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A Letter to the Readers

To All Sections and Clubs

Dear Comrades:

We are submitting to you a series of documents that may assist you in the conduct of the discussion through the Convention period. These documents include:

- a. A majority and minority statement acted on at the last meeting of the State Committee on December 8, 1956.
- b. Recent material, including a letter on the question of unity and three amendments to the Draft Resolution voted on at the recent meeting of the National Committee, December 17-19, 1956.

In publishing excerpts of the State Committee documents in the Daily Worker on January 2, 1957, we noted that they were acted on prior to the meeting of the National Committee and that we were presenting them as part of the discussion within the spirit of the letter and resolutions of the National Committee on the subject of unity and change.

We believe with the National Committee and the point of view expressed in the letter and the resolution on name and form that primary emphasis should be placed on the changes advocated in the Draft Resolution; namely on the fight for a mass policy and the necessity of overcoming deep-rooted left-sectarianism. We believe that analysis of the main roots of sectarianism in the Draft Resolution and summarized in the National Committee letter is sound.

We believe furthermore that the changes recommended in the Draft Resolution and reaffirmed at the last meeting of the National Committee are basic changes that will assist the Party to emerge from its present crisis.

We do not believe that these changes are adequate or sufficiently far reaching to meet the situation. Hence our advocacy of change of name and form for the reasons contained in the majority statement. We continue to hold these views. Nevertheless it is evident that such changes, assuming their validity, are not

realizable at the coming National Convention in February. We believe it is possible and desirable to continue the discussion on these issues without diverting from the original and fundamental issues posed in the Draft Resolution or without weakening the unity necessary to achieve positive action on the Draft Resolution.

For our part we would prefer to see the changes recommended in the majority statement of the State Committee resolved at this time. We are mindful however of the situation within the Party and the unreadiness on the part of many to go beyond the Draft Resolution at this time. We have never, nor do we now consider that our point of view on change of name and form must prevail at this time regardless of the situation in the Party.

We do welcome the position of the National Committee that proposes to keep the question open for further exploration and discussion following the Convention. We believe this is a wise decision and need not result in protracted discussion to the detriment of the day to day work of the Party. We believe the unity achieved today on the basis of the Draft Resolution will provide a sound foundation for further progress in the near future.

State Board, New York
George Blake Charney, Chairman
Bill Norman, Executive Secretary

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On Our Cultural Work

Statement by Regional Committee of Cultural Region on some aspects of cultural work.

The document we present here is an exploratory one, designed to open public debate rather than present definitive answers or program. We ask that it be viewed as a basis for discussion, and that it be examined in the most critical of fashions. We urge especially that it be circulated among non-party intellectuals, so that we can obtain the benefit of their views.

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It is generally accepted today that the Communist Party of the U.S. is in a condition of crisis that has long been maturing—a crisis that was precipitated by the revelations of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. That similar crises are developing in other Communist Parties of the world and in many areas of Marxist thinking, can no longer be denied.

As part of the general reappraisal now going on in Communist ranks, the Executive Committee of the Cultural Region of the N. Y. State Communist Party feels obliged to examine a number of questions concerning the Party's attitude to culture and cultural workers. In doing so, we hope to be able to illumine some problems concerning Marxists and culture in general, and the functioning of the Communist Party in particular. We offer the following opinions for discussion.

1.

The programmatic position that guided the Communist Party's work in the field of culture in the last years is contained in V. J. Jerome's report to the Communist Party Convention in 1951, entitled "Grasp the Weapon of Culture," as well as in William Z. Foster's "History of the Communist Party of the U.S.", (pps. 449, 467,

535-7), and in the works of several other Marxist cultural figures.

Essentially, the Party has viewed the American Cultural scene as tightly controlled by the war-mongers, and totally committed to the preparation of the American mind for inevitable entrance into a new world war. The mass media of communication were portrayed solely as vehicles for the purveying of brutality, racism, pornography and notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the supremacy of the "American way of life." The mass of cultural workers were viewed as having sold themselves out to corruption. Hope for the future was seen almost exclusively in the small, pure, independent cultural movement of the extreme left, which, in some way, would develop ties with the labor movement and the organizations of the Negro people. This estimate of the status of the American cultural scene conformed, in the main, with the official estimate of the Communist Party in the fields of politics, economics, the Negro question, etc.

In the words of William Z. Foster ("History of the Communist Party of the United States," page 535):

"The world capitalist crisis manifests itself also in our cultural life. What is called American culture is in fact bourgeois ideology. It cultivates the interests of the capitalists and is expressed through various art forms, which are opposed to the national interests and democratic cultural strivings of the working class and the masses of the American people. This bourgeois cultural life exhibits to the highest degree the characteristic features of capitalism in decay, of imperialism heading into fatal war. The capitalist class has enlisted the paid services of the Pounds, Eliots, Joyces, Faulkners, Hemingways, Dos Passos, Hickses, Mumfords, Eastmans and the like, and with their aid, it is filling the country

with a stifling miasma of intellectual chaos, obscurantism, and hopelessness, designed to bewilder the people and to disarm them before the reactionary policies of American imperialism.

... "The capitalist-minded scientists are engaged in the reactionary and impossible task of harmonizing science with religion. The priests and preachers, supposedly men of peace, are busy in the front ranks of the warmongers. In no great nation does bourgeois cultural life show such marked evidence of decay—in science, music, literature, art, sports, theater, radio, television—as in the United States. Bourgeois culture rots as the capitalist system dies."

In recent years, however, a growing disagreement developed in the left with these estimates and perspectives which were criticized on the grounds of failure to see the real contradictions arising in the life of the country, and their reflections in cultural work. It is quite apparent that forces in American life, independent of the left, have succeeded in expressing vital, pro-democratic ideas in the mass media, and have made significant advances in the struggle for peace, trade-union unity, civil rights, Negro equality, etc.

In our particular Communist Party parlance, this estimate has been criticized for its "sectarianism"—that is, for its one-sided, narrow examination of life and its failure to consider what has actually been taking place. Yet, to our minds, the characterization of "sectarianism" is not a satisfactory explanation of the severe crisis in the Party, nor of its isolation from the major forces operating for progress on the American scene.

In the field of culture, it excludes from examination many Marxist concepts that were operating long before V. J. Jerome's report or Foster's book—concepts that have determined the Communist Party's approach to cul-

ture from its very inception.

We ask, for example: are there any *conceptual* flaws in the U.S. Communist Party's way of considering the entire field of culture? Has the Party genuinely appreciated the particular nature of culture—and especially of its development and traditions in the U.S.—or has it viewed culture dogmatically, from the standpoint of one-sided theories? Has the Party not had an oversimplified approach to the relationship between the development of ideas and the role they play in social life? Does the relationship between the class struggle (the "base" in Marxist terminology), and ideas (the "superstructure") not need re-examination?

Has not the concept of "art as a weapon" represented culture and art as being subservient to the strategic and tactical line of the working class (read Communist Party)? In doing so, has it not acted as a stultifying concept, inhibiting the creation of genuine works of art? Is culture a handmaiden of politics, and *can* cultural works be created on the basis of their reflection of a political program or tactic?

Did we develop a program for the cultural needs of our country in a *scientific manner*—after a thorough examination of cultural institutions and their relationship to class forces? Or did we not superimpose on the facts generalizations made by Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, etc.?

Essentially, we are asking whether we violated the *soul* of Marxism and scientific socialism—which is the application of objective scientific method, to the particular problems that faced us. And whether, despite the finest of intent and self-sacrifice on our part, this violation did not act as our Achilles heel, finally manifested in the current crisis of our Party.

We do not know the answers to many of the questions we raise. In the last analysis, those and other critical questions can be answered only when the fullest collective thought and experience of both Marxist and non-Marxist cultural workers are brought to bear upon them. But, we submit, the process of examining these questions must be undertaken *now*, if the movement is to be able

to extricate itself from the crisis it is in.

2.

There are some who contend that the Communist Party has made no contributions at all to the development of an American culture that serves the interests of the American people—but we cannot agree.

To argue, as some do, that our entire past is a tapestry of error, is to be blind to the modest but genuine role our Party has played in the struggle for a vital, humanistic culture in our land.

In the early thirties, for example, when artists were literally starving, none fought more tenaciously than the Communists for government support of WPA projects where writers, directors, musicians, actors and artists could be gainfully employed. As a result the production of cultural works available to masses of people enriched the entire spiritual life of our nation. We projected the idea of the artist's social responsibility and proposed that an inexhaustible source of material lay in the experiences of the common people of the land—and the best creative minds in America, finding our teachings confirmed in life, adopted, for a time, this cause as their own. Through their works, and in articles, such nationally-renowned writers as Steinbeck, Richard Wright, Erskine Caldwell, Hemingway, Wolfe and others, revealed their indebtedness to Marxist thinking. Nor is it accidental that Theodore Dreiser, the foremost novelist of his generation, declared that the logic of his life led him to join the Communist Party.

By the same token, the political work of our Party in that period and thereafter exercised considerable influence in moving intellectuals into activity around the broad social issues affecting all the people. When Spain was invaded by Franco, Hitler and Mussolini in 1936, we were instrumental in convincing the vast majority of the writers in America that the interests of American democracy required support of the Spanish people. When the shadow of Hitlerism fell across Europe, we helped move the greatest talents of our epoch to speak out against the perils of fascism.

And when war finally came, Communist writers, film makers, artists and theatrical workers contributed their talents to mobilizing our entire people for victory. The support we enjoyed is a matter of record, and our influence upon the progressive, humanist culture of the period is too well known to be denied.

And yet, it seems to us now in retrospect, that there were at all times a number of contradictions in our ideas and activity which impaired our ability to best serve the interests of the people and intellectuals.

In political terms, one of the contradictions was this: while, at all times we fought for what we considered to be the best interests of America, at many critical junctures we subordinated these struggles to the tactical needs of the world socialist movement led by the Soviet Union.

We believe now that the historic impact of the Russian Revolution left our movement without the ability to assess objectively many aspects of Soviet experiences—that we assumed that the Soviet Communist leaders were infallible and that we applied their theoretical statements uncritically to the United States. To put it more bluntly—while rejecting the slanderous accusations that we were foreign agents, we believe that we *were* ideologically subservient to Soviet thinking and political needs. And it is indisputable that this uncritical acceptance of Soviet ideas brought us into conflict with the ideas and experiences of the American people and intellectuals. We can cite: our condemnation of American Jazz when Soviet leaders characterized it as decadent; our wholesale attack on American culture as reactionary when Zdanov first described it as such; our intolerance of many important trends in the plastic arts when the Soviet theoreticians deprecated everything except their brand of "socialist realism." Though we made our decisions by ourselves, we took our cue from the Soviet Union and our resultant abrupt changes in "line" inevitably created suspicion of our independence and integrity.

We also believe that we *not only* assumed the Russian Communists first to achieve socialism—but that *we*

too possessed this divine gift because we fought for socialism. We did this even as we expounded the necessity for criticism and self-criticism—yet we maintained a stubborn insistence that we were right and brooked no criticism from within or without. We operated, in short, more like the crusading movement of a militant church than like a political party which espouses scientific method. We were partially effective because material conditions were impelling the people forward and we responded to their needs—but as social conditions became less pressing, we became even more dogmatic, shrill and self-assertive. We proceeded as though those who disagreed with our official position, whether inside or outside the Party, were enemies of the people, the working class and the party. As a result, we made ourselves vulnerable to governmental attack, and facilitated our isolation in the political onslaught that took place at the end of World War II. While proclaiming our devotion to political principles, we had replaced the spirit of scientific investigation and inquiry with the dry rot of conformism. Under these conditions, it was inevitable that we should shrink in size, influence and appreciation.

3.

In the field of culture—along with Soviet and other Communist theoreticians—we developed a premise of distinct but limited validity: "Art is a weapon"—and exalted this into a principle that injured our own creative work and our influence with American cultural figures.

Actually, it seems to us, this slogan has validity in the sense that art inevitably plays a role in the battle for the minds of men. In this sense, it is, of course, a weapon. However, art is *not the same* as politics. Yet, in practice, we tended to interpret the slogan to mean that all the works of an artist must fit the immediate political program of the Communist Party. We insisted, in other words, that every cultural work play a politically programmatic role—and that culture serve as a handmaiden to politics. In doing so, we now believe we established a standard incommensurate with culture. Yet we demanded

of our own and sympathetic intellectuals that they conform to the concepts we maintained.

To make matters worse, we insisted that the content of genuine works of art in this period could be best expressed only in a particular form which we called "socialist realism." Here, too, we believe that the idea of socialist realism has, or can have, a definite validity for many artists. What we did, however, was to make adherence to this concept (or to our interpretation of it) a *standard* by which culture was to be judged. Even a casual survey of the history of culture demonstrates that such a theory and practice had to clash with the facts of cultural life, and with the needs of artists and the people.

The result is that those cultural figures who did not embrace our concepts of culture found little or no encouragement in our ranks. On the contrary, they tended to be alienated by our insistence that they create by the standards we had set, whether they could honestly embrace them or not. When we did not assail the work of such persons, we arrogantly tolerated them and thereby drove a wedge between them and ourselves, instead of finding common ground upon which we could stand together. In short, *we left no room for common struggle in the area of cultural production with non-party artists.* The fact is that non-party artists often cooperated with us in politics despite disagreement and hostility in the field of cultural production.

It inevitably followed that, given the enormous pressure by reactionaries in our country during the cold war, our self-isolation in this area made it easier for many intellectuals to capitulate completely to the enemy. But the great body of American cultural workers who sought primarily to express themselves as honestly as they could and still make a living in their fields, were only alienated by our dogmatism. In their daily lives, they were subjected to tremendous pressures to conform, to abhor controversy, to create pallid works, or works of outright violence and brutality. Yet from us, they found not sympathy and understanding of their problems—not common grounds upon

which we could stand together—but a parallel pressure to conform to standards *we* had set. Caught thus generally to resist both camps and find their own difficult way to live and create. They uttered a plague on both your houses—and we were left increasingly alone.

There were times when voices were raised in criticism of this line the party had taken in cultural matters. But in an atmosphere which insisted that the line of the party must be kept pure and free of "distortions of Marxism," "opportunism" and "capitulation to enemy ideology"—substantial differences of opinion were met with attacks, vilification and threats of prompt expulsion. The famous Maltz dispute is a case in point. In 1945, Albert Maltz challenged the slogan "art is a weapon," arguing that it tended to put the artists in a strait-jacket, rather than liberate him as a working writer. He was thereupon accused of supporting an "art for art's sake" position, and his article was characterized as "near Trotskyite."

Yet Maltz made a plea for the highest quality in art. He condemned the tendency to praise the political program of a work of art no matter how poor a work it was. He argued for conditions of freedom which would enable writers to explore, investigate, experiment, test. But with the rejection and condemnation of Maltz's position, the climate in our movement became increasingly restricted and confined. More and more, we applied a political means **test to all cultural work.** Standards of beauty, taste, distinction and style became sloughed over or ignored. Disagreements, such as with V. J. Jerome's conclusion ("The Negro in Hollywood Films") that the post-war screen depictions of the Negro constituted a "tactical concession . . . more dangerous because more subtle"—such disagreements were flatly rejected, labelled "anti-leadership" and pro-revisionist, and ordered withdrawn. The result was that we laid a base for the isolation of our movement from artists and intellectuals which is so pronounced today.

We believe that this rigidity we displayed is not an accidental phenomenon nor an aberration from the basic concepts of Marxism-Leninism as developed throughout the years. On the contrary, it seems to us to have its roots in a contradiction in Marxist theory and practice as applied to the fields of art and culture.

Historically, the Marxist movement here and in the rest of the world has tended to regard culture in two diametrically different ways.

