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Dear Reader:

We received the following note from one of our friends and readers. "I have been getting around a great deal in my region, as you know. Some of my experiences have been the unhappy kind—fighting to convince some members to remain in the Party. Sometimes I've been successful. Sometimes not. I am writing to you to present questions that are raised by all these people, most of whom do not know each other. I think it would be good if we had some articles answering these questions.

1. Is there a need in our country for a Communist Party?

2. Since many organizations, such as the ADA, NAACP, and others have taken up many programmatic demands we once made, is there a place and a role for a Communist Party?

3. What is the role of a Communist Party today, in our country? Can it play a vanguard role?

4. Since we have been so thoroughly labelled, slanderously, as "foreign agents," can we take part in the marketplace of ideas and have our ideas looked upon on their merits?

5. Can the present leadership make the changes needed to revitalize our movement as an American movement that can play a role in our nation's affairs?

I hope that some of your readers will undertake to write answers in on these subjects."

Comradely,
W. T.

Our own answers to these questions are unequivocal—there is a place and a need for a Communist Party. It has an important role to play, and we need big changes to enable us to play that role. But we present these questions as requested by our friend to stimulate the answers from our readers. We hope we hear from you.

We have received another letter from outside our state, which we reprint here because the writer asks us to. Since we have been listening to his bald headed threats with apathy for years, we reprint it for Auld Lang Syne.

Party Voice

Dear Sam:

Glad to see someone in the New York State leadership take the long overdue step of repudiating the article "Opportunism in District 65," written in June of '53 by Kendrick and Golden.

I hope it is the beginning of a profound study and examination of past experiences of activity in former left-led unions. It would be helpful if one industry and union were examined to help determine what estimate and analysis existed to lay the basis for policies and tactics that led to our isolation.

The New York State Board, together with the Party organization in District 65 by undertaking such an examination would be making an important contribution to the present discussion.

A searching critique of the article by Kendrick and Golden would be a helpful start. Now that we have heard from Coleman how about a more basic critique from Kendrick and /or Golden.

(As an aside—how do Kendrick and Golden or the N. Y. State Board explain the effort to "expose" "Opportunism in District 65" a year after the National Committee began to lay the basis for a serious struggle against our sectarianism and growing isolation. Recall the articles and reports in '52 and early '53 by Swift, Rockman and Stevens.)

With best regards,
SAULLY WELLMAN

* * *

We think that the British Daily Worker editorial which discusses the crisis in the British Communist Party has a very valid point. That is that the discussion be conducted in a comradely spirit—with an eye toward the collective solving of a common crisis and problem. We endorse that plea, and make it in our own behalf.

* * *

We have received several requests for a definition of democratic centralism. We reprint here the standard definition taken from the rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the only definition we can find.

"The guiding principle of the organizational structure of the Party is democratic centralism, which signifies:

a) The application of the elective principle to all leading organs from the highest to the lowest.

b) Periodical reports of the Party organs to their respective Party organizations.

c) Strict Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority.

d) The absolutely binding character of the decisions of the higher organs upon the lower organs and upon all Party members."

(Quoted by Zhdanov: Organizational Problems of the Communist Party, p. 13)

Points (a) and (b) refer to the democratic election of the leadership, and the democratic right of the members to hear reports and review the work of the leadership.

Sections (c) and (d) define the centralism. The leadership thus elected can make all decisions for all lower bodies and all members.

The question of policy making is regulated entirely (except for elections of the policy makers, and the periodical reports back) by the centralist points, c and d.

We hope this answers the purpose of the readers who have asked for the definition.

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OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CPSU

By L. W. M.

(The writer does not believe that the Draft Resolution deals satisfactorily with the problems discussed in this article, and therefore submits it as part of the discussion of that Draft, although it was written previously.)

Communists can serve no cause—neither the advancement of socialist ideas in this country, nor protection of socialism where it exists or is being built—without winning the confidence of the people of this country, and primarily of workers, Negroes and others suffering discrimination in any degree and seeking to overcome it.

In our day, this confidence cannot be won solely by fighting for the people's daily needs. In the first place, Communists are not alone in doing so. Powerful organizations—unions, NAACP, parents' associations—do so with energy, sincerity and much success.

Communists can win support for socialism only by demonstrating that the people's needs can be met more fully and quickly under a socialist organization of society than under a capitalist, and that certain fundamental problems—depression, unemployment—cannot be solved under capitalism at all.

Today, the existence of socialist countries—countries in which most means of production are publicly owned—and primarily of the Soviet Union, means that socialism is judged on its record. No matter how completely the picture of life in a socialist U.S.A. may be worked out in the future, advocates of socialism here are compelled, whenever that subject is discussed, to take a stand on the way in which it has worked out in the Soviet Union.

In most of the world this easily becomes an asset to the advocates of socialism, for the increase in production made possible by that system, and the elimination of the contrast

between extreme luxury for landlords and capitalists and extreme poverty for the people, has already made it superior in every way to slave-owning, feudal and undeveloped capitalist forms of society. But in countries where capitalism has a long history, where the democratic institutions set up by the capitalists to reflect changes in business fortune have been broadened by the people's struggle for universal suffrage, enfranchisement of women and minorities, and civil liberties, and where imperialist exploitation of foreign countries has made possible an increased living standard at home: in these countries, particularly our own, the argument for socialism on the basis of its accomplishments is more difficult.

Productivity

The basic factor in demonstrating the superiority of one system over another is its productivity. You can't give the people what you haven't got. The Soviet Union does not yet produce nearly as much as we, nor does it produce, *per head of population*, as much as any West European country, or Japan, in a number of fields, or even as much per person as the East European people's democracies which had a century of capitalist development. It can provide the world's most universal health care, as proved by the fact that its death rate is lower than ours—an enormous achievement for a country that eats much more poorly than we. It is, before our very eyes, surpassing us in the level of compulsory education it gives its children. It offers its women painless childbirth, and the Pope recommends the Soviet method to the world. It has shod the barefoot, replaced rags with clothes, eliminated national inequality to a degree not touched by any other country.

In some respects, however, progress has been slow, and in some, there has been none at all in the 40 years since the Revolution. The *Daily Worker's* Moscow correspondent reported Monday (July 23) that the housing space per person is hardly greater than in 1913, before the Revolution, and is smaller than in 1926, and that new housing is now distributed on the basis of one family per room, with two or three families sharing kitchen and bathroom. The fact that housing for 25,000,000 Soviet people was destroyed in World War II is something that West European workers can understand, having suffered much air raid destruction, but to Americans it is only a statistic.

Nor has the Soviet Union yet greatly surpassed the number of cattle it had 28 years ago. This is due to wartime destruction and, before that, destruction by peasants who followed the lead of rich farmers—kulaks—in killing their cattle rather than yielding them to collective ownership. This is reflected in the amount of meat and milk in the diet, although fairer distribution enables the Soviet worker to eat meat two or three times a week, while he rarely saw it in Tsarist days. Nor has grain output kept up with the growth in population, until this year.

Clearly, the American people cannot be won to socialism solely on the basis of its achievements in raising the living standards of the Soviet people, particularly when Soviet leaders admit that things could have been better but for mistakes in agricultural and other policies. Nor can American advocates of socialism run away from the facts of Soviet life, all the "bad" sides of which have been carefully reported by the capitalist press, and repeated by trade union and other molders of opinion.

Political Conditions

If this is true in the sphere of material conditions, it is even more true in the sphere of political life. In material matters, including living standard, education and health, even the capitalist press admits that the USSR has an overall record of great progress, despite the exceptions indicated above. But in terms of political freedom, it is now clear that matters got progressively worse for 25 years, from the silencing of the Trotskyites—who are now admitted to have been oppositionists, but not criminals—in 1927, to Stalin's death in 1953. In the entire history of political movements by any nation or class in any country, there is nothing to compare to the execution, under Stalin and his colleagues, of 70 per cent of the Party Central Committee elected in 1934: 98 out of 139 members. What makes this unique is the fact that these were not oppositionists, but people who had won election on the basis of their contribution to industrialization and collectivization, and who wholeheartedly supported the line of the Congress at which they were elected.

Americans simply want no political system under which anything like this can take place. This requires American advocates of socialism to spell out civil liberties and the functioning of democracy in a socialist America. But for the American Communist Party it means more.

Civil Liberties Under Socialism

The American Communist Party does not approach the American people with clean hands, as far as the Soviet Union is concerned. The American Communist Party repeated, as gospel truth, which it sincerely believed, every lie told by the Soviet Union about its living standards, about Tito, about democracy in the Soviet Communist Party, about the Moscow Trials, about the electoral system, about the Doctors' Case, the stamping out of Jewish culture.

This is also true of other Communist Parties. It is the more to their discredit because their leaders have been in and out of the USSR con-

stantly, and many lived there for years. However, they at least enjoy the advantage of solid ties to the people in countries where the working a "foreign agent." This is not a capitalism. This is true not only in Italy and France, but in England and even Canada.

The United States is the one modern country whose working class does not oppose the capitalist system. The working class actively supports the existing bourgeois democratic system of government, and believes it better than any dictatorial system it has ever seen elsewhere, including the Soviet Union. The Negro people are fighting segregated schools and buses, and for the right to vote, while not fighting the plantation system at present, thus indicating that human dignity is at least as important to them, and at the moment more important, than economic issues.

Problem of American Communists

If, in this situation, less favorable than in any other important country on earth, the Communist Party is not to damage the cause of socialism, much less advance it, it must free itself completely of the charge of being a "foreign agent." This is not a matter of proving in a Smith Act Trial that Communists have been good soldiers in the war, or the labor movement, or in struggle against discrimination, or that they have not taken money from the Soviet Union, or direct orders, or even of showing that the Communist Party has made practical applications of policy on its own.

It is a matter of proving that they do not regard the Soviet word as gospel, that they are not apologists, that they judge the Soviet Union on the basis of facts and not propaganda handouts, that they study Soviet developments independently, exactly as Marx studied the Civil War in the United States, and that agreement with the Soviet Union, when it occurs, arises out of thinking based on the interests of the non-exploiting majority of the American peoples, and its experience.

This is not the case today. Last July the *Worker* carried an article by the Chairman of the CPUSA, William

Z. Foster, on the June 30th resolution of the C.C., CPSU written in reply to world criticism, and that of Communist Parties, of developments in the Soviet Union revealed by the 20th Congress, and particularly the secret Khrushchev report. Foster has not one word of criticism to offer of that resolution, or of the Soviet leaders, or of any aspect of the present situation in the USSR.

Yet, among other things, that resolution is a direct slap in the face of the Communist Party of the United States. The CPSU has a perfect right to disagree with Togliatti or anyone else. But its newspaper, *Pravda*, has no right, when choosing to reprint a critical article by the General Secretary of the American Party, Dennis, to censor it by omitting his reference to the execution of Jewish cultural leaders and the suppression of Jewish-language culture, something on which not one word has been said in the USSR to this day. The crime is compounded, and its deliberateness is made clear, when, having chosen only Dennis' article to inform the Soviet people of foreign Communist criticism (and Dennis' criticism was far weaker than Togliatti's), the CPSU resolution contrasts his approving words to Togliatti's criticism, and again completely ignores the question on which it censored his article.

How can any American Jew: how can any American Negro, who knows, as William L. Patterson put it in the *Daily*, that his fate is bound up with that of any other minority, have any use for an American political leader who fails to protest this censorship and to raise the censured question even more strongly? Dennis, by his silence for the months since his article appeared in *Pravda*, and Foster, by his failure to mention this matter in his article, have abdicated all right to leadership in the Communist Party. This is not their only mistake, and they have performed a lifetime of services (as did Rakosi and Gero) but at this moment it is a fatal mistake with which the Communist Party cannot live. If the Party does not demonstrate independence, it cannot live. This is not independence, but cringing subservience.

Why the Fatal Mistake?

But if this is the straw that ends their usefulness to the Party as its top leaders, or the Party's usefulness to the American people if it retains them (just as Rakosi's unwillingness to break with Stalinist methods ended his usefulness as the leader of the Hungarian Party he served with incredible self-sacrifice for a lifetime), there still remains the question as to why they have remained silent.

I believe the basic reason is so-called defense of the Soviet Union. But today the Soviet Union can defend itself, as the 20th Congress made amply clear. In the world balance of forces, capitalist encirclement no longer exists. It is the Communist Parties abroad, and particularly the CPUSA, that needs defense. The CPSU made a contribution in that direction, starting with the Belgrade apology to Tito last year, when it indicated its belief in different paths to socialism, and the independence of the various parties. A further contribution was made by dissolution of the Cominform. But the leaders of the CPSU are apparently too steeped in their exalted position in the world Communist movement to be consistent in this respect. Their Resolution of June 30, and the subsequent Pravda editorial, are steps backward.

How Support the Soviet Union

The best support the CPUSA can give to the continued existence and growth of the USSR is to win support among the American people. It can do so only by defending its interests, including those of all of its components, including the 5,000,000 Jews, who have a legitimate interest in the fate of Jews abroad. And when the interests of any section of the American people—and I see no conflict between the interest of American Jews in this matter and those of the liberty-loving American people as a whole—conflict with the policies of the Soviet leaders of this moment, these American interests come first.

Related to the concept of defense of the Soviet Union is that of international working class solidarity. That is easily dealt with. Are the Soviet leaders helping or hurting interna-

tional working class solidarity by their silence on the Stalin-era crimes against the Jews? They are hurting it, as you can learn by talking to any Jewish worker, and it is therefore a service to international working class solidarity, and to working class support of the Soviet Union, to protest their attitude.

A third reason for this silence by the American, and other Communist Parties, since the Soviet resolution of June 30, is the assumption that Soviet Marxists must necessarily be the world's best Marxists. That is false historically and theoretically. Marx and Engels lived in capitalist countries all their lives. That did not prevent them from developing the theory which the Soviet Union still regards as fundamentally valid. Lenin made his greatest theoretical and organizational contributions before the Revolution, if only because he did not outlive it very long. Mao Tse-tung creatively developed Marxism-Leninism in a country that was not even capitalist, but semi-feudal. Dimitrov conceived the People's Front in a Nazi dungeon, and proclaimed it from a Nazi courtroom.

It is not Marxist, but idealist, to hold that Soviet Marxists must be the best in the world. In a certain sense, they can be the poorest, and get away with it in practice. By this date, it is not their Marxism that makes Soviet socialism, but the existence of socialism in the USSR that requires them to be Marxist. The only alternative there is a return to capitalism, which even the Nazi invaders and the Harvard Research Center investigators of the thinking of Soviet D.P.'s concluded the Soviet people would not countenance.

The fact that theory is not the great concern of today's practical-minded Soviet leaders, and the fact that political thinking was suppressed under Stalin, as Khrushchev and Mikoyan have admitted, explains why there can be such gross backwardness as Furtseva, Khrushchev, and now the whole C.C., CPSU have displayed on the Jewish question. Is not the theoretical backwardness of the Soviet leadership indicated further by the fact that the 20th Congress did

not originate, but merely swung into line, with the concept of legal transition to socialism developed in Communist parties in capitalist countries, including the United States, over the past 20 years?

The American, and all other Communist Parties, owe it to socialism, not only to think out their own problems independently of the CPSU, but to have and express opinions on its problems, because its policies affect the good name of socialism everywhere in the world. And in whatever field information on the USSR may be lacking, foreign Communists have the right to demand that it be made available, in this day when the USSR believes it safe to invite a Gen. Twinning to Soviet air shows.

But Communists have no right to silence on any pressing problem of concern to any section of the American people. They must form their own opinions on Soviet matters with the information at hand, when the USSR refuses to provide it. And they must demand such information, and the correction of injustices, by means exactly as forceful and public as are necessary to get results. Be it remembered that Tito, as we now know, furthered the cause of international socialism, particularly the right of each country to go its own road, when he defended himself against Soviet attack by trading insults in public, accepting aid from the U.S. and forming a military alliance with Greece and Turkey.

