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Source of Our Revisionism

In critically examining the causes for the development of right opportunism in the American Communist movement, some comrades have expressed the opinion that the primary reason was the growth of bureaucracy in our organization.

It is incorrect, in my opinion, to place this as the basic source of the revisionism which has occurred. By this, I do not mean to minimize the role that bureaucracy has played, in stifling the voices of those who felt errors were being made, in developing uncritical habits of thought with regard to the line put forward by leading bodies, in leading to abandonment of the systematic practice of self-criticism, and in making us unreceptive to the reactions of many workers both outside and inside our organization. I am certainly among those who have been guilty of these methods of work, tending to become part of a "transmission belt," and confining myself to "applying" and "developing" our position as far as I was able, without challenging in any basic way the central thesis put forward by Browder—even though I was engaged in educational and supposedly "theoretical work" in the CPA.

Important as these bureaucratic methods have been in contributing to our errors, however, they cannot adequately explain why our movement as a whole developed a right opportunist approach to American imperialism. The question must be answered, for example, as to why a right instead of a left deviation from Marxism occurred.

The answer to such questions can be found only in recognizing the pressure exerted upon our movement over a period of years by the most powerful capitalist system in the world, and especially by the "democratic" line followed by the American liberal bourgeoisie in recent years. From this source, a non-working class, non-Marxian approach gradually crept into our ranks, spreading illusions about the nature of American imperialism and American democracy, and finally dominating our general line, particularly with regard to the postwar period. While fighting against left sectarianism, we were not alert to this danger from the right. Furthermore, the very mistakes we were making tended to encourage bureaucracy, including the stifling of instinctively more correct working class reactions; this in turn helped to cover up the wrong line we were pursuing.

Unless the matter is placed in this way, we would fail to follow a Marxist method in analyzing our own errors, individually and collectively—a method which requires that we discover how ideological trends are related to the "material conditions of life," and their political consequences. We would be unable, moreover, fully to correct our mistakes or guard against them properly in the future. One thing that has been driven home forcefully by this situation is that so long as capitalism and class society exist, there will be continued pressure upon the Marxist movement to deviate either to the right or left, the main direction of this pressure depending on the concrete situation. Only constant vigilance against the influence of non-working class and anti-Marxian conceptions, together with the theoretical strengthening of our organization and the development of still closer ties with the working class, can provide any safeguard against future errors. There can be no "guarantee" except constant struggle for a correct Marxist-Leninist line. This process also requires the elimination of the bureaucratic methods that have grown up in our organization and the refreshing of our leadership.

This need to base our thinking upon the "material conditions of life" has been reemphasized in my mind by the very nature of the revisionism we developed. Let me give an example. A group of us were recently engaged in systematic restudy of Marxist economics, from the standpoint of bring-

ing our "basic theory" into line with the concept of a postwar world of "expanding capitalism," "progressive imperialism" and continuing prosperity. We did conclude that the tendency to crisis is inevitable under capitalism and that imperialism would continue for some time—but we nevertheless wholeheartedly accepted the general perspectives put forward by Browder. How did we bridge the gap? Essentially, by speaking of the growing "intelligence" and "insight" of the bourgeoisie, which would result in this class agreeing to accept not only a lower rate of profit, but perhaps even a smaller mass of profits, both at home and abroad, in order to avert "chaos!" This was in line with the statement of Browder that "Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at Teheran were the representatives of the collective intelligence of mankind facing the threatening supreme catastrophe of history and determined to avert it." (P. 13, "Teheran and America.")

Thus in order to revise Marxist economics, in which it is recognized that the search for profit is the very driving force of the capitalist system, we resorted to an even more far reaching revisionism—the "revising" of historical and dialectical materialism, the very foundation of Marxist theory. We threw overboard the "material conditions of life" as the ultimate determining factor in class interests and political alignments, and substituted a sort of all-class or above-class "intelligence" as the main forces in shaping history. This is essentially philosophical idealism, against which the leaders of Marxist thought fought some of their sharpest battles. Historical and dialectical materialism, on the other hand, while recognizing that ideological trends contribute to the making of history, emphasize that these trends arise from the economic conditions and class development. Only under socialism does man for the first time become free to control the material conditions of his existence, and then only by recognizing and applying certain historical and physical laws.