On the one hand, Marxists have recognized that the culture produced in any society is related to the fundamental social and political conflicts that society contains. Marxism has maintained that in a class society, the class which owns the means of production tends, on the whole, to promulgate those cultural works which serve to buttress its rule and to suppress or disparage those works which challenge its rule or advance the ideas of an oppressed class. Marxist parties, upholding the standpoint of the working class, have encouraged (at times insisted on) the creation of works which advance the immediate as well as long range interests of the working class and which actively assail the class interests and ideas of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, Marxism has also recognized that there is an historical continuity to culture, and that great works of art produced in different social epochs transcend their limited social framework and contribute to the total cultural heritage of all humanity. Marxism has acknowledged that while culture has a class and national character, in the sense that it is affected by social and national conditions, it also has a universality, in the sense that the best cultural works reflect constantly the widening horizons and aspirations of progressive mankind. Far from assailing the great artists and thinkers of the past, Marxism has treated them with critical appreciation and respect. From the earliest days, Marxism has inveighed against "tendentiousness" in art—or the creation of works in which the bias flows from the artist rather than from the truth of his material—and has urged the creation of a body of culture which rests upon the best

cultural output of all past and present societies. Marxism has pointedly denied a mechanical one to one relationship between art and society, and has insisted that artists take into account the total complexity of social and personal relationships. Rather than demand that the artist narrowly serve politics, Marxism has demanded that he serve truth. In this way, Marxism has contended, genuine art inevitably serves the interests of the working class which is the only class in contemporary society that need have no fear of ruth.

These two views (perhaps oversimplified as we have stated them here) seem to us to reflect the contradictory attitudes that Marxists and the Marxist movements have had toward culture. On the whole, however, it is the first view—which might be called the narrow class view—that has dominated the attitude of the Marxist movement toward culture in the last 30 to 40 years. At least this seems to us to have been the case with regard to the Communist Party of the United States, and—judging from what we have read—most of the other Communist Parties of the world.

If this is so, it seems to us to provide a partial explanation of the remarkable contradiction between the indisputably attractive and liberating power of Marxist ideas in general, and the stultifying effect these ideas have too often had in the field of art and culture. While the ideals of Marxism continue to attract the outstanding creative minds of this and virtually every other country in the world, the dogmatic practice of the Communist Party, ensuing from its emphasis upon this narrow view of culture, has tended to have a negative, deterring effect upon thousands of intellectuals.

In saying this, we do not ignore, of course, the overriding fact that even if our movement had never erred in theory or practice, we would still have suffered losses from the political attacks upon us and the constant distortion of our views that have taken place in the U.S. especially in the last 10 years. But we reject the notion that our errors in theory have been due to an "objective situation" over which we had no control. These er-

rors, in our opinion, arise from the duality of views of culture engendered in the Marxist movement and from an uncritical acceptance of Marxist theory as dogmatically interpreted by the movement's political leaders.

At the same time, it seems to us that the concept of a "monolithic" party—that is, a party where only one viewpoint can prevail—is equally responsible for the errors our movement has committed in the cultural field. It seems to us that the concept has validity for the general Marxist movement only in the sense that a working class movement must have a working-class program. The party is monolithic then only in the sense that it must fight for the primary historic interests of the working class, which best advance the interest of the mass of the people. But monolithic, in practice, has come to mean that only one interpretation of what the program and practice should be has been allowed to exist. Dissents have either been frowned upon, silenced or excised, as the case may be. We believe such a concept to be injurious to the needs of the Marxist movement generally, and particularly fatal to the movement's approach to science and culture. Both science and culture require, for their very existence, a climate of freedom of examination and experimentation, untrammelled by dogma or doctrine. Without such freedoms, science and culture must wither, rather than flourish and expand.

If this duality of views has actually existed in the Marxist movement, as we believe, it should then become possible for the Marxist movement to extricate itself from the crisis it is in. But this requires, in our opinion, a recognition, first, that our *political* crisis ensues from a contradiction in *ideas*; and, second, the rejection both in theory and practice of what we call the "narrow class view" of art that has so long prevailed.

4.

As to our proposals for the future, these are the opinions we hold. First, it seems to us, the Communist Party—as it responds to the dynamics of change—must nail to its mast the ban-

ner of the freedom of the arts.

This means it must fight for the freedom of all artists to explore, practice, investigate, experiment, without genuflection to dogma or political demands. It should ask of the artist and intellectual in its ranks what it asks of its other members; primarily, support of its general political program, participation in the organization and payment of dues. Within its ranks and without, it must foster the fullest flowering of debate, fighting relentlessly against those conditions which choke off dissent or require cultural workers to conform. It must fight for the right of all cultural schools of thought to speak, publish, create, produce—while exerting its own purely moral influence to point to the superiority of humanism and realism as guiding methods in the arts.

In the last ten years the freedom of all American cultural workers has been sharply restricted due to the incursion of McCarthyism. As a result, the cultural welfare of the entire nation has been sharply undermined. Even today, despite the eclipse of McCarthy and a definite liberalization of the atmosphere, artists are still black-listed for their opinions—controversial matters are still largely proscribed in the mass media—and the right of dissent remain severely circumscribed. In addition, the economic status of most cultural workers continues depressed, with the great majority of novelists, playwrights, composers, fine artists, actors, etc. unable to make a living in their fields. The result has been a perceptible depreciation of the cultural life of our entire nation. Not only the cultural workers but all America suffers.

Undoubtedly the sharpest restrictions upon artistic freedom lie in the continuing denial of employment to talented Negro artists, especially in TV and the films—and in the failure of these media to present materials that reflect the reality of Negro life in America. Unless these limitations can be removed, artistic freedom remains a partial, limited thing, and the American people are denied an opportunity to enjoy a flourishing

cultural life, truly representative of the democratic spirit of the nation.

In combatting these major restrictions upon artistic freedom—restrictions which derive from monopoly control of the media of mass communication—the Communist Party must frankly admit that it has restricted artistic freedom in its own ranks, and must make a clean break with these practices once and for all. It must recognize that although art is a creative reflection of the material relations in society, it is *not* the same as politics, that it has laws and life of its own, and that nothing stifles culture so much as the demand that it conform to a line, regardless of what that line may be. It must recognize that a democratic, humanist culture inevitably advances the cause of all humanity—and that the artist should be encouraged to create by his own standards, subject to the friendly criticism of his peers and the final judgment of the audience.

We believe the Communist Party must acknowledge that the mode of existence of the artist, as of any good Marxist, requires him to be a remorseless critic of everything that is—and that it must encourage and promote vigorous inquiry, full examination, constant experimentation and investigation without applying labels of heresy or deviation from a line. The behavior of the Party to cultural workers who enter its midst should be a model of the freedom of inquiry that the Party advocates for all.

This does not mean that the Communist Party should adopt an attitude of indifference or neutrality to the content of the ideas contained in cultural works, or that it should not be an organization of action. As a Party, the Communists should espouse the creation of a body of works that looks fearlessly at life, and that appreciates the limitless potentiality of man. But it should advance its views through methods of persuasion rather than dictates, and it must grant the right of dissent. A democratic humanist culture cannot be legislated into existence or established by fiat.

Furthermore, we believe that the main request any Marxist movement must make of its writers, artists, musicians and other cultural forces is to *create*. Because his honest work as an artist advances the cause of all humanity, the writer should be encouraged to write, the composer to compose, the artist to paint, the actor to act. This seems self-evident, yet it requires reaffirmation. The fact is that the Communist Party, in practice, has too often tended to pull the cultural worker in an opposite direction. It has impressed upon him the general political task facing the nation, and has urged him primarily to act as a political organizer operating in the cultural field. It has paid scant attention to his creative problems, except to pounce upon him for errors or to laud him for those efforts which visibly advance the Party's line. And it has failed to recognize that his greatest contribution to the welfare of the American people comes primarily from his development as an artist.

In fact, his ability to persuade others of the validity of his political views and to move them into the arena of political action depends on his ability to win the esteem of his fellow cultural workers as an able practitioner in his chosen field.

Needless to say, there are any number of additional matters that require consideration by Marxist cultural workers today. Besides a number of theoretical matters, these include such programmatic questions as the position of the left toward proposals for a Fine Arts Bill, government subsidies for artists, international cultural exchange, economic problems of cultural workers, the role of culture in the fight for peace and civil rights, etc., etc.

Obviously, a broad program for the left in the cultural field needs to be elaborated as quickly as possible. We have not attempted to do so in this document because we feel that the questions we have raised are fundamental ones that need to be resolved before a meaningful and comprehensive program can be prepared.

Origins of the Crises in the CPUSA

By WM. Z. FOSTER

THE CRISIS now afflicting the C.P.U.S.A. is both organizational and ideological. It manifests itself not only by a considerable loss of members, but even more seriously, by a deep-going theoretical deterioration. The causes of the crisis are various and complex. Let us here indicate its several major roots:

1. *The long-range "prosperity" factor.* One of the most elementary causes of the Party crisis is the long-continued industrial "boom," with its somewhat improved economic conditions for large sections of the working class. This situation, except for a couple of short depressions, has lasted almost continuously for some 17 years. During this long period there has been very little unemployment, much overtime work, an increase in the two-jobs-in-one-family system (30 years ago only one in twenty married woman was a wage earner, but now the ratio is one in four), and there has been increases in wages and "fringe" benefits on a hitherto unknown scale. All this has as its basic causes the effects of World War II and of the rise generally of American imperialism.

Notoriously, such "boom" conditions tend to weaken the revolutionary spirit among the workers, as has been clearly shown in the history of Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and other industrial countries. Relatively better economic conditions have been the fundamental reason for the historical weakness in general of Marxist movements in the United States and for the wide growth of capitalist "prosperity illusions" among the workers. Such illusions, very prominent during the great "boom" of the 1920's, are even more vigorous in the current post World War II "boom." Our Party, naturally, is not exempt from the retarding effects of such economic pressures. In fact, their influence has been one of the most basic factors tending to isolate our Party from the masses and to confuse its ideology, especially during the period of the cold war.

2. *The Government Cold War attack upon the Party.* Most everyone will agree that the bitter assault made upon our Party by the Government during the critical periods of the cold war decade was a potent factor in causing our present crisis. It caused the Party serious losses in members and it has helped to make many of its members and leaders largely lose their Marxist-Leninist theoretical bearings. It is foolish to underestimate, as many do, the casualties that we have suffered in our long and hard fight to prevent American imperialism from deluging the world with the blood of a great atomic world war—a fight which, on a world scale, resulted in an historic victory for the international forces of peace. The arrest and jailing of the Party's leaders, the deportation of many workers from this country, the widespread intimidation and discrimination against Left wing workers in many other spheres, and the ideological terrorism of fascistlike McCarthyism undoubtedly took a heavy toll from our ranks and those of our sympathizers. Other Communist parties, facing similar or worse persecution in specific situations of fascism or near fascism have suffered equal or greater losses than ours.

3. *Powerful anti-Communist moods among the masses.* A special factor during the cold war years, highly detrimental to our Party, has been the extreme anti-Soviet, anti-Communist feeling that has existed among the working masses of the people. Not only did the decisive leaders of the major trade unions, almost to a man, support the aggressive foreign policies of Wall Street and carry on a violent campaign against the U.S.S.R. in general and our Party in particular, but the broad democratic masses of workers, farmers, and others were also heavily influenced by this ocean of anti-red propaganda. While the latter were distinctly opposed to a third world war, nevertheless they were nearly unanimously of the opinion that the Soviet Union (and with it

our Party) was responsible for the war danger which they so greatly feared. This had catastrophic effects upon the Party's mass contacts and made it extremely difficult for it to connect up with the, mostly spontaneous, anti-war activities of the masses.

Communist parties in all the imperialist countries had to contend with similar anti-Soviet moods among the masses, but nowhere did these have such strongly negative effects upon Communist anti-war work as in the United States, the heartland of the imperialist drive towards war. This was because in other imperialist countries the Communists exerted a far greater leadership of the working class and were able to protect the workers from poisonous imperialist pro-war propaganda, and also because the masses basically were animated by a strong hostility to American attempts at domination of their countries and also generally to the warlike moves of Washington. Consequently, in none of these countries were the warmongers able to develop the intense war hysteria and fascistlike persecution of the Communists as took place in the United States which were such grave handicaps to us.

4. *Sectarian mistakes made by the Party and its leadership:* Basic factors, too, in contributing to the Party's present crisis have been the various Left-sectarian errors made by the Party, especially throughout the years of the most serious persecution during the cold war decade. This was the type of error naturally generated under such intense political pressures. These errors, of course, seriously injured the Party's mass contacts and also tended to alienate many of its own members. In the reports, resolutions, and discussions of recent months, however, such errors have often been grossly exaggerated. That the mistakes of the period were serious and numerous, I have tried to make clear in my article in *Political Affairs* of last October; but the ex-

treme exaggeration of them that has taken place has made their damaging consequences far greater than the reality.

The general effect of error-exaggeration has been to discredit the Party's past policies, its future perspectives, and its leadership. The excesses in self-flagellation that have taken place cannot be classified as healthful Leninist self-criticism—in many cases they reached the extreme of being an actual attack upon the Party's prestige among the masses and, in fact, even upon the very existence of the Party itself. This lop-sided criticism has been one of the most decisive of the various factors in creating pessimism, political confusion, and liquidationism in the Party. It has definitely been cultivated by the Right tendency in the Party as preparatory work for the watering down of our Marxist-Leninist principles and for transforming (liquidating) the Party into a so-called political action association.

5. *The Revelations of the Stalin cult of the individual.* Among the most decisive of all the factors contributing to the existing crisis in the C.P.U.S.A. have been the negative consequences flowing out of the exposure of the Stalin cult of the individual, initiated at the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held last February. Undoubtedly, our Party, naturally enough, has been most deeply affected by the shocking bureaucracy, brutalities, anti-Semitism, and dictatorial practices of Stalin in his later years, and of the bureaucratic machine which he built up. This initial shock was greatly intensified by the tragic events in Hungary during the past several weeks. Eventually all this will work out successfully, but the bad immediate results of it were made worse by the tendency of some comrades in our Party to misinterpret the situation and to utilize it to justify attempts at watering down our Marxism-Leninism, at developing anti-Soviet moods, at weakening the Party's spirit of internationalism, and even at liquidating the Communist Party itself into a so-called political action association. This whole unto-

ward development of the Stalin question, coming on top of the various other factors here listed, has greatly intensified the Party crisis as a whole.

6. *The growth of the Right tendency in the Party.* Still another decisive contribution to the growth of the Party crisis has been the development, particularly during the past several months, of a strong Right tendency in the Party. This Right trend has evolved out of all the factors above listed, but its most basic roots are in the "prosperity illusions" bred of the capitalist economic "boom." In this respect the movement greatly resembles, not only the Browder deviation in the middle 1940's, but also that of Lovestone in the latter 1920's—wrong trends which grew out of the illusions created by the big industrial "boom" and upswings of American imperialism of these decades. Other powerful roots of the Right tendency in the Party are its basic misinterpretation of the Stalin revelations, and also its fundamental distortion of the Party's experience in the fight against the war danger during the past decade. But the heart of the Right program is its two-phased proposal to weaken Marxism-Leninism in our Party and to transform the fighting Communist Party into a political action association. With its developing wrong analysis and policies, the Right tendency has also, in itself, regardless of subjective intentions, become a strong factor for intensifying the crisis in the Party. In fact, it is the very summing up of this crisis and the most concrete expression of it. The most serious mistake that the Party has made during the past several months was its failure to realize more promptly the dangerous significance of the rapidly growing Right tendency and to take the necessary steps to correct it.

7. *The changing world situation:* The above-cited several factors making towards the present crisis in the CPUSA have operated under the decisive influence of a very rapidly changing world situation. The substance of this world change amounts to a sharp intensification of the general crisis of world capitalism and a

swift growth of world Socialism. Especially important phases of this basic international change during the very recent period have been, the defeat of the drive of American imperialism toward a third world war, the weakening of American hegemony over the capitalist world, the growth of inter-imperialist antagonisms and the decline of the NATO war alliance, the growth in political influence of the Bandung Asian and African countries, the loss of the Suez Canal by British and French imperialism, the armed invasion of Egypt, the French colonial wars in Africa, the very rapid economic growth of the USSR and People's China, the rapidly changing relations between the Soviet Union and the European People's Democracies, etc., all of which basic events deeply affect the CPUSA and its policies.