This must be the basis of its relations with all other CP's: unity for peace and socialism; complete independence in everything not directly and immediately endangering peace and socialism; and the right to make suggestions and demands upon all other CP's, including that of the USSR, where the interests of peace and socialism are truly at stake. They should have the same rights, but no more, with regard to the CPUSA.

While this is approximately the formulation in the Draft Resolution, I will believe that it is more than lip service only if the Party leadership speaks out officially on specific matters now pressing.

The Key Problem — Leadership

By AL LANNON

I MUST say that I am deeply agitated and concerned over the crisis which is tearing our Party to pieces, as well as the present role of our Party leadership (New York State and National, at any rate), which seems to be to perpetuate this crisis and lead the Party into the swamps of opportunism.

It has been said that the revelations, concerning the cult of the individual, at the 20th Congress of the CPSU has made necessary the re-examination of all of the basic principles of our Party. Under that slogan we are in the process of destroying the Marxist-Leninist character of our Party, repudiating the cardinal Socialist principle of International Working Class solidarity and embarking on the road of opportunist capitulation to American Imperialism.

I, too, was quite concerned at the revelations made at the 20th Congress of the CPSU (which I was able to read in jail, in the *New York Times*), yet I do not understand the reaction of our Party leadership and the panic which seems to have swept our movement. The revelations and the subsequent events in the Soviet Union did not and do not warrant such panic and capitulation.

When I read of the revelations the first question in my mind was—will these revelations provoke a crisis in the Soviet Union and give world imperialism its longed for and worked for opportunity to move in and weaken the very heart of the Socialist world?

Well, when it became clear to me, that there were not even the beginnings of such a crisis in the Soviet Union, this fact became an event of tremendous significance and inspiration. How can one explain the fact that a person who had the prestige and authority of Stalin could be so critically re-evaluated without the people of the Soviet Union faltering for even a moment?

The answer is that whatever the mistakes, weaknesses and even the crimes of Stalin, and the cult of the individual, they were not of such a character as to alter the course of history or modify the decisive thing—the idea of a new way of life—the idea of Marxism-Leninism—of Socialism. The idea of the role of the Bolshevik Party had penetrated so deeply into the millions and millions of people of the Soviet Union that it could not be reversed.

In some respects the people of the Soviet Union went through a crisis even greater than that of the war. It was weathered only because the mass of the people had achieved a tremendous degree of political maturity—only because they were and are irrevocably committed to their new way of life and to the theories, principles and organization which can make their goals realizable.

So to me the main question has been answered in a manner which only deepened and strengthened my confidence in the Soviet Union, its Bolshevik Party and in the cause of world Socialism. To me also the biggest and main proof of the justification of the criticism made of Stalin and the cult of the individual was not in the reports and speeches, but in the reaction of the masses. We all know of the tremendous adulation of Stalin by the masses of Soviet people and it is just unthinkable that they would accept a re-evaluation of his role just on someone's say so.

A leadership and organization which dared to undertake to go before the masses for the required re-evaluation had both—the greater confidence in the facts and even greater confidence in the rank and file masses. This means that not only are the mass of the Soviet people in a healthy condition but also that the Soviet Party and its leadership, in spite of the harm done by the cult of the individual, are essentially sound and healthy.

These briefly are my reactions to the events which took place around the 20th Congress. I saw no cause for panic and demoralization, on the contrary, I saw every reason for greater respect and confidence. I saw no reason for the scuttling of our basic principles but rather greater confidence in the correctness of our Marxist-Leninist principles and in the eventual world victory of our cause.

We are now being told that the 20th Congress revelations has taught us the necessity of not being “dogmatists” and to learn to be more “creative” in our application of Marxism to the special conditions of the United States.

This is absolutely correct and I might say that we were saying that long before the 20th Congress of the CPSU and no Communist Party in the world, certainly not the CPSU, has asked us to do anything else.

But I'm afraid that the people who are now telling us not to be “dogmatists” have something else in mind. We are being told that in order not to be “dogmatists” we must agree that Leninism is nothing more than the application of Marxism to the peculiar conditions in the Soviet Union—a purely “Russian” national phenomena—and that therefore Leninism should be separated from Marxism and rejected if we wish to “creatively apply Marxism to the United States.

What petty-bourgeois reformist nonsense is this? Are the Chinese Communists “dogmatists” because they state that their task is the strengthening of the Marxist-Leninist character of their Party and to learn to better apply the science of Marxism-Leninism to the peculiar conditions of their country?

I do not believe that all the Communist Parties in the world are discussing the need for a better understanding of Marxism-Leninism and

the need to improve their ability to apply this world science to the special characteristics of their respective countries. We could very fruitfully follow their example to the benefit of our Party and our working class—but this is not what is being done by the New York and National leadership of our Party.

What is being proposed is the separation of Leninism from Marxism—the castration of our Marxist-Leninist science—as the only way in which we can “creatively” apply Marxism to the special conditions of the United States.

Of course the Draft Resolution is not so bold as some of the comrades who spoke at a recent New York State Committee meeting. Since “Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution” the Draft Resolution simply, magically, waves away American Imperialism, replacing it with some new sort of “monopoly” and ipso facto, Leninism in effect, is made obsolete. Of course the Draft Resolution hastens to assure us that we must base ourselves on “Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by the Communist Party of our country.” It is unfortunate that the Draft Resolution is not as frank as the comrades in the State and National leadership are in their speeches interpreting the Resolution—at least we would not be so confused as to just what is being proposed.

It is my firm opinion that the aim of the Draft Resolution and its drafters as well as the aim of the New York State leadership is not to find ways and means to better apply Marxism-Leninism to the U.S. but rather to divert us from our Marxist-Leninist principles into the mire of right opportunism.

One of Lenin's greatest contributions to the science of Marxism was his development of the Marxist idea of the role of the Communist Party as being the vanguard of the working class without which the working class could not achieve its emancipation in the period of imperialism. I think that the experience of the world socialist movement has borne out the unequivocal correctness of Lenin's thesis on the role of the Party.

It is my contention that those people who state that “Leninism must be modified” that it is “just a body of thought,” etc., etc., are in reality trying to create the conditions for the liquidation of our Party as a revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist vanguard party of the working class.

It is a scientific fact that Socialism was not and could not be established in any country without a working class at whose head stood a revolutionary vanguard Marxist-Leninist Party. To say this will not apply to the U.S. is making a mockery of our socialist science and playing with “schemes.”

Contrary to the Draft Resolution I do not think that American imperialism has voluntarily left the world scene. On the contrary. American imperialism is very much alive and very active attempting by force and bribery to establish its mastery over the rest of the capitalist world and doing all in its power to organize and launch counter-revolution and war against the Soviet Union, People's China and the Eastern European democracies. Aye—a vile, brutal, rapacious imperialism which must be fought by the working class and people of the world and especially by the working class and people of the United States. The peace, security and freedom of the people of the world, as well as the people of the U.S., depends upon the defeat of world imperialism and American imperialism in particular.

The new world situation created by the strengthening of the world camp of socialism and the tremendous anti-imperialist struggles of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America does not absolve the American working class of its responsibilities, does not create the conditions for the liquidation of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard Party of the working class in the U.S.

* * *

It is my opinion that the present talk of a “new mass Party of Socialism” is a “gimmick,” a glittering illusion put forward in order to pave the way for the dissolution of our Party.

I believe there is less socialist thinking among the American work-

ers today than ever before and this is explained by the objective economic conditions, the violent anti-Communist campaign of the U.S. ruling class and by the absence of the consistent activity of our Party in defense of Socialism. Socialist thinking does not and cannot develop spontaneously among the workers—it is brought to them by the conscious efforts of the organized forces of the Party of Socialism.

Yes, I believe the talk of a “new mass party of Socialism” is a gimmick to prepare the road for the dissolution of our Party—to give up all our fighting basic principles and turn our Party into a sectarian “debating society” in company with Norman Thomas, A. Muste, et al.

I think it is time to put an end to this middle class, muddle-headed hunt for “gimmicks” and “respectability” as a substitute for hard day to day activity and struggle.

I think it is downright arrogance for people, who have proven themselves incapable of applying Marxism-Leninism to the U.S., to now try to cover up their own bankruptcy by claiming that it is Marxism-Leninism which is at fault and should be discarded.

Another thing—under the slogan of being an “independent Marxist Party” we find our press and many of our Party leaders giving expression to such vicious anti-Soviet slander as to bring into question our very right to a sector of the world Socialist camp.

It is true that we must learn to apply Marxism-Leninism creatively—it is true that we cannot mechanically transplant to the U.S. Marxism-Leninism as it is applied in the Soviet Union, China or anywhere else. It is also true that Wall Street has used all of its tremendous power to give the American people the idea that American Communists are “foreign agents.” They have been quite successful in this and it is one of our major tasks to dispel these vile lies and slanders among the masses.

But does this require us to foul our own nests by joining the imperialist wolf pack against the main bastion of world Socialism—the Soviet Union? Does this require that we

give up the glorious, liberating idea of International Working Class solidarity against world imperialism? Does this require that we replace International Working Class solidarity with "Montgomerism"—with rabid nationalist jingoism?

Yes, does it require our giving aid and comfort to the U.S. State Department and the counter-revolutionary forces in Europe which are attempting to destroy the socialist achievements of the people in Eastern Europe? One would think so by reading the Daily Worker in its handling of the events in Poland and Hungary.

I see nothing wrong in discussing the need to more creatively apply Marxism-Leninism, by our Party, in the U.S.—in the need to very self-critically evaluate our mistakes and weaknesses and hammer out those programs, tactics and organizational measures which would enable us to function more effectively—on the contrary—such a discussion is long overdue—but that is not what is happening in our Party, and especially among our leadership, now.

I say that our Party membership is being taken for a ride when they are told that we are going through a deep, self-critical evaluation of our work, program and policies in order to get at the source of our past errors and in order to enable us to better fulfill our responsibilities in the days and years ahead.

This is not what is taking place in our Party today. What is happening is that, under cover of giving lip service to the crucial need for a self-critical review of our work, our Party and all its basic principles are being torn asunder, that the very guts are being torn out of the Party, and we are being led along the path of capitulation to the bourgeoisie and for the liquidation of our Party as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard Party of the American working class.

Some of our Party leaders tell us that there "is a revolt among the Party membership against dogmatism and sectarianism" and on this basis bring forward their opportunist liquidationist theories as efforts to overcome our "dogmatism and sectarianism" and thus divert the real demands

and desires of our membership up blind alleys.

Yes, there is a "revolt" by the rank and file of our Party. But in my opinion it is a correct revolt against bureaucracy—against the cult of the full time functionaries—a revolt against a system of leadership which left no room for the rank and file except to carry out orders and "directives" without question—and if they dared to question they were put under investigation and were made to feel like enemies of the Party.

That is what the "revolt" is about—a revolt against a bureaucracy which has reached its apex in the past five years—a revolt against self-appointed "generals" who have been running things to suit themselves with no regard whatsoever to the thinking and wishes of the rank and file. I'm afraid that this talk about "a revolt against dogmatism" is an effort to divert and side-track the membership and to turn the "revolt" into an attack upon the basic Communist principles of Democratic Centralism as a means of helping to put across the liquidation of our Party.

Some people are telling the membership that the crass bureaucracy of the past period was a result of the application of the principle of Democratic Centralism. This is a swindle. Bureaucracy has nothing in common with democratic centralism—bureaucracy is the exact opposite of Democratic Centralism. The membership who are honestly and correctly up in arms against the existing rotten bureaucracy should not be confused and diverted by those who want to wipe out, not bureaucracy, but the cardinal Communist principle of Democratic Centralism, without which our Party will be converted into a middle class debating society, a sect, and not a working class organization of struggle.

It is being said that anyone who doesn't understand that "left sectarianism" was the main cause of our isolation in the past years does not understand anything." I believe it is true that we have made a whole series of left sectarian errors and these have certainly helped bring about our present state of isolation, yet, I think

it must not be forgotten that every serious crisis faced by the Party was brought about by the efforts of some forces to divert us from our Marxist-Leninist principles and steer our Party on to the road of right opportunist capitulation to our class enemy.

This was true in our struggle against Lovestone's theory of American Exceptionalism. It was true in our struggle against Browder's theory of revisionism and class collaboration. And it is true today in the struggle which must be conducted against those who are attempting to use the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU in order to liquidate our Party as a revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist vanguard Party of the American working class.

I believe that in spite of many real left-sectarian errors in the past ten years our greatest error in this period was when in 1951 our Party was, for all practical purposes, dispersed and our leadership was unavailable. It was during this period, from June 1951 to the present, when practically every proposal for organized activity by our Party was arbitrarily condemned and rejected by the leadership as "left-sectarian." Under the slogan of "struggle against left sectarianism" a war was conducted against any and all efforts to organize the left-progressive forces for active work among the masses.

Under the slogan of "getting into the main stream" all proposals for the organization of our forces in the main stream and anywhere else, in order to attempt in an organized manner, to direct that stream into channels of struggle, were condemned, discouraged and fought against. Those of our forces which were organized were not encouraged and helped in order to work more effectively—rather they were castigated and beat down as "left sectarian."

Those real left sectarian errors which some of us fell into during this period were primarily a wrong reaction to the right opportunist efforts of the leadership to disorganize the left and our Party and prevent any organized activity.

Was it left sectarianism when the 1952 Draft Resolution and the 1954

Draft Program presented us with the thesis that a victory for the Democratic Party in the 1954 and 1956 elections would carry us to the threshold of the people's front and Socialism?

Was it "left sectarianism" when all organized rank and file activity in right-led unions was discouraged and (in New York at least) sabotaged under the slogan of the need to "broaden out"? There were no proposals on how to "broaden out"—only cynical criticism and lectures on the need to liquidate these movements, become respectable, lay off the "labor leaders," and "wait for conditions to arise" in order to build "broad movements."

No, it was not "left sectarianism," nor the real left sectarian mistakes which were made—but rather the right opportunist line of our leadership which brought about a serious cleavage in the ranks of the left forces, disgusted and demoralized many working class militants and helped to isolate our Party from the mass of American workers.

Aside from the objective situation of the past ten years, which Comrade Foster deals with in his October P.A. article, and in spite of some real left sectarian errors, it was the right opportunist line of our Party leadership—it was this war against left initiative which has done more to isolate and weaken our Party than any other factor.

As far as I am concerned the slogan of "he who does not see the left danger in our history does not understand anything" is nothing more than a cover up—not only of our past right opportunism but also of the present efforts being made to lead our Party into the swamp of liquidation and capitulation.

While I believe that there is a real need to recognize the weaknesses of our Party, overcome them, become more creative in our application of Marxism-Leninism to the American scene I am convinced that our key problem is to bring about a complete and fundamental change in our Party leadership—that only by the solution of this problem can we find the

answers to all the other questions facing our Party.

I believe that the position taken by our Party leadership on the events in Hungary and Israel and their endorsement of the anti-Soviet, anti-Socialist policy of the editors of the Daily Worker, have raised very sharply the question of the ideological corruption of this leadership.

I am convinced that our Party leadership, as presently constituted, is incapable or unwilling to lead our Party to a fundamental solution of the problems which it faces. This leadership, if allowed to continue will produce only one "new creative" result—the complete destruction of the remnants of any organized Marxist-Leninist movement in the United States.

I do not believe that the normal process of recognizing mistakes, learning from these mistakes, establishing guarantees against a recurrence of these mistakes and developing correct general policies, will solve anything as long as the present leadership remains fundamentally unchanged.

I believe that there were serious defects in the combination of forces which emerged as the Party leadership at the 1945 Convention when revisionism was correctly rejected. At that time it remained to be seen just what type of leadership would emerge, out of that combination, as a result of that time.