In correcting our errors, therefore, it is apparent that we shall have to review the whole range of our thinking, since initial mistakes in economic and political theory when persisted in must involve revision of the basic world outlook of Marxism as they did in the case of Bernstein and others.

I should like to make just one more point in connection with the draft resolution. While I agree with its main line, an addition that seems absolutely necessary is some analysis of the economic perspectives facing America and the world. While the programmatic demands include the fight for 60 million jobs, wage increases, social security, fair farm prices etc., the resolution does not indicate the setting in which we believed this struggle will develop. There is virtually no analysis of the present reconversion crisis into which our nation is slipping, the likelihood of a postwar boom, or the deep cyclical crisis which will follow. Since the resolution sets our sights for the next period, some orientation on these matters should be included.

Further thought should also be given to the character of the fight against the reactionary economic policies of the monopolies. There is no mention, for instance, of the need to demand revision of the patent laws which certainly represent a major source of monopoly control in our economy. We should also explain more clearly how and why the anti-trust laws can be used to fight reactionary practices of the monopolies—especially to smash the German-American-British cartel system, and attack the limited production-high price policies of the trusts—without falling into the old utopian "trust busting" approach of the middle class. No doubt these and other proposals will be carefully considered by the national convention, but it seems worthwhile to mention them.

Celeste Strack, Haldane Club,
Alameda County, California

Leadership Must Be Close to Members

I agree with statements by Comrades Duclos, Foster, Ford, Leo Baroway, George Hitchcock, George Walker, Mary Scott, Micky Beagle and others. Also I agree with the reports of Dennis and Williamson to the National Committee meeting in June. These comrades have said many of the things I had in mind when I first thought of expressing myself. Comrade Foster's statement to the National Board on June 2 was like a fresh breeze; Comrade Browder's was foggy and weak.

One thing that bothered me a lot was that the leadership and the rank and file were getting further and farther apart. We had little knowledge of how our elected leaders spent their time and what they were accomplishing. We knew we were doing practically nothing but we hoped they were supermen building a better world for us for they were always busy. Now we are shocked to learn that they were on the wrong track. However they say they are sorry and have learned better and with our help they will keep on the beam in the future. We know in most cases they are sincere and hardworking people and will do their best. But we have learned they are human like the rest of us.

The Communist movement doesn't belong to the elected leaders; it belongs to all of us members and to the entire working class as well. It is our duty to keep it that way. If the Communist organization is the most important one in the world and the one that can lead all the rest, we members better give it some of our attention and effort. One of the open secrets of the Communist movement is the collective effort of its members.

We rank and file members can in the future attend our meetings and pay our dues without being coaxed. We can read our press and literature on current problems. We can study the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Dimitroff and others who have proved their knowledge of the science of society. We can take part in the discussions and activities of our Communist organization. If we do these things to the best of our abilities we will feel that the organization really belongs to us and when elected officials do things we don't understand or like, we won't just give up and be sour. We will insist on knowing why and this will keep our leaders on the straight and narrow too.

The above is what I mean when I say our recent mistakes are the fault of all of us; it explains my part of the responsibility as a rank and filer. Our elected leadership are doing pretty well explaining their part.

About literature: in the future I urge that pamphlets etc. be written more simply; use illustrations and examples for important points even though the cost is higher. Mike Gold has a swell style for example. The style of the Goldway pamphlet was good.

Lorine Kinz, Oakland

READ

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REVISIONISM HAS A HISTORY

Approving the main line of the resolution as amended by the National Committee, I think that Part II, in speaking of mistakes, fails in correcting them, in that it does not identify their source, nor concede their development over a long period of years, nor scarcely admit the parallel growth of a bureaucracy which sheltered their opportunism—the invariable function of bureaucracy.