During the long Party discussion much that is constructive has been done towards liquidating the Party crisis. The Party is now definitely recovering its political balance, as against the gross confusion that prevailed during earlier months. Definite conclusions have been arrived at, mostly crystallized in the draft Constitution, regarding the democratic reforms necessary for our Party. New and fraternal critical relations are being developed towards the Socialist countries and other Communist parties. Many valuable lessons have also been learned relative to the Stalin revelations. In the knotty Hungarian question, for example, our Party has largely come to the same general conclusions as practically all other Communist parties; namely, that although grievous errors were made in that situation by both Soviet and Hungarian Communists, nevertheless, when the crisis came and Hungary was faced with the establishment of fascism and the world with the growth of a serious war danger, the Soviet Union had no other practical course to take than the one it did, difficult though that was.

The central thing that must be done now to overcome the crisis in the Party is to defeat the efforts to
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THE REAL ISSUE

By LILLIAN GATES

FOR MANY months the discussion has gone on in our movement covering a very wide field. Soon after the April meeting of the National Committee which gave the first comprehensive frame-work for examining the whole past decade of work came the Krushchev revelations and then the events in Hungary. Thus, piled onto a long over-due complete evaluation of our policies came a whole host of questions which have shaken us from stem to stern.

Under such conditions, the crisis in the Party has deepened. Hence the importance of finding answers to these questions has grown. Hundreds and even thousands of our members are not participating in this discussion, but have stated they will wait to see what happens. Among those who participate are many trends. The problem is very complex, and I question those who can rather glibly say "the membership has already decided" a number of issues. Even our conventions will not fully reflect the trends because of the severe limitations of political repression and harassment. And unless the views of all trends are taken into account, the crisis will be worsened, not improved.

In face of this situation, it seems to me that a dangerous trend has developed which can only set back our movement further. That danger is the creation of a rigid and almost hysterical atmosphere which seriously inhibits the discussion of all ideas on their merits. In content, the spearhead of this rigidity stems from the efforts of Comrade Foster and others to turn the question upside down and to make the main question confronting our Party that of the "right" danger.

The National Committee statement on change and unity recognized the problem in their warning against substituting invectives for discussion

and in re-emphasizing the left-sectarian character of the errors of the past decade as the major factor in our decline in strength and influence. I would like to develop this further.

Errors and Objective Conditions

1) Without clarity on the basic nature and causes of our mistakes of the past, we cannot move ahead. Yet this important question has been weakened by a confused posing of the impact of objective conditions *against trying to learn from our tactical mistakes in adjusting to these objective conditions*. A straw man has been erected: namely, that we deny the effect of objective conditions.

But it was precisely because we finally began to understand the objective conditions which existed (cold war hysteria, repression, economic conditions, and later changes in the international picture) that, in the 1952 and 1954 programs, serious beginnings were made to change our past sectarian policies. We then began to grope for the root causes of this sectarianism, not uniformly, but nonetheless to probe and change.

The real issue is not whether we should have opposed the Korean war, or the Marshall Plan, or warned of the war danger. Of course we should have. The issue is how we did those things and the one sided emphasis of our policy and estimates. And as we proceeded to examine the issues which lead to our isolation from the labor, Negro people's and other organizations, we made further progress. We began to take a whole new look at our past approaches to social democracy, to such organizations as the NAACP, the parents movement, labor unity, how to develop work in industry, etc.

In our work in New York over the past five years, we had many good

experience in a number of industries and fields of mass work which proved that we were on the right track with the 1952 and 1954 outlook, despite the limitations of both in realizing more fundamentally the growth of strength of the peace camp and its consequences. We found that our effort to apply these policies fully was met with stubborn resistance, centering in the National Administrative Committee. This is not to say that no contributions were made there against left sectarianism. It is true that Comrade Foster wrote an article against sectarian distortions in the struggle against white chauvinism and that he stated that our main problem in a number of fields was that of left sectarianism.

One would think that the work of the New York District would have been welcomed, therefore. Instead, we have been charged with being "right wing, opportunist and liquidationist." All of us are comrades who have been in leading posts in a variety of areas during the past difficult years. Prior to 1952, most of us made serious left-sectarian errors ourselves. Some attempted to combat various aspects of our sectarian policy, and we found the going very rough. After 1952, we tried very hard to learn; we did, I believe, succeed in making important changes in policy: on electoral policy, Negro work, Puerto Rican work, peace activity, trade union, in particular. But we still found the going pretty rough, for we did not get the full support of large sectors of the national leadership. Today, however, practically all of our estimates have been incorporated in the National Draft Resolution.

It would seem that instead of dealing with us so harshly that some degree of recognition would be given for the attempts to save the Party

from further liquidation and isolation caused by persistent left errors. Of course, the main problem is not recognition of individuals, nor even of their destruction. It is to keep our eye on the ball, and that ball is to help build a more effective movement for Socialism.

Why then today the effort to check and hold back the correction of past errors?

If we take the Dennis and Shrank reports of April (and the Shrank report was simply a report of the National Committee meeting in April), we will find that in the main they simply deepen and confirm points which had already been the basis for activity over the past few years. It is possible that both reports could have taken into account more the human factor: the feelings of hundreds of devoted members who so self-sacrificingly carried out many activities which we must now say did not achieve the desired results. But having accepted that point, is it not incumbent on all those who desire to see the richest lessons drawn from our work during the past ten years help such a critical examination and not retard it?

Atmosphere for Airing All Views

Even in this, I hope that in the future mistakes can be discussed in an entirely different tone. The harshness and ruthlessness with which those making mistakes, real or fancied, have been dealt is a hall-mark of a dogmatic outlook. Sharp polemics "without mercy" might have had their place in the early days of struggle for clarity on elementary principles but we in America need far more the atmosphere for the airing of views. Nothing in my own work makes me more determined for change than past excesses along these lines. Since theory must lag behind practice to a certain extent, some errors are unavoidable. The approach should be to watch for them, and when they are made, change them without making victims of those who committed them. The indiscriminate labelling of all who have questions in the troubled times of today as "right wing" and liquidationist is a

case in point. Such an approach might also avoid the present apparent horror with which the acceptance of mistakes is being greeted by some.

I do not believe that the critical evaluation of our past policies was the cause of the worsening of the Party crisis. Indeed, the reports of Comrades Dennis and Shrank gave hope to many that we were serious about changing past methods.

The effects of the Khrushchev revelations, and other developments around Poland and then Hungary have caused the greatest devastation. Again, the solution to overcoming this great damage is to find new answers, not through attempting blind appeals to faith and confidence. The historic advance of the peoples of the world to Socialism is inevitable; but the way is neither pure nor painless. At least for a large section of the membership I know of, they want genuine answers, probing and the opportunity to add their views on Socialism. I believe that this can, in the long run, have only healthy effects, especially in our country where our path to Socialism must of necessity have its own specific features.

Nor is it true that we "invented errors" which did not exist in order to discredit leadership.

In the final analysis, all leaders will have to stand or fall on the basis of performance. It simply is not possible to concoct a false picture.

Similarly, our Party must always stand or fall on the basis of specific performance. No matter how much we say about our courage and devotion and we have that, along with many other courageous Americans, Negro and white, who have faced jail and death for their convictions—we cannot avoid the fact that our mistakes, overwhelmingly of a left-sectarian character, were a major factor in weakening our strength and influence. Can we not simply say this, accept it, learn from it, and proceed to improve—without going through all sorts of contortions which becloud the issues and are daily repelling additional members as well as others outside our ranks?

This is not just a matter for future history. It is vital for the great struggles of today. Our full support is

needed in the historic battle now under way to rear down the walls of jim-crow, a step which will mark the next leap forward for American democracy as a whole. Congress and the State Legislature are opening. New moods are stirring in the labor movement. Considerable activity is taking place among the Puerto Rican people. How shall we view these and other developments. Through the beclouded and faulty spectacles of our old approaches or with a vision cleared by removing the accumulated dust of past sectarianism?

Marxist-Leninist Theory

2) The second question around which, in my opinion, great clouds have been generated is the approach to Marxist-Leninist theory.

If there is anything I believe we should avoid it is a duel over words. Nothing so smacks of sectarianism (and can lead to greater repulsion of all) more than arguing, as theologians did of old, about how many angels can dance on the point of a needle.

A big issue has been made over the formulation in the National Draft Resolution which says we should accept Marxism-Leninism as "we interpret it." This has been equated with abandoning Marxist-Leninist theory. Yet these individuals argue that they too are for applying Marxism-Leninism creatively to the specific conditions of this country. Now, the reason for this phrase "as we interpret it" is because of the *objective conditions* in this country, which create the problem of distortion of our views and seek to hold us to the *letter* of books written years ago dealing with other countries and problems. If we are to take objective conditions into account, why should a big issue be made over this question?

What we are all basically concerned with is *content*. Do we want to discard a body of thought which, in relation to social phenomenon, is a demonstrably sound science, and which has been an invaluable guide to social progress? No we do not. But we also recognize that we must *change* our understanding of how to use this science, and study what

changes have taken place in our country and in the world, and accordingly change concepts when necessary.

Is it reasonable to equate study and possible changes in the future with abandonment of Marxism-Leninism? We cannot possibly undertake such a full study prior to the Convention. Some thus say it is far more important, under the unsettled conditions of today, that we re-affirm our basic outlook. I too am for reaffirming our basic dedication to the achievement of Socialism, but I do not see how this can be done—precisely because of all the questions and the errors or the past—without underlining necessary changes to make that goal more desirable and more feasible.

Our Party members and leaders who have devoted fifteen, twenty and twenty-five years of their lives, under very adverse conditions, to the movement for Socialism are told that they must recite every concept they still consider valid when they state that other concepts should be restudied. Can anyone really believe that we have lost our understanding, overnight as it were, of the existence of the class struggle, of the profound meaning of historical and dialectical materialism, of the theory of the national and colonial question, or that we question the existence of American imperialism?

It will be a great disservice to the discussions at our conventions if this is the spirit injected. But more im-

portant, it will be a set-back to any real effort at charting new paths or developing creative thinking. Communists, above all, should be hostile to the repression of thought, and eager to advance their knowledge. "Nothing human is alien to me" is attributed to Victor Hugo; it was long a motto on our walls, but we need to embody it in our very beings!

3) Finally, I would like to touch briefly on changes in the nature and structure of the Party.

Much dissatisfaction existed at the outset with the section in the National Draft Resolution on the Party. It stemmed from a feeling that there was no basic guarantee of the changes in the Party which most members felt necessary. We lost additional members because of this. The new amendments proposed by the National Committee and by the majority of the New York State Committee, I believe, greatly add to the scope of the changes and guarantee a full and free discussion of all ideas.

One of the problems in the past period has been that the discussion has tended to center exclusively around changes in the structure and name of the Party. I do not intend to elaborate on the changes I advocate since they are in line with the statement of the majority of the New York State Committee.

I also feel, however, another way

of beclouding the issues to say that this is the only issue, or that changes in policy are the only issue. I believe that changes in policy are vital, and should go hand in hand with discussion of other changes which unfortunately there has been insufficient time to discuss properly before the Convention; and therefore cannot be carried through at its conventions.

Those changes which have been projected have helped to forward the specific amendments now adopted by the National Committee.

We must also take note of the fact that a great many of our members are still dissatisfied with the changes offered. Any approaches to Party unity which do not take the views of these members into account will narrow our membership further.

In a sense, the big test of how much we have changed, and our capacity to change, will be the approach to these questions at the Convention. I for one fervently hope that the outcome will be such as to prevent the further narrowing of our movement,—a process which can only have very serious consequences.

I believe that our tradition of past service to the workers, Negro people, and people of our country calls upon us to exert our very best efforts to look deeply and think broadly as we make our decisions. That is how we can make a new contribution to the future.

This, as I see it, is the real issue before our Convention.

A Letter

SINCE WE are progressives and a vanguard based on scientific socialism, I suggest that Marx-Lenin be followed correctly. We've made errors. It shouldn't be necessary for us to continue discussing them. We should close ranks and move forward and profit from the past mistakes. If mistakes are not made, we can't make anything. We don't have to dwell on them. We'll only go backwards. We must take Marx as our architect—he gave us a blue print. Lenin was the first engineer who proved to the world that Marxism could work. He

did it in Russia. But we find ourselves living in 1956 instead of 1917.

Dimitroff developed his policy of the united front. We ignored every proposal he recommended. Today nationalism and a broad united front should be our program. No one alone has the correct policy. The correctness of any policy is how it is applied to every day conditions. As proof of this we must look at Poland and Hungary. These revolts were caused by the suppression of ideas. It was the young generation that wanted the right of self-expression in the future.

The old leaders were afraid of advanced thinking which is the very foundation of Leninism.

I hope in our coming convention we will be able to consider and analyze the problems and come to an understanding as to how they may be solved.

I have confidence in scientific socialism. Only by thinking and applying our thinking scientifically will we reach our ultimate goal.

JIM
Syracuse, N. Y.

RESOLUTIONS

The Furriers Joint Board Section membership meeting in Convention December 9, 1956 unanimously passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS we believe that the main errors prior to the pre-convention discussion were "left" sectarian in character and

WHEREAS at the present time, the main danger is a right deviation from the principles of Marxism-Leninism:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Convention support the principles of Marxism-Leninism without equivocation.

The Furriers Joint Board Section membership meeting in Convention December 9, 1956 unanimously passed the following resolution:

Whereas this Convention considers the continued existence of the Daily Worker and the Worker important to our movement and the entire labor movement, and

Whereas we must recognize that a principal reason for the lack of enthusiasm by sections of our membership for the Daily Worker and the Worker at the present time is due to the fact that these papers are not an expression of the views of the entire Party. They express the views of only one section of the Party—that section represented by Johnny Gates.

Whereas this Convention expressed unanimous Comrade agreement on the following points:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. This Convention pledges full support to the Daily Worker and the Worker both by contributing financially and obtaining subscriptions;

2. That the composition of the Editorial Board of the Daily Worker and the Worker be immediately altered to include two others; one associated with the views of Comrade Foster and another associated with the views of Comrade Dennis even if this means the release of two members of the present Editorial Board;

3. That the Editorial Board, re-

constructed in this manner, should function until the conclusion of our National Convention.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent through our District to the National Committee for their consideration.

The Furriers Joint Board Section membership meeting in Convention December 9, 1956 unanimously passed the following:

WHEREAS this Convention expressed full agreement with the resolution of the conference of the auto worker sections of Detroit, held at the end of September and printed in the "National Convention Discussion Bulletin No. 2" November 27, 1956;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this Convention go on record to that effect.

The resolution is as follows:

"WHEREAS this conference of all the auto worker sections of Detroit, held at the end of September, reflects the thinking and experience gained through long years of leadership and struggle in this basic industry, and

"WHEREAS we feel that the thinking and opinions of this conference should be recorded and made known because of the special importance and role of the industrial worker in the party and in the present discussion, and

"WHEREAS this conference showed a complete agreement on the following points:

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

"1. That there can be no question as to the continued existence of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. as a political party, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism as applied to the American scene, and it be emphasized that our mistakes stem from a superficial understanding and application of these principles, rather than from a weakness in the principles themselves;

"2. That we reaffirm democratic centralism as the basic rule of our

Party, that in supporting democratic centralism we emphasize (a) That all our experience as militant class-conscious workers convinces us that without democratic centralism we could not continue to exist as a fighting organization; (b) that the present breakdown of democratic centralism had its beginnings in Party practices that existed long before the recent anti-Party persecution; (c) that the relationship between industrial workers and leadership must be completely overhauled so that the knowledge, experience and thinking of the industrial clubs actually go into the making of party policy; (d) that the problem of bureaucracy in our Party be studied in the light of the above, and that we use the CP of China as an example in developing organizational measures to combat this bureaucracy, and strengthening inner party democracy;

"3. That the industrial clubs and sections in our Party be continued and strengthened; that while this form of organization poses many problems requiring solution, yet all our experience proves that it is the only form through which the Party can carry out its role among industrial workers.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent through our District to the National Committee for their consideration."

