herewith you will \$5 to go toward the latest fund drive. And below is comment on current and not current events.

I believe criticism which is not self-explanatory and which goes to too great length can be more destructive than constructive. Criticism to be constructive should carry argumentation on both sides, and offer suggestions how best to make improvements toward a fuller development of socialism.

It seems to me that if the Communists, socialists, etc., can get together and form a coalition in France and Italy and other countries, why not in the U. S.?

Like J. B. says in the Aug. 5 Letters from Readers why blame ourselves so much for our present state? Like him, I believe that the Smith Act and repression are the main cause. I believe some of the energy being used toward self-criticism and criticism generally should be used toward fighting to abolish the repression in the country. Smith, McCarran and other such acts.

JOHN Q. PUBLIC.



My Life as a Housewife And Mother of Two

Dear Editor:

Your article by Elizabeth Lawson and letter referring to her columns are very interesting to me because they reflect so intimately the conflicts of being a woman, wife, mother and when financial problems demand it, a worker too.

It is a challenge to be all these things at one time and not have moments of resentment at having been born a woman.

I hope that the majority of us are more sensible than that most of the time. The life of a working man is not at all more stimulating than that of a mother and housewife. My husband works at a dull routine job. He stands on his 40 year old feet all day long. They are often swollen feet when he gets home at night. He is a tired guy. The people he meets are the husbands of the people I meet. Not always gay and enchanting; they are just like we are. They crack a joke, tell a story, and go about their work. I can appreciate his life because I never had a fancy exciting way of earning a living either.

By comparison, it is a vacation to be a housewife. I am happy to keep my apartment as clean and bright as I can, I'm happy to have the privilege of raising a son and a daughter. It is not dull; it is hard, all worth-

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The American Road to Socialism

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

Some Important Areas of Agreement

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS

A GREAT deal has been said about the differences in the national leadership of the Communist Party. Such differences exist on all levels of our party. In fact, this is a sort of period of differences, incident to the review of the party's past, present and future. As the statement of the National Discussion Committee declared (in the Aug. 3, Daily Worker): with the publication of the Draft Resolution, the discussion will enter a new stage. Meanwhile, the present discussion will influence the Draft Resolution.

The party membership, I am sure, will be mindful of the fact that the capitalist press is trying desperately to intervene in the discussion and turn it to its own ends. But this will not deter any member from continuing the discussion.

Too little has been noted, it seems to me, of the exceedingly important areas of agreement in the national leadership. First of all, the National Committee has issued two statements on the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U., both unanimously. They were adopted after conscientious, intense and extended discussion. These statements were sound in my judgment and were a contribution to the thinking of our members and the people generally on the momentous questions involved.

Although other differences exist among leaders and members on various aspects of the question touched upon in the National Committee statements, this shouldn't detract from the step forward by our party's statements on various issues posed by the 20th Congress. Moreover, in a principled discussion, differences are not likely to remain static. They are changed, modified or dissipated in the course

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

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

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

of debate and reflection. Today's difference may be tomorrow's agreement. With the publication of the draft resolution one can see not only if there are any fundamental differences, but what they are and what they're related to. In the meantime, one can examine and re-examine his own and many other points of view.

As for my own personal approach on the Stalin revelations, I wrote an article early in the discussion which appeared in the Daily Worker.

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IT IS my opinion that the discussion has already reached a stage where we have to give far more attention to our own party's policy and role in this country, and to our responsibilities to the American people. That, in the last analysis, will determine the fate of our party. In this connection, my report on the Negro question indicates certain differences on this front in our National Committee and party generally, and I will not elaborate them here.

I believe that the biggest single overall challenge to the American party is the fight against left

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

the American people and the cause of Socialism.

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

We urge upon everyone fullest participation in this discussion.

DISCUSSION COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY



BENJAMIN DAVIS

sectarianism, against this harmful direction of our whole party. The main necessity for this, I believe, arises out of the new historic epoch of today. I do not believe that the central reason for this is either the revelations about Stalin, or the alleged fact that our party over the years has been nothing save a collection of sectarian errors, blunders, and mistakes and idiocies.

I believe that those who base the fundamental changes neces-

sary in our party on the latter two factors as the principal ones are heading the party for even more serious trouble than now. If we base ourselves primarily on the Stalin revelations, then we are not an independent party at all but are making the developments in the Soviet Union decisive as to what we do in America, only more so than ever.

This is fallacious anyway, since we were aware of our isolation, and were attempting to grapple with it, before the 20th Congress. The 20th Congress helps us to focus our attention on the specific characteristics of our own country as never before.

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IF WE based ourselves on the false concept that our past is a huge blunder, then we forget altogether the objective conditions of our country, the past achievements of our party and we wander into a timeless, spaceless subjectivity.