Instead, it defends bureaucracy by "praising it with faint damns" about "our reluctance" to self-criticism, and "failure" to consult the membership. This is over-gentle when one recalls the comrades driven into inactivity or even out of the organization, both before and after Teheran, by a bureaucracy which smothered independent thought and pursued a policy of liquidation long before Teheran.

What, for example, have we to brag about—disputing Comrade Duclos—because our "enrollment" increased 25 percent? Nothing, comrades, when membership in a Communist organization was open to anyone who believed in capitalism—"at least for many generations."

Rather take account of the liquidationist exclusion of foreign-born members (1940), of the Nisei (1941), of the members inducted into the services (since 1940), the dissolution of the party in Hawaii (1941)—all parts of the liquidation process which—after Teheran, dissolved the CPA in the South and was directly en route to dissolve the entire CPA by destroying its political identity.

It is inadequate, to the point of making a new error per se, to recognize mistakes "in the recent period" (whatever that means), and then emphasize "especially since January 1944," while not acknowledging them as originating in the socio-political environment of the New Deal, and developing in an increasing misconception of bourgeois reformism. So much so that even that term was not—and still is not—applied to it. And hence its class nature and class limitations were not understood.

Precisely in such period of bourgeois reformism is it necessary that leadership maintain Marxist firmness. That ours did not is proven by its final acceptance of bourgeois reformism as a substitute for independent proletarian organization and activity. But that process was well-advanced in January 1944.

For example, we gave great aid to Spain from 1936 to 1939. But can it be said that it was unaffected entirely by our growing reliance on Roosevelt? Certainly the same blighted vision which led Browder, in 1943, to read something into the diplomatic document of Teheran that wasn't there, had previously created a tendency which resulted in our being "surprised" in 1939, when the Soviet-German non-aggression agreement was signed; and "surprised" once more in 1941, when Hitler violated it. Yet Marxists should have been surprised in neither case.

Grave as are Browder's errors, and made far more grave by his refusal to admit them, the leadership left in charge when he went to Atlanta maintained an opportunist and bureaucratic inter-regnum he could scarcely excel, so far had the process already advanced long before Teheran.

Long before January 1944, monopoly was no longer to be criticized—except for flagrantly exposed treason. In 1942, Comrade Hudson, questioned directly by me, could give no adequate explanation why. In 1941, Comrade Minor was head of the party, and speaking in San Francisco endorsed Roosevelt's appeasement of Vichy and Petain "to save the French fleet." Revisionism did not fall from heaven in January 1944.

Again, early in 1941, a spontaneous and most beneficial discussion on the role of woman—particularly the housewife—began in *The New Masses*—but was ordered cut off. Thereupon, I prepared a discussion article for *The Communist*—where discussion articles should always be in order—in April. But the bureaucracy in the center rejected it without one word of explanation; while the state bureaucracy, without so much as consulting me, forbade me writing on that subject elsewhere (incidentally admitting it knew nothing about the subject).

A bourgeois distortion of Marxism prepared six months later by Comrade Landy definitely crippled our work among women and furnished the apologetics for laying upon millions of women the double

burden of household drudge and war worker. That is my opinion. But certainly, whatever the worth or worthlessness of that policy, its determination was a model of bureaucratic arrogance and mis-handling.

However much Comrade Browder became the "chief architect" after January 1944, these evidences above, show that he had assistants, that revisionism has a history which is not mentioned in the resolution. Small wonder that after Teheran, his attempt to use the CPA as a "seeing-eye dog" to guide imperialist capital through the hazards of postwar traffic met such unanimous approval of the Board—with the noble exception of Comrade Foster.