We, a group of comrades active in mass organizations in Queens, wholeheartedly approve the resolution adopted by a Brooklyn branch and published in the *Party Voice*, issue No. 7.

While there are differences among us as to the form and program that our Party should adopt, we are unreservedly opposed to any liquidation by default or by disintegration, by inactivity and failure to collect dues and to maintain an organizational apparatus. We believe that no one, whether on section, county, State or National levels has the right to dis-

RESOLUTIONS

solve our organization prior to the February National Convention.

As a token of our firm belief in the above, all those present at our meeting on November 26th, have paid up their dues, up-to-date. We call upon all clubs to do likewise, to fully participate in the current discussions and to guarantee a fruitful national convention.

Resolution adopted by Print section, passed 15 to 1:

Move that Section 10 of the convention proceedings bulletin issued shall be as follows:

"All state officers (some 12) shall be seated at the State Conventions with voice and no vote save those that have been elected as representing a body in the Party."

This motion not intended in any way as evaluation of State Committee, but is intended to focus sharply upon proper democratic procedures.

From a Flatbush, Brooklyn, N. Y. Club—for the N. Y. State Comm.

We base this resolution on the belief that the references in the Draft Resolution on bureaucracy and the lack of democracy in the Party are far too superficial and inadequate to serve the purpose of putting the Party on a sound footing. There must be an accounting in detail of these evils, how they happened, and their destructive effect upon the Party as a whole, the members as individuals, and the relations of the Party to the American people. It must be recognized first of all that regardless of whatever changes are made in the Party, these evils represented a denial and perversion of principles basic to the Party program and constitution. We were in the untenable situation of proclaiming one set of principles and living another.

We were in principle a party always in close contact with the people, collective in our way of work, monolithic and at the same time democratic in its operation, constantly

checking and improving itself through criticism and self-criticism. In practice there was an almost total denial of the right, let alone the necessity, of criticism from below. Any attempts at such criticism, or expression of differences with a proclamation, formulation of program, was almost always looked upon with suspicion, or denounced as anti-Party activity, factionalism, or, at the very best, immaturity. Programs, tactics, policies, theoretical formulations, tended to flow from the top down, with every obstacle and discouragement placed in the way of any movement in the opposite direction. The Party took on an almost military character, with stimulating club discussions and collective activities replaced by orders, mobilizations and directives. A group of little functionaries was encouraged to develop whose actual activity was that of "errand boys" and message carriers from higher bodies to lower, and who shuddered at any independent thinking from below. The leadership was supposed to be chosen by, and responsible to, the members, and close to them. In practice, election became a mere formality. Leaders were appointed, co-opted, announced to the membership, with discussion of their qualifications limited to closed committees. The leaders were generally known to the members only through occasional articles or public speeches. Lower leaders were appointed to Party organizations of mass organizations, shifted from post to post, from community to community, from task to task, without any discussion with the people involved. Leaders in high positions and lower were in practice removed from real contact with the masses of people. A snobbishness developed among the Party leadership that could be characterized as a caste system, with the leaders on each level becoming a little self-protecting family, even self-admiring and self-congratulating. At conferences, the greatest weight was generally given to remarks on a basis of who said them, not what was

said. Members with great popularity and following among the people were turned into functionaries so overburdened with inner-party activity that their potentialities for real leadership were lost. Upon almost every active Party member, there was so great a burden of meetings upon meetings that family, family life, their own intellectual, Marxist and cultural development, their opportunity for friendly relations with the very people they were supposed to learn from and influence, were strained or made almost impossible. Instead of a place in which the members could feel their lives enriched, as human beings, the Party became all too often a sponsor of actions and ways of life that could be characterized as inhuman. It became a forbidding organization to the masses, so that to enter it seemed to be a repudiation of whatever human relations and pleasures a person had formerly had. When, in the last ten years, there were assaults upon the livelihood and jobs of hundreds of members, through loyalty programs, witch-hunts, red-baiting and the like, these members frequently found themselves in a deep crisis. And precisely in this crisis, they who had so much to offer, and who had done so much, found themselves often without help, without guidance, without any feeling that they were part of a collective Party that perhaps could assist them, or at least give them a feeling of not having to solve all their problems alone. In theory, we were a Party to whom human beings were precious. In practice, people were regarded almost as expendable. There has yet to be a reckoning of how many people were disillusioned or in other ways lost, through these practices.

These evils must be eradicated. They cannot be eradicated simply by general announcements such as "we have been bureaucratic," or "undemocratic," or "we must democratize the Party," or "we have all been guilty." Nor can they be eradicated simply by printing letters of criticism in the *Daily Worker*, or *Party Voice*,

or other Party organs. The "democratization" of the Party can be carried on in as undemocratic a way, dictatorial and "from above," as the previous practices. We propose that every member in a leading position must go through a process of self-

criticism, in which the main body of criticism consists not of their own judgment of how they were wrong, but of what is thought of them by those they worked with, and those to whom they were responsible, and to whom they gave leadership. We

believe that every leader must consider himself or herself to be on probation, until the membership is satisfied that they have gotten rid of old and bad habits of work, and developed truly democratic and collective methods of work.

A Letter

Dear Comrades:

The letter from the National Committee accompanying the Draft Resolution refers to the omission from the Resolution of any significant mention of several questions. One of these necessarily omitted questions as that of the analysis of the past, present and future of the Youth question in our country.

The word "necessarily" is used advisedly. We recognize the enormity of each of the questions omitted and feel that it would take a great deal to work and discussion to undertake such an analysis.

But that such an analysis is necessary and urgent is an obvious truth. For where does the future of the left movement arise, but from the ranks of the youth of today.

However, these are not times to reformulate old clichés about the "future of the country" and "fresh ideas" and "new blood," etc. The kind of estimate needed today should reflect the whole new experiences of today's youth—different from those of the 30's, different from the youth of World War II days,—products of years of cold war, relatively high employment, new educational opportunities for Negro youth, etc., etc., etc. For this question, as in all the others the Communist Party must undertake the most thorough analysis, estimate and program.

Because of this necessity, and because it was felt that the Party would not be expected to do this without

the very active participation of the Party youth themselves, and because Party Youth *alone* cannot undertake such a full estimate, it is vitally important for EVERY Communist to speak out on it, but especially the youth themselves.

Further—although the *largest* single group of new recruits to the Party in the past 10 years was among the Youth, facts today show that among this section there is at present a very high disorganization in the Party. Whole groups of Party youth have not been in a Party club for many years—many new recruits have never participated in a Communist Party meeting—many youth in leading positions in the youth movement have received no leadership, guidance or paid dues to the C.P. in all these many years.

The Party Youth in Manhattan, recognizing all of the foregoing, undertook to organize themselves into a Party Section (with the approval and agreement of our County Committee) for at least the period between now and the National Convention, to insure the participation of Party Youth in the discussions now taking place, and the conventions on all levels.

In addition, we undertook to fight through on all levels for the fullest possible participation of Party Youth in all meetings, conferences, committees and conventions of the Party. We have thus far been successful in achieving recognition of the necessity for Youth per se to be represented at

these functions, and are to be allowed delegates to the County and State and National conventions.

We would like to encourage by our achievements all other Party youth to make a like struggle in their communities all over the country, and voted at our last Section meeting to write this letter to so urge them.

This letter is also intended to urge upon the leading bodies of our Party everywhere, and especially the National Committee, the urgent necessity for the participation of Party Youth in all coming Conventions, especially the National Convention, and if necessary, to make *special provision* for their participation. We also urge all State and District Committees to take this seriously into consideration in determining the breakdown of delegates from your area to the National Convention.

However, we feel that most essentially, any such achievement will only be accomplished if the Youth in the Party begin *NOW* to wage a struggle for their full participation in the discussion, in all levels of the Party, and in the Conventions coming soon.

We feel that only this way can the necessary omission be filled and our Party can thereby once again, give leadership to the historically vibrant and revolutionary youth of our country.

—These sentiments were adopted unanimously by the Manhattan Communist Party Youth Section November 19, 1956.

Whither the CP of the USA

By MIM

EVERYONE IS challenging, everyone is thinking, everyone is trying to help answer the question: Whither the C.P. of the U.S.A.?

We are part of an era of readjustments, of finding new roads. Imperialist nations—1/3 of the world—are sorely beset with the problems of the uneven development of Capitalism, the threats of National Liberation movements, the challenge of Socialism. They are twisting and turning with every power at their command, to preserve themselves. The Neutralist Nations—1/3 of the world—are using all peaceful and revolutionary means to achieve their nationhood. Some turning in the direction of Capitalism, some in the direction of Socialism. The Socialist nations—1/3 of the world—weighed down by their own violations of Socialism, yet always alert to the threats of Imperialism, are cutting new paths to Socialism on the basis of national self-determination and the collective role of Socialist nations and parties.

The new relationships of these forces on a world scale, and the new relationships within each country have not yet fully or clearly emerged. This makes the tasks of the International Communist movement and of individual Communist Parties doubly difficult: how to correct old mistakes, and how to prepare ourselves for a new era, which is not yet fully defined.

It has taken us many years to make our mistakes; therefore, I suggest that at this point, when we are not faced with immediate decisions of sharp class struggle in U.S.A., we take time to study and work among the people to find the more basic answers. Give more time to such problems as: What are our strategic and tactical aims; the present and future role of American Imperialism; is an economic crisis necessary to achieve an anti-monopoly

government? What is the role of the bourgeois democracy—social democracy—Marxist thinking—and their respective organizations in the U.S.A. Are we, or are we not a political party—can we play such a role in the U.S.? To what degree will outside example and internal struggle determine the development of U.S. Socialism?

These problems, and many more, should inspire a "back to school" movement, the like of which we have never seen before. Some, who attempt to come to hasty conclusions on these questions, such as the D.W. and the N.C. position on the Hungarian crisis on November 5, and then have to change (more in line with Comrade Dennis' reservations) on November 7th, will run the danger of turning their sincere attempts at new thinking into a new pattern of mechanical and superficial thinking based on emotional reactions of the moment.

There are some general areas of agreement in the Draft Resolution such as the analysis of the world scene; the anti-monopoly government objective; immediate objectives in various fields of work; the possible peaceful and parliamentary road to Socialism; that we need a Marxist organization to study, analyze, discuss and continue in mass work.

There is a difference in the estimate of the role of U.S. monopoly as an imperialist nation. There is a difference in the concepts of the struggles necessary before and after an anti-monopoly government coalition on the road to Socialism. There is a difference in the estimate of struggles necessary to maintain world peace and co-existence.

The main areas of disagreement in the Draft Resolution discussion lie in the main causes of our party's errors and the solutions for them. I should like to deal with the two extremes of position as put forward by Comrade

Foster's article (Oct. P.A.) and the N.Y. State Board discussion which has been circulating in New York State for the last five months.

Comrade Foster's writing reminds us that we are not "super-men," "makers of our own destinies." He places the objective conditions, the "cold war" offensive as the main reason for our weaknesses. His re-statement of U.S. monopoly intentions and attacks makes a good anchor for our discussions. It reminds us that we are still living within the orbit of Big Business, anti-democratic, anti-Socialist ideas and actions. He also deals with important contributions we made to the struggles of the American people.

But Foster belittles the "contributions" our mistakes made to these struggles. In many cases either we did not participate in, or we seriously disrupted the trade union, community organization, and Negro people's struggles. In many cases hurting belief in Socialism by blindly defending the S.U. policies.

Comrade Foster believes that the main line and policies of the Party were essentially correct since 1945. But he does not differentiate between the time when it was correct and when it remained rigid, as relationships began to change and the people began to move away from us.

Comrade Foster believes that exaggerations of Party and leadership errors lead to a demoralization of the membership and loss of respect and confidence in the Party. This was not true in those areas where the Draft Resolution was the basis for discussion—just the usual confusion and sober attempts to find the answers.

In those areas where the extremes of the "completely compromised" and "ineffective" position of the party was the basis for discussion, there was more demoralization. This took the form of less leadership; not meeting;

little electoral work; low point of Jefferson School.

Comrade Foster could have helped combat this by recognizing the sincere confusion and questions on the concept and role of the Party, and by welcoming all thinking, not discouraging it by labelling it. Then all together we could begin to sort out what was scientific, semi-scientific, or just a flight into fancy.

Now I should like to deal at some length with the N.Y. State Board discussion. This point of view places the main responsibility for our size and semi-illegality on our own errors of line, policy and tactics. This has been valuable, because it showed that our own serious errors allowed monopoly to cut us down in size and separate us from the American people much more than was necessary in the "cold war" period.

It claims that our size and illegality proves we are not and cannot be part of, or effective on, the American scene. Therefore, a change in name and form will make us more acceptable—Political Association. This denies some American history. Small, militant groups laid a base for revolutionary, democratic changes in our country. They were unpopular and violently attacked by the people until their ideas became generally accepted and fought for. The leaders of these movements were often accused of "foreign" ideology (Jefferson) and as the most advanced end of the American democratic revolutionary movement they constantly committed left impatient mistakes, (Abolitionists, Molly McGuires). Interestingly enough, the name and form of these organizations (including political) were not changed unless made completely illegal or absorbed by larger movements.

The N.Y. State discussion correctly emphasizes the possibility of peaceful coexistence and parliamentary transition into U.S. Socialism. It foresees a long period of comparative peaceful coexistence abroad and at home. Therefore, we only need a looser, Socialist-minded organization to cope with this period of comparative class peace—Political Action Association.

This approach takes for granted that U.S. monopoly can maintain its

present pace without coming into sharp conflict with the working class in the near future.

Also, it fails to see that a unified, well organized, well trained CP is necessary at all times. In an era of comparative class peace, the leadership role must be that of helping weld the people's coalition; in an era of sharp class struggle it can take a more advanced role, whether it be to help maintain an anti-monopoly government or help move into Socialism.

The State discussion correctly states that we must make changes that will help eliminate dogmatism, inflexibility of thinking, stop blindly following and defending other countries, develop more American thinking and practices; end bureaucracy.

But it tends to make S.U. bureaucracy and the form of our organization the scapegoat for our errors. This leads to the feeling that we must change the name and form in order to correct the Party's serious errors and tends to substitute for a deeper evaluation of the U.S. party theory and practice.

It fails to see that, with all its weaknesses, the unity, loyalty, tightknit organization kept us the largest American Marxist Party; best trained, organized, best ties with the masses, while other Socialist Parties (always legal) became smaller and ineffective.

The State discussion correctly states that we attacked and alienated other Socialist minded forces and the need to bring them within the coalition as valuable leaders with valuable ideas.

But it fails to see that difference between the values of their reform leadership within the coalition and lowering the standards of a Marxist Party to include them. At best they are hesitant, non-militant, fear to involve their rank and file, and have no class coalition outlook.

The State discussion places correctly the mistakes of our vanguard role, raised issues that were too advanced, capturing leadership in organizations to push the issues across, not working within the level and desires of the membership of mass organizations and trade unions.

But does this leave us without a vanguard role? They fail to define the role of a Communist as different from

other members of a mass organization. Some call for breaking up industrial clubs because of no vanguard role. This kind of approach would merely increase the size of mass organizations by a few thousand without bringing in the values of Marxist leadership. An overall objective view, thinking in terms of class and national relationships, help mobilize membership to realize objectives stated by their leaders—detailed leadership on how to unite and help a moving coalition move faster.

To do away with or minimize this vanguard role would leave our comrades to repeat left errors, or do nothing for fear of repeating them. This leaves the leadership of the trade unions and mass organizations completely in the hands of reform or Social-democratic leadership. This thinking certainly contributes to the feeling of uselessness of a C. P.