The present situation in our Party has convinced me that in the past ten years these defects were neither eliminated, overcome or even minimized. On the contrary, they have hardened, become chronic and in the past few years become the dominating factor in the life of our Party.

Those people in our Party leadership who had and have some grasp of Marxism-Leninism, have roots in the American working class and have the proven ability to lead, have for too long adjusted themselves to and surrounded themselves with, people who no more have the ability to lead the American working class than the man in the moon. Most of these people never even came from the work-

ing class and certainly have never proven their ability to lead.

Perhaps some of them had established their right to prove whether they had the qualities to learn and lead. One thing can be said for most of them—they were not only willing to accept the responsibility of leadership but anxiously sought it. The fact of the matter is that these people, objectively, began to constitute a clique, influencing our movement with clique methods and eventually infecting and dominating others who had different backgrounds and abilities.

Even though most of these leaders were honest in their belief that they were the answer to the needs of the Marxist movement in the U.S. they, as individuals, lacked the ability and experience to understand and lead the American working class and to apply Marxism-Leninism to America. They have failed in the past ten years to acquire this experience and leadership but have succeeded in becoming the dominant factor, in our Party leadership, in formulating policy and controlling our movement.

Our Party has suffered bureaucracy, in one form or another, throughout its entire history. Heartless, soulless bureaucracy, indifferent to the needs and desires of our Party and its members. Our Party was able, from time to time, to fight and overcome this bureaucracy because it was the bureaucracy of individuals.

I am convinced that the situation is different today. The present bureaucracy is impervious to criticism, and rank and file corrections, because it has become a clique bureaucracy saturated with conceit and contempt for the rank and file membership.

If this is the case then there can be little mystery as to why our movement has lost its capacity to provide leadership to the American working class. In such a situation to talk about correcting mistakes—to talk about removing some "bad forces" and adding "good forces" is just wishful thinking.

The entire system and character of the Party leadership as presently constituted must be liquidated and reconstituted.

Strengthen the Draft Resolution

By NORMAN SCHRANK

I BELIEVE the draft resolution has some good points which deserve support and approval. I thus view it positively.

1. The anti-monopoly coalition as our main strategic task in the period ahead. This is an important point. In the past our Party had varying strategies which caused much confusion. Our perspectives were affected. At one point we had socialism as our main strategic aim. (Incidentally, this conformed to Stalin's Foundations of Leninism where he posed the question of strategy in terms of succeeding social systems.) At another point our strategy was a peace coalition. At still a third point it was a democratic coalition.

I believe that raising the anti-monopoly coalition, led by labor, which would curb the power of monopoly capital, as our main strategic aim in the period ahead, cuts through all the confusion we have had in the past, is firmly rooted in the American tradition, and comes from the needs of real life today. Of course, this is only the first, immediate stage. The following stage would place the transition to socialism as our strategic aim.

2. We are moving away from the past when we now say that a Farmer-Labor party is not the only form of political realignment. Today we say that we do not exclude the possibility that the Democratic Party may be that vehicle. Hail to good common-sense. The voting base of the Democratic Party is the decisive mass of labor, liberals, and the Negro and other people's movements. It is not impossible that these forces, under certain conditions, would move into the Democratic Party leadership and exert its decisive influence. Today in Michigan the labor movement is pretty important in the Democratic Party. Parenthetically, I would like to remind the comrades that this view of realignment expressed in 1953 by some New York leaders was called "right opportunist" in an article in *Political Affairs*—indeed an official

policy article. But time moves on!

3. The resolution has a reasonable approach to the American Road to Socialism based on a democratic, peaceful and constitutional path. This is important and profoundly correct.

4. The resolution calls for a united party of socialism and charges the national committee with fostering such a perspective. This view is in harmony with the times. G. D. H. Cole and Camille Huysmans, two venerable socialists of Europe, are also moving towards unity. How it will develop is difficult to foresee, because I do not recall a period in American history when the socialist movement was really united. But such a perspective is necessary and possible.

5. The resolution downgrades our past immodest assumption that we alone would lead the American people to socialism, that all socialist and trade union currents would have to come to us. We were, so to speak, the "annointed vanguard." We have much to give to the class struggle for human betterment—that is the ingredient of Marxism. But, by the same token, trade unionists, socialist oriented people and liberals have also made some fine contributions for human betterment, and even for socialism. Today we grant that many political parties can move to socialism—even parties without a previous socialist view.

6. The resolution places properly the relation of objective and subjective factors in explaining our losses. While granting that the objective conditions played a part—political reaction and the economic boom—it places subjective factors as the main cause of our losses. This has become, as you well know, a big point of difference in the Party's analysis of our past errors.

For instance, we made a mistaken estimate of the imminence of the economic crisis because—"the Party judgment in each case was faulty because it never made an adequate analysis of the specific features of American

capitalism." Can we say that we made such a mistake because of the objective conditions—because of reaction or the economic boom—or because of a wrong, dogmatic position where we followed a policy of not adequately studying American capitalism? (Incidentally, this above quote of never making an adequate analysis of American capitalism is some comment on our Party's dogmatism and sectarianism!)

7. The resolution has a section on our mistakes covering peace, fascism, economy, trade unions, the Negro people, elections, left-led organizations, united front activities: *This is generally a good section, even if on some points improvements can be made.*

8. Left Sectarianism, as the main danger, is correctly placed in the draft resolution. Our main job today is to overcome completely the influence of left sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all our fields of work. I believe that the resolution is good on this, even if, on one or another point, it would tend to undercut this main theme.

9. The roots of these left sectarian, dogmatic errors are also treated in the resolution, listing three of them:

1. The historical dogmatic application of Marxist *theory* to our country.

2. Wrong views, uncritical attitudes that we developed toward other Communist Parties, other socialist countries—particularly toward the Soviet Union. This lack of critical, scientific, and supporting attitude hurt us deeply.

3. Wrong forms of Party organization, bureaucratic methods of leadership, and no inner party democracy. I know this doesn't exhaust this key question—but at least a beginning is made!

and 10. The resolution also called for a democratization of the Party.

There are some other good features of the resolution, but time prohibits further treatment of them here.

I feel that there are weaknesses, omissions and some wrong views in the resolution which should be corrected, included and changed. *First*, the resolution does not ring with an affirmation that we love our country, are proud of its huge achievements, and that we base our whole thinking on the inner necessities of America. No one says this can be done effectively in a draft resolution. Our work in the future will alone be proof that we *mean* we have pride in our country. The resolution must be strengthened considerably on this point.

Second: The resolution states that the "Party is confronted with a critical situation." What an understatement! In my view—without quibbling over words—we must say we are in a crisis! Not since the birth of our Party or in the 20's have we been so isolated as we are now. We have been slandered fairly effectively with lies as "foreign agents." We have made serious mistakes in estimates, policies and tactics. And the revelations around Stalin have not helped us in America. To me, these are features of a *crisis*, which we recognize—but are hesitant to describe accurately.

We are in a very difficult situation—facing the dilemma of how to get out. Nor, despite much joy on our part in watching 1/3 of the world go socialist—can we point to that part of the world and expect to find answers for ourselves in America. Our dilemma is our own. The Resolution should say we are in a crisis.

Third: In calling for an anti-monopoly coalition as our main strategic task in the next period, the resolution fails to point out two things: 1. the tremendous scope, energy, and skill that is going to be necessary to stimulate, mold and weld this huge coalition of 90% of America. To accumulate these class forces into one coalition is a gigantic job.

2. To weld these class and national forces within the coalition, with their varying and differing aims and issues, great care and skill must be used to steer the coalition against the main enemy—monopoly capital—directing its main fire there—a point we so sorely failed to do in the past. *Misdirecting the main blow* in the past—against our allies or the leader-

ship of our allies within the coalition—against the center forces in the trade unions, against the liberals, against the social democrats, against the Negro reformists—*cost us heavily in mass support and prestige.*

I would say that this point is very much underplayed in the resolution.

Fourth: I believe there is a serious omission in the resolution's failure to describe the socialism we seek as democratic socialism.

There is a new situation in the world and in the U.S. New conditions, new tasks. New theories are just beginning to be thought out to adequately describe the new situation. Obsolete theories are being dropped. New policies are being designed. A new look is coming over the world.

Our party is in crisis. But the unique feature of this crisis is that it takes place on the crest of a huge upsurge of the Socialist one-third of the world, of the colonial system breaking up and new independent nations rising in the 2nd 3rd of the world—of a new outlook unfolding in socialist circles in 3rd/3rd of the world, in western Europe, the Americas, and the East towards communists—and vice versa; of a new look at peaceful coexistence between socialism and capitalism, and all that this means.

The days of World War I, the Russian Revolution of 1917, the establishment of the third communist international, and the split with the socialists—the policies we pursued in the period we called "Wars and Revolutions" has now passed.

Based on changed conditions, we are reappraising our theory. And that is Marxism—not as dogma, but as a vibrant force—a guide to action. We now see, as wrong, Stalin's law of the inevitable violent proletarian revolution. There are important modifications in Lenin's theory of State, wherein the smashing of the capitalist state machine was central. There are changes in Lenin's thesis on the inevitability of war under imperialism. There are modifications in the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, varied national paths to socialism, etc.

Given civil liberties under socialism in America.

Given possibility of several parties

moving towards socialism—with the C.P. no longer in a monopoly.

Given possible, if not probable, existence of many parties under socialism in America.

Given various national paths to socialism.

Given the Bill of Rights, Constitutional traditions as a living force.

Given the democratic, peaceful and constitutional path to socialism in America, *what is wrong in characterizing the socialism we seek as democratic socialism?* Is the socialism we seek undemocratic? I am for its insertion.

Fifth: On the United Party of Socialism—I believe there has been some unclarities on this. The unity of the left socialist groupings such as the National Guardian, the Monthly Review, the American Socialist—while desirable, is not decisive. Neither will Norman Thomas and Browder, forming a socialist left be decisive, though they might be a big help and I am for a positive attitude towards this development. But I think these will have limited value *until the main sections of the socialist-oriented, or formerly socialist-minded trade unionists, who have the best and broadest working class base, supported by many liberal minded people, are organized into a socialist left.* This too, should be considered in the resolution.

Sixth: The section on party achievements should be retained in the resolution, but the way in which it is written strikes me as self-serving. After reading the list of achievements, one would have to ask—"then where were the mistakes?"

They are mechanically separated from our errors. As a matter of fact most of the achievements listed in the four categories of peace, civil liberties, the Negro people, economic struggle are precisely the areas, issues and struggles where our errors were made. I do not want to minimize our achievements—but this section needs re-working. The criticism made of my May report to the S.C. on this issue is sound.

Seven—On Marxism-Leninism: Wm. Z. Foster, on the question of uniting the parties of socialism says: "The route to the building of a mass party of socialism in this country lies

through the strengthening of the Communist Party upon the basis of Marxism-Leninism and broad united front mass struggles. Towards other left groups our policy at this time should be one primarily of active collaboration, and if and when the opportunity develops, to consolidate with them upon a Marxist-Leninist program, based upon American realities."

Comrade Foster's perspective of a united party of socialism is one thing—and I am not discussing it now.—But he raises the question of the eventual unity with other left groups *only on the basis of Marxism-Leninism*. The precondition for a United Party of Socialism cannot be Marxism-Leninism in the program.

I maintain this view of eventual unity of socialist groups not only is unsound, but totally *unreal*. This is the inflexible dogmatism that has cursed our Marxist movement since its inception. Picture if you can, the Monthly Review, the National Guardian, the American Socialist groups, Norman Thomas, Muste, not to speak of some TU Soc. etc., uniting for socialism in the U.S. on a Marxist-Leninist program. It is substituting fantasy for facts. Such a precondition for unity would kill our chance of participating, our hopes, of any perspective for united action, relations, or struggles—towards an eventual formation of a socialist movement in the U.S.

I say the essence of Marxism-Leninism, of socialism, can be advanced if we develop united actions, relations, struggles with all socialist forces and eventually some form of unity. But comrade Foster is turning *Marxism-Leninism into a fetish* by insisting that it must be retained in a program of the united movement.

I believe we must absorb the best of those international Marxist theories that are applicable to our country, from whatever source, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao-tse-Tung, Togliatti, etc.

I agree with the resolution where it states: "We must differentiate between theoretical propositions that are universally valid, as distinct from those belonging uniquely to the Russian Revolution." But haven't we in the name of Marxism-Leninism

brought uniquely Russian generalizations here and used them as valid in our country? We have made a fetish of Marxism-Leninism, as some are still doing—and turned it into its opposite.

We should delete Marxism-Leninism from the Preamble of the Party Constitution. Purists insist we should include it. The simple fact is that the Preamble to the Party Constitution and Program is the short program for the Communist Party. Non members can see at a glance what we stand for. Do we have to explain a complex question of Marxism-Leninism in the preamble? Can we? Obviously not. But I believe Comrade Foster is in error on this question of Marxism-Leninism. I would like to ask: Why does not the Communist Party of France have Marxism-Leninism in the preamble of their constitution?

Consider the times we live in—our country and the world 1956, I believe that Marxism or scientific socialism is adequate to describe the theories of our movement for socialism in America. This is not departing from Marxism-Leninism.

Eight: I believe the draft resolution must come to some conclusions on the question of Browder. We cannot really thoroughly re-examine the past ten years, and even go back 30 years on some questions, without a word in the resolution on Browder. I have recently read some of his pamphlets and can say that on some of our past policies he raises some penetrating criticism. I have not yet re-read Teheran, Victory and After, etc., so cannot freshly comment on his past views. If Browder developed a perspective of class peace, relying on the intelligence of the bourgeoisie, I would disagree with him. *But the first mistake we made was to throw out much that was good when we removed Browder—Coalition, United Front, American Tradition, a search for new ways to advance our movement in our land. What was wrong with the slogan "Communism is 20th Century Americanism?" It became very popular, but later was condemned as revisionist. The second mistake was that we did not maturely deal with him and that possibly expulsion could have*

been avoided. It is not the usual thing to laud someone yesterday, and trample on him today. Hindsight is easy, I admit,—easier than charting a course.

Are these two conclusions I draw so new, so drastic? They are not. Others have drawn them long before we did. Yet this has earned us the epithets of "right wing," "pro-Browderism," by no less a person than Wm. Z. Foster, the revered chairman of our Party. Yet I disagree with Bill's characterization and I believe it is in error. There are a number of other national leaders who have likewise made such characterizations. I feel *at least* these two conclusions should be inserted into the resolution.

Ninth: The resolution speaks of democratizing the Party, of abolishing bureaucratic methods, developing inner Party democracy, bringing the leadership closer to the members. It makes some proposals. The resolution even speaks of bureaucracy as coming from a mechanical application of certain principles of organization. But this is very inadequate and ducks the essence of the problem—democratic centralism and a monolithic party.

I say we should move away from the principles of Party organization laid down in 1903 for a country entirely different from ours in 1956. Our Party principles of organization should be democratic. More autonomy to the State organizations, county organizations, Sections Club. Our national committee should be constituted from state organizations, each having representation on it. Delegated bodies from top to bottom should make policy. Majority should rule. Discipline should be based on majority rule. Dissent is the absolute requirement for democracy.

This section requires drastic overhauling to fully democratize our party and move off the monolithic concept which drugged us into automats and led to so much unnecessary disciplinary and expulsion cases. We should publicly apologize for most of our monolithic expulsions.

Ninth: I disagree with the resolution where various proposals are characterized offhand as liquidationist and others are dismissed as untimely.

There is one thing that is very important in this period of great change and that is to carefully, patiently, maturely—examine all questions. We don't have all or most of the answers needed. The least we should do is keep an open mind on questions and even while disagreeing, discuss and mull them over. Most of all we must not create an atmosphere where a proposal is condemned out of hand. Enough characterizations, and labeling, and condemnations! Our comrades are groping and thinking today as never before. Some are doing it for the first time, having said goodbye to just being the workers and letting others be the foremen and managers. Some of these fine comrades come up with proposals to dissolve the communist party. I have spoken with them. Probe deeply, scratch the surface and we will invariably find they really did not mean an evaporation of the Marxist movement in America, a dissolution into nowhere. They want a drastic change and reconstruction of the American Marxist movement to make it living, real—not sectarian, dogmatic and dead. They want a reconstitution of the Communist Party into an educational league, a political action organization, an association. Some want it at this coming convention. This is not dissolution.