Man born of woman—and notably the present writer—is "weak and full of sins"—but it didn't need a Duclos letter to tell us that there was something wrong with a "Teheran perspective" which Comrade Minor interpreted to a San Francisco audience a full year ago, to mean that there could be socialism ONLY "in one country," and if the peoples of Europe should decide otherwise, then American imperialism had the approval of American "Marxists" to prevent it. The center was told about this—but like the Three Monkeys—"heard no evil, saw no evil, smelled no evil."

These are among the reasons I hold that Part II of the resolution is so inadequate as to demand elaboration if future errors are to be avoided by understanding those of the past, and if bureaucracy is to be wiped out at all levels.

At the same time, there seems to be a weakness in Part I, in its failure to combat concretely Browder's postulates. It should give a better explanation as to WHY there are "capitalist groupings and elements" who "desire to promote democratic objectives," then merely to say they do so "for one or another reason." This is almost as bad as the metaphysics of Browder, who says they are "the far-sighted ones." Neither does the resolution explain WHY monopoly capital is "inherently" reactionary.

These "far-sighted ones" have economic interests opposed to monopoly, and hence to its Fascist political expression. That is why the "anti-trust" phase of our program is justified, to gain allies among the bourgeoisie—even though we are not "machine breakers."

Browder contends that the "men of the trusts" are not inherently reactionary; that they are so only for lack of "markets." The resolution does not answer him. Yet the problem of the market is NOT the decisive problem. Rather is it the decline in the rate of profit (independently of the rate of surplus value, which may even increase) resulting from the changed organic composition of capital. And finance capital is inherently reactionary because it can be nothing else and hope to restore its falling rate of profit—market or no market. It appears that somebody might well study Volume III of "Capital."

In his June 2 statement, Comrade Browder uses the "carrot and club" policy against the resolution. Either, he says, you will have America making war against the Soviet Union (immediately, or later) or you must accept his alternative "course of policy, Teheran and Yalta." (Marxism, of course, rejects the carrot and dodges the club by recalling the existence of another alternative—inter-imperialist rivalries.)

But to make the carrot seem attractive, to "protect" the Soviet Union, he offers economic inducements to imperialism—"markets" and "putting our vast sums of idle money to work" by "a series of giant industrial development corporations." It was "practically" proposed in topical articles that this meant a sharing of the world, and hence unity between British and American imperialisms.

And this, which is a recipe for war against the Soviet Union—was offered by Browder as a means of avoiding war against the Soviet Union! This, too, was offered with no consideration for the limitations on the self-expansion of capitalism which are set by its internal contradictions.

It is to these internal contradictions of capitalism that we must look to understand WHO are the enemies, and WHO are the friends, of democracy. And also how to attain an independent leadership of all democratic forces for the working class.

Harrison George, San Francisco

MARXISTS ARE REALISTS

One of the outstanding mistakes we made since January 1944 was accepting Browder's subjective ideas of not only the American corporation capitalist but the American working population as a whole. I want to state here that Marxists have been and still are proud of their scientific approach which is based on objective facts to the class differences of capital and labor. Marxists are not metaphysicians assuming a cause and wasting their emotion chasing up the wrong alley.

Marxists are realists finding cause in the daily interaction about them and are flexible enough to meet the exception when necessary.

There have been many accepted statements disagreeing with Browder's idea that the lamb can lay alongside the lion without being devoured—as pertaining to capital as the lion and labor the lamb. But little or nothing has been mentioned about Browder's idea that the American people were not subjectively ready for socialism. In the first place it is impossible to decide whether a 132 million people are ready for anything without taking on objective, impartial, statistical and scientific count or vote. In the second place, unfortunately only a minority is ready to lead the majority to a more socialized system because the minority has been better factually therefore objectively informed. Thirdly it is inconsistent with Marxist thinking to speak of being subjectively ready when the basic thinking is objective and selfless and not subjective, which is based primarily on a selfish point of view as practical under capitalism.