Recent experiences show that consistent club discussions have trained our comrades in new ways of thinking and work. The comrades have been more than welcomed back in community organizations and trade unions, in spite of their known past ties and mistakes.

The State discussion correctly states that we do not play the same role as the two major political parties, nor can we elect candidates at this time.

They fail to mention that the masses make electoral changes when the movement is strong enough for small parties to represent them. This happened in N.Y. City with proportional representation.

No other Socialist Party has given up its electoral status. This is the American form for political platform and publicity. We should join other small parties in N.Y. State to win back the constitutional right to place on the ballot—to change the electoral college laws.

The State discussion correctly states that we must guarantee the right to differ, the right to raise differences after majority opinion and the right to develop more local analysis and tactics. But they propose to accomplish this with an assembly-type leadership and more complete local

autonomy, instead of a strong centralized leadership.

They fail to see why most American trade unions and mass organizations have found a loose organization without central strong leadership impractical for the day-to-day needs of their organizations. Complete autonomy of locals or branches, interpreting national programs leads to disension, not unity of purpose and action.

We admit our bankruptcy if we cannot develop leaders we can trust and respect. The *Daily Worker* editorials would tend to substitute for Party line and leadership.

The State discussion correctly takes into account the severe criticism of us. We must prove our sincerity by making those kind of changes that will show we are working in the best interests of the American people.

It fails to take into account that we are Communists, part of an International movement. As such we are expected to have the courage to be self-critical, and, as Communists, make the necessary changes.

Friends and critics would suspect our motives in changing name and form, as establishing a new "front" organization, or admitting that Communism has no place on the American scene.

The State discussion correctly estimates that we need sharp changes in order to function in the spirit and purpose of a Marxist organization. We need also to keep and retrain our membership and leadership.

It fails to learn the lessons of making drastic changes without sufficient analysis of the international and American scene. It wants to make drastic changes now on the possibility that there will be only one party of Socialism in the future in the USA. This is not backed up by any experiences in any other country, or in the USA.

It does not give thought to experimental changes that we can make without further breaking up our Party. We can move ahead in the future and make other changes as indicated by time and experience.

Many members see values and weaknesses in both the Foster and the New York State discussion; but they

feel that they are faced with only two extreme alternatives: Comrade Foster's position—to maintain the Party as we have known it; the Political Association position—to change the complete character and function of the Party.

I believe that there is a third alternative. I believe we can start solving the problems of our Party and avoid factionalism by learning lessons from some of our good mass work. We must find the best basis around which our membership can be unified and mobilized for a study and work. We can combine the essence of the strength and importance of a Communist Party with the sharp changes necessary to make it an effective Party in the USA.

I believe we can take giant strides to democratize, to Americanize, to develop and apply old and new theory, to make errors "more temporary and local" (Chinese), correcting and strengthening the Communist Party of the USA.

As a result of three years of experiences in new ways of work and discussions with many comrades in mass and trade union work, I should like to make the following proposals:

DEMOCRATIZE THE PARTY—1) Guarantee the right to differ, the right to raise questions (by organization or individual) after majority decision. **2)** The right of lower bodies to work out and apply local policies and tactics in line with national policies. Differences with a higher body, on local policies, should be debated in the lower body and decided by majority vote in that body. **3)** All thinking on new questions should be openly debated before the membership. All new major policies (between conventions) to be voted on at special conferences of delegates from the entire body.

ANTI BUREAUCRACY—1) All bodies should have a minimum of two representatives to the next higher body (more check on individual responsibility, more representation, more opinions and experiences); **2)** All leaders should consistently attend their club meetings (failure to do so to be brought to the atten-

tion of their body); **3)** All national, state, county leaders, be assigned to work consistently with some lower body. **4)** All leaders should have some non-Party working ties.

STREAMLINE THE PARTY — MAKE TIME FOR MASS WORK

—1) Reduce the number of full-timers to a necessary, supportable core. **2)** Work out a simple administrative system to take care of Party organizational needs (a technical set-up, not a political body with meetings). **3)** Local bodies should make organizational changes necessary to meet the increased demands of mass work (lessen number of Party meetings in proportion to increased amount of mass work). **4)** Consider the increased financial burdens of belonging to mass organizations when estimating Party dues and funds.

BACK TO SCHOOL—1) Plan classes on all Socialist theory. **2)** Plan research and classes on American history and democracy. **3)** Encourage and print new theoretical thinking.

ENTER INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST DEBATE—Use our and international publications to deal with theoretical differences and criticisms, (role of U.S. imperialism, national question, etc.)

HUMANIZE OUR PARTY—1) There are many levels of thinking and experience among Party members (joining the Party does not automatically throw everyone into one mold). **2)** All members have some important contribution to make within any limitation of time and place. **3)** Personal problems are an important part of political work (should be given every consideration and help). **4)** Everyone's ideas should be considered with respect and open-mindedness.

I add these proposals to others that have been made, and invite more, in order to help achieve a unified, workable Communist Party of the USA, which will serve the best interests of the American people and the International people's movement.

What Kind of Party

By M. D.

THE CENTRAL question confronting our party today is "What kind of party shall it be?"

That great changes in our party are necessary is clear. But *change in itself* is not the heart of the issue dividing our party today. The question is *what kind of change?* Some are attempting to *divide* the party rigidly into two camps—the "creative thinkers" who are for "drastic change" and the sectarians, dogmatists, the stand-patters who want *no change*. Nothing exists in between except conciliators." Thus they say "Our changes or none. All else is meaningless patchwork. Choose! "Be creative or be sectarian!" Some, are even going further. They say: "Either the changes we propose are accepted or the party is doomed to death as a sect." And of these some have publicly and more privately concluded: "I will not remain in such a party." They say, "it is the resistance to our changes that is liquidating the party." Granted, the intense sincerity of these comrades, and I do and their deep conviction that the changes they propose are a life and death matter for the party, they have no right to propose or *impose* their views on the party *so rigidly, so dogmatically*. The *banner of change* grants them no *such immunity* from the same deep-going probing and critical examination as they themselves have been subjecting the party and many basic questions. We have all of us been wrong many times. Let us debate with conviction, but let us all remember life itself will be the final judge. Certainly, if we can raise the perspective of a broader party of socialism, uniting many groups with which we have far greater differences, we can *live, work and fight* together as we have done for so many years in the past.

Certainly, regardless of our differences, we have to *unitedly* strive to overcome any moods of leaving the party no matter from which source they stem. It is not true that *any change will inevitably improve* the position and situation of our party or in effect "things are so bad—they cannot get any worse." Things could also *change for the worse* and it is my opinion that is precisely what would happen if some of the changes proposed are adopted by our party. It is *not* true, that the only danger our party faces today is that of *dwindling into a sect*. I recognize that terrible and threatening danger and I believe our party can be rallied to struggle against it.

But, I recognize too another, a new and growing danger that would *liquidate* a Marxist-Leninist party, under the guise of "drastic changes."

The comrades, who are the proponents of these "drastic changes" raise the cry, that their opponents offer no changes of their own. Hence, in effect are defenders of the status quo. There is an element of truth in this accusation, and the criticism should be objectively accepted.

But some of the proponents of these "drastic changes" have greatly contributed to this situation, for they helped feed the new danger of dissolution either in its outright form or in liquidating its Marxist-Leninist content.

By their very aggressiveness and it must be admitted, widespread influence they have confronted the party with the immediate task of the *defense* of the party, *defense* of its Marxist-Leninist content.

I consider such a *defense* of the party at *present* the *prerequisite* for making the *necessary changes* in our party. For *without* a party, *without* being based on clear Marxist-Leninist principles, what will be left to change?

The *key* to understanding these

proposed changes, lies in the perspective which gives rise to them. For basically the answer to the question what kind of party should we be is largely determined by how one views the road ahead. It is in this sense, I want to discuss some of the recently proposed changes submitted by the N. Y. State Board.

One of the most basic of these proposed "changes" is the discarding of *democratic Centralism*.

Says a proposed resolution: "Our outlook of *long term* co-existence, of peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism does not demand the old centralist features of organization."

Since the thinking in the proposed resolutions and the article of Comrade Gates entitled "Time for a Change," are quite related, I want to give some quotes from that article. Says Comrade Gates:

"The cold war is slowly but *steadily* diminishing, and we have *already* entered into a new era of peaceful co-existence which will probably be of long duration. . . ."

And a little later on:

"We have *entered into a protracted* period of peaceful competition during which the struggle in our country *will be* of an *evolutionary* character, and lead to *eventual* revolutionary transformation. The path towards the triumph of *Socialism* here is one of peaceful and constitutional struggle. We need a party geared to *that kind of situation and struggle*."

What is the *common thread* running through all this? It is a perspective that already views as a *foregone conclusion*, as already *attained* what both the 20th Congress and our Draft Resolution correctly project as *realizable possibilities*, the "titanic"

battles for which must still be fought out and won before they assume the definite shape of attainment.

The point to remember is that we have not yet reached the stage where what is possible has already become reality and above all not to act as if it has. One of the healthiest notes struck in the discussion and here comrades like John Gates and others have made good contributions, is the emphasis placed on soberly viewing American reality, avoiding our habitual weakness of attempting to skip stages. Yet, that is precisely what is being done in this case.

Is this not so when Comrade Gates categorically states "we have already entered into a new era of peaceful co-existence which will probably be of long duration" and envisions a "protracted period of peaceful competition."—"A steady diminishing of the cold war. . . ." No where in the 20th Congress was such a definite perspective projected. What was put forth were the tremendous possibilities to achieve it based on the worldwide relationship of forces. On the contrary it warned "To be able to do this all anti-war forces must be vigilant and prepared, they must act as a united front and never relax their efforts in the battle for peace."

But, above all, how does such a one-sided, categorical perspective jibe with present-day reality?

Did not the turn of events in the Middle East and Hungary confront the world with a serious sharpening of tensions?

Have not new and serious dangers in the path of struggle for peaceful co-existence arisen? Has not the cold war been heightened? Does this one-sided perspective equip our party to meet the realities of life?

I do not think so. On the contrary it only aids in "dulling the vigilance" "relaxing efforts" in the battle for peace.

This tendency of flight from present-day reality and skipping stages is further revealed by one of the main reasons upon which the State Board bases its conclusions to discard the Leninist concept of democratic centralism as out-moded. In the same resolution the State Board admits that democratic centralism was "necessary

. . . for all parties under conditions of severe repressions and civil wars."

Leaving aside the question of civil war, one must indeed be prepared to exaggerate the gains made in the battle to regain democratic rights (and I do not wish to minimize them in the slightest) to describe our party's present position as anything but severe repression. One of the things that amazes me is how, with comrades still in jail, many awaiting their turn, our party in a semi legal and in many places illegal conditions, one can speak of parties under "severe repression" without recognizing it's of yourself you are speaking. Part of facing up to American reality, is to realistically regard not only the position of isolation we are in, but the difficult road ahead before the "severe repression" upon us is lifted. This regardless of the reasons for it, and I am in agreement that our own errors certainly facilitated this situation. While it is necessary to look ahead to the period when we have fully emerged from "severe repression" and democratic positions lost, have been restored and strengthened, it would be folly to attempt to gloss over or skip the present stage we are in.

It would be disarming to give the impression that the period of severe repression for our party is behind us, that all that is required of us is to make certain organizational, ideological and tactical adjustments to avoid any resurgence of repression or to surmount it.

It does not depend on us alone and particularly because of our weakened and isolated position we are less of a determining factor at present. The present heightening of tensions presents new dangers we cannot ignore.

What is the heart of the matter?

It is one's attitude on the leading role of the party.

Democratic Centralism and the vanguard role of the party are vitally related to each other. It is no accident therefore, those who propose discarding democratic Centralism likewise challenge the concept of a vanguard party. Thus the State Board says as regards the role of the party: "It should strive to become a leading organization of the working class and of the popular forces." There are

numerous variations on this theme in the party today among the clearest expression of which are the following quotes from the article by Comrade Don Amter in the current issue of P.V. "The loose organizational form . . . may make for less efficiency, but winning a mass following is 1000 times more important than efficiency.

"Socialism cannot advance in this country by countering the American democratic traditions of looseness and the right to dissent. And later on he says "When the time comes that a party of scientific socialism can play a leading role in our country, I am confident that American Marxists will be able to make these organizational adjustments necessary to carry out its historic role." If a vanguard party is not necessary, then neither is a cohesive party, ideologically united and capable of bringing to bear its united will, after democratically arriving at a common outlook.

If this were so, I would be for it. Why not? It is far more difficult to accept and carry out the role of the vanguard party in the arduous struggle for socialism. As has been the lot of every brother party.

It is far more difficult to combine (Not impossible as some say) centralization (firm unity of will and action) and democracy. It is far easier to build a "loose" organization as is the case with average American organizations. It is far easier to be a member of such an organization. The only trouble is its too easy.

Too easy for the "perspective of titanic economic and political struggles envisioned by our Draft resolution.

Too easy to defeat so powerful and ruthless a force as American monopoly despite the "emergence of socialism as a world system." We have much to learn from other American organizations, but what other organizations are confronted with the historical task of leading the difficult struggle for socialism? Our organizational and ideological firmness is dictated by the responsibilities and tasks placed upon us, just as the "looseness" for mass organizations some are now making an American tradition, arises from lesser requirements.

Certainly, our party must not me-

chanically apply the principles of democratic centralism, imitating the Russian party which had far different conditions to contend with, as we often tended to do.

But what is needed is the application of the internationally tried and tested principles of democratic centralism to our own specific conditions and needs, not the dissolving of our party into an amorphous body, under the slogan it is dictated by so-called "American tradition."

Certainly, serious bureaucratic distortions have plagued and harmed our party, which I will refer to later on.

But, we would be tearing out our guts, not just removing the ulcer, if we discard democratic centralism.

One final word on the question of the vanguard role.

Some confuse a vanguard party with vanguardism. There is a world of difference between them.

Vanguardism means disregard for the masses, running ahead of them, substituting the party for them. It can and did lead to a rupture between the party and the working class. That is the essence of the left sectarian errors which did so much to bring our party to its present position of isolation.

As a reaction to this, some now say, what is wrong is that we look upon our party as a vanguard. Where are we a vanguard today, they ask?

If by that they mean where do the workers look to us for and accept our leadership, the answer is "in very few places."

From this they conclude it is immodest, unrealistic and dogmatic to still view ourselves as a vanguard party, under these circumstances.

But this is a mechanical, undialectical view of not only the concept of vanguard role, but of the class struggle itself.

It sees the vanguard role as played only at the stage of development when our party is openly accepted by the masses, rather than a dynamic development of the class struggle itself. It confuses the extent to which and the manner in which the party can play its vanguard role which varies with the relative position of the party at a given stage, the relationship of

forces, etc., with the very concept itself.

Many parties (including our own at present) suffered serious set backs. The Italian party at one point dwindled to 1,000. Certainly it was able to fulfill its vanguard role far less effectively and in different ways than at present when it is 2 million. (No one should confuse this as an argument for a complacent acceptance of a dwindling party.) But the point is that when objective conditions changed it had the cadre, the program, the experience to emerge as the accepted leaders of the Italian working class. Certainly serious errors, setbacks not only are often as a result of rupture between the party and the masses but likewise compound the error itself.

Certainly what is called for is a realistic appraisal of our relationship with the American masses today, moving with them and not running ahead of them, not exaggerating our capacity, projecting more sober aims. No one can deny our main task is to heal the rupture between us and the masses. That, under the present circumstances is the essence of our vanguard role.

The initiative for this cannot come from the working class, but from its vanguard. The essence of our being a vanguard is not conceit, arrogance, immodesty which like bureaucracy are diseases that plague our party and hinder its true vanguard role, but that ours is a party which represents the present and future interests of its class, which is guided by a science which will enable it to accomplish the attainment of these interests, which has and will have a courageous and effective history of struggle. The long and honorable history of our party in pioneering in the struggles that led to winning of unemployment insurance, social security, the organization of the giant industries, the victories of the Negro liberation struggle, the fight for peace and against fascism, despite the many mistakes committed in the course of them, attests to both the objective need for as well as the ability of our party to play its vanguard role.