I say we cannot condemn off hand such definite proposals as liquidationist, without discussing and probing into what the comrades are trying to say, what points they make.

The National Committee I know, doesn't have the final answers to take us out of our dilemma. Our perspective is not adequately spelled out in the draft resolution. How can it reject legitimate thinking at this stage of the Party discussion?

I plead for open mindedness—not name calling. This name-calling has been a weapon in the hands of those opposing change—a veritable hysteria has been created in the party on the question of liquidation, which inhibits, limits and frustrates proper answers.

I am not for a Communist Party as we have known it. I am for two elements as the framework for our organization 1) the immediate needs

of the people and 2) their socialist future. If a political action association encompasses this and it is the best solution, then I am for it.

I do not agree to confine our Marxist movement into an Educational League. We can and should do more than that. But neither do I condemn such proposals as liquidationist, and sort of illegalize and drive underground such ideas that will now arise in this turbulent period. One comrade explained her view of an educational league this way: We had a vanguard role in the past. Today mass organizations and trade unions, the Negro people's organizations are doing the fighting. Well and good. Today we no longer have a vanguard role. Therefore, let us educate for socialism. Thus—an educational league. Instead of condemning such a comrade as a liquidationist, which the resolution does, why not discuss our vanguard role today, which is the real problem that is being raised?

Nevertheless there are a few comrades who do believe in dissolving the Communist Party without a reconstitution into something else. These comrades are wrong.

Tenth: Given a correct reading of the new political situation in the world and in the U.S., given a serious critique of our past work, given a correct program and policy for our party, a reconstruction of principles of party organization—given these—I am for a name that would correspond to these changes. Assoc., League, etc.

A name for our movement is not a principled question. There are many Marxist movements with different names. Each name arose from the inner necessities and historical features of those countries. I believe this should be dealt with at the coming convention and in the discussions now. However, I am not in favor of a new name without some drastic changes. Without changes a new name would have the effect of trying to buy *respectability and popularity* cheaply. These are only a few of the criticisms of the resolution.

The New York leadership, and others, are now confronted with a serious situation. Charges have been made that we are "right wing, liquidationist, pro-Browder."

We have as fine a record behind us in the last five years, as any other district leadership, and on some questions were even ahead of the national leadership, as the records shows. I ask the comrades to look carefully at the draft resolution, p. 54: "However this struggle was carried on in a piece-meal manner with considerable inconsistency and vacillation because it met with strong resistance in the Party. *This resulted at time in conciliation with our continuation of sectarian policies and practices.*"

This sentence has a history, at least for me, and the N. Y. leadership. In 1951 we began to have differences on the peace question with N.A.C. and other national leaders. We began to press forward on labor unity and agreed that communists in a certain union were correct in supporting the merger with the A.F.L. The national leadership did not agree. We began to see failings and inadequacies of left led organizations. This led to even sharper differences with the N.A.C. and some national leaders. We began to see similar errors in the struggle against white chauvinism about fifteen months before Comrade Foster wrote his article in Political Affairs July '53. We developed a new, fresh line in our peace work, and in our trade union work, pressing towards organizational unity without making united labor action a precondition to unity. We developed fresh approaches to electoral policies, etc. This was not always clear, and we were not correct at all times. Some comrades in N. Y. were ahead, and others behind in these developments. When we were correct, but were criticized wrongly by the National leadership, we sometimes even mistakenly agreed with their criticism—as in the case of trade union unity. Nor did we develop our line without some real beauts of mistakes—left sectarian, bureaucratic ones. But where we did plow new ground, *in many areas* and were stymied by the national leadership *on many questions, for several years running*, we concluded that the national leadership was conciliating with left sectarianism.

For that conclusion we were hauled on the carpet, told to withdraw it, and not use it again. We hesitatingly

and grudgingly agreed. That was close to two years ago—and that was some three years after the differences with National on line and policy began. Today it is in the resolution, and we quietly greeted it.

But do you think the National Committee comrades who rejected this criticism and conclusion from N. Y., would have the maturity, when they belatedly changed their minds, and inserted it as a political conclusion in the resolution, would say to N. Y. that they were wrong? No. Self criticism is slurred over, as if mistakes were made by the Party in general and by no one in particular.

We are also charged with liquidationism. I feel that those comrades on the national committee for these past ten years who voted NO on the resolution, are more responsible than any others for the left sectarian mistakes in policies and estimates that "dissolved" our prestige, "liquidated" our trade union and mass base and downgraded our national standing. And this, granting the role of objective conditions.

Nevertheless it is a matter of record that no one in the State Board is in favor of dissolving the Communist Party or evaporating the American Marxist movement without some form of reconstitution.

Comrades, the big issue in our discussion is change. There is a strong trend in the national leadership and the party to stand pat, to drag our feet on change, to hold on to dead center. I believe this is the big problem of our movement today. I believe this is true of the Chairman of our Party who voted "No" on the draft resolution, and of many of the comrades in the national leadership who voted "yes."

Sometimes I feel the stand-pat, dead center comrades are still too much hypnotized by the international movement. They wait for distant winds to blow.

Some comrades have learned the lesson of 1945 too well. They say we are a party of extreme swings. In a sense this is true. But I feel that sectarianism has been the American party's historical weakness. It was true also, of the American socialist move-

ment before us. But the charge that we move to extremes is being used today by those who hold the stand-pat position—who want no change, and by those who want to return to old policies. Under today's conditions this criticism, which was once sound—becomes harmful. *It becomes a pernicious thesis against change!*

The Chinese, from whom we have much to learn, say to make a drastic change, one must *lean in a certain direction*. LET US START LEANING.

State Board
Communist Party,
New York State
Dear Comrades:

The Statement by the New York Board of the Communist Party which appeared in the *Daily Worker* on October 25 demands an immunity from criticism for the New York State leadership.

The Board asserts it has no member who stands for liquidating the Party. But just what constitutes liquidation is a matter of political judgment. It is admitted in the Statement that some members of the Board favor "transforming the Party into a non-party political association with change of name, etc." It so happens that many people feel that precisely such a "transformation" is tantamount to liquidation. The Board, by the terms of its Statement, places such a belief in the realm of "invective and name-calling."

If we are to have the "sharp and probing" discussion which the Board thinks "healthy and desirable" then it is impermissible for the Board to pronounce a ban on a line of thinking which makes a political characterization of the views of some of its members.

Earl Browder in his *Teheran* (p. 117) said: "The Communists foresee that the practical political aims they hold will for a long time be in agreement on all essential points with the aims of a much larger body of non-Communists, and that therefore our political actions will be merged in such larger movements. The existence of a separate political party of Communists, therefore, no longer

serves a practical purpose, but can be, on the contrary an obstacle to the larger unity." And John Williamson comments on this in his report favoring reconstitution of the Party in 1945: "This meant the liquidation of the political and organizational role of the Communists."

Is it any wonder that many of us believe that the present proposals for the "transformation" of our Party are liquidationist in the same sense that the 1944 "transformation" was? For ten years we did not hear a challenge to Williamson's characterization. Must those of us who believe it still to be correct now drop it because the State Board thinks it is wrong? Must we agree with the Board that anything which falls short of a proposal "to dissolve our Party, scatter its devoted, trained socialist membership and leadership" is not liquidationist?

If we think a spade is a spade may we not call it a spade? If we think certain proposals are liquidationist, by what name may we call them? According to the Board Statement, if we call them liquidationist we are engaging in "invective and name-calling."

The Board shows an undue solicitude for those of its members who may have been called liquidationists in the course of this discussion. It might at least have shown the same concern for the rank-and-file members who have been stigmatized as dogmatists! Certainly the Board exaggerates its fears. I have not known any of its members to be silenced "by fear of being stigmatized." (Quite the contrary!) But those who can find no acceptable synonym for "liquidationist" must now clam up.

Arthur

THE N.Y. STATE COMMITTEE
IS LAUNCHING A
DUES DRIVE
Have you paid your Dues?

FOR AN ELECTORAL PARTY

By O. H. LEEDS

THIS great historic debate of 1956, on the crisis facing the American Communist Party, appears to have reached a definite stage. It seems that two major groups are emerging. Those who want to continue with the present Communist Party and those who would like to form some kind of Communist Political Action Association. (Un-Browderist, of course!) I find myself in the lonely position of accepting neither.

Those who are for burying the Party and installing in its place some sort of COPE or ADA outfit, see the situation as follows:

They have been profoundly disturbed by all the revelations from Stalin to Hungary. And they should be.

They see the movement as being politically and even morally compromised by its past errors and docile attitude towards the Party of the Soviet Union. And they are right.

They see us as an isolated, sectarian, semi-illegal, outmoded, discredited and unimportant group. And who can deny this?

Lastly, they see the present Party as having built-in weaknesses in it. Undemocratic methods of work, bureaucracy, doctrinairism, a democratic centralism which doesn't work, etc. They want once and for all, to break with all this. To slowly if necessary, and without arrogance, begin to merge with the mainstream and thus to find the American road for peacefully achieving Socialism. Again, there's much truth in these observations.

Those who oppose this political action group theory appear to be less homogeneous in their ideas of what's to be done. Even though they agree with much of the criticism mentioned above, by and large they don't see the past in such disastrous terms. Some of them may now use the term, Marx-

ism-Leninism, less often than they did in the past, but they are not for its abandonment. They're for an independent Party, though the decisions and even phraseology of the 20th Congress are their starting points.

They too, are for changes—making the Big Turn—but are fearful of "right dangers" and "deviations," Browderism and "liquidationism." Like everyone else, they are well aware of the sad situation we're in. But it is clear that their political hides are obviously thicker than average.

Both of these groupings "support" the tendentious, editorializing and contradictory Draft Resolution. In ideology, political perspectives and strategic aims, they say they see eye to eye. Although the "liquidationists" are perhaps a bit more free with their criticism of the Soviet Union. . . .

If, after a meeting, you rode home in a car with the exponents of either one of these two groupings, you'd think they were miles apart. You'd soon learn that the group you weren't riding with, are shrewd operators, factionalists, getting their speakers around to all the meetings, etc. Now, I don't want to minimize the danger of fratricidal splits. But I submit that there isn't much to choose from between them.

Is the Communist Party a party as Lenin understood one to be?

It is not.

Is the Communist Party a party in the American sense of the term?

It is not.

What is the American Communist Party?

That's right. It's an Association!

And this is only one of the many things which is wrong with it.

Now, obviously these groups aren't merely quibbling over a name. And since everybody is for the tentatively outlined political program—including the achievement of Socialism peace-

fully and constitutionally—what then is all the fuss about?

I consider it tactically unwise to use the following formulations to an anti-Freudian audience, but there's no escaping it. These two groupings are patently suffering from deep psychological disturbances.

On the one hand, we have a group so mentally upset, shocked and embarrassed, that they want to do political penitence in Karl Marx societies. On the other side of this coin we have the other group that's as equally shocked and—what's worse—the victim of political paralysis. The only thing about them which isn't rooted in paralytic stand-pattism, are their tongues. They pay lip service to the need for change. Then resist it at every turn. For instance, of the scores of tentative changes suggested in the Draft Resolution, there are as many contradictions elsewhere in that document. Sometimes in the very next sentence. We have speakers from the National Office blithely prating about not dominating the lower bodies. Then they proceed to browbeat everyone within reach.

Putting things off. Setting up commissions. Warnings against "right" and "left" dangers. In a word, Stand-Pattism.

Let's face it. Both the Stand-Patters and the Liquidationists have been conducting an introspective debate. Refusing to face reality. Instead of struggle, we have a constant looking-in on ourselves. All the manifestations of the very sectarianism we wish to avoid are present.

Why is this so? Because neither of them are facing up to the serious problems affecting the American people today.

It is a fact that we are more interested in our isolation than we are about issues. That right now, it is our isolation which literally dictates our

political perspectives. Which determines whatever passes for Party work today. It is embarrassment that leads to these political association theories. Not issues.

Because we committed errors in the past, because we displayed attitudes of arrogance in our work, we now propose to rectify this situation, not by struggle, but by exhaustive self-examinations and through debating societies!

What determines our trade union policy today? Or our attitude to the National Elections? Is it the needs of the people? Or is it our isolation? In the name of a non-existent unity, we tail behind the mis-leaders of labor, letting them take us anywhere they want to go. Having us supporting a democrat party, militantly dedicated to the continuance of the Cold War, sabotage of civil rights, and the continued destruction of the Bill of Rights. Our policy is not only unprincipled, but also will not advance the interests of the people in their struggles against these reactionary forces. All in the name of overcoming our isolation!

What is the first duty of a peoples party? Of a workers party? Of a Communist Party? To bemoan and bewail its loneliness? To examine its belly button? To be morally pure? Or is it to examine the conditions of life in the country of its nativity? To find the answers to the problems that life in a class system impose on us all. And above all, to lead in struggles on these issues! Right now, in Brooklyn tonight, there's a trade union Communist with problems attendant to his nomination to office. He can't find anyone with experience in his field to help him. We're all too busy with this debate. . . .

In all the history of the human race, I can think of no group that ever marched forward on the basis of such introspectiveness. This has killed more than one political party here in the USA already. It is a tribute to something about us that we have not as yet met such a fate. Let's not push our luck too far!

Morality and all it implies is an important factor in human activities. Certainly, it's as embarrassing as hell



to be faced with flip-flops every other year. And sometimes sooner. Only he who is made of steel and not flesh and blood, could not be profoundly disturbed by the evils of a Stalin dictatorship or the Soviet overrunning of Hungary. I for one want to know and learn about these matters and thus be able to steer clear of their mistakes.

But I submit that the decisive factor determining whether a movement will live and grow—or die—is not its being morally compromised. Important though it may be. If this were true, then a lot of movements would have been long gone from the scene. Our very country was built on the wholesale slaughter and robbery of the American Indian. The naked aggression of Britain and France against Egypt will not finally be resolved by mere moral condemnation. Rather it will be by the forces for peace based on their material needs. And our understanding of Imperialism, together with our struggles will make the difference.

This movement can grow. Not by religious purges, but through struggle in the interests of the workers. This movement will be successful from the moment we begin to realize the following fact: that there are more profound crises facing the people—than those which we think faces us. . . .

And lastly, our Party will grow when it adapts itself to the conditions,

to the historic traditions and to the needs of the American people.

Here I can only cite briefly some of the problems.

Peace is at best a shaky thing today. Economic insecurity, unemployment and inflation is our lot today.

Immorality and corruption of Youth cry for solutions today.

Housing and discrimination in housing find no answers today.

The misuse and stagnation of science demands attention today.

The movement of Negroes for equal rights is at an impasse today.

There is an agricultural crisis today.

The South is still unorganized today.

The trade union movement is still trying to live with Taft-Hartley today.

Puerto Ricans are piling up in New York today—oppressed, exploited, and victimized.

We, who have to live with these issues, *want answers!* Today!!

What do we get from the party? "Wait until we decide whether we're going to have a Model "T" or a Karl Marx society" is the response!!!

Instead of our publications orienting the discussion to these problems, instead of our leaders orienting the comrades to these questions, we have a free-swinging, free-for-all debate about everything under the sun—except the peoples needs.

There isn't a single issue mentioned above that either of the two old parties intend to do anything about if they can help it. Moreover, they're going to keep anyone else from trying to do something about them. They did just enough to keep the labor movement in line. And they've done plenty to discourage us. They've been so successful in fact, that we now have liquidationists to contend with in our ranks.