This subjective point of view is primitive, un-social, uncivilized and is based on the concept of the survival of the fittest, or the dog eat dog practice. Finances makes you individually fit under capitalism so it is little wonder that so many people are individual misfits under capitalism and do not survive. So it is necessary if we want to continue being the vanguard of the working class that we continue educating them to cope with their adversities instead of becoming tired and weary and abandoning the idea that the working class is subjectively unfit to run their own house. In having the working class turn its other cheek 100 percent we behaved like extremists and not realists. We should have told the capitalist to turn the other cheek when necessary to win the war. We were also too extreme in giving up most of labor's hard fought accomplishments under Browder when capital threw us a bone and a wink and we jumped on the bandwagon for a capitalist ride. Also, we were extremists when for years we exposed capitalist unfair and inhumane treatment of the working class which gave the hurt multitudes an understanding welfare organization for them to turn to in time of need. Then we closed the doors in their faces and said go away you have no grievance.

Browder has a defeatist idea when he says America is traditionally a two party country. This indicates he is a static and willing to go along with status quo—certainly not progressive. History is written daily and if we are too tired to guide the working class to its liberation then the capitalist will continue misleading the working class and exploiting them for his personal gain. Let us go back to our party status as a threat and warning to the capitalist that the working class has its tried and true leadership instead of a tired and opportunistic leadership.

M. B., Phoenix, Ariz.

WE SHOULD WELCOME DUCLOS' LETTER

My first reaction, upon reading the Duclos article, was a feeling of relief. The worry and fear which had nagged at the subconscious mind of all of us who call ourselves Marxists had been given a name and exposed to the light of day. I believe that many of our top leadership had long since been awake to our danger and struggling against the forces which kept them from speaking their minds as freely in our press as they must have expressed them behind closed doors in meetings with Earl Browder. I believe that the Duclos article was merely a welcome springboard from which our National Board could dive into the present discussion with the membership. I believe that the bitterness, the sharpness, of the first draft of the resolution reflects that long and bitter struggle, and that the National Committee intended us so to realize it. A reasonable dispassionate recital would have been totally inadequate preparation of the rank and file for the unfortunate character of the struggle that still lies ahead for the Association.

All of us share the responsibility for the errors that led us into opportunism and revisionism. For although many of us did protest we finally accepted without too much effort to make our position known, without digging deep into Marxism and Leninism to document and implement our protests.

And, having accepted, we found ourselves in the most comfortable period of our lives as Communists. It was swell while it lasted. But now that we are awake we can say of the Teheran thesis as Glenway Westcott, in his "Apartment in Athens," has his tragic Greek react to the German major's exposition of the Nazi creed:

"Point by point, sentence after sentence, it seemed as plain as day and in dead earnest and quite convincing and almost overwhelming—then when he tried to contemplate it in its entirety, as a whole, it fell to bits, and he felt inclined to giggle."

At the first of our club discussions of the draft resolution this tendency to giggle showed itself and irritated some of the comrades. But that giggle had been bubbling up for a long time. The explosion of mirth at our own expenses was a healthy thing. Perhaps we Communists should laugh at ourselves more often!

At any rate, most of us now admit that the rosy prospects, the pleasant fantasies of "Teheran" were never quite believed, no matter how hard we tried to keep ourselves talked into it. Actually, because we had to have something to tie to, and because we had been summarily shifted from our Rock of Gibraltar—Marxism-Leninism—we Communists found ourselves turned into Democrats, looking toward the leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, rather than toward our own national leadership. I believe most of us were very fine Democrats, very useful Democrats, and we did many a good job. But in liquidating our Party we liquidated communism as an active force in American life and politics.

In tying to Roosevelt we were reacting very logically to "Teheran," as Browder expounded our position. We knew that the only hope, the only possibility of a realization of "Teheran" lay in Roosevelt's continuing in office. And, actually, in his continuing to live indefinitely. There was no place in our planning, in our fantasy for the death of Roosevelt.