Some conclude that the policy of coalition of parties, historically neces-

sary in certain countries, precludes the vanguard role of the party. On the contrary, it presupposes a relationship, in which the party is able to exercise that role in its broadest way.

Undoubtedly our discussion is part of and influenced by the debate now taking place throughout the international movement and we must take part in the discussion on these fundamental questions. However, we should strive to avoid making our party a battle-ground for the resolution of all problems of relations between fraternal parties. If anything, would guarantee, that we cease to be an American party that would be it. The fact that the recent great longshore strike was practically ignored by our party is a dangerous signal for all of us to heed.

Finally, it should be noted, that while many basic questions are being discussed, no party anywhere is questioning the basic principles of democratic centralism, vanguard role.

By all means let us break with the dogmatic application of the "letter of the law." It is my opinion however that under the banner of creativity some are ready to uproot the very pillars upon which our party rests.

I ask these comrades to pause and consider, why such deep division is evoked, by their proposals? Why they do not aid but compound our party's crisis? It cannot all lie in the deep seated sectarianism which is a big factor. Why do they not hesitate, re-examine their thinking more in the light of this situation, be more modest, allow the best judge of all, experience to test theirs and all views? Above all, regardless of differences we must guard the unity of our party, stamp out factional flames and allow no enemy to fish in muddy waters.

In what way should our party change? This is not an easy question to answer. It will truly require the skillful distilling of the collective experience and wisdom of the entire party. The field should not be left primarily to those who are most facile with pen, as there may well be a tendency to do.

It seems to me at this stage a vital aspect of the question is our approach to change.

There are those who inject not the element of crisis (which is deserved) but *desperation*. Their attitude implies there's nothing to lose (to some everything is already lost). Others, counter it (and I believe Comrade Foster seriously errs in feeding this tendency) by *complacency* toward the party's serious errors and weaknesses. The first things to *remove* in our approach to change are the elements of *desperation* and *complacency*.

Sober and sound reasoning should lead to change. The party must be convinced it's a change for the *better*, not a wild shot in the dark or a get-rich quick gimmick.

Secondly, it should be on the basis of creatively applying Marxism-Leninism. But merely waving the banner of creative Marxism to clear the way for proposed changes is not enough, for this banner has a history of *misuse* as well as proper use. Especially, is there grounds for sober examination of what is proposed when among those so suddenly "creative" are some who only yesterday were among the most "dogmatic."

Creatively applying and developing Marxism means doing it scientifically. And that means a careful, many-sided evaluation of our experiences. It means scientifically discarding proven obstacles. It means that what is proposed, is not final and irrevocable, but will likewise be subjected to the careful testing and amending or discarding by the judgment of life itself.

But the *very scope* and *tempo* of the proposed changes on the part of some *precludes* such a truly creative approach. For years we *plodded* along uncreatively. Now with *gargantuan appetites* that greatly *overestimate* our party's *creative capacity* as well as *digestion*, almost every fundamental concept is proposed for drastic over-hauling. What is more a mechanical *time table* is set—the Convention date.

A more *realistic* view of the convention, of the capacity to *project* and *absorb* change is in order. Our objective must be to *unite* the party *through change not further divide* it. Those questions upon which there exist deep differences upon which insufficient examination and testing

have taken place cannot and must not be resolved at this convention. Rather, they should be questions for further examination, discussion and debate. Furthermore, we should distinguish between those changes *within our power*, and those basic changes over which *we have no full subjective control*. In the latter category, and in my opinion *one of the most basic changes* necessary for the health and very existence of our party is a change in its *present composition*. For what our party *needs* above all is a *blood transfusion* from our class, particularly working class, *young, militant, fresh, idealistic blood*, that can refresh our stagnant, tired, somewhat disillusioned blood. What are some of the changes which our party overwhelmingly desires?

First and foremost, I would place the *democratization* of our party. Since I dealt in detail with some concrete proposals in the No. 5 issue of PV and since Part IV of the Draft Resolution incorporates many of these changes, I will merely enumerate some of them: the encouragement and protection of the free expression of opinion; the right to dissent, the protection of the rights of members, the correction of the past bureaucratic relationship between higher and lower bodies, leadership and membership. This in itself would be a *tremendous step forward* and would *unleash the creative initiative* of our membership like never before. It would lay the basis for *involving the entire party* in the solution of problems in the pursuit of the American path to Socialism. *Secondly*, it wants to *bridge* the terrible gap between our party and the American working class and people. While mindful of the oppressive objective conditions to which we have been subjected, our party in the main correctly rejects any explanation which fails to deeply and honestly lay bare the self isolating causes for our present critical condition. There is rightful concern with the problem of how our party is to win "legality" in the eyes of the American workers and people. There is no question this is the most important problem we face today. It is also the most difficult because of a combination of objective conditions,

the influence of anti-communist propaganda, our own serious errors. The placing of this question squarely before the party, the demand that we address ourselves to its solution is a valuable contribution on the part of those comrades who have raised it so strongly.

But in many their concern has developed into *subjective obsession* and disorientation. They see the path to "legality" primarily in the changes they propose. Our party has to make any and all changes that are necessary to enable us to more effectively overcome the false picture portrayed of us, and of socialism. But it can only do this in the context of truly *advancing* the struggle for *socialism*.

There are different ways of winning "legality" in the eyes of the people. At their present anti-Soviet, anti-communist level, the simplest and the quickest way would be to sink to that level. That is the well-trodden opportunist path of "merging" or rather "submerging" in the mass. No one of course is advocating such a course. But there are tendencies to confuse principledness and tactics.—That is the essence of the *short-cut* to "legality" embodied in some of the proposals to discard democratic centralism and the concept of a vanguard role. These tendencies, together with loss of confidence in Soviet Union likewise feed anti-Soviet moods. But there is *no short-cut*, there is *no easy path*. The path to "legality" or more correctly "acceptance" by the American people and workers, is a *hard road of struggle*, in which the *deeds* of Communists *overcome the lies* of our enemies. The entire history of our party *rings* with *that basic truth*. It was the way Communist won non-Communists to accept, support and some join our party in the days of the depression, in the struggles for equal rights for the Negro people, in the organization of the unorganized. That is the path many of us ourselves took to our party overcoming in the process our own prejudices and misconceptions of the party and socialism. Certainly, today for many reasons *we are now discussing* it is much more difficult.

Certainly, basic changes are needed in estimate, program, tactics, organ-

ization. Those changes that would facilitate winning the masses to our party, to the struggle for socialism should be made. But in what way would the discarding of democratic centralism, our vanguard role, a change in our name, a weakening of the bonds of international solidarity aid us in this? I believe it would only accomplish the opposite. Given the charting of a correct perspective and I believe the Draft Resolution after

some needed corrections could basically provide this, plenty of hard patient skillful work, sharp struggles, in many places on an elementary level, will be required. The purpose of the discussion is to *clear the path* for such work, not merely to perpetuate itself. In the final analysis, this will *determine* as well as *test* everything we decide. It is necessary to say this now, because we are at the lowest point of activity, and because the dis-

ussion tends to become an end in itself and is acquiring an abstractness fed by isolation from activity. *People*, Communist leaders and members will *construct*, move, will be the *living bridge* that will *first narrow then close the gap* between our party and our people. These are the elementary truisms which in the midst of the deep-going debate must not be lost sight of.

A Letter

To the Editor:

I would like to challenge as being filled with gross inaccuracy, to say the least, the statement by the New York State Board of the C. P., in the *Daily Worker* of October 25, 1956: ". . . the State Board considers it necessary to take sharp issue with views circulating in the Party that the leadership in New York stands for and recommends dissolution and liquidating of the Party. The views are false." And again—"No member of the Board proposes to dissolve our Party, scatter its devoted, trained *socialist* membership and leadership." (Emphasis added)

These quotes are both misleading and contemptuous of the Party membership, because later in the same article it states: "There is a trend of opinion that favors transforming the Party into a non-party political association with change of name, etc."

What is the essence of this statement if it is not, in effect, dissolution of the Party? Not only does the majority of the State Board advocate the dissolution of the Party, but along with that a rejection of Leninism. It is my opinion that based upon the panic that has set in since the 20th Congress, and as a result of their own individual loss of confidence in

Socialism, in the class, and in themselves, a majority of the State Board would take the whole Party down the path of opportunism. And more, not only do they want to dissolve the Party, but some on the State Board advocate the return of Browder to leadership. Some leaders of the State Board even declare that Socialism is no longer our strategic aim, and again in the most contemptuous approach to the membership, suggest that this is inherent in the Draft Resolution, but that only those with a keen eye can detect this.

The members should have a right to know all this, and to disguise these ideas and intent, as the statement tries to do, is being dishonest with the membership.

As to their self-righteous position that "They render a disservice to the discussion who resort to invective and name-calling," the majority of the State Board is not like Caesar's wife. In the period of the last ten months, *they* have used name-calling against any one who disagreed with their so-called new "creative Marxism," and with the changes they wish to institute, with the characterization of left-sectarian, dogmatic and inflexible. Actually, the real state of affairs is that they are the ones who have been dogmatic in the past, and still con-

tinue to be dogmatic, and, moreover, are hardened bureaucrats, and they are attempting to stifle any rejection of the new line with name-calling. Not only have they resorted to name-calling, but they have done much more—they have kept many comrades who disagree with them from assignment in the Party, and from playing a leadership role, regardless of past experience.

I personally wonder what opportunity will be presented to those who disagree with the majority of the State Board to express themselves at the coming State Convention.

I want to add my voice to the demands that not only national leaders state their position, but that the members of the State Board also come out on all vital questions in clear, precise language, and end their double talk. I feel that in discussing the reappraisal of the past, we must include the last ten months, which was used to spread pessimism and confusion, and which has resulted in the demoralization of sections of the membership, and all this flows, in the first place, from the majority of the State Board.

This has done immeasurable harm, to the Party, and it was impermissible that this state of affairs was allowed to develop and continue.

HELEN TURNER

Coalition Demands Change in Form

By BERNARD

I WANT to discuss the two proposals: first, that we abandon the democratic centralism and monolithic unity, and second, that we change the form of our organization from a party to a political action association.

On the question of democratic centralism, it is our experience that this proposal is often met with the statement that we never had real democratic centralism and that what we now propose in its place is, in fact, the only true democratic centralism. Therefore, for this discussion, I define the term as follows: What we are proposing to abandon is democratic centralism AS WE HAVE PRACTICED IT.

However, when the question is put in that way it becomes clear that all we are proposing is the recognition of an already existing condition. Long before our section convention convened we had already abandoned democratic centralism and monolithic unity. Moreover, it would now be completely impossible to re-establish either of these things in the party. We can, if we wish, publicly admit this change, but whether or not to make the change is no longer in our hands. It has been done and it is irrevocable. Therefore, if we go into our national convention with no other changes in our organizational structure to propose than these, we will come out of the same door by which we entered.

Comrades have warned us that we are in danger of becoming a sect. Now a sect is a relatively small group, having no connection with our influence on the main stream of society, engaged in continuous ideological discussion and ritual, and having no other activity. I think that if we will look at our party with open eyes we will see that we are already a sect. Events have moved rapidly and yesterday's foreboding has become today's real-

ity. Our problem is therefore how to change from being a sect into being a part of the mainstream of the American social movement; how to become, simultaneously, a part of, and an influence on the political and economic development of American society.

It is with this object in mind (that of becoming connected with, and an influence on the political and economic development of America) that we propose to change from a party to a political action association. The difference between the two is this: A party attempts to achieve political power by running candidates in its own name with the expectation that some day it will achieve an electoral victory. But a political action association does not have its own separate list of candidates. Instead, it combines with other associations and groups to jointly support a common list of candidates. In other words, a party is a sort of do it yourself organization while an association believes in the coalition road to power.

I think that in developed countries today there is no other road to power than that of coalition. In continental Europe governments are formed by coalitions of parties. There, every political trend has its own party which contends for representation in the parliament, and the government is based on a coalition of these parliamentary delegations. Under this system the communist movement operates as an electoral party and tries to become a part of the governing coalition.

The political system of the U.S. is entirely different. The executive branch of our government does not hold office at the pleasure of the legislative branch as is the case in Europe, nor is the cabinet responsible to the congress. We have no such thing as a coalition government in the Eu-

ropean sense. However, we do have coalitions of a different sort. Here the two main parties, the Democratic and the Republican, are coalitions of diverse groups but these coalitions are formed before the elections, not afterwards. Changes in the coalition take place prior to and during the election and determine the outcome.

Under this American system, for a serious political group, such as the Communists, to organize a political party in the electoral sense, amounts to copying, uncritically, the European pattern. It certainly is a rejection of the coalition road to power.

It is proposed that we change our organization from a party to an association so that instead of operating as a separate electoral party after the European pattern, we could operate as a trend within one of the major American parties. However, in this case as in the case of democratic centralism and monolithic unity, the change in content has already been made and there remains only to adapt the form to the content. We are, in reality, no longer an electoral party. This is not because we are not officially recognized. By petition we could obtain a place on the ballot just as the other sectarian groups do. But the fact is we are not candidates under our party label. Our outlook is to expect a major political realignment within the two-Party system, or one that would bring to birth a major labor Party. And our party did support major party candidates in the last election. Some of our comrades thought that this was done unskillfully. Some thought that we should have supported the protesting section of the Negro voters who switched to the Republicans. Some thought that a vote for Eisenhower would be interpreted as a vote for peace and that we should vote for peace. And some thought that since the progressive

movement received insufficient or no concessions from either party that we should boycott the elections. But I know of no one who advocate running Communist candidates.

As far as the content of our party is concerned, these basic changes have already been made. We have abandoned democratic centralism and monolithic unity and we have ceased to be an electoral party and have become a political association. But some comrades still cling to the old form and decline to recognize the new situation. They say two things: First that perhaps in the future we may want to run candidates and, after all, the form is not important so why change. Second, the fear that changing to a political association will signal the abandonment of the class struggle and of Marxism.

On the subject of the form of our future political action association, the draft resolution foresees two possible courses. It says that some comrades foresee a farmer-labor party. The idea that we would run our own candidates while supporting one of these major coalitions would be fantastic if we had not done it so often in the past. At any rate it is something that is beyond the understanding of most people.

Of course minority parties are a traditional American method of voicing a protest but the American people will not understand minority parties having coalition aspirations

WM. Z. FOSTER

(Continued from page 9)

water-down Marxism-Leninism and to replace the Communist Party by an amorphous political action association. Obviously, in the discussion the membership are now moving de-

as they do in Europe, and that is why the Liberal Party, which tries to be a part of the Democratic Party coalition, meets with no success. It is clear that remaining a party, which to Americans means an electoral party, only puts obstacles in the way of our joining a coalition, and we should not put obstacles in our own path. Nor do they say that obstacles are not important. I think that the comrades who refuse to become an association have no confidence in our ability to become a part of a major political coalition and that they are resigned to remaining a sect.

On the question of the class struggle I think that the comrades' fears are unjustified. When determined groups join a coalition such as our major political parties are, they are able to impress upon the coalition their common program. At the present time we can see in its early stages a great coalition forming on the issue of transforming the superstructure of the South. The coalescing forces are the NAACP, the labor unions and the liberal and progressive forces generally. And since their organization basis is the Democratic Party they will inevitably impress their program on that party.

This coalition is forming without our participation. But is there no role in it for us? In the first place is there no need for devoted and energetic workers? And in the second place cannot Marxist analysis help elucidate

the problems of the coalition? Is it really true that the superstructure in the South can be changed without an attack on its basis, the land tenure system? Here there is still an empty platform from which to advocate completion of the democratic revolution in the South.