What is the way out? Struggle against the monopolist ruling class! And struggle for our rights!!! We are a political action group today, not merely through an incorrect interpretation of Leninism, but because the ruling class rigged the situation that way. And we accepted this status. In battling for our rights we will be performing a signal service for the rights of all Americans.

Here, in case anyone doesn't know it already, I am fighting for a Communist Party in the American sense of the term. With ballot status. With clubs based on the Electoral District. With candidates and campaigns before, during and after Elections.

I am for an electoral party for the following reasons:

Because millions of voters have been denied their right of choice.

Because we have been denied our electoral rights.

Because Americans expect to effect social change through the ballot.

Because I cannot any longer be for something without fighting to realize it. For years now, we have been issuing press statements and depositions claiming that we are for achieving Socialism constitutionally, peacefully and democratically. "Peaceful transition" we call it. Yet, is there not a contradiction between our protestations and our actions? Is our Party so organized as to conform with our ultimate aims? Today our Party is the only party that anyone even thinks has a socialist perspective. Yet we do not function in the manner understood by Americans.

I am not unmindful of the serious and honest objections to such an



electoral Communist Party, by many comrades.

Whether we can now or in the future elect anyone to office, to me is not the question. It is completely immaterial. This is not the issue. What's at stake is our right to be such a party.

Some comrades think that proportional representation is the electoral method which gets the French and Italian Communists their big deputy delegations. And that since we haven't got PR, what's the use? I have neither the time nor the space to discuss this issue at length, but I know that it is not election gimmicks which is helping these Communist Parties.

Others are afraid of this method because they think it would reinforce our isolation. So who's stopping them from joining other organizations and trade unions?

Still others are concerned about the legal difficulties involved and the need for us to "earn the right" to be a Party. To them I say this. That if their consciences bother them, then they should retain their membership in this new Communist Party, and consider their mass org work to be that of setting up Karl Marx educational societies. And let the rest of us get on with the business at hand and also the difficult task of eventually electing a majority of Communists to seats of political authority here in the USA!

In conclusion, let me briefly if possible, take up one more objection to this proposal for an electoral Communist Party. One of our liquidationists, George Blake, who has come out

openly for this middle class political association, discussed the Communist Trials in this fashion. He says that he couldn't square Peaceful Transition with the Foundation of Leninism. This apparent contradiction bugged him. It embarrassed him at the trials.

His solution? Let's get rid of these two plagues, the Communist Party and the Foundation of Leninism! Let's have a CPA!

Will such a policy win this group some friends? It might. Such a path of non-struggle might also keep them out of jail. But obviously the problem is not to try to square P-T with F-L, but to square P-T with CP! I am for the achieving of Socialism constitutionally. I think there is some justification for the belief that it can be achieved that way. However, I am not aware of any studies of the state and of class forces which comes within gunshot of Lenin's studies, either in clarity or depth. Hence I am not for the junking of any revolutionary theory which would leave the workers disarmed in a future critical moment. . . .

Finally I don't wish to discuss the merits of the Hungarian situation. Whether the Nagy government was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary is important to know. It does appear that there were some positive aspects to that abortive struggle. It certainly caught the Gero administration and the Soviet Union flat footed. They were visibly embarrassed by this messy situation. When the entire Hungarian people became inflamed at the shooting—accidental or otherwise—of demonstrators, they offered to make concessions like mad. So what do these cocky guys do? They go all out with their demands. Results? Two weeks of violent upheaval is smashed in about four hours. I think that a little knowledge of Bela Kun, of John Quincy Adams and Thomas Paine, of V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin, would have helped them to weather the storm, to have become successful revolutionaries, instead of defeated rebels.

So let's keep our powder dry. Let's build a Party which Americans can appreciate and which will one day lead America.

AGAINST DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

A CLUB MAJORITY

OUR club has resolved to go on record as being opposed to Democratic Centralism. As an organizational structure it has been found to be at variance with American tradition and a hindrance to unity of action internally. This decision was arrived at after a study was made of what Democratic Centralism is, in theory as well as in practice, and finalized by a vote of all present with one dissenting.

It should be noted that most were rather hazy as to just what Democratic Centralism is in theory and how it has actually served in practice. We soon came to the realization that no matter what it was supposed to be in theory, the manner in which it actually functioned in practice was the important consideration. The formulation of what D.C. is in practice, here, in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, we found in Mao Tse-tung's "Selected Works."

The meaning was precise, and whether or not this formulation was employed during the Revolutionary war in China, this was unmistakably the way it was practiced here in the United States under far different conditions. The shocking and then sobering effect of the formulation, plainly written, brought the response from the majority present—"this is not for us, this is not what we want now or at any other time. This is not in the American tradition. Now for the quote:

"Since the Fourth Army of the Red Army followed the directives of the Party centre, extreme democratization has diminished considerably. For example, the decisions of the Party can now be carried out fairly well, and no longer does anyone bring up such erroneous proposals as to carry out in the Red Army 'democratic centralism from the bottom to the top' or 'ask the lower levels to discuss first, then let the higher levels decide.'"

In order to rectify extreme demo-

cratization and "organizationally to enforce strictly the democratic way of life under centralized guidance," the following line was submitted by the Chinese leadership.

1. The leading body of the Party must give a correct line of guidance and find solutions when problems arise, in order to establish itself as a leading centre.

2. The higher body must clearly understand the conditions of the lower bodies and of the life of the rank and file, so as to secure an objective basis for correct leadership.

3. Party organizations at all levels should not make decisions without due deliberations. Once a decision is reached, it must be firmly carried out.

4. All decisions of any importance made by the Party's higher bodies must be promptly transmitted to the lower bodies and the rank and file Party members. The method for doing this is to call a meeting of activists or a general membership meeting of the Party branch or (when circumstances permit) even of the column and to assign people to make reports at such meetings.

5. The lower bodies of the Party and the rank and file Party members must discuss in detail directives from the higher bodies in order to understand their significance thoroughly and decide on the methods to carry them out."

Perhaps if we had read this prior to the 20th Congress in the Soviet Union and Khrushchev's private report our reaction might have been quite different, perhaps no reaction at all but the usual acceptance. It was, however, precisely due to the 20th Congress and the private report that lead us to examine the root cause for such revelations. We examined the prevalent and only explanation given to us—"the Cult of the Individual" and found it wanting.

Democratic Centralism leads to the Cult of the Individual

The cult of the individual is a result not a cause. Stalin was a "villain" after a certain point, yes, but he had not been up to that point; what happened? Perhaps then, he was also the victim as well as the victimizer. Adulation can corrupt, power can corrupt, but why was one man treated like a super-natural being, why the extreme authority, the abject behavior of others near him. How did all this develop? The concept of leadership as infallible beings was deliberately fostered with its inevitable result being the worshipping of the one supreme being at the apex of the unholy structure. Stalin therefore, to repeat, was the victim of all this and finally victimized the very ones who had gone along with this development, had made it possible.

The answer then is to be found in the kind of super-structure established in the Soviet Union that lead to these excesses as well as to the corruption of Stalin and others. Perhaps Stalin became psychopathic, it is unimportant. A decent society does not permit a madman to rule it. At any rate the pattern was too similar in the other socialist countries for comfort. Democratic Centralism as established in the Soviet Union sooner or later had to and did come into conflict with the socialist economic base. The most advanced economic system had to come into conflict with an authoritarian, superimposed superstructure which did not parallel its advanced position. Should this organizational form of Democratic Centralism which was centralism and no democracy have continued, the economic base itself would have suffered because the people would have lost incentive for furthering its development. This is the contradiction that led to the rise of the cult of the individual and the corruption that followed. Bureaucracy is

not inherent in socialism but it is inherent in centralism.

We have been guilty of an oversimplification of a number of concepts to the point where one may well wonder if we are bereft of ordinary common sense. The over-simplification that the complexities of man himself will automatically be resolved with the process of changing the economic base is a dangerous one. Therefore every possible safeguard is needed to insure the people against those who may betray them. That this possibility exists can no longer be doubted. It is difficult to forget the comrade who wrote from jail, "There is no more bitter misery than to sit in the jail of a government for which I have always fought." This must never happen again!

Discipline

Now for those who regret the excesses but immediately revert to type and raise the question of discipline, somehow confusing "commandism" with obtaining discipline; the organizational form has not been devised that can by itself create unity of will, action or discipline. This is precisely what Democratic Centralism cannot do. Only conviction, understanding, and each man attains these for himself, can produce such results. If any-

thing at all has been proven, the authoritarian methods of our Party has not been able to attain these results. You cannot obtain attendance at a meeting or action on any issue merely by issuing an order. Let us remember that it is precisely because this was attempted that we failed. You cannot order conviction; you can create it by clarity of exposition, by the merit of your theory. Many of us tolerated abusive, bureaucratic methods because of our own understanding and convictions and worked in spite of them, certainly not because of them, feeling that the day would come when we would rid ourselves of bureaucracy. How unified, disciplined and "rarin" to go does a comrade feel when he cannot express his thoughts openly and honestly? The expression "he voted with his feet" is a very apt one and a reality to be faced.

Democratic Centralism is a contradiction in itself since no concept can be two things at the same time. It is not accidental therefore that in all instances Democratic Centralism has worked centrally and not democratically. The argument that the people are at fault for permitting abuses is one that merely adds insult to injury. To have questioned the policies or actions of leadership was immediately branded — anti-leadership, anti-party,

and anti-working class. Our own expulsions and Khrushchev's private report are proof enough of what happened to those who disagreed. The people learn to survive by being quiet. The concept for leadership should be that they are the servants of the people. The relationship of leaders to the people was beautifully expressed in Montgomery, Ala. "When considering the leadership in Montgomery, you've got to consider the "fellowship." We are your representatives, and we will do and say what you want us to do. It is up to you, if you want to ride the buses. All we want to do is to help you to get where you are going."

Our Party must be a thoroughly democratic party, absorbing the best of democratic American traditions and furthering them. We therefore submit the following proposals:

1. Direct election of officials based on their stated policies, every two years.
2. Majority rule, right of minority dissent.
3. Leadership in communities to be local, not imported.
4. Whenever possible a working leadership.
5. Right of recall.
6. Open debate.

A Letter

Editor, PARTY VOICE:
New York, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

At its last meeting a majority of the East New York (Brooklyn) Section Committee of the Communist Party passed a resolution criticizing the statement in the Draft Resolution reading, "The Soviet Union refused to behave in accordance with the myth of 'Soviet aggression,' and instead the socialist countries directed all their efforts toward preventing war and achieving peaceful co-existence."

The criticisms made were that the internal policy of the USSR during the period referred to was one which

gave grist to the mill of the war advocates. Also, the foreign policy of the USSR was criticized by individuals as follows:

1. There was a question of the wisdom of the Berlin Blockade.
2. There were questions regarding the encouragement of the North Koreans to proceed south of the 38th parallel despite the provocative aggression by Rhee's forces.
3. A study of the events leading up to the Soviet-Finnish War was urged.
4. There was criticism of the USSR's attitude toward Yugo-

slavia as helping the advocates of war and splitting the peace forces.

Although the vote was on the quoted sentence in the Draft Resolution only, some members felt that the USSR's present policy was still not a maximum effort for peace. Cited in this connection were N. Khrushchev's speech at the British Labour Party dinner, the undermining of the Moscow declaration with Tito about the equality of the Communist parties.

Fraternally,

Temp. Sec'y.

Dissenting Report on Democratic Centralism

By MINORITY

LENIN and the other founders of the CP in the SU had their main attention directed to attaining Socialism in their country. Facing them they found a developing capitalist class and the supporters of Czarism. It was obvious through both the teaching of Marx and the experiences of the Russians themselves that these groups were not going to hand Socialism to the workers on a silver platter. In order for the Russian working class to combat these strongly organized groups, both to achieve Socialism and immediate reforms, organization was required.

There are all kinds of organizations. Some organizations base themselves upon the blind obedience of the members to the leaders. Other organizations base themselves upon "complete freedom" and no attention is given to doing things in an organized way. In searching for a correct way of organizing, Lenin and his comrades rejected both of these types as incapable of leading the working class in a correct struggle. While they appreciate the need for unity of action in the face of a strong and organized enemy they also realized that a party which based itself only on the arbitrary leadership of its leaders and which paid no attention to the experiences and ideas of its members would be doomed to turn into a lifeless sect, with no connection to reality no matter how well intentioned these leaders might have been. On the other hand they realized that a party which only discussed things could never come together to fight as one force for the things they believed in and would end up following on the tails of the workers instead of leading them to Socialism. From this process of thought emerged the concept of DC which combines the two correct features of the organizations described, namely (1) unity of action around the Party's decisions and leadership, (2) freedom of discus-

sion and criticism so as to guarantee that the decisions made would be in line with reality and if they were not could be corrected.

There will be some who ask "Even if this is true, does this apply to the U.S.?" I think the answer to this question is a definite YES. We all know that in the U.S. we face a strongly entrenched capitalist class. We also know that this class is not voluntarily going to turn over socialism to the workers. On the other hand a new situation in our country and the world has opened up which makes it possible for wider groups of people to join the struggle for Socialism than ever before in history. This means that a CP must have a full understanding of people and conditions of the U.S.; this can only be gained by the freest and fullest examination of our country. The decisions which we make on the basis of these discussions should be carried out in a united way so as to guarantee the most skillful kind of tactics so that we may take the fullest advantage of our opportunities. Therefore I think DC should be introduced into the Party.

Now that I have stated how DC came into being and why I believe DC should be the organizational form of the Party, I would like to say why I think the decision of the group is erroneous. The majority report given is based on a quotation from Mao which I believe has been used improperly.

Quotation 1, dealing with DC in the Chinese army is misunderstood. DC is not the method used in the army. This is not new. We shouldn't be shocked as centralism has been the organizational form of all armies that intended to win any battles. Mao was attacking the concept of DC for the army not for the Party. This shows that Mao recognized that there is quite a difference between the two in theory and in practice. There we find that Mao means that there is

a difference between how a revolutionary army would practice centralism and how a CP functions. In reference to the Mao quote the report says, "This was unmistakably the way it was practiced here in the U.S. under far different conditions." I agree with this statement completely, further, I feel that this is a very important point for all members to realize so that we may start correcting this abuse. But what this statement means was that we practiced what Mao wanted for the Red Army, namely extreme centralism in our CP. Therefore what we practiced and should therefore be attacking is that we are not practicing DC in our Party.

Quotation 2 from the writing of Mao gives a list of statements which the report takes to mean are his definitions of DC. This is incorrect and untrue. A full reading of the quote given in the report shows clearly that the points Mao makes are designed to "rectify extreme democratization in the Party."

Extreme democratization is undisciplined behavior where everyone does exactly as they please, causing havoc in the Party. Not paying attention to the leadership is just as dangerous as a form of centralism which pays no attention to the membership. Nowhere in Quotation 2 or in the article from which it was taken does Mao say that he is trying to define DC. At that time Mao was fighting the main problem of extreme democracy in the Party. The five points given by Mao were designed as a guide to the Parties' leadership so that they could find the correct answers to the people's problems. Mao recognized that the only way to avoid extreme democracy was to give correct Marxist direction to all comrades in their search for a correct policy. The reason why Mao's five points do not contain anything about things going from the bottom to the top was that

Mao was not trying to give a complete definition of DC but in reality was trying to teach leadership how to behave during a period of extreme democracy. This is in line with the Marxist policy of emphasizing the things that have to be corrected. At this time in the history of China extreme democracy was a distortion of DC. Today the American Revolution, peaceful or otherwise, is being held back by another distortion of DC, namely extreme centralism. So we have to direct the main fire at our present distortion. The lessons that must be learned from this are that it is not DC that is wrong but the distortions of it that are wrong.

In the report the idea was given that DC is not in the American tradition. In my opinion in the past number of years the Party has been operating under extreme centralism. This means that decisions come dictatorily from the top down. This is certainly not in the democratic tradition; however, what I have been trying to show in my report is that we have not been operating under DC.