When Roosevelt died the tragic suddenness of the catastrophe caught us wholly unprepared. At the time I wondered at the intensity of my own grief. I was not alone in being grief-stricken and inconsolable. Most of our comrades were in the same state of dismay and consternation. We couldn't lift our heads and get going again. Such an attitude on the part of those who call themselves Communists is inconceivable. The answer simply is that for a long time we have been Rooseveltians, not Communists. Having abandoned Marxism-Leninism for a new era of American Exceptionalism under Roosevelt we lost our leader when he died, and our dream was over. Ugly things began to happen—things we assured ourselves would never have happened if Roosevelt had lived.

But what real assurance have we that Roosevelt, a member of the capitalist class, the finest flower

WE ENJOYED THAT "BEAUTIFUL DREAM"

The problem that bothered me most after reading the National Board resolution was whether or not a coalition of labor and the people's forces could shape the course of the nation without the support of a substantial section of the bourgeoisie. It seemed to me that the resolution evaded this fundamental question. In view of the classical Marxist analysis of the bourgeois state, I visualized an either-or situation: either we go forward to a peaceful postwar world in alliance with a section of capital, or we face a situation where, in a crisis of policy, the bourgeoisie, more or less united around a reactionary program, would simply impose its will upon the nation.

It is clear to me now that my first approach to the resolution was unreal and subjective. I was fighting against losing this beautiful dream of a postwar world without serious problems. I was saying: We can and must go forward. And if we can't do it without the bourgeoisie, then let's do it with them.

This was an untenable, unreal position. How did we ever fall into the kind of thinking that said there can be no advance for the people without the conscious cooperation of the bourgeoisie? Of course, once we thought that, we would resist facing the basic question posed by the resolution and by Foster, namely: far from their being any guarantee that the bourgeoisie will cooperate, the only realistic assumption can be that the decisive section of the bourgeoisie will fight against a democratic program every inch of the way. If we were to grant that the bourgeoisie is decisively influenced by reactionary imperialist forces, and at the same time assume that progress is impossible without decisive bourgeois support, then indeed we would be face to face with the alternative presented by Browder's position that our nation faced a period of reactionary ascendancy in foreign and domestic policy. When I reached that point in my thinking I could not accept such an alternative, and it became very clear to me that I had placed my reliance on the capitalist rather than upon the working class. And I began to look for other alternatives than those which had been presented by Browder.

I think we have to go back to the basic proposition put forward by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935—that the alternative to fascism is the People's Front. This does not exclude anti-Fascist elements of the bourgeoisie from the coalition. But it does mean that if the forces of the people do not organize to stop reaction, then it won't be stopped. I think the development of our policy has so gradually obscured this basic concept that we cannot come back to it without a real struggle.

The question we face today is not new. It is true that the conditions have changed, but this only means that our answer can be more confident. I think that we face the question posed by Hitler's coming to power: can the forces of the people prevent capitalist states from following a course leading to fascism?

I want to express my conviction that the answer

of the bourgeoisie, would have followed through war and into a lasting peace the path that Browder had laid down for him and his class? Having chosen Roosevelt as our leader—without his consent and despite his wishes—having bemused ourselves into a never-never land with the magic words, "Unity" and "Teheran," we had long since ceased to criticize our leader, to analyze Roosevelt by Marxian methods, as we had done from 1932 through half of 1941. Perhaps such an analysis may now be in order. As a member of the bourgeoisie, as the savior of Free Enterprise, as a warrior against fascism, Roosevelt will undoubtedly rank among the eternally great. But as the leader of the vanguard of the working class—to which leadership we elevated him when Browder abdicated—it may be found that he left much to be desired. Perhaps it is high time we again elected our own leader.

A. A., East Hollywood Club, Los Angeles

to this question is Yes. I think now that with all its inadequacies, this was the fundamental thinking of the board resolution and that it was sound.

Browder posed the impossibility of progress without bourgeois support in his statement to the National Board. He said:

"Only if the bourgeoisie has a class interest which coincides to some degree with the national interest does the possibility exist that the policy of longterm collaboration with the Soviet Union can be realized without a basic change in the class structure of state power in America."