I think that our political action association will also make their proposals, which, while we may have to advocate them alone for a while, will in the end receive coalition support. For instance, I would advocate socialized medicine. I would frankly advocate the welfare state with security from the cradle to the grave. I would propose that the expenditures budgeted for arms be diverted to schools, housing and roads. And when the reactionaries cry, "This is creeping socialism!" I would say, "Yes, this is the road to socialism. Is it not a pleasant prospect?"

I conclude from all this that those comrades who believe that we can formulate a program that is acceptable to the American people and that will at the same time lead to socialism, will naturally want to adopt a form of organization natural and acceptable in America, namely, that of a political action association. And I look forward to our association, on the basis of serious study of the theoretical and practical problems involved, becoming a part of a great coalition for progress and in the end, for socialism.

stitute for it. With these major phases of the Right program rejected in the Party discussion and eventually by the national convention, the Party will be well on its way again to unity and political health. To defeat the project for a political action association is the life-and-death necessity now before the Party.

The Issues of the World Communist Movement

The last article sketched the development of the critical situation in the world Communist movement. The sharp re-evaluations and big corrections of the Communist Parties of Japan, Brazil, Indonesia, Greece, France, and the first start in our own Party were made before the XXth Congress of the CPSU. Then a new round of deep self-criticism was opened by Khrushchev's speech at the Belgrade airport in June of 1955, and by the XXth Congress itself. Since then, many other Parties have begun to reveal the symptoms of crisis and to review their work and policies. Among them are the Canadian, the British, the French, the Australian and the Italian. In the People's Democracies as well, great changes have taken place in Poland. The Hungarian Party has suffered a disastrous crisis. And in other People's Democratic countries changes are taking place.

Post World War II Outlook

Let us examine the political outlook of the Communist movement in the People's Democracies, in the main capitalist countries, and in some of the colonial countries that were winning political independence in the early post war years.

The People's Democracies

Gomulka said, in November of 1946:

"The first difference is that the social and political changes in Russia were effected through a violent revolution; in our country they were achieved in a peaceful way.

"The second difference is that the Soviet Union had to go through a period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas in our country there is no such period, and it can be avoided.

"The third difference characterizing the variation in the ways of development of both countries is that the government in the Soviet Union is in the hands of the Council of Delegates, or Soviets, which combine the executive and legislative functions and constitute the socialist form of government, whereas in our country the legislative and executive functions are separated and the government is based on a parliamentary democracy."

Rakosi, Hungarian Communist Party Secretary, said at the Third Congress of the Party:

"During the last twenty-five years the Communist Parties of the world have learned the lesson that there are several paths leading to socialism, yet we cannot secure socialism unless we take the special circumstances of the country in question into consideration. We also know that whereas socialism draws upon the whole storehouse of international experience, our socialism can only come into being as a result of the development of Hungarian history and of Hungarian economic, political, and social forces. This will be a socialism born on Hungarian soil, adapted to Hungarian circumstances." (William Z. Foster: *The New Europe*, 1947, pp. 94-95.)

Dimitroff, then Communist Prime Minister of Bulgaria, said:

"The popular Democracy is neither socialist nor Soviet. It is the passage of democracy to socialism. It creates the conditions favorable to the development of socialism by a process of struggle and work. Each country will arrive at socialism in its own way. The advantage of the people's democracy is that this passage (to socialism) is rendered possible without the dictatorship of the proletariat. This possibility is due to the example of the Soviet Union and to the lessons of all the struggles led in the world by the proletariat." (Wil-

liam Z. Foster: *The New Europe*, p. 17-18.)

Foster further describes the new democracies as "the result of national democratic revolutions. The essence of this revolution is that the peoples in these countries, during the war, with the potent help of the Red Army, drove out the fascist invaders, and also smashed their own big capitalists and landlords who almost unanimously joined the fascists. In these struggles the old states' machinery was destroyed and the people built new people's governments in their place, as well as nationalizing of the basic sectors of the industrial system." (same book, p. 18.)

This was the accepted outlook of the Communist Parties of the People's Democracies. So well established was the outlook of a broad, national coalition front, and joint action of different anti-fascist parties among Communist Parties everywhere that Foster states:

"Obviously, there is need for a working class political organization. But this body should not be founded upon the old, narrow lines of the Second International, nor should it be another Communist International. It should include both Communist and Socialist Parties, together with democratic peasants' organizations and other progressive groupings. That is, the new International should reflect on a world scale the democratic coalitions of progressive groups which are now so prominent a feature in many European countries." (Same book, p. 55.)

The Cold War and The Changed Policy

Then came the mounting cold war. The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the organization of NATO, the establishment of bases, the full program of the drive of American

finance capital for expansion and dominating positions unfolded its evil. To achieve its aims, the Wall Street elite were prepared to use economic threats and blackmail, political intimidation, and military threats from positions of strength—and, if necessary, war, as in Korea.

Under the impact of the cold war, the path outlined above by Gomulka, Dimitroff, Rakosi, and others, was abandoned. The Communist Information Bureau was formed for the European Parties, somewhat like another Communist International. The Communist Parties of the People's Democracies moved back closer to the path of the Soviet experience: other non-Communist parties were illegalized in some countries, and virtual one-party rule established. In Hungary and Poland, for instance, the Communist Party took the same relationship to the government as the CPSU had in the Soviet Union.

The Yugoslav Party was expelled from the Communist Information Bureau. It is clear now that the issue in the expulsion was exactly the question of a national road to socialism, and the equality and independence of the Communist Parties. As the Communist Information Bulletin, *For a Lasting Peace*, stated on the anniversary of the expulsion of the Yugoslav Party: "The treacherous policy of the Tito clique made it doubly clear to the Communist and Workers Parties that the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B.) are the centre of world communism, that the CPSU headed by Comrade Stalin is the leader and teacher of the international proletariat, of the working people of the world." (Issue of July 1, 1949, p. 1, editorial.)

The outlook of Dimitroff and Gomulka was criticized as not Marxist-Leninist. Beirut, speaking on the ideological basis of the United Workers Party of Poland (*For a Lasting Peace*, January 1, 1949, p. 2), criticized those who had an estimate of the People's Democracy "as something which differed qualitatively and in principle from the system foreseen by Marxism-Leninism."

"Some people who wanted People's Democracy to be a road to so-

cialism considered that this road was distinguished by some sort of special qualities that exceeded the bounds of Marxism-Leninism."

Marxism-Leninism as Stalin described it in his writings, is made the "universality of the Russian experience."

Thus, what Rakosi referred to as the lessons of the past twenty-five years of the world working class of many paths to socialism, of national democratic fronts, were replaced by a return to a policy of imitating the Soviet Revolution under the tutelage of the CPSU (B.) and Stalin. Where independence was fought for, as by the Yugoslavs, excommunication followed, and the members of the Communist Party there were called upon to "replace them (the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party) and to advance a new internationalist leadership of the Party." (Resolution of the Cominform, June 28, 1948.)

The new policy was fortified by the wave of trials of "Titoists," Slansky, Kostov, Rajk, Gomulka.

The forced tempo of moving to socialism, and its accompanying repression, the skipping of stages, laid the basis for the recent crises in Poland and Hungary.

In Other Countries

The same change in policy took place, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Communist Parties of capitalist countries. The period of the change runs from 1947 to 1950; but the circumstances of course, vary widely. The change took place along the same general lines.

For instance in our country our policy of coalition and popular front of the war and immediate post war (and post-Browder) period was converted into a "go-it-alone" policy. We have discussed this in articles and in the draft resolution, and in our meetings at great length, to say the least. I want simply to give one illustration.

The Draft Resolution of 1952 stated that our support to the formation of the Progressive Party was a mistake, for it boxed us off in the field of electoral activity away from the main political arena in which the

working class and their allies were fighting. But within that error, we made another, more revealing error.

At the founding convention of the Progressive Party the Vermont delegation brought in a resolution on the "cold war" in which they criticized Administration policy, and placed some of the blame for the tensions on the Soviet Union. This was a more or less neutralist position.

Those influenced by the Communists at that convention made the issue of this Vermont resolution a breaking issue! Apparently, we were ready to break even with this advanced sector of the electorate (quite advanced, and quite small), withdraw into our own little, narrow shell, if any part of the cold war tensions was placed at the door of the Soviet Union.

It is not important that Mikoyan and Bulganin have stated that some of the tensions were increased by Soviet errors. What is important is that we accepted the idea of two camps, the socialist and the imperialist, and that "neutralist" groups really were in the war camp! We accepted the idea that only those who fully and unqualifiedly support socialism, can fight "the war drive of American imperialism" and can be considered in the peace camp—thus ignoring the strong peace sentiment of the American working people, which inevitably had certain anti-Soviet neutralist forms.

The Japanese Experience

The experience of the Japanese Party is even more revealing. In a report to the Second Conference of the Communist Party of Japan, in January 1947, the Secretary of the Party, Nosaka, called for the "naturalization of Marxism-Leninism on Japanese soil." He went on to say:

"The possibility has arisen that proletarian parties, by winning a majority in Parliament, might be able to form their own government and take political power into their hands by destroying the bureaucratic apparatus and its forces. In other words, the possibility has arisen of winning power by Parliamentary, democratic methods."

This policy was again restated in June, 1949. The Japanese Communists made fine advances in broad united front relations with the Socialists and others, even though Japan was under the MacArthur occupation.

In *For a Lasting Peace*, the Cominform Bulletin of January 6, 1950, there appeared an editorial article on Page 3. Titled "Concerning the Situation in Japan," the article derided Nosaka's attempt to invent a "new" theory, the "naturalization of Marxism-Leninism in Japanese conditions." The article said this theory had nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism, and sharply attacked the line of the Japanese Party.

Again, Marxism-Leninism is defined by the Cominform, whose dominant Party was the CPSU, in such a way as to prevent its change and growth in the light of new situations, and the specifics of a particular country.

As a result, the Japanese Party abandoned its broad, united front policy and embarked upon the leftist, adventurist and sectarian policy as they themselves later criticized it (see PV number 8, p. 31).

The Japanese Party went into a steep decline in membership and influence. It became increasingly isolated and was well on its way to complete isolation. They then returned to the policy that they had given up under the attack of the Communist Information Bureau (p. 31) (PV, number 8) and have re-emerged as a growing, important force in the Japanese working class and popular movement. As was mentioned earlier, they recently conducted a joint election campaign with the Socialists and the combined Parties received over 40 per cent of the vote.

In the Parties of the capitalist countries as well, the early post-war years saw a general policy that was the extension of the people's front policy of the Seventh World Congress into the period following the great anti-fascist war of national liberation. The policy was one of broad popular democratic coalition against the treacherous, anti-national ruling class collaborators with the fascists.

"It was the Communists," states

Foster (*The New Europe*, p. 40) "who, bearing in mind the people's joint experience of the middle thirties in Europe, came forward with plans to translate the unity of the resistance movement into the national unity and coalition form of government."

It was this policy of broad democratic unity that was abandoned by most Communist Parties under the shattering impact of the cold war developments. Almost alone, the Italian Communists strove to maintain a broad and flexible, non-sectarian policy of coalition. This of course, is relative, for they too, were influenced by the changes in policy made under the conditions of severe cold war. But their striving to retain this policy, I think, is the reason they alone maintained their large membership so well.

The Colonial Countries

Evidently the policies of the Communists in the colonial countries also underwent the same kind of sharp change in the '48-'49 period. The Indonesian Party went into sharp struggle with the Sukarno-Hatta government of the Indonesian Republic in the '48 period, after a policy of common cause with it against the Dutch colonialists. Although the Indian people won political independence from Great Britain in 1947, and although Zhdanov in his report to the founding meeting of the Cominform says that the camp of anti-imperialism has the support of Indonesia and the sympathy of India, later reports do not speak of these two countries as associated with the camp of peace. (A. Zhdanov, *The International Situation*, p. 18.)

In fact, the nations of the neutralist camp, composed mainly of newly independent former colonies like India, Burma, and Indonesia, that with China formed the base of the 1955 historic Bandung Conference, seem to have been generally assessed as not being within the camp of anti-imperialism and peace. The very name of this camp undergoes a transformation, and in later reports and speeches (for instance Bulganin, *For a Lasting Peace*, Nov. 10, 1950) is called the

camp of peace, socialism, and democracy. The neutralist nations, whose struggles were fundamentally against imperialism, seem to have been lumped in the only other camp mentioned: the camp of imperialism and war.

It is not too surprising, then, to read the speech made by Liu Shao-Chi at a Trade Union Conference of the Pacific (*For a Lasting Peace*, December 30, 1949). He says that "the fighters in Viet Nam, Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines are acting correctly," and that "an armed struggle for emancipation has also started in India." This is a reference apparently to peasant uprisings in India. Liu says, "It is necessary to set up, wherever and whenever possible a people's liberation army led by the C.P."

This policy of armed struggle is stated toward the close of 1949, after the independent (politically) governments had been set up in India, Burma, and Indonesia—and seems to call for armed struggle against these newly established governments.

Liu bases himself on the correct and successful struggle of the Chinese Liberation Army under the Chinese Communist Party, and says that "it is impossible in these countries for the revolutionary working class and oppressed peoples to overthrow the yoke of imperialism and its lackeys and to establish a people's democratic state by taking any easier path other than that indicated above."

This general policy is the one that the Indonesians sharply reversed in 1952. This 180 degree turn enabled the greatly diminished Party to grow to its present great size of a million in four years. This general policy is the one from which the Communists in Malaya are trying to disentangle themselves (*For a Lasting Peace*, January 13, 1956.) Sharp turn from this policy has also been made, evidently, by the Indian Communists. In 1952 (*For a Lasting Peace*, November 7, 1952) the Secretary of the Indian Party refers to Nehru and the Congress Party as "the enemy." Since then, their policy has changed sharply to one of warm support for the foreign policy of the government, and critical support for the main burden

of the government's internal policy as expressed in the Second Five-Year Plan. (*India's Progress*, issued by the *Far East Reporter*, pp. 40-42.)

II

It seems to me that the too brief outline above enables us to draw some tentative conclusions from the events of the last decade.

1. The main error of the past decade was as our draft resolution states it: Left sectarianism.

This is how it was characterized by the Brazilian, the Japanese, the Greek, as well as by the French in their 1952 Central Committee meeting. The error in the colonial countries, such as India, Indonesia, Burma and Malaya seems also generally to have been a leftist, adventurist, sectarian policy. In discussing the colonial movement at the XXth Congress, Kuusinen says:

"Our historians and our propagandists ought to study and look over with a critical spirit . . . the celebrated theses of the VI Congress of the C.I. on the colonial question. Concretely, I have in view the definition and the estimate of the role of the national bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries contained in these theses. Even at the time these theses on the colonial question were formulated they were tainted with sectarianism. Under the new conditions, when the authority of the Soviet Union has greatly increased, this estimate does not correspond at all with reality."

The estimate of the national bourgeoisie in the thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, in summary is indicated by this statement:

" . . . those tasks which the Second Congress of the C.I. had already characterized as the basic tasks of the Communist Parties in the colonial countries, i.e., the tasks of struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movement within the nation itself." ("The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies." Thesis adopted by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, p. 20.)

These questions are of interest to us in our own discussion on the theo-

retical aspects of the Negro question. As for the People's Democracies, It seems to me that the errors in Hungary and Poland, for example, and the change from the '47 coalition, national front policy of transition to socialism, are also sectarian, leftist errors.

The Cold War a Soil for Sectarian Errors

The overall characterization of these errors, to my mind, would be the abandonment of the coalition, popular front policies as they were extended and developed during the war and in the early post-war years. Under the terrible blows of the cold war, the narrow-minded, go-it-alone sectarian policies of the pre-Seventh World Congress days were restored. These errors were not made necessary by, they were only facilitated by the cold war. The policies that resulted from them weakened the struggle for peace and democracy.