Therefore I feel that I have to disagree with the majority report dealing with DC, because in reality what many comrades feel bitter about is not DC which does not exist but instead the extreme distorted form of centralism which certainly does exist in the Party.

In order to understand how centralism developed so strongly in the Party we have to look back and see where it came from. I think there has been a mistake in the relationship of the leadership to the rank and file of the Party. During the period of the last ten years the leadership did not adhere to the Marxist policy of learning from the experiences and ideas of the rank and file. Extreme centralism in the last ten years is a reflection of a basic mistrust of the rank and file; and also of the idea that only the leadership can supply the ideas that will keep the Party from falling apart. This error was extremely aggravated by the wrong policies that came from the national leadership, for example: (1) the question of the Negro nation, (2) the type of

struggle waged around white chauvinism, (3) the Party's approach to Peace, (4) to the Soviet Union, (5) to the Social Democrats, (6) attitudes on the imminence of depression, to name just a few.

These policies fell against deaf ears because they did not conform to the reality that our comrades in mass organizations and the labor movement saw before their eyes. When our people in the mass and labor organizations saw that carrying out these policies either isolated them or caused them to lose their jobs, a tendency spread throughout the movement to accept the policies of the National leadership in theory but in practice to use their own experience as a guide. When the National leadership saw this situation developing they began to question the attitudes of many comrades, as retreating from the struggle, as right opportunists, etc., instead of recognizing that there was something wrong with the policies. In this situation extreme centralism became a way of forcing our comrades to carry out a wrong policy.

I think the spirit shown by our club in attempting to solve the crisis in the Party is a very wonderful thing and even more wonderful when we stop to consider how in the past the rank and file had so little to do in shaping the policies of the Party. The struggle that is going on in our club shows a real effort on the part of the members to become serious

Communists. However, though the proper spirit is essential it is most important that this spirit be directed in the right direction. What I have tried to show in this dissenting view on the nature of DC is more than just this. It is an attempt on my part to show that much more is involved in the Party's crisis than just the question of DC; here are some questions that I feel we must get to the bottom of.

(1) How to stress the democratic aspect of DC.

(2) Why the Nat. Lead. has not criticized themselves as individuals and as a body for their errors.

(3) How to adapt Marxism-Leninism to the American Road to Socialism.

(4) Why we erred on the question of war, fascism, depression.

(5) How to get a correct set of tactics for a period of prosperity

(6) Why and how we erred on the Negro question and how to correct this.

(7) Why we didn't correct the idea that the masses were ready to desert the two party system (PP) a lot sooner than we did.

(8) Why did we take the position of either "You're with us all the way or Against us all the way in relation to liberals in general and labor leaders, Negro leaders, Jewish leaders and intellectuals in particular. In fact didn't many of us sever long friendships with many people on the basis that they weren't "progressive."



Peaceful Co-Existence and the Communist Party

By ALAN MAX

CONCLUDING SECTION

(The first sections of this article appear in *Party Voice* No. 7. This is the concluding section:

IV

THE modern movement of socialism dates in America, as one would expect, from the rise of the modern labor movement. The modern labor movement in turn, dates from the rise of trustified capital in the '70's and the great class battles that came in its wake.

If the establishment of the first socialist state in 1917 marked a new period for American capitalism, it necessarily marked a new period for the American socialist movement. Apart from the inspiration which a majority of socialists drew from the actual establishment of a socialist society for the first time in history, any movement dedicated to the revolutionary reorganization of the American economy from now on faced a new historical situation.

With it came the need to take into account the effects which the existence of a socialist state would have upon capitalism and the class struggle in our own country. Although in the first two years after the Russian Revolution what had to be taken into account immediately was the need for solidarity with the young socialist republic against military intervention by the imperialists, as well as the possibility of other working class revolutions at that time, historically the matter was more complicated.

In the need to estimate the real historic significance of the Russian Revolution lay the basic explanation and historical justification for the rise of the Communist movements. This fact is in no way negated by any misconceptions which accompanied the establishment and dictated many of

the original practices and policies of the Communist International.

Strength of Communists

The Communist movements have endured because they have never doubted the profound significance of the establishment of a socialist society in what had been the empire of the Czars. The Socialist or Social-Democratic parties had a false estimate of the Soviet Union and therefore were all the more unable to cope with the problems faced by the working class of their own countries. Tied up with their attitude toward the Russian Revolution was their attitude toward World War I. These were actually two sides of the same coin—the question of policy toward imperialism in practice and socialism in practice.

In our own country, the Socialist Party has in recent years explained its decline on the ground that the "Democratic and Republican Parties took over the program of the Socialist Party." The real reason, however, is to be found in the Party's hostility to the New Deal at home and to the Soviet Union, a policy that was intensified in the '30's by the infusion of Trotskyites into the party. It is true that the two old parties adopted certain social reforms; but it is also a fact that the Socialist Party adopted the attitude of the two old parties toward the Russian Revolution.

I am deliberately by-passing at this point the blindness of the Communists to the many negative features of Soviet development. The basic question—holding for an entire historical period—is the contradiction between the economic domination drive of American monopoly capitalism and the conditions making for peaceful coexistence. On this question, the Communist Party has made serious mistakes. However, because

of its understanding of the nature of monopoly capitalism, on the one hand, and of the main element making for coexistence—the nature of a socialist state—American Communists have been closer than most others to the truth.

In the aftermath of the horrendous admissions about the Stalin regime, American Communists are compelled to revise drastically many of their attitudes. They are compelled to solve the problems of combining independence, mutual criticism and genuine international working class solidarity. Any attempt, as entertained by some, at solving this problem by adopting an attitude of indifference or detachment toward the countries of socialism, however, would prove completely unworkable. This is so if only because of the crucial part which relations between the capitalist and the socialist sectors of the world will play in the development of working class struggle within our country from now on to and through the transition to socialism.

I have said that the great merit of the Communist Party has been its understanding of monopoly capitalism and of the significance of socialism in the Soviet Union. But this is not the same as having a correct understanding of the nature of the relationship between the two.

An Inadequate Understanding

From its inception, the Party had an inadequate understanding of the contradiction between the domination-drive of American capitalism and the forces making for peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic competition, and peaceful transition—and for reasons some of which were virtually unavoidable.

In the first place, the course that the future might take was obscured by developments at various times running in the opposite direction, such

as the war of intervention to crush the Russian Revolution. "Anglo-French and American imperialism," Lenin wrote at the time, "will inevitably strangle the independence and freedom of Russia, unless world-wide socialism and world-wide Bolshevism triumph." Actually both the attempt to strangle Russia and the various attempts at working class revolutions in Central Europe at the time ended in failure.

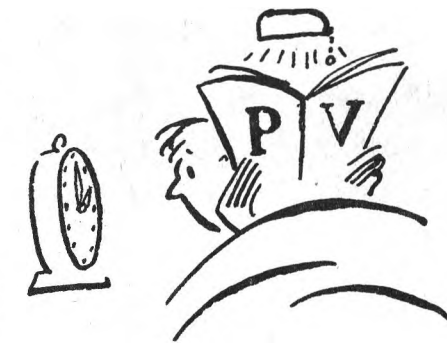
Also obscuring the possibilities for the future was the fact that the contradiction between monopoly capitalism in our country and the conditions for coexistence was only in its beginnings. It was only after World War II that the contradiction became so much more developed. A one-sided, and therefore false, estimate of the situation was not only avoidable by this time, but inevitably had serious consequences. It should be added that many other, but not all Communist Parties shared in the one-sided estimate.

Immediate vs. Long-Range

The seriousness of the mistake of identifying the immediate developments with the long-range, cannot be stressed too much. For there is no guarantee at all that the future will not see developments that again seem to negate the possibilities for peaceful coexistence, competition, or transition. The tendency to view any such developments as the final pattern must be guarded against. They must be viewed—as they have not always been in the past—as obstacles that need to be struggled against and overcome in order to open up again the high road of progress.

While it was virtually impossible 35 years ago to have a satisfactory picture of the possibilities of coexistence and of peaceful competition, the question of constitutional transition to socialism in our country was something else again. Ruling out at that time any outlook in the future of the possibility of constitutional transition here colored the entire course of the Communist Party.

The inability, under the circumstances, to grasp fully the possibilities



of coexistence and peaceful competition affected the question of transition. But misconceptions on transition were not unavoidable. They flowed primarily from a transplanting to America of concepts (along with organizational procedures) that had proved astoundingly valid for Russia but were not, by that fact, necessarily valid for this country.

Practically ignored was the fact that the party of Lenin had been organized 14 years before the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia while the American Communist Party was being organized 139 years after the bourgeois democratic revolution in the United States. Furthermore, while only a few months separated the bourgeois democratic from the socialist revolution in Russia, in our country the interval has already extended for 180 years and no one can predict for how many more.

This prolonged existence of the bourgeois-democratic republic in our country is an important factor not only for the possible nature of the transition to socialism, but also for the conditions and democratic traditions which will help shape the form of working class rule.

Concept of "Soviet America"

The Communist movement needed an outlook of militant struggle for the conditions which would make a constitutional transition to socialism a possibility—and eventually a reality. Instead the outlook was one of almost uninterrupted wars and economic crises which would be climaxed by a civil war—necessitated by the force and violence of the capitalists against the majority—and followed

by the establishment of a "Soviet America."

What was required was that the Communist Party be the most democratic organization in the country—both in its internal structure and functioning as well as in its devotion to the struggle to maintain and extend every previous democratic right won by the working class and other sectors of the people over the turbulent decades. Instead the organization's structure and program fitted in more with the conditions of Czarist Russia, which was not only thousands of miles away but which had already been successfully disposed of by the Bolsheviks.

Tied up with the question of a democratic organization is the question of a legal organization. This is crucial for any working class movement in America. It is not in contradiction with the struggle for legality which such an organization may have to wage against repression. There is hardly a trade union which has not had to take security precautions for its members before the organization won its bargaining rights. The NAACP is being outlawed today in the South and has to find ways of safeguarding its membership rolls. But there is never any doubt in the minds of the masses that these are legal organizations and that it is the various organs of the government and the associations of bosses and planters that act in an illegal and conspiratorial manner.

The conspiracies of the capitalists are best defeated in a democratic form of society when the working class organization views itself and fights to establish itself as a thoroughly legal organization. The concept of "combining legal and illegal work" is a hindrance in these circumstances. A working class organization fights for full legality at all times and, in order to achieve it, combats the illegality of the foes of the working class.

If it is to achieve a fully legal status—at least in the eyes of the masses—a Communist organization must, in the first place do its utmost to assure that its relations with other working

class and people's organizations are on the frankest and most legal level possible.

Possibility and Necessity

I called attention earlier to the proposition that the possibilities outlined in this article (peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic competition and, for that matter, peaceful transition to socialism) are not only possibilities. They are also grave necessities. The present article has concentrated on the "possibility" side of the question—after all, that is what is new in the world. But the "necessity" aspect is no less important.

In considering the possibilities for successful struggle against the monopolies and against monopoly capitalism, we are not discussing merely how to achieve greater and speedier successes. If the outlook were limited to that, there would be no need for a Marxist organization ("so long as progress is inevitable, why worry about its speed?"). But the reality is quite different. We are discussing how to go forward not only for the sake of moving ahead, but to keep from going backwards! For if the historic possibilities of the American people's social advances are not fulfilled, the price in terms of reaction can be very costly.

We are dealing here with monopoly capitalism, the inner contradictions of which lead—except to the extent to which they are successfully struggled against—toward unlimited expansion and therefore toward economic chaos; toward world domination and therefore toward war; toward the destruction of living standards and therefore toward repression. The fact that these tendencies of monopoly capitalism have been more or less successfully combatted in the past, are being combatted today and will, we are confident, be increasingly combatted in the future in no way diminishes the importance of the basic proposition that there is no standing still, that to keep from being pushed down, the masses of people must succeed in moving ahead.

All of this, I believe, demonstrates the need in America for a strong Marxist organization and—at the pres-



ent—for the Communist movement, assuming that it will make the extensive changes needed in its program and form so that, instead of becoming still more of a sect, it will reverse the direction before it is too late and begin to exert direct and open influence in American life once again.

What Can Communists Offer?

What do the Communists have to offer. In my opinion they have a contribution to make, flowing from their theoretical grounding in creative Marxism-Leninism, especially along these three lines:

1. An understanding of American monopoly capitalism, against which the struggle of the working class and others is being waged, whether consciously or not.

But this means that the Communists must bring their understanding of American capitalism up to date. It is not possible to rest on a set of propositions of what capitalism will do. It is necessary to study the degree to which the workings of capitalism have been affected by the struggles of the masses and by changes in world conditions—and the exact degree to which it has been affected at each particular moment.

Just because Communists have a socialist outlook does not automati-



cally mean that they have something to offer to the progress of the working class. Communists were rightly critical of the Socialist Party for opposing—from the "left"—the New Deal in the '30's. Little did the Communists dream that by the early '50's they themselves would in effect be opposing the new demands of labor—pensions, guaranteed annual wage, etc.—and also with "left rationalizations."

2. The Communists can also make a needed contribution through their understanding of the essential meaning of the existence of the various socialist countries. Such an understanding is urgent, if this article is correct, because of the importance for the American people of the possibilities of coexistence and economic competition between capitalist and socialist states.

But this requires on the part of Communists a scientific, as against a utopian, view of the socialist societies now under construction. This means an understanding that the relation between the underlying economic structure and the superstructure of government, culture, etc., is no more simple than under capitalism; that there is nothing automatically inevitable about the progress under socialism; that negative elements can develop in the superstructure unless successfully struggled against; that the negative—as well as the positive—elements in the superstructure in turn effect the underlying economic structure itself.

Without a realistic understanding of the process of development in the socialist countries in both its negative and positive aspects, Communists will never be able to fight effectively for coexistence and economic competition.

Socialism in America

3. Finally, Communists have to offer to the American working class the understanding of socialism in America, in which the working class will have to play the main part.

But this requires an understanding of how socialism must be fought for in America, that is, for the fulfillment of the possibility of constitutional transition, and how the immediate economic, political and constitutional struggles fall into the overall picture of the struggle for socialism. Communists can offer a needed grasp both of the obstacles which the capitalist state places in the way of a transition to socialism and of the possibilities of overcoming those obstacles.

Communists must be the first to see that there are not only different paths to socialism but also different paths of socialist development. It is not enough to say that under socialism in America the standard of living will be higher than under capitalism, that democracy will be greater, that the role of the unions will be more important, etc. There are no automatic guarantees. It is true that the socialization of the economy is the precondition of a socialist society. But a socialized economy in itself, as the tragic developments in the Soviet Union demonstrate, does not automatically mean socialism in the full meaning of the word. Communists must study those American conditions and traditions which will make easier, under a socialist economy, a successful struggle for the highest possible form of socialism and of socialist democracy.

The Work of the Party

In discussing the negative aspects of Communist Party history, I have given only one side of its work. Actually the party has often sought, to one degree or another, to apply to the American scene the basic and universal Marxist-Leninist principles of the struggle for socialism—including the development of the Marxist method in connection with political economy, the class struggle and the relations of the working class and its allies to the transition to and establishment of socialism in America.

The history of the Communist Party has actually been marked by the contradiction between these two aspects of its work: the conscientious attempt to apply the Marxist method

to conditions in our country, and the carrying of the burden of many conceptions, practices and organizational forms with no relevance to the United States and certainly not to the period of the Communist Party's existence. Each of these two contradictory aspects of the Party's work has had its ups and downs. If the reader will think back to the most fruitful periods in the Party's history—like the late '30's—he will find that those were periods where the Party's efforts to imbed itself in the American scene overcame, in some measure, the tendencies pulling it in another direction. But even in these best of periods, the breakthrough has never been complete and before long the negative aspect has advanced again.