Whatever we decide for our party, must be within the framework of the present historical period and against American imperialism for the purpose of achieving socialism in the quick-

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Los Angeles County Resolution

We Must Strengthen and Maintain the Party

THE CENTRAL question being discussed in our Party concerns the immediate future of our organization. While no one would disagree that our country needs a Mass Party of Socialism, there are sharp differences as to the path which would lead towards such an objective.

The L. A. County Board, recognizing that opinions of today may be modified and/or changed as the discussion in the Party continues, is in general agreement with the following propositions:

1. We recognize that the objective conditions (which our Party does not determine) affecting the economic, political and social status of the American working class are the primary factors in shaping the class consciousness of that working class, with all its resultant impact on other political phenomena.

2. Our Party's task is the defining of the subjective factors (the program, constitution and organization of the Communist Party) which would allow for the fullest utilization of objective changes. We would single out three main questions as decisive to this discussion:

a. The relations of the Party of Socialism to the struggle for immediate demands; i.e. the

question of the struggle for the united front with the broadest masses.

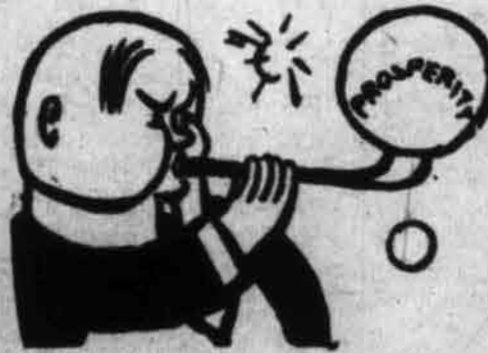
b. The relationship of Communists to other socialist groups.

c. The further application of Marxism to the American scene.

3. The perspectives, therefore, for a New Mass Party of Socialism can only unfold as a result of the process of the development of the class struggle, the development of a mass program designed to bring class and socialist consciousness to Americans, and the development of relations with existing socialist trends. We believe it would be a serious mistake for us, at this time to decide the program and outlook of such a New Party or to blueprint in any way its forms and structure.

4. The maintenance and strengthening of the Communist Party TODAY is essential to any future mass socialist perspective. Even our sharpest critics recognize that we are the largest Marxist organization in America.

5. In our opinion there are two equally dangerous liquidationist trends present in the Party today: The first; liquidate the Party immediately to make room for a new party. We reject the opinion, that a new party could be built at once. In our opinion, the building of such a new party



now would not guarantee a broader organization for socialism with greater ties to the people, especially with a stronger base in the working class.

We also reject the idea that changing the name would make it easier for us to be "accepted" by the mass of the American people. Our Party must fight to establish the legality of Marxism in opinion. There can be no substitute for the fight for the recognition of Marxism as a valid social science and for the right of communists to play their part in the struggles for progress of our country. But this cannot be accomplished by a "gimmick;" it requires the consistent application of Marxism to the U. S. so that it can answer the needs of the American people.

6. We reject with equal emphasis the liquidationism of the left; the idea that there is nothing too basically wrong with our Party, that our isolation comes

not from long-standing weaknesses but solely from the objective conditions. While there is no doubt that the cold war hysteria had enormous results in its attack against the American left, our primary concern must be directed towards the sectarianism in the political line, party democracy, etc., which have historically tended to diminish our influence with the American working class and its allies. Our Party can be liquidated as readily by the defenders of the "status quo" as by those who openly state we have no future. For instance, the SLP is still an organization, but its decline into a sect is an established fact.

We urge, therefore, that the searching re-examination into long accepted traditions of how our Party functions be continued; that no fetishes of so-called "principled" questions become a barrier to this deep-going re-appraisal.

It is obvious that only a Party that had made contributions in the past, that did have an important history of initiating and participation in mass and class struggles, could engage in this type of internal, critical self-examination. The principle to be recognized, in our opinion, is the development of a Party with mass ties.

-L. A. County Board

The American Road to Socialism

Bring Our Socialist Theory Up to Date

By A.L.

Chicago Metal Worker
THE RECENT article "No Magic Formulas," by a Chicago trade unionist, and several others, represents an understandable reaction to the weaknesses of positions like Mac Weiss'. They properly re-introduce the importance of correct day-by-day tactics and hard work in the shops and unions. However these articles in turn make an even more serious mistake in their one-sidedness.

Magic formulas will never bring Socialism. But neither will continuing to bat our heads against a stone wall at the end of a blind alley. Hard work and skilled tactics will bring Socialism ONLY if guided by a theory brought up to date to meet the new conditions. The need for this new theory is what is missed by these comrades.

"A Chicago Trade Unionist" lays most of our isolation at the door of objective conditions and prophesies that in time of economic crisis we will repeat our rise to mass leadership as in the '30s.

But it has been under these same objective conditions that the people defeated McCarthy, labor achieved unity, the Negro people launched the greatest movement in their history, the unions achieved great economic gains. Our party was losing ground while other progressive forces were rising to give leadership.

There is no guarantee that the situation of the 30s will repeat itself. Then there was a vacuum of leadership among the people, which we filled. Today there is no lack of leadership forthcoming.

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THE party's isolation in the shops and unions comes from something much more profound than the lack of hard work and proper tactics. Fact is that some



of us have been plugging away in the shops for years. As individuals we are by no means isolated. But has this altered the isolation of the party as an organization in our shops? No.

The lack of effort, the poor tactics, the weak leadership—these are not causes—these are symptoms of something bigger.

Our party is in a crisis because a new era in the world Socialist movement is opening, just as a new era was opened in November 1917. Something new is struggling to be born, and a dying fundamentalist cultism is trying to hold it back.

The first successful proletarian revolution in 1917 inspired revolutionary Socialists in every country to model themselves on the tactics and organizational forms of the Bolsheviks. Now that So-

cialism has become victorious on a much wider scale—now that lessons are being drawn from 40 years of Russian experience—it is clear that there are other paths to Socialism. As Togliatti pointed out, the world Socialist movement has become a movement of many centers, no longer just one.

It is quite likely that in the U. S., the "party of a new type" has become a party of an old type; that history requires a party of a still newer type in America.

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MANY comrades call for a "return to Leninism." What could be more un-Leninist? Shall we now pore over the works of Lenin, paragraph by paragraph, to debate which is universally applicable and which specifically Russian?

Religious scholars in the Mid-

dle Ages spent several centuries in such a study of the Bible. If Lenin were living in America today—he would plunge into American life and American thought—guided by a spirit of scientific inquiry—evolving new theories based on facts instead of preconceived notions; checking them against results and changing them as he went.

We can best evolve this new American Socialist theory not only among ourselves, but as quickly as possible in discussion and activity with other Socialist and liberal minded forces. Many of these people were more correct than we about a lot of things in recent years.

We need a new united American Socialist movement not for negative reasons alone, not because we want to change the name of the Communist Party to duck out from our mistakes.

We need it because the success of the Socialist sector of the world has spread the cause of Socialism beyond the boundaries of the Communists alone. We no longer have a monopoly on Socialism.

New movements should take the best of the past along with them. We have a huge contribution to make to a new American Socialist movement. Our single greatest contribution will be our experience at this hard, day-to-day tactical struggle in the shops and unions!

With whom shall we unite? Let's not pooh-pooh other Socialist trends as "isolated intellectuals," "semi-Trotskyites" etc. Revolutionary Socialist politics is not counting noses, like a ward heeler. Our concern is to seek out that which is truthful, new and developing—no matter how small it may appear today.

In political life two plus two seldom equals four. It usually adds up to 10 and rapidly grows to 50 and 100. There are thousands of ex-Communists still active in the labor movement; many labor leaders under Socialist influences. The unification of existing Socialist trends would quickly draw to this movement a powerful force in the trade unions.

A new united Socialist movement probably could not agree on the American path to Socialism. But neither could we Communists if we continue our party's existence. How can there be agreement when sufficient experience from the Soviet Union, Italy, France, etc. are not yet in? And even after European experiences are in, there will be plenty of room for inquiry and argument about the American scene.

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A MONOLITHIC party was possible after 1917 because it appeared as if experience proved beyond argument the correctness of the Bolshevik method. The further advance of Socialism has opened up additional paths, many of them untried yet.

Better to have a live active movement full of healthy controversy over points that are necessarily still open—than a unanimous senile cult.

Before we become too alarmed over the idea of a long period of debate, let's remember one simple thing. In Europe and Asia the majority of workers have long accepted Socialism as their class goal. Arguments about ways of reaching Socialism there are of current importance.

But in the U. S. the majority haven't had a chance to find out the truth about Socialism. It would be well worth a few years of internal debate over paths to Socialism if all American Socialists could pool their efforts to tell the American workers what Socialism is.

Letters from Readers

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while work is hard. It keeps me young and makes me creative.

I've worked while being a mother too, and it is not at all liberating to have your little ones and come home so tired and know that your prime job of raising good citizens must be done on a part-time basis.

Perhaps women in professions feel differently, I cannot say.

Whenever I've been able to catch up with family debts being a housewife my favorite role; my family's favorite role for me too. Every working mother I've ever met wished that she didn't have to work and that she could give her children the full time they need. Childhood is so short when it is over, your chances are over.

I would feel more helpful toward a young mother if I could contribute a feeling of importance in her own mind about her life than to tell her that she is right in feeling dragged down. Capitalism drags both sexes down. Need we fight over who is more miserable?

It would be better, if a young



mother is in a receptive frame of mind to help her learn to do her new job more efficiently. It is a good feeling to get a few tips on any new job.

Help a younger person learn the short cuts and easier attitudes. It's nice to drop in and tell a friend like that, to take her husband for a soda, she may do the same for you some evening. She may not be acquainted with the many activities available to housewives. Adult centers are jammed with such women. Clubwomen in America are myriad. Housewives are a most organized group. They have a large national network of religious, cultural parent and even baby sitting clubs and organizations. The forms of organization may be not according to our liking, but they do very nicely and they defend their position and they see it.

They do not feel downtrodden, they are not as backward as Elizabeth Lawson thinks—they just place more value upon their place in the world than she seems to.

I expect that they shall always be quick to sense whatever tasks events put in their hands.

—A. B.

Wants More Action On the Jews

NEW YORK.

Dear Editor:

Two items which appeared in today's issue struck me for their unusual honesty, of a degree which has seldom appeared in all the recent discussions. I refer to Lillian Gates' article and the letter of Stanley Archer.

Like Archer, I cannot agree with your acceptance of the resolution of the C.C. of the CPSU as a "profound Marxist analysis," and, I suspect, if the truth were known, neither would many others.

I am an outsider, and I truly would like to understand the mechanics of "democratic centralism."

As far as your own statement is concerned I cannot (Continued on Page 10)

Let's Look at Our Record-- The Reasons for Mistakes

By A PARTY MEMBER

DETROIT, Mich.

The recent revelations about very serious weaknesses in the Soviet Union as well as our own severe isolation require that the present self-critical discussion of our Party go really deep. We should shake ourselves up.

In this respect, it is not enough to list left-sectarian mistakes; we have to analyze WHY we made such mistakes.

There are two basic reasons, in my opinion, for the series of profound mistakes we made over many years.

1. Whereas we should have been an independent and equal Party, we were substantially under the ideological thumb of Soviet Communist leaders.

2. Michigan experience has forced me to conclude that much of our leadership lacks essential working-class qualities.

Following are examples of subservience to Soviet Communist leadership. Some reflect serious mistakes which they made in international policy to which we gave wholehearted approval. Others reflect Russian policy that we wrongly tried to transplant to the U.S.A.

1. Our Communist Party



structure is modeled on Lenin's book, "What is to be done," which describes the kind of a Communist Party needed in Czarist Russia of the early 1900's. We incorporated this description lock, stock and barrel for the U.S.A. of the 20's to the 50's.

A Communist Party structure modeled with the U.S.A. in mind will be more likely to grow and prosper.

2. In 1939, when the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, we flipped-flopped from a militant anti-Nazi stand to a "Yanks are not coming" position.

Yet at that time, the Nazis were fast increasing their strength. This flip-flop smashed our reputation among the majority of our former coalition allies in the anti-Nazi struggle. We are still suffering from this mistake.

3. In 1941, when Nazi Ger-

many attacked the Soviet Union, we again flipped-flopped into all-outers for war and the second front.

This position was correct. But we had to turn a somersault to get to it because we previously tried to transplant a Russian policy to American soil.

In addition, we now glued our eyes so single-mindedly on the Soviet Union, that we neglected many justified grievances of the American workers. We even proposed piece work. This is remembered by many workers.

4. In 1947, Andrei Zhdanov described what is, in my opinion, an over-simplified version of the world forces: namely, 2 camps—peace vs. war; socialism and democracy vs. imperialism and fascism.

This became the policy of the Cominform. The job was to strengthen the one and weaken the other.

We applied this one-sided conception in its full oversimplification to the U.S.A. Like the scholastics of the middle ages we sought the facts to fit the Bible (line).

Thus, Walter Reuther, Potofsky, the NAACP leadership, etc., who certainly were not in the peace camp, were placed in the

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Letters from Readers

(Continued from Page 7) comment any further, since I cannot always understand the specialized terminology you use. That is why Lillian Gates' article was impressive, refreshing and comprehensible.

Neither can I swallow the evasive treatment of the subject of anti-Semitism (and I know these feelings are shared by others). The futile "rehabilitation" of victims as though the whole matter never existed does not resemble the honest self-criticism you describe.

I doubt that the Jews of the world wish to disappear as a people. One of the reasons the Soviet Union held the respect of Jews of various political beliefs



was the feeling that here, at last, the Jews could decide their own destiny, without the pressures against them existing elsewhere. Here it was not necessary to change one's name to survive, and one could encourage their children to be proud of their language and culture, without feeling of shame and inferiority.

The shattering of this belief gave further impetus to the migration to Israel. If you feel that the Zionist movement is "bourgeois" inspired you are mistaken again. Israel represents the desperate desire of Jews of all classes to survive as a people, with dignity and self-respect. It is also the last resort of Jews who are disillusioned with socialism, as they have seen it.

Since you have contributed to this situation by your own admitted shortcomings, it is your responsibility to take the initiative here to show the leaders of the Soviet Union that we are far from satisfied by their treatment of this tragedy.

Many American Jews, like myself, are trying honestly to keep some faith in socialism. For us, your protestations of sincerity are not enough, we would like to see some honest action.

A READER.

The American Road to Socialism

Changes Needed, But Keep Shop Branches

THIS LETTER expresses some of the opinions of the Communist steelworkers in the Gary area concerning the Dennis report and the general discussion now taking place in the party, exemplified in the discussion section of *The Worker* and in P.A.

Firstly, while we feel that the discussion of the 20th Party Congress of the Soviet Union has world-wide importance and that the views expressed by the Soviet comrades bear extensive discussion in our own party, we are more concerned with the direction the American party has gone in the past several years and the character and direction of the future.

By this we mean that discussion of a "line" on foreign policy, transition to socialism, national electoral policy, etc., is subordinate at this moment to the paramount question of a unified, but thoroughly democratic party, free of bureaucracy, and based on the working class. Indeed, judging from some of the discussion we have read, even whether we are to have a Communist Party.

Taking the question of the party's existence first, we state unequivocally, that the Communist Party, i. e., a Leninist party must continue to exist in the United States. Many changes are necessary in its organizational set-up, its constitution and its outlook, but there can be no substitute for a Marxist-Leninist type party in the struggle for socialism.

What changes must be made in the party and what weaknesses overcome? Here we believe two things are important. The first is organization and the second, outlook. The two are of course interrelated but we can discuss them separately here.

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FIRST on organization. Using the phrase "democratic centralism" or more correctly, misusing it, our party has gradually developed the centralism and neglected the democratic to the point that it has withered and almost died. Democratic centralism derives its merit from its ability to draw on the experience of the whole party. The comrades in the basic organizations, the branches, discuss policy and express opinions to the leadership. They elect leadership and can disagree with leaders. But for the past many years there has been the absence of conventions, of democratic election of leading people, of the ability of the mem-

bers to disagree and most important of all, an absence of leaders consulting with the comrades in the branches and learning from these comrades who are in daily contact with the people. It is this fact that in the main accounts for our mistakes in judgment in the past. From where we sit, we see a cleavage in thinking between the full-time leadership and the rank and file which is so great as to give us in effect two parties.



We feel that the first big change in the party must be to take steps such as constitutional guarantees of free discussion, elimination of co-optation, democratic elections, etc.; the cutting down of full time administrative personnel, the integration of shop and community comrades in lead-

ing policy-making bodies and the assignment of full-time leaders to work directly with specified sections over an extended period so that the comrades can learn from each other.

The policy for our work in steel, for example, must come primarily from the comrades who are steelworkers and not handed down by some full-time functionary who happens to have been assigned to work in that area.

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SECONDLY as to the party outlook. We feel that the most glaring weakness over the past years is the failure of the party to turn its face to the working class. We have made several good resolutions, such as Comrade Winston's report in 1947 (Continued on Page 11)



SOME AREAS OF AGREEMENT

(Continued from Page 6) est time and in a peaceful, democratic manner. The concept that our party's past is just a blob of mistakes, makes of our party leaders and members like a bunch of fools. It undermines confidence that our party can solve its problems. This is false and demoralizing.

I strongly disagree with the report of Norman Schrank to the N. Y. State Committee because among other things, it tends to wipe out the past achievements of the party. It contributes to the false notion that the last years of our party membership have been wasted. I can understand the desire of the reporter for a hard-hitting self-critical approach. But laudable motives do not always produce laudable results. One may allow too for the fact that our party, especially on the upper levels, is unfamiliar with self-criticism, but the Schrank report is still a grotesque distortion of self-criticism.

Self-criticism is to strengthen, not to destroy. Americans don't act that way about organizations they belong to that have made any positive community contributions. The contributions of our party to American democracy

from its inception are too numerous to list here.

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THE Schrank report also stimulates tendencies toward liquidation and opens the door to all sorts of right opportunist dangers. It is inevitable, in the present state of our party, that other dangers besides sectarian ones appear, some honest and some not.

A lengthy document is being widely circulated in our party calling openly for a return to Browderism. In my opinion, we should return to nothing, since there is no previous period like this one. Naturally, we should correct any past mistakes with respect to policy or individuals. We must go forward in this entirely new and different period—different from all previous periods in the 108 years since the founding of Marxism.