Just as the Cominform reports did not consider the neutralist countries, themselves needing peace and anti-imperialist in nature, as part of the peace camp, just so did we take a hostile attitude to neutralist sentiment here—not understanding that neutralist sentiment was in intent and content peace sentiment.

Fajon, at the June 18, 1952 report cited above, asks of the French Party: "Is it not true that we have the tendency to identify the struggle for peace, which is the decisive question of the present, dominating all others, with the struggle for socialism, which is the program for the future?"

This mistaken identification ran through the policies of the international Communist movement—and is reflected in the name given to the camp after 1948. After that year the peace camp is called the camp of peace, socialism, and democracy.

I think it can be said that the abandonment of the broad policy of coalition and popular democratic unity, a return to leftist, go it alone sectarianism based upon confusing the cause of peace with the cause of socialism, was a major factor in the difficulties of the Communist movement.

Where this policy was sharply reversed, and in time, as in Japan and Indonesia, the Parties involved grew swiftly and flourished. Where the return was made by a Party of the People's Democracy toward a national path to socialism, as in Poland, tragic crisis was avoided.

2. A second feature that emerges from the outlined developments is that the world Communist movement seems to have been affected by these errors. For the countries of Europe there is a definite link through the Communist Information Bureau, the establishment of which coincides with the period of reversal of the broad coalition policy.

The way this worked out in practice is seen by the expulsion of Yugoslavia because of differences on the question of the road to socialism with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Thus, it seems that the central source of this great sectarian error was the "CPSU, headed by Comrade Stalin."

And in this concept of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin as the center and leader of all the Communist and Workers Parties, made explicit in the expulsion of the Yugoslav Communists, there is also the concept that all roads to socialism must approximate the Soviet pattern. For this concept seems to me to be responsible for the departure of all the People's Democratic countries from the line they stated in 1947, to the policy they pursued afterward—of considering that policy not Marxist-Leninist, of single Party rule, (even where other parties were tolerated), of heavy industrialization, of imitation of the Soviet path even to the uniforms, as in Hungary.

3. Both of these errors—the return to leftist, sectarian policies, and the assertion of the sole leadership of the CPSU, whose road was the sole road to socialism, have a common source. Here I can only make a rough, first approximation, hoping that others will develop, correct and round it out.

The central source of these errors, is the stultification of Marxism-Leninism by the CPSU, as led by Comrade

Stalin. It seems to be that Marxism-Leninism was frozen on the basis of the Russian experience—enshrined as a dogma instead of a living science of socialism. Along with this theoretical hardening, went a whole body of concepts, outlook, practices, and method of work that were all viewed as universally valid.

The October Revolution is the foundation upon which socialism arose in the Soviet Union, and, because it existed there, made Stalin-grad the turning point of history's course. Upon that foundation of a Socialist Soviet Union was erected the new world situation we now live in: a socialist third of the world, a crumbling colonial system, a vast zone of peace.

Obviously, this holds great lessons for all Marxists. But to stop the growth and change of this science at a given point in history, to codify it, to universalize it for ever and everywhere, based on one country's experience, is un-Marxist-Leninist. And this was done by Stalin—on questions of road to socialism, on the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the direction of the main blow, on the Party, on the colonial question. I urge you to re-read *"Foundations of Leninism"* as well as the two-volume *Leninism*, by Stalin. Some of these points and references I made in my article in *Party Voice*, number four.

Making Marxism Chinese

As long ago as October, 1938, Mao Tse-tung showed his break with dogmatic Marxism-Leninism:

"... Communists are internationalist-Marxists, but Marxism must be integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and given a national form before it can be put into practice. The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies in its integration with the specific revolutionary practice of different countries. . . . If the Chinese Communists . . . talk about Marxism apart from China's characteristics, that will only be Marxism in the abstract, in the void. Hence, how to turn Marxism into something specifically Chinese, to imbue every manifestation of it with Chinese characteristics, i.e., to apply it in accord-

ance with China's characteristics, becomes a problem which the whole Party must understand and solve immediately." (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 260.)

There was one period in which creative Marxism-Leninism produced the policy of the popular front—sharply changing the policy of the Sixth World Congress after the disastrous experience in Germany. During this period, roughly from '34 to '39, and again from '41 to '47, the Communist movement grew and flourished in most places, developing broad coalition policies, rejecting the national nihilism of the earlier days, beginning to apply Marxism-Leninism to their own country. The thirties were the years of the finest work of our own Party.

Dimitroff's People's Front policy of the Seventh World Congress developed in real life under the great national, anti-fascist upsurge during the war of national liberation, as the coalition policies along national roads to socialism as projected by Dimitroff, Gomulka and others in '47. But this policy was dramatically rejected with Tito's expulsion, and the trials of "Titoists" that followed.

In our country, our isolation from the forward-moving and growing labor movement, the great upsurging Negro people's struggles, the new and unprecedented organization for struggle of the farmers, the growth and activity of the popular organizations such as PTA's, ACLU, and many others, revealed our crisis to us.

On a world scale, great new advances have been made and are being made. This is the meaning of the new world relationship of forces, of Bandung, of Geneva, of the crumbling of the world colonial system, of the smothering of the Suez imperialist adventure by Britain and France, and of course the fact that 900,000,000 people live in countries led by the working class.

But in the face of these great forward moving developments by the world's working people, the Communist Parties of so many countries found themselves losing membership and influence—in Japan, in Indonesia, in the U.S.A., in Australia, in England, in France. In Greece, the

Party suffered disastrous losses, as in Malaya and the Philippines. And now the tragedy in Hungary.

Why? The answer, I think, lies in the failure to use Marxism-Leninism as a living science, creatively applied to one's own country. We have been living, and dwindling, by the dogmatic, frozen, static Marxism-Leninism as we have studied it in the interpretations mainly by Stalin. We have also been trying to live by the whole bundle of practices and methods of work as they developed in the Soviet Union.

The Draft Resolution is correct in listing this as a root cause of our errors.

A pre-condition for true Marxist-Leninist analysis is a break with the tradition that Soviet Marxists are the source of all wisdom in Marxist-Leninist theory, organization, practice and methods of work. So long as this view predominates, there can be no question of applying and developing Marxism-Leninism to our own scene, creatively. We will remain dogmatists, mainly studying writings from abroad, rather than life's green tree at home.

It is interesting to note that of the three countries in which working class rule has been established by their own internal forces, without the direct aid of the Red Army, two—China and Yugoslavia, took a road of independence from the dogmatic Marxism-Leninism of the Soviet leadership. China quietly but definitely made Marxism Chinese in the years after the long march, in independence of the C.I. and Comrade Stalin. Yugoslavia was expelled, vilified, and harassed because the Communists there insisted on independence. I cannot speak of Viet Nam. I know very little of the history there of the Association for the Study of Marxism which Ho Chi Minh heads and which replaced the Communist Party dissolved in 1945.

This error of considering Soviet Marxists as virtually the sole interpreters of Marxism-Leninism, was ours.

I think the Draft Resolution is again correct when it proposes a course of independent, though warm and fraternal relations between Communist Parties. We should study the experiences and theory as it devel-

oped by all Communists the world over, and, of course, by the fine Marxists of the CPSU, as an aid in our own development of the science of Marxism-Leninism in application to our country.

The XXth Congress

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, the Yugoslav rapprochement, and the Soviet statement of October 30 seem to be to be one vast self-criticism of this situation. In the Twentieth Congress, the leaders of the CPSU defined the new world situation. They presented new theoretical propositions that flow from this reality. It should be noted that almost all the speakers attacked dogmatism and tried to re-establish the essence of the Leninist method—anti-dogmatism, for creativity based on reality, and against clinging to the theories of yesterday.

The revelations concerning Stalin reinforced this attack on the old, outworn and dogmatic. And in the past two years, the emphasis on national roads to socialism has been steadily strengthened, although it seems to me that the Polish crisis revealed a gap between the acceptance of the idea of independence and national roads to socialism and the ability of the CPSU to act accordingly.

What is important for finding the answer to the problem posed above is the knowledge that this gap has not suddenly appeared. The gap, I think, can be measured in one way in the gap between the reality of the Yugoslav break and our understanding of it prior to Khrushchev's speech at the Belgrade airport. Or by the gap revealed between our understanding of Soviet political democracy and the Stalin revelations. Or in the gap between our judgment of the situation in Hungary and Poland before the crises there, and the realities of those situations.

The very shock of the series of events of the past two years is a measure of the distance between our theoretical and ideological position and the actuality of the real world.

It is a measure therefore, of the error of the world Communist movement—an error with old and deep

roots.

The political line of the error and its criticism are stated at the Twentieth Congress.

What are the components of the errors that led to the shocking gap between the policies, theories and practices of Communists and reality?

1. The universalization of the Russian revolutionary experience. The science of Marxism-Leninism was hardened at this historic achievement, as is made clear in Beirut's speech quoted above, and the Cominform editorial on Japan. This frozen interpretation of Marxism-Leninism became established as dogma, always and everywhere valid; it failed to keep up with the changing world, national and class relationships.

The self-criticism of this is indicated by Mikoyan:

"It is a matter for regret that during the past 15 or 20 years we have seldom, very seldom turned to the treasure house of Leninist ideas with a view to understanding and explaining phenomena both in the internal life of our country and in the international situation." (A. I. Mikoyan, Speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

2. From this came the concept that all roads to socialism must follow, or at least closely approximate the Soviet road.

Shepilov corrects this:

"In these conditions only formalists and those who would make Marxism a dogma can assume that such deep-going transformations as the transition from one social system to another can be effected after a single pattern—in one and the same manner in, say Denmark and Brazil, Sweden and Malaya. This is a distortion of the essence of Marxism, of its creative spirit. . . .

(D. T. Shepilov, Speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

3. The importance of national factors, recognized by Dimitroff in the struggle against the anti-national, fascist sections of finance capital, continued to grow in the anti-fascist war of national liberation. The working class increasingly emerged as the leading force in the struggle for national salvation and independence. Yet in the cold war period, these strong na-

tional factors were ignored, as in the Peoples' Democracies and in the colonies striving for independence.

Mikoyan touches on this wrong attitude toward national feeling.

"To the surprise of many bourgeois leaders, our Government was not afraid to speak openly, in the case of some international questions, about certain mistakes made in our foreign policy in the past and some instances in which relations were aggravated also due to our fault. The Soviet Government resolutely took the course of eliminating shortcomings in our work in the sphere of foreign policy."

. . . "It goes without saying that only real Leninists are capable of taking such steps as the Central Committee took on the Yugoslav question in the period between the Nineteenth and Twentieth Congresses. . . .

"A number of other measures—the dismantling of our military bases in China and Finland, the liquidation of the mixed companies in the Peoples' Democracies, the peace treaty with Austria, etc.—likewise show that our policy was bold, based on principle, on respect for the sovereign rights of other peoples, that it was active in nature and for this reason bore fruit." (My emphasis—S. C.)

(A. I. Mikoyan, Speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

Many Streams

4. The failure to appreciate the forward movement of non-Communist working class, peasant, and other sections of the population as a result of the democratic upsurges of the anti-fascist struggle and the desire for peace. This underestimation led to abandonment of the coalition policies and the return to a narrow, sectarian, go-it-alone policy. The main blow again was directed against Social Democracy, bourgeois democratic movements, etc. This narrow minded policy was in some ways a reversion to the VIth World Congress line. Shepilov criticizes this sectarian narrow mindedness thus:

"One of the characteristic features of our times is the combination of the socialist revolution in certain countries with the mass struggle 'of all the oppressed and dissatisfied.' The great Lenin rejected as 'pedantically ludicrous' the allegation that capital-

ism will be succeeded by socialism when 'one host takes up a certain position and declares "we are for socialism'" and another host, another position and declares "'we are for imperialism'" and this will be the social revolution!' (Works, Vol. 22, p. 340.) Actually, in the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, many socialist and non-socialist currents and streams which are washing away and undermining the dilapidated edifice of capitalism from different sides are converging into a mighty flood of the people's liberation struggle.

"Do these currents and streams differ as to motive forces, ideology, and immediate aims? Unquestionably they do. The attraction of the ideas of socialism has increased to such a measure that besides Marxist proletarian revolutionaries, political leaders, groups, and parties, whose understanding of socialism does not coincide with the principles of revolutionary Marxism, but who are ready to fight against imperialism and for the vital interests of the working class and all other working people, declare themselves supporters of socialism. That is why in many cases common interests in the struggle against capitalist oppression, for freedom and democracy, may, and do, compel differences and diverging views to recede into the background.

'Communists are absolutely opposed to sectarian limitations and narrow-mindedness. They want all contemporary mass movements, whatever their type and shade, to unite against imperialism. Struggle against social oppression, against colonialism, for peace and democracy will bring about the realization of the great hopes of all oppressed peoples, whether they be Arab, Asian, or Latin America; of all working people, whether they be Catholic or Protestants, Buddhists or Mohammedans.'

(D. T. Shepilov, Speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.)

Bureaucratic Methods

5. Undemocratic, dictatorial and bureaucratic methods of work, practices and relationships. These characterized the C.P.S.U. and was the soil that permitted the evil flowering of the cult of the individual and its

crimes. Even before Khrushchev's second report, Mikoyan mentioned these errors.

"The main feature characterizing the work of the Central Committee and its Presidium in the last three years is that *after a long interruption collective leadership has been created in our Party.* . . .

"It will not be an exaggeration to say that this is the most important Congress in the history of our Party since the death of Lenin." (A.-I. Mikoyan, Speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

These practices also characterized the relationships between the Party and government and trade union organizations in the Soviet Union; they were copied by the Peoples' Democracies.

The same kind of practice tended to prevail in other Communist Parties, influenced as they were by the Soviet Party as a model.

These errors gravely weakened the fight for peace and for bringing the new world situation about. It was not the new world situation that made previously correct policies no longer suitable under the new world conditions. These conditions made the errors glaring, and forced their recognition. The correction of these errors has been the process of change and re-evaluation described in this and the previous article.

Perspective

The question may be asked: "How is it, that despite these errors, a new world has been brought into being; almost a billion going to socialism, a crumbling imperialist colonial system, and a vast zone of peace?"

Firstly, while the errors weakened the Soviet Union's role and to some extent, its internal development, they could not alter the main direction of its fundamental socialist, constructive role domestically and on a world scale.

Secondly, the basis was laid for transition to socialism in Eastern Europe during World War II, by the action of the Red Army and the patriots of these countries against the Nazis and their collaborators. The error here, arising after 1947, did create dangers to socialism, as in Hungary.

Thirdly, the Chinese did not make these errors, so far as I know, in their policies. Whatever errors did crop up were minor and have been or are being corrected. I understand the recent Congress of the Chinese C.P. made policy changes to correct errors, but these were minor errors within a sound policy. The Chinese revolution was the decisive feature of the post World War II developments.

Fourthly, in the capitalist countries these errors created the difficulties and critical situations already noted.

Lastly, in the colonial countries that won independence, such as Burma, Indonesia, and India, the Communist Parties did not play the leading role in these victories.

The events of the past fifteen years were the greatest events in the unfolding of human history. Hundreds of millions helped shape their own, and mankind's destiny in gigantic, bloody as well as non-violent, struggles.

Errors were made—of course. But mankind reached a new stage in human history. These glorious achievements stand luminous, as does the Russian Revolution which provided the impetus and foundation for this new world.

This article discusses the errors so that we may learn from them—and I am sure much more than the lessons I draw. The errors seem magnified out of true historic perspective; I think that is inevitable in any examination of a concrete problem important momentarily—but small in historical view.

Some Lessons for Our Discussion

Many of the questions and answers raised in the discussion can be tested in the light of the experiences of our own and other Communist Parties.

No explanation of our difficulties can be unique—that is, explain only our crisis in the United States.

To do that would be like learning that twenty people who ate together got sick, and explaining the identical symptoms by saying that nineteen of them ate bad food, but the twentieth, who ate the same food, was sick with the same symptoms because he sat in a draft. But that is a matter for another article.