How, then, does Browder explain the participation of the Communists in the governments of such countries as Italy and France? Would he contend that the coalition governments of Europe represent "a basic change in the class structure of state power" which is impossible of achievement in America, short of socialism?

I can only interpret Browder's position to be that since everything depends on the continuation of the Big Three coalition, and since we cannot look forward to a coalition government in the United States decisively influenced by progressive forces, therefore we must rely upon the bourgeoisie to carry out this policy through the organs of the bourgeois state. Isn't Browder actually proposing that we simply abandon as useless any attempt on the part of the working class to participate in formulating state policy?

I cannot believe that this is really Marxist thinking on the question of the state. I am convinced that there is no real contradiction between Lenin's classical analysis of the bourgeois state, and a perspective for forcing through progressive national policies in postwar capitalist America in spite of the opposition of the decisive section of the bourgeoisie. I think that a full discussion will resolve this problem in our thinking. I for one feel that such a discussion is very much needed.

In this connection, I would like to raise the question of the international relationship of forces. I think we have tended to vulgarize our approach to internationalism into a narrow nationalist concept that as the United States goes, so goes the world. It seems to me that just as it is impossible to explain the betrayal of France in 1940 without reference to the international situation, so today it is impossible to gauge the opposition to American imperialism only on the basis of the national relationship of forces. We say that as a result of the war, the world relationship of forces has shifted in favor of democracy. Doesn't it follow that these world democratic forces will of necessity struggle as allies of the American people against the imperialist strivings of the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world? If that is true, then any pessimistic outlook which is based only on national relations is unwarranted.

In conclusion, I would like to say a word on the practice of democracy in our organization. I want to cite my own experience to indicate the practice of relegating policy making to the top leaders of the top committees in our organization. I have been an alternate member of the California State Committee for a year. In all that time, only one meeting of the State Committee has been held—last September! Since I was unavoidably absent from that meeting, I have never once been involved in a discussion of State Committee policy. My membership is a formality, and nothing more. I am simply on the receiving end of a mailing list which is used for sending out memoranda of already formulated policy on state politics or on organizational problems.

This does not mean that I am blameless, either. I have been equally guilty of such practices in my own work. As a teacher, for example, I have listened to my students only to "correct" them! As an organizer for the work of the press, I have never seriously developed collective thinking and leadership among the comrades involved in this work.

We have a very real problem to tackle—the problem of developing real democracy in our organization, from top to bottom.

Judy Schmidt, Los Angeles

We Were Guilty of "Trailing"

I agree entirely with the line of the National Board resolution.

As Comrade Foster said in his letter to the National Committee members: "Trailing after the big bourgeoisie is the historic error of social democracy, and we must be vigilantly on guard against it."

When Browder's boasted new contribution to theory is examined in comparison with the revisions of the past, it can be seen at once to be a revision itself, in the same direction as two famous ones: Bernstein's about half a century ago and the "Right Deviation" of the 1920's. The new things in Browder are that he struck roots much farther back into pre-Marxian soil, and the product was much farther away from Marxism than Bernstein and the "Rights" dared to go, publicly. It does not seem likely that Browder did this consciously; apparently the latest deviation was, like the others, stimulated by shallow observation of "new factors," but that may be considered as merely another resemblance to the two earlier.

Eduard Bernstein worked out a theory which was scathingly assailed by Lenin and others, was defeated in convention in 1903, but which seeped through and poisoned the whole Socialist movement.

Bernstein seized on a "new situation" of his day, a passing phase in which statistics showed little business and small farms increasing more rapidly than big business and big landlordism or capitalist farming, and he declared Marx was wrong in saying that society increasingly splits into the two camps of propertyless wage workers and big business, with revolutionary submergence of the latter as the only way out.

But Bernstein never dared say that we should not fight big capital. He only preached the fight would be less a class war than a popular overcoming of the big capitalists by slow and parliamentary means.

The "Right Deviationists" 20 years ago produced special forms in various countries: Lovestone's "American Exceptionalism" and in the Soviet Union advice to the kulaks, "Enrich Yourselves!" But basically it aped the Austrian social democratic doctrine of "super capitalism," the theory that world finance capital was then so powerful, so able to rule by planned economy, that there would never be another industrial crisis, and no period of wars and revolutions such as Stalin warned would come.

But the "Right Deviation" did not advise us to make friends with this monstrous growth of trusts and cartels even though there were then also "new conditions" and "changes in the world situation," especially the temporary stabilization of capitalism after World War I and the 1921 crisis. Remember the "boom period" of the "Hooverian age?"

The Trotskyite treachery had so little dislike for big capitalism that Trotsky and his chief lieutenants (and some of the more regenerate elements of the recognized right deviation with them) went on Hitler's payroll and became Nazi fifth columnists. But Trotsky sought always to cover up with "left" camouflage this movement to the right, and also never dared openly to propose taking orders from monopoly capital.

We know from many analyses of the Bernstein period that a strata of "Socialists" had become bourgeoisified themselves, did not really want any fundamental change in society but just wished to go on comfortably as workers' leaders. And we know that a variety of timidities and factional corruptions made the right deviators allies of capitalist forces outside their party. But none of them dared advise making friends with capitalism or openly following its lead.

Browder's program does just that. And, as it goes farther in its conclusions, so it started farther back for its point of departure.

There is much in Browder's feeling that the increase in strength of the Soviet Union and of progressive and trade union forces changed the nature of capitalists and their class, that reminds one of the pre-Marxian idea that society is an organism like an animal body in which physiological changes spread through the whole structure. Says Browder's "Teheran" (Page 73), after a discussion of the significance of the agreement of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt in their conferences:

"If, however, in the ranks of big capital there is a sufficient number of men of vision and understanding who recognize the suicidal results to their own system that inevitably flow from a

failure strictly to subordinate its operations to a broadly conceived and definitely planned program of national and international expansion of well-being for all—then such men, integrated in or working with the democratic-progressive camp of the people, can become the decisive leaders of big capital . . . sufficient for it to participate in the national unity in support of the program of Teheran. There is a growing volume of evidence that there are such men of vision and understanding in the ranks of big capital."

This is a typical statement by Browder. Intimately associated with this idea is that of the Utopian Socialists against which the Marxians wrote polemics nearly a century ago, and against which Engels wrote the "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific" chapters. Remember how Engels pointed out: ". . . the French philosophers of the 18th century, the forerunners of the revolution, appealed to reason as the sole judge . . ." and the Utopian Socialists all thought their ideas had only to be known to be adopted by all classes?

The hard facts, as socialism recognized, even in 1880 when Engels wrote the book, were "class antagonisms, existing in the society of today, between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage workers; on the other hand . . . the anarchy existing in production," and policies and philosophies developing out of class interest.

But Browder, in 1944, in "Teheran" (p. 23) says: "The obstacles in the way of achieving this goal (international and class harmony) are almost entirely in the persistence of old prejudices and ways of thinking on both sides of the supposedly controversial questions."

The Browder writings of late have been full of that sort of stuff. In "Victory and After," which he wrote in 1942, this approach had already begun: "We know this problem will be solved because it must be solved" (p. 47); "This is a reasonable universe" (p. 72); "This chapter, which merely sets out to argue that it is foolish to be afraid of communism . . ." (p. 73); "We must depend upon the patriotism of the rich, a patriotism stimulated by their intelligence . . ." (p. 88). There is a great deal more of that.

It is true the Utopians were talking about socialism, while Browder was asking only for some Morgans and Rockefellers who would be intelligent enough to be good and kind to their workers and friendly to the Soviet Union, but the general approach was the same.

How did our party come to accept such a theoretical monstrosity? As more and more discussion articles are pointing out, it was a gradual weakening. At first, in the United Front days before the war, many voices warned along with Dimitroff