It is because of this contradictory process in the Party's work that Communists can rightly feel that their life in the Party has been fruitful even while they face up squarely to its shortcomings and errors.

The double aspect of the Party's work and history also explains why hundreds of thousands of Negro and white working people have joined its ranks over the years—and why, tragically, these same hundreds of thousands have left the Party.

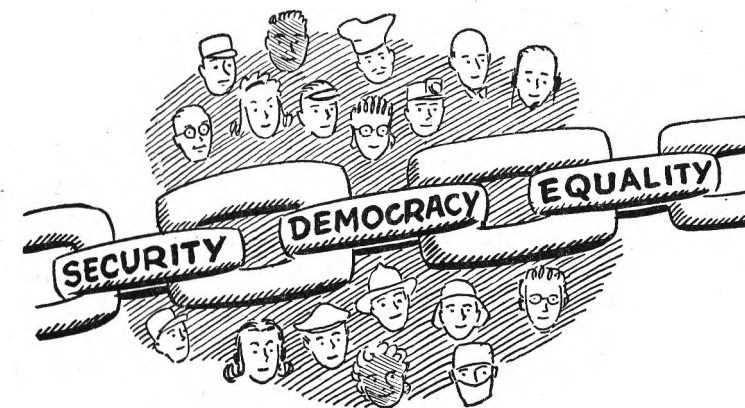
The resolution of this particular contradiction in the Party's work—between its efforts to apply Marxism creatively and the tendencies, practices and habits that defy the effort—is long overdue. But perhaps it is only now that the means are at hand for resolving it once and for all. And resolved it must be if the present or-

ganization is to continue its existence and make the needed contribution to the struggle for a democratic coalition and for the appropriate forms for an expanding movement of socialism.

The means for resolving the situation consist, in the first place, of the now definite picture of the character and direction of the struggle ahead; in the second place of the new-found ability, stimulated by the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, to examine objectively every past practice and concept, preserve and develop that which is valid, dump overboard whatever is dogmatic, doctrinaire and untrue, replacing it with what is scientific and living.

The current draft resolution is an attempt to solve the contradiction which has plagued the party ever since its inception. Its conclusions, in the opinion of this writer, make for headway in this direction. Where the draft falls down, however, is in an over-all analysis of the past three decades and of the road ahead. In the absence of this analysis, the conclusions fall short of what is needed for the party to become stronger and more influential and serve as the necessary transition to a higher form of socialist organization when conditions warrant.

History will never forgive a movement that fails to rise to the occasion when the challenge to re-make itself is so critically urgent and when the road ahead is marked so clearly with its signposts of peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic competition and peaceful transition to socialism.



Test Our Theory Scientifically

By M. D.

I am in basic agreement with the resolution as a whole. If I confine my remarks to some critical observations, it is because in the limited time, I want to concentrate on what I think is necessary to strengthen it.

In my opinion, while left sectarianism still constitutes the main danger, the right danger increasingly menaces the party. Not only can we dwindle into an ineffectual sect, we can also dissolve ourselves piece-meal as a Marxist-Leninist organization and deteriorate into an ineffective amorphous organization. The decisive struggle that must be waged and won in our party is to avoid either alternative. But that requires first of all a sharp awareness that such an alternative constitutes a serious threat today. The draft resolution reflects some awareness of this situation in its rejection of dissolution particularly. But it in no way corresponds to the urgency of the situation and consequently it fails to adequately alert and mobilize the party.

This was not the situation several months ago. It is increasingly so today. Our party and the National Committee in particular would be making a serious error if it became prisoner of its own basically correct characterization of left sectarianism as the main danger over a long period. It was and is. But we would indeed be dogmatic if we rigidly and mechanically adhered to a characterization and failed to see the rapid growth of the right danger. This in turn is weakening the struggle against left sectarianism. Both dangers are feeding each other and the party is threatened with a polarization of forces.

Comrade Foster while unjustly and

incorrectly ascribing to what he characterizes as the right tendency, what amounts to a plot to dissolve the party, and while failing to adequately explain what gave rise to this right tendency other than blaming it on the National Committee's failure to fight it, is correct in my opinion in sharpening the awareness of the party to the sudden and rapid growth of the right danger and for the need to fight it.

Here I want to digress for a moment and frankly say a few words on the question of Comrade Foster. The danger exists because of the present situation in our party, of a division in our ranks along the lines "for or against Foster"! Aside from the factional flames such a development would fan, it would divide the party on a false issue. Foster's views must be considered in the same objective spirit as the opinions of everyone. The party has correctly clamored for the free expression of differences. Now it must objectively and solely with interest of achieving the best solution to the problems facing us, weigh all views. So should it be with Foster. The good in his views should be accepted and used to find our way out of the crisis we are in. What is wrong in them should be rejected.

It seems strange to speak of Foster in this manner, to appeal for an objective hearing for him. But in a period such as our party is in, with the danger of polarization of views growing, there is a menace that those who see only the left danger will read what Comrade Foster has to say, not to objectively weigh what he says, but how he says it and how to refute him.

On the other hand, those who see

only the right danger will uncritically rally around Comrade Foster's article as a platform of struggle against rampant right opportunism.

It is not my intention at this time to make the subject of my remarks an extensive evaluation of Comrade Foster's article. That is not possible in the time at my disposal. I do, however, want to make some general observations. I believe he is basically correct in his position on Marxism-Leninism and our party.

I think he is correct in lashing out at the aspects of self-annihilating criticism that has done so much to demoralize the party, undermine its confidence and feed liquidationism. I do not, however, think that he adequately explains it. I think he is very wrong and only feeds factional tendencies when he ascribes all this to what amounts to a conscious plot on the part of the right tendency to prepare the party for dissolution. Following this thesis, he underplays the party's weaknesses and errors and I feel not without considerable subjectivity on his part.

I think he is correct in noting the harmful effects of treating the slogan of a broad mass party of socialism as an immediate issue, but it is my opinion in his desire to avoid this, he almost obliterates it as a perspective that our party must actively strive to help bring about.

I think he adds something that is missing in the draft resolution when he sharply strikes out at some anti-Soviet moods and tendencies that arose in the wake of the Khrushchev report. I think he is correct in noting tendencies to what he calls "new Browderism." I believe, however, he

fails to probe the reasons for this. Particularly he fails to see that in correctly rejecting Browderism, the party threw out much that was good and healthy, that was not Browder's personal property which left with his departure, but the party's achievements to which Browder also made contributions in his healthier days. This was particularly so as regards the united front and the good beginnings to identify our party with the finest in American democratic traditions. What the party basically wants is not Browder or his revisionism, although there is some confusion on that (aided by our lack of a more objective evaluation of that period), but how to re-establish our ties with some of the healthy lessons of our past.

I think Foster fails to fully see the deep roots of left sectarianism in our party and to self-critically evaluate his own role in contributing to its growth. In my opinion while it is correct to quote the excellent contributions comrade Foster made in the struggle against left sectarianism on white chauvinism, it is wrong for him not to deal self-critically with his particular role in feeding left sectarian (it could be done on the right danger, on the war danger, on TU questions). However, notwithstanding all these weaknesses which I believe add up to weakening the party's efforts at overcoming the crippling effects of left sectarianism, it would be incorrect to fail to grasp what I consider are the very vital contributions comrade Foster makes in his correct stress on the defense of Marxism-Leninism, the struggle against the growing right danger and the critical need to fight for our party.

Marxism-Leninism and the Resolution

The draft resolution fails to take a clear cut position on the all important question of our attitude to Marxism-Leninism in general and in particular as it relates to the character of our party. Why didn't the National Committee clearly address itself to Comrade Charney's position? I'm sure he expressed his views there. If not, the



National Committee must certainly be aware of the fact, this view is not just the personal opinion of George. George said, if I quote him correctly, "he would do away with denoting the body of scientific socialism thought as Marxism-Leninism, given us by Stalin, because it has built-in dogmatic features." I don't consider this a matter of semantics and I'm sure neither does Comrade George. If that's all involved, then why even raise it?

In the first place regardless of whether Stalin conceived the concept Marxism-Leninism (we should not forget Stalin also made important contributions) it happens to be a very apt description of the general body of theory upon which the world Communist movement is based. It's so called "built in dogmatic features" did not hinder one of the most creative of all parties, the Chinese party, from both adhering to Marxist-Leninist principles and applying them with such success to the Chinese scene. The same can be said for all other parties.

But much more is involved. What is really at the heart of the matter is what kind of a party should we be, or put more accurately what kind of a party is needed to lead the working class and the people to socialism.

It's in this sense I want to deal briefly with some aspects of the present situation in our party. I think our party is witnessing the most vigorous upsurge against dogmatism, and doctrinarism in its history. Its a sort of late coming of age. As such it is more painful coming at a relatively late age. The New York Times

put it cruelly but with large grains of truth when it remarked acidly "at this late date they speak of studying American reality."

The movement to uproot dogmatism is historically and currently a life and death question for our party. The banner of creative Marxism is certainly the correct one under which to rally the party to wage such a struggle. But matters are not quite that simple.

Why is there no unity on such a slogan as creative Marxism? Among other reasons, because there are serious differences on what constitutes creative Marxism. This is so because together with positive, there are negative features of this upsurge. What has entered our ranks is not only a spirit of creativity, but the spirit of despair as well. Not only a soberness reflected in a determination to look at American reality, but disillusionment as well. Not only a correct rejection of blind confidence but a loss of confidence itself. Not only a bold striking out toward independent thinking on the American scene that is the essence of Marxism-Leninism, but a disorientation and a loss of moorings as well. Not only a rebellion against rigid, dogmatic bureaucratic forms, but a tendency toward formlessness and amorphousness.

There are some who view the proposals for various forms of dissolution of the party (included here are those for *dissolution now* and those for *dissolution later* when the party it is viewed will be more ready to accept it), the proposals for eliminating democratic centralism, for deleting Marxism-Leninism as the basis of our party, for eliminating the vanguard role of the party, for a hypercritical attitude toward the Soviet Union, all as part of the spirit of creativity, the revolt against dogmatism. The resistance to this type of creativity is explained as the inevitable struggle of deeply entrenched sectarianism on the part of some and conciliation with left sectarianism and dogmatism on the part of others.

By this reasoning the field of creativity seems to be occupied solely by those who are ready to lightly discard basic principles. There is an element

of truth in all this. The right tendency has arisen in the course of a necessary and healthy revolt against dogmatism and left sectarianism. But it is the seamy side, it is the pendulum swing. There is resistance to change, to uprooting of dogmatism and sectarianism, to creatively applying Marxism-Leninism on the part of a deeply encrusted sect. But that resistance is only being fortified by the growth of the right tendency. There is conciliation with left sectarianism, but at present I would say there is even more conciliation with the right tendency because the right danger occupies much the same favored position at present that left sectarianism did when we were looking only or primarily to the right for the source of danger.

The Validity of Marxism-Leninism

It is in grasping the two-fold character of our upsurge against dogmatism and sectarianism that the present discussion on what constitutes creative Marxism should be viewed in my opinion.

I think it is this that explains the correct and necessarily sharp exposure of our errors on one hand and the self annihilating moods accompanying them. I think it is this that explains the healthy and vigorous blows struck dogmatism and sectarianism on one hand, and the hasty, get rich quick theoretical and organizational solutions now being advanced by some. Why is the question of Marxism-Leninism raised at this time and particularly the latter? Why is there questioning of the validity of the very term Marxism-Leninism?

I think in part it is part of the healthy upsurge against a dogmatic and doctrinaire approach to theory that has long cursed our movement. That is the healthy core that under no circumstances we can afford to lose, that must be rescued from its negative excesses. It is a bold attitude of taking nothing for granted, of critically examining everything, if looking everyone squarely in the eye, including the giants of scientific socialism, to see how they measure up. I think that spirit is good, is neces-



sary, is creative. For too long a time that spirit was stifled in us. There is an all too painful realization on the part of all of us of how much more productive we could have been, how further advanced our Party and the cause of socialism would have been, had that spirit been nurtured more in us, in our party. There is naturally a sweeping response, a sort of compensation for our past inertness, a desire to make up for lost time. Many of us who were gentle as lambs, now roar like lions.

In part there is this subjective factor. But more basic factors are involved. I think it is in part a reaction to the Stalin revelations. The positive aspect among other things is that it took everyone off pedestals. It sharpened critical thinking on all questions and particularly on all leaders. In that sense it gave the world movement a long needed healthy jolt. But not everything positive results from such jolts. What was damaged in the process was not only the standing of Stalin, but of the S.U. as well. Together with critical questioning, there is a tendency to lose confidence in fundamental basis of Marxism-Leninism itself. There is a tendency to want to start from scratch, starting with



our political alphabet. Some act as if a political A-bomb had hit us and demolished our socialist ideology and the arduous task of rebuilding on ashes faces us. Another major factor is the situation both as far as our country and our party is concerned. While the world has advanced so that socialism is a world system, in our country the socialist movement and our party has moved in the opposite direction. In the context of the other factors I mentioned and our failures to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism successfully to the American scene, thus has not only stimulated a spirit of bold creativeness, but a loss of confidence in Marxism-Leninism itself. Especially our failure to study the economic situation in the United States, our constant wrong prognosis of crises.

I think we should strive to see these two features in ourselves today so that we can understand ourselves the better. I think that is missing in our resolution. I think a well reasoned reaffirmation of the fundamental validity of Marxism-Leninism is necessary as the starting point of a creative approach to Marxism.

I think there is much we have to discard and change. But I don't want to discard for discarding sake. I want to know what you want us to discard and I want to discard as critically and scientifically as I want to accept.

I'm for the further testing of all basic principles as they apply to the American scene but scientifically where conclusions follow careful testing not conclusions first leading to testing later on the basis we'll find out if we're right. More, I think the point made in the resolution of making our independent contribution is key. It is time a country like ours made such contributions. That in my opinion is the spirit of creativity. It has nothing in common with quickie conclusions based on a sudden or frustrated reaction to errors and defeats or a giving in to intensified pressure upon us at our ideological weak spots by our enemy.

Creativity comes painfully, a product of painstaking, objective questioning, but confident examination. Above all it requires a certain confidence in one's tools and Marxism-Leninism are our chief tools, though by no means the only, to which we have to add a few of our own.

Crisis in the World Communist Movement

By SAM COLEMAN

THE past five years have seen many Communist Parties throughout the world re-assess and alter their policies.

On June 18, 1952, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France met and heard a report from Etienne Fajon, the Director of L'Humanite. Jacques Duclos has just been arrested on false charges in connection with the peace demonstration against the visit of General Ridgeway. Fajon directed his report against sectarianism, pointing out that the Party's . . . "most tenacious defect, the one which does the greatest harm to the Party and which the Central Committee has the duty to correct vigorously, is sectarianism."

" . . . the sectarian orientation of the Party would lead us quickly into the ruts abandoned twenty years ago." Fajon criticized specific left sectarian features of the work, such as the call for political strikes, the frenzied tone of the propaganda of the Party, the attack on those who might be allies, and the weakness of activity by Communists in right led organizations.

This meeting opened the discussion. However, this fight against sectarianism was ended in January of the next year, as we shall see later.

Brazilian Communists Correct Errors

In December of 1953, Luis Carlos Prestes reported to the National Committee of the Communist Party of Brazil. In discussing a new Program for the Party, he criticized the old program for its leftism and sectarianism.

"The program we put forward in the August Manifesto," he said, referring to the old program," a document that was the basis for all the Party's activity up to the present time, helped strengthen the false sectarian and "Leftist" positions that

have hurt our Party's entire activity in the last few years."

Prestes lists a series of such costly errors in the work of the Party on the electoral, trade union, peasant, and mass organization fields. (*Political Affairs*, April 1955, p. 60.)