Our party was sectarian during Browder's leadership and it was only after his anti-Marxist ideology was rejected that we shed ourselves of some of the sectarian aspects of our policy. Thirdly, had we not defeated Browderism—with its rosy picture of American imperialism seeking coexistence with the so-

cialist and democratic camps—we would have been more in the soup than now. Since '45, the chief danger of a world atomic war has been from the firebrands of the American monopolists.

One of the most positive lessons we should learn from the Browder period is that we should not go overboard in correcting sectarianism as we did in correcting right opportunism. Far larger sections of the American people are ready to struggle for peace and democratic advancement than ever in the nation's history. Even the ranks of socialist-minded citizens have increased. We have to eliminate boldly all self-imposed tactics which temporarily estrange our party from these masses. Likewise we hope others will do their share in making the adjustments necessary for the broadest unity of the people.

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MANY comrades hesitate on the radical changes that must be made against sectarianism because they fear that Browderism or some other kind of right opportunism will be imposed upon the Party—such opportunist errors as infected our strug-

gle for Negro rights during World War II. Then, we rejected the double-V campaign of the Pittsburgh Courier—for victory over Hitler abroad and victory over jimcrow at home. That was one of the gems of Browder's leadership. I hope we shall have done for all time with zigging and zagging in the mass struggle for Negro rights.

Right opportunism is not the main danger in our Party today, and even the appearance of reefs and shoals of a right character does not make it so. Yet, within the framework of our historic sectarianism, our Party has made many massive right opportunist mistakes—such as Browderism, Lovestoneism, both on unscientific theories of American exceptionalism. American capitalism has many unique features, which we, because of our sectarianism, have too long neglected. But it is still monopoly capitalism, subject to certain basic laws common to all capitalisms.

The left sectarian danger grows out of an encrusted method and orientation of the Party which, in this historical period, can transform our Party into an impotent sect. Right opportunism can become a serious danger only if our Party fails to arm the membership on all types of mistakes which can be made in transforming our Party into a truly powerful arm of the American people, into an effective instrument for socialism.

It is high time we got over our immature one-sidedness, our tendency to swing from one extreme to the other. As has often been said, life is much richer than theory. And we must face up to it in all its complexity, alerting our Party membership against all the various types of dangers which could divert us from the main task.

We cannot have an attitude of spoon-feeding our member-

ship, that is, of failing to tell them of one danger simply because we fear it may divert them from attention to another. I don't believe that if our Party membership is informed of the right danger, it will inhibit them from going all out in their struggle against the main left danger.

The present period in our Party is one of education as well as of basic self-critical examination. Either we take advantage of it in all its various aspects, or the political eyes of our members will have blinders so that they can see in only one direction and not the whole picture.

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THE PERIOD of "sacred cows" in the Communist movement is over, whether applied to theories, policies or personnel—at home or abroad. Under the guise of ridding the movement of old "cows," let us not establish any new ones. Let us not drift into an atmosphere in our Party that inhibits one from mentioning anything except left sectarianism. That is self-defeating and has nothing in common with the far greater democracy which must permeate our Party.

Over the last five or six years our Party members have grown tremendously. That too is a feature of this period and deserves much greater appreciation. As we move from one historic period to another, some of the most cherished principles, not only of Stalin, but of Lenin and Marx will need rethinking.

We will have no hesitancy in doing this in the interest of the American people, whenever the need and the occasion arises. In my judgment, the science of Marxism-Leninism, in all its many sidedness, is still indispensable if the enormously new opportunities for peace, freedom and socialism in this period are to be realized by the American people.

The American Road to Socialism



The Reason for Our Mistakes

(Continued from Page 7)

Other camp—the war camp. Their middle positions: opposition to illegalization of the C.P.; opposition to McCarthyism; for Negro rights; support of many colonial liberation struggles; etc. thus could not be considered as a basis for united struggle but rather as demagoguery on their part to ensnare the people to support a coming war.

To explain our losses and growing isolation, we stated that the people really believed our program and will soon follow the left. All we would have to do is take our program to the people.

ECONOMIC MISTAKES

5. This rationalization was fortified by another error of the Soviet Union which we adhered to.

When Eugene Varga, the Soviet economist, asserted the U.S.A. will probably enjoy an extended period of prosperity, he was disgraced. Some other Soviet economist gave the reasons why Varga was "wrong." We printed that article in the P.A. and substantially followed its reasoning.

And so we predicted the imminence of a major depression which would radicalize the workers and end our isolation, provided we put forth our program boldly. Ever since then we have had a persistent, leftist, false estimate of economic trends in the U.S.A.

6. In 1948, the Soviet Union opposed the Marshall Plan. In spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of American workers supported it as a means, however imperfect, to help rebuild Europe, we adamantly opposed every part of it. We thereby ignored the sentiments of the American workers—a profoundly wrong thing to do.

7. In 1948, when news came that prominent Jewish cultural institutions in the Soviet Union were shut down and in the years right after when "cosmopolitanism" came to be associated more and more with Jews and Zionism, we preferred faith to facts and vigorously defended the Soviet Union.

Now that anti-Semitism is proven to have been sponsored by some leading Communists in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and possibly other Socialist countries, we are caught with our pants down. Some of our leaders, particularly in Michigan, still assert anti-Semitism has never reared its head in the Soviet Union because it is "impossible." Shades of Scholasticism!

More such examples can be listed.

As a result of this lack of independence, we developed a dogmatic instead of a scientific method in our evaluation of everything. We fitted the facts to suit a "line." Thus, we were often wrong in our analysis of difficult, profound problems.

INDEPENDENCE AND INTERNATIONAL

Further, as a result of this lack of independence, we developed, basically, a non-American approach to many problems. We therefore found it almost impossible to develop a truly American party. We gave grist to the mill which furnished the false argument that we are an American but rather a foreign-dominated party.

Some may think independence of thought is a violation of international working-class cooperation. That is not true. Really independent, national and equal parties are a necessary condition for true international cooperation; otherwise the result is dominance, not cooperation.

This is not to say that, overall, the existence and truly great accomplishments of the world's first socialist state did not have an enormously positive effect on the development of progressive forces in our country. Nor is it to say that policy was ever dictated or forced upon the Communist Party of the U. S. A. by the Soviet Communist Party.

It is to say that in many ways the leadership and some of the membership of our party voluntarily acquiesced to the ideological dominance of the leaders of the Soviet party. This inevitably undermined our Marxist scholarship; caused grave errors; and helped brand us as a non-American political party.

Our leadership must not evade this question. They must analyze it fearlessly and burn out this lack of independence as with a hot iron. It is surely heartening that the Daily Worker, in its own right, has made such a remarkably good start in this direction.

Thought must also be given to why we acquiesced to Soviet party ideological dominance. Briefly, these reasons seem to me to explain why: 1. The Soviet party adopted an open aura of infallibility and boastfulness along with the idolatry of Stalin. Further, they stated that they alone were at the head of the world's peace camp. They covered up mistakes instead of exposing them. 2. We considered the Soviet Union the full answer as to how to attain socialism and as to how to build it. Undialecti-

cally, we considered their model the paragon for all, which in philosophy is known as idealistic absolutism. 3. The theoretical level of our leadership is low. 4. The ties of our leadership with the workingclass are weak.

THERE IS A SECOND REASON

There is a second basic reason for the great number of serious errors our party continues to make in its tardiness in correcting errors: namely, grave weaknesses among many of our leaders—I refer to my personal experience in Michigan.

These weaknesses consist of egotism; lack of contact with the party rank and file and with ordinary workers; lack of personal participation in mass people's organizations; lack of comprehension of shop moods, needs and problems. In other words, a big divorcement from the workers on the part of the leadership, and a profound lack of understanding on their part in this PREVENTS them from leading the workers.

I believe that most of the shop members and sympathizers of the Communist Party in Michigan look on the party leadership warily. Many, in some of the biggest shops, strongly resist having anything to do with the organized party leadership. On the contrary, they believe they can do better progressive work in the unions on their own without the "burden" of the party leadership.

It would be profoundly wrong to think that most of these workers are cowardly or economist. They strongly believe in socialism and progress; but they also strongly believe that the present party leadership, organization and methods are not suited to the workers and the problems they encounter.

Many other shop workers are in contact with the party, but hesitatingly, warily, by no means whole-heartedly.

Is this critical situation an indication that the party has no role to play in the struggles of the Michigan workingclass? Not at all.

Burning, unanswered problems plague Michigan workers; and they would most eagerly appreciate help to solve them. In the General Motors shops, speed-up and repression has reached the point of terror in some shops. Speed-up and intimidation is very severe in the Ford plants. Speed-up is a raging issue in the Chrysler plants.

Thousands of auto workers, now laid off, many with much seniority, are desperately worried they will never get their jobs back even with high auto pro-

duction because of automation, speed-up and decentralization.

Negro workers still face rampant discrimination; are the largest percentage of unemployed; find it the hardest to exist while unemployed; have poor, over-crowded housing conditions.

Other sharp, deep problems exist, too, calling for the aid of just such an organization as a Communist Party—close to the workers, mindful of their needs, down to earth in its estimates, ably using its vast experiences and Marxist science.

The unions, while absolutely necessary, cannot totally and properly answer such questions and needs. They don't have sufficient long-range perspective nor enough insight into the class struggle.

In the face of all this, we say we are isolated in Michigan. But are we isolated? Who is isolated? Our shop members are not isolated: It is our leaders who are isolated from our shop members and other workers. Therein is the isolation.

Our leadership must be intimately associated with shop workers. Shop workers must be in a position to vote on and influence all important Communist Party policy.

Not only our leadership and shop workers, but also the workers generally and union leadership in many cases—their moods, problems and desires—must influence and constantly refine and change our policies.

This would be real party democracy. It would also keep us from swaying to the left or the right of the workingclass track.

WORTH REPEATING

I know there is nothing new in what I am writing here. But it is worth endless repetition until it is forced through to achievement!

In Michigan, our leadership are not even in functioning party clubs of any type; most of them do not participate in mass organizations; the top leadership, instead of honestly and sincerely listening to rank and file opinion and seeking out such opinion, much more strongly press their own opinions and hand down totally top-instituted policies.

We can in no way deny the difficulties of the great attacks upon us and the job-security difficulties of our members. However, we must not make this an excuse to enrust our bureaucracy and further stunt our inner democracy. Indeed, this situation requires a real study of how to democratize our party and eliminate insufferable egotism in the leadership.

In summary: the basic causes of our left-sectarian errors and slowness to correct our errors lie in the substantial ideological subservience of the American party leadership to Soviet party policy and secondly, in a stunted inner democracy and bureaucratic leadership—at least as I have seen it in one important area.

The solution of these weaknesses are necessary if we are to grow and avoid in the future the disastrous errors of the past.

Prisoners

(Continued from Page 3)

and rubber hose (for writing prison authorities about complaints.)

"No smart lawyer is supposed to come here and see about anything. We keep you here as long as we want you here," the warden told Brown.

★

THE WITNESS Jones, who had been in the same prison with Brown, said he had seen the warden tear up Brown's letter. "I'm running this chaingang and I want you to understand that," he heard the warden shout at Brown. Jones said the warden

Shop Branches

(Continued from Page 10)

and Comrade Hall's in 1949, but in practice only feeble pretenses have been made to make ours the party of the workingclass.

We have remained in composition and in direction more closely associated with the middle class. This orientation, in our opinion, accounts for our mistakes in constantly attempting to organize new left centers which gain some support among the middle class, particularly in large cities, but hardly among the basic workers. In fact, attempts to insist on introducing these middle class forms into basic working-class areas such as steel have contributed to the difficulties of the comrades in those areas. Further, we fail completely to see the key character of our work in the basic trade unions, and with notable exceptions, the entire discussion in The Worker ignores the class character of the party.

We disagree most strongly with those comrades who express the need to dissolve the shop branches. We feel the shop branches need strengthening. But more than that, the party must consider the work in the basic trade unions as the most important work for the entire party. This means that the national policies of the party must be made with a view of how they will be received among the workers as more important than how they will affect the middle class.

If this were done several years ago we would not have made so many errors in regard to the Progressive Party as one example. We feel that the discussion today, giving such overwhelming prominence to such questions as a mass party of socialism and the peaceful transition to socialism reflects a middle class thinking which permeates our party.

These are not the questions uppermost in the minds of the workers. They are not yet ready to think in terms of socialism. The capitalist system has not demonstrated to the workers that it has outlived its usefulness. A mass party of socialism will not become important to the workers until they are convinced that capitalism can no longer serve their needs. This they will learn from experience and through struggle. Once they are convinced and know the need for socialism, then they will find their own roads to socialism.

We cannot draw the blueprints now. And any statements we make about how peaceful the path will be will not convince them. The question of peaceful or forceful means is not what is holding back the workers. It is the lack of complete exposure of the nature of capitalism.

★

SOME of our comrades say frankly that we need a complete overhauling of our present leadership including wholesale changes in leading personnel in order to make the necessary changes in the party. Most of us feel, however, that the organizational changes must be made first along with the decisions to democratize the party and orient it to the basic workingclass. We feel that some of the present leaders can adjust to the new thinking but many will not. Those who are so steeped in the old bureaucratic methods that they cannot change cannot be al-

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kept punching Brown. "A guard drew a shotgun on Brown and hit Brown on the head with an iron pin—about 1½ inches around and a foot long—" taken from a bulldozer nearby.

Jones said that the warden later that day warned the prisoners in the mess hall that "I know how to get along with you black sons of bitches. That's to kill you and work hell out of you!"

A nice picture this of what the cult of white supremacy has done to human beings black and white in the great state of Georgia and the other states likewise of the South.

Shop Branches

(Continued from Page 11)

lowed to continue in leadership.

We feel that there is a future for our party in this country, that this future will be realized and that the party will come out of this crisis stronger and more capable of assuming its vanguard role.

GARY STEEL WORKER.