Japanese C.P. Self-Critical

A report by Sanzo Nozaka on the Sixth National Conference of the Communist Party of Japan (evidently held in 1955) appears in *For a Lasting Peace*, January 13, 1956. Speaking of the resolution passed at that conference, Nozaka says:

"Among errors made by our Party in the past the resolution mentioned the three chief and most deeply rooted ones, namely violation of the unity and cohesion of the Party, leftist adventurism, and sectarianism."

Nozaka goes on at length to detail the leftist, adventurist and sectarian errors. The errors are generally of the same kind as the French and Brazilian reports criticize. The widely publicized May Day scrimmage in Tokyo, at which Norman Thomas was a speaker, evidently was a product of the wrong adventurist line.

During this period, the membership and prestige of the Japanese C.P. declined steeply.

Since the corrections of the Japanese Party, a coalition of Communists and Socialists won more than 40 per cent of the popular vote in the recent elections. Comrade Nozaka himself was elected Senator.

Events in Greece

The Communist Party of Greece had to make sharp revision of its policy from that of armed struggle to parliamentary coalition forms of struggle. The Party was forced to remove its General Secretary and other leaders and to criticize its policy of continuing armed struggle—a

bitter criticism indeed when the cost of that error is called to mind. Its membership fell from 400,000 to a small fraction of that figure.

Comrade Togliatti describes the basic error made in Greece: ("The Ways to Socialism"—March 13, 1956.

"Other Communist Parties were not able to understand that it was necessary to move in that (parliamentary) way under those conditions. This was not understood, for example, by our comrades of the Greek Party, who, when it was announced, in 1945 that elections were to be held, contented themselves with a declaration to the effect that it would be nothing but an electoral farce and took such a position as to result in civil war, which then had unfavorable consequences not only for the Party, but for the Greek people as a whole."

Costly defeats forced the re-examination of the past; new, drastically different programs were developed as by the Indonesian Party, whose story can only be gleaned from the Communist press. But it is clearly a dramatic story: left with fourteen thousand members after severe losses in struggle against the Sukarno government in 1948 the Indonesian Communists regrouped and worked out a policy of critical support of that government. The change was made early in 1952. The membership of the Indonesian Communist Party is now about one million.

Thus also many of the Communist Parties of the Asian countries were compelled to alter radically their path from one of armed struggle to parliamentary and mass struggle.

Similar problems confronted the Communists in Burma, Malaya, the Philippines—problems of disengaging from a policy of armed struggle that met defeat, although successful in China. The story of Luis Taruc seems to be a tragic result of an attempt to bring the fighting to an end.

Our Party

Our Party also began taking stock of our position in 1952. The Draft Resolution on the 1952 elections, the articles by John Swift in *Political Affairs*, and the Draft Program of 1954 were self-critical and all of them proposing new policies.

Our reappraisal was incomplete. The absence of our national leadership made full discussion very difficult. This was compounded by the system of unavailable leadership then in use. These two problems made it impossible to conduct a wide, deep-going discussion that could have effected the needed changes in our policies then. Resistance to the broader line of the Draft Resolution of 1952 and the Draft Program was active even in the national leadership, which, as the Resolution points out, vacillated and conciliated, and failed to carry out a necessary struggle against leftism and sectarian policies.

Therefore, our own stock-taking and needed shifts in policy had to wait for the return of the National leadership and for the second round of self-criticism in the Communist world movement—the second, dramatic, crackling stage in the development of the great ferment of evaluation and change.

The Second Round

The second, round of reevaluation and changes began with the dramatic self-criticism of Khrushchev at the Belgrade airport in June, of 1955. This startling speech and the subsequent statements of Pravda (July 16, 1955, reprinted in *Political Affairs*, September, 1955, p. 60) denied that the Yugoslavs had been restoring capitalism, and that the regime was fascist, as had been charged. The way was opened for the joining of the socialist countries. Pravda declared that "different countries can employ different forms and methods of dealing with the concrete problems of socialist construction, depending on their distinctive historical and national features . . ." and that not all countries will come to socialism in the same way (article mentioned above). This seemed to be a correc-

tion of the reasons given for the original expulsion of the Yugoslav communists from the Communist Information Bureau in 1948. These reasons all referred to the differences in socialist development that the Yugoslav Communists had with the Soviet Communists in the first place.

The second step in this round of reappraisal came with the historic XXth Congress of the CPSU. This Congress' work can be roughly summarized:

1. The description of the new world relations established since World War II. This included the system of socialist states, now comprising roughly more than one-third of the world's population. Secondly, the disintegration of the imperialist-colonial structure with the achievement of political independence by China, India, Indonesia, Burma, Egypt, and other nations embracing almost one-half of the world's people. Thirdly, the coalition of the socialist and newly independent nations to form a vast zone of peace that totaled well over half the human beings on earth.

2. *New theoretical propositions drawn from the new realities of the world. These included the idea of long term coexistence of socialism and capitalism; the non-inevitability of large scale wars; the possibility of transition from capitalism to socialism by parliamentary and peaceful means, without civil war; and the different roads to socialism of different lands following from this proposition. An important practical lesson was not only the desirability but especially the possibility of Socialist-Communist unity at this stage of world affairs.*

3. The criticism of the criminal violations of socialist justice and rights of the Soviet people under the leadership of Stalin, as well as criticism of some of Stalin's theoretical contributions.

The XXth Congress started a tremendous chain reaction of new looks in the world working class movement; among Communists in the first place, and among socialists as well.

In one way or another, almost every Communist Party showed the impact of the XXth Congress.

I must base these remarks on news stories in the commercial press, as well as news reports in our own press and foreign Communist magazines. The dissolution of the Cominform and its Bulletin after the XXth Congress has eliminated any single Communist publication that reprinted Communist reports the world over.

In the socialist countries, sharp changes took place in the relationships between the Party and the masses, between the Parties, in the relations between the Party and the government, and in the course of socialist construction.

Thus, the Communist Party in Poland has revised many of its policies drastically: its course of socialist construction, the relations of the Party to the government, the relations of the Polish Workers Party to the CPSU. Gomulka, who had been expelled from the Party and jailed, is now the head of the Party. The Polish upheaval hardly needs any elaboration.

The bitter tragedy in Hungary also needs no big description here. The Party there (I am told of almost a million members) is badly battered, has been reorganized, and is also led by a man who had been expelled and imprisoned by the Communists.

The same process of change is going on at a slower, less cataclysmic rate in other socialist countries, as in Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Bulgaria, and East Germany.

The Chinese Party at its recent Congress also made many changes in the direction of improving democratic processes in the Party and in the country, and in Party relations to other parties, etc. It should be noted that in China the multi-party government remained throughout, and some of the errors now being corrected in Poland and Hungary and other People's Democracies were not made in China.

It is clear that the Party in the Soviet Union is making sharp changes in its functioning, in the activities of its government organs, and in the statement of October 30 criticized its previous relations with the Parties in socialist countries.

Many Parties in the capitalist world are undergoing the same kind of criti-

cal re-examination as we are in the United States.

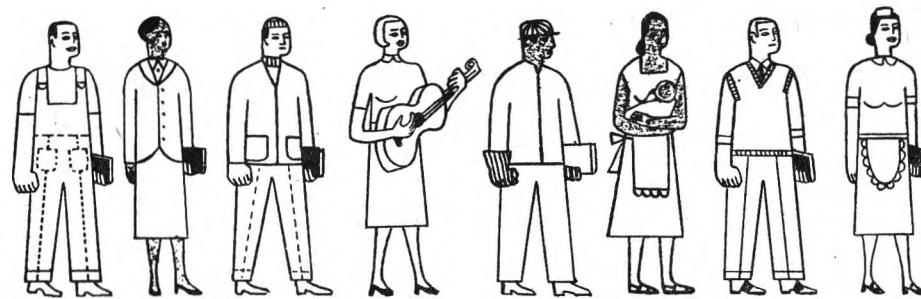
The French Party, according to its published figures, had lost well over half its membership before the XXth Congress. The reported events in France following the Hungarian tragedy seem to indicate, in the statement of three of its intellectuals, in the smaller size of its demonstrations, and in the very fact of the quarrel in progress between the French and Polish Communist leaders, that there is a new, critical situation growing there.

The Party of Great Britain seems to have opened up the kind of discussion we have been having: the September 26 issue of *World News*, a Party publication, has a series of discussion articles. J. R. Campbell opens up the discussion on revision of "The British Road to Socialism." Another prominent Communist opens up a discussion on democratic centralism, in which others participate. And the recent news reports of resignations from the Party of several prominent trade unionist, a few *Daily Worker* staff members, and a resolution from a local body differing with the national leadership on the Hungarian events seem to presage deep-going discussion and changes there.

The Canadian Party has shown evidence of a critical development in its ranks with the resignations of six leaders of the Quebec Provincial Committee, and the sharp statement by the Canadian leadership to the Soviet Party on the events in Poland, which in turn was attacked by a statement of the Ukrainian section of the Canadian Party. Two new resignations from the Executive of the Labor Progressive Party have just been announced.

In Australia, *The Communist Review* of September 1956 indicates that the discussion now has been opened with the query we have placed before ourselves at the opening of our discussion: "Why are we a Party of declining membership and ascending age levels in a period rich in opportunities to reverse the process?"

The great Italian Party, largest of all in the non-socialist lands, has already announced profound changes in its relations with the trade union



movement, and in its outlook. Evidence of the far-reaching reappraisal going on is its closing down of the Party University for a year, in order to revise the theory and practice taught there.

The reported negative reactions of the Norwegian and Indian Party to the Soviet's role in Hungary are unprecedented in the Communist movement. So, indeed, are the queries to the CPSU from the Swiss and Swedish Communist Party leadership as to the Soviet's actions in Hungary.

I cannot discuss the reactions of other Communist Parties because I have no information. I think, however, that the developments since the XXth Congress, and the few instances I mention of further developments since the Hungarian events, when added to the reappraisals that preceded the XXth Congress, are enough to show that there is great ferment in the world Communist movement.

It is my opinion that this ferment is unprecedented since the establishment of the Third International: there are sharp differences not only within the Parties, but between the Parties, as between Poland and the Soviet Union, France and Poland, or Canada and the Soviet Union, etc.

It is my opinion further that this ferment has been developing during the past five years. The reappraisals and changes made before the XXth Congress as in Indonesia, Greece, Japan, Brazil, France were the early stages of a vast discussion greatly accelerated by the Yugoslav-Soviet rapprochement, the XXth Congress, and the events in Poland and Hungary.

On the basis of the scanty evidence available to me, it seems true that, outside of the non-socialist world, and with the known exception of Italy, other Parties have generally suffered losses in their membership and influence at some point in the last

decade. This is true of the Communists in Brazil, Japan, Greece, the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, France, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, the Philippines.

It seems also true that those Parties that have made the most sectarian, adventurist and leftist errors have suffered the sharpest decline. I judge this on the basis of the statements of these Parties, or reports in the Communist literature.

One further tentative point: in two countries that have been sharply self-critical, and have drastically altered their policies, success has been notable. These two Parties are those of Japan and Indonesia.

What explains these developments? What fundamental explanation can tie together the round of reappraisal that started in 1952, the Belgrade airport speech of Khrushchev, the XXth Congress, and the events since? Is there a plausible account of such events, so widely separate in space, and in social system, that can begin to clarify the basic trends mirrored in Greece, Japan, France and Poland and Hungary?

What is the nature of the crisis now manifesting itself in the world Communist movement, simultaneously with the recognition of the great strides forward represented in the system of socialist states, the Bandung conference, Geneva, and the failure (as of this writing) of the British and French attack on the Suez Canal?

I would like to try, in my next article, to find such an explanation. I think that our crisis is integrally connected with the crisis in the world movement, and with the historic world events of this recent period. Efforts to explain or solve our own crisis in terms of our bureaucracy, or our inadequate leadership, can at best explain only partially. Our crisis seems to be around our own form of world-wide issues and problems.

Letters

Oct. 23, 1956

Editor

PARTY VOICE

New York, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

After being away from close contact with the Party for several months I am continually shocked by the attitudes encountered among many old-timers since the Khrushchev disclosures and the discussion around the Draft Resolution.

After listening to the discussion and arguments, at some meetings I wonder when that portion of the human mind which deals LOGICALLY with problems withered away in the minds of many comrades in the last period (if it ever existed).

Though I find it hard to believe I have heard the following expressions:

1. The stories about Stalin are lies—there were no crimes.

2. The so-called “deviations” from socialist democracy and foreign policy were inevitable. If this were really so, then the advocates of this theory are advocates of tyranny and are merely posing as advocates of social justice—hypocrites.

3. That we are all human so let's not be too critical of past and present Soviet errors—just aberrations.

4. That it is true that in the past the SU committed errors, but now that we have REAL leadership there, NOW the SU is really infallible—a new sacred cow.

I am harping on all this because I feel that it deals with one of our most important problems: our relationship to the CPSU. I think that the psychology of many American Communists must be examined in this regard.

My opinion is that there was an identity of the SU before the 20th Congress with a sort of heaven on earth and of Stalin with God. Many people in the Party lost the ability to think and became religious fanatics who knew their catechisms perfectly.

The blow of the disclosures was too much for them—loosing the precious symbol of an international model

and so they more or less deny these disclosures or establish a NEW Marxist model: the USSR under Bulganin, Khrushchev et al.

I think that there are two methods of dealing with this:—one is a study of the left movements in our own country to demonstrate that we have the independent roots of a true socialist movement in our country regardless of the SU and whatever happened there and will happen there, that we can be successful here.

Another is the appreciation of formal logic, something looked upon by these fanatics as suspicious because of its non-class nature. When I make a criticism of Soviet foreign policy it burns me no end to be told by some old-timer that he or she is “not ready” to call the SU an aggressor.

An end to creating straw men to knock over. Foster sets a poor example in his criticisms of the Draft. What is done here is to question the purity of the motives of one's antagonist as opposed to one's own purity.

If a little logical, independent thought does not sift into us we are through.

K.

Adopted: Oct. 23, 1956

I am only a rank and file member of the Party writing this letter to say that I was greatly shocked and not a little disturbed by the arrogance of the statement of the New York Board in the D. W. on October 25, 1956.

I think I shall here resort to “name calling.” This statement was the most bureaucratic expression I have come in contact with in Party circles for some time.

“Frank and open” discussion is encouraged in this article, but the statement warns us not to dare think that “the leadership in New York stands for and recommends dissolution and liquidation of the Party.” Then, what

are we, who can read and analyze an article, supposed to think of the material that has been appearing in the *Sunday Worker* and in *P.V.*? “Frank and open” discussion means to me, as I am certain that it means to many other comrades, the right to discuss openly what we have read and heard by comrades who have leading positions on the State.

To me, as only a rank-and-file member, an article or discussion that insinuates a turn from a Marxist-Leninist party, or calls for a change from a political party to a political action association, or which does not indicate the vanguard position of a communist party, is calling for liquidation, dissolution, destruction, transformation, subversion, or other synonyms. They all add up to the same meaning.

If this is what certain comrades want, then why aren't they “frank and open”? Why is it necessary for the State Board to apologize for this expression in our “frank and open” discussions?

P.V. has made it obvious that the liquidation (transformation) of the Party is the view of some comrades on the State Board. Such articles get space. Few have I seen given space which disagree! Though, of course, we have “free and open” discussion!

But I am not here interested in discussing the political disagreements that exist today. These can be graded from outright liquidationism to sectarianism. What I am interested in here is honesty. Let those who think sincerely about the future of our Party be truthful in their discussions. Let them not hide behind veiled and honeyed words and above all let them also permit others who disagree to speak out with the same freedom. This would be genuine dignity; a dignity which goes beyond just deploring “invectives and name calling,” not the false dignity revealed in the Statement of the N. Y. Board.

R. P.

NOTE: I regret sincerely that I cannot affix my full name to this. It is due to jeopardy of employment. But I am a rank-and-file member of almost 20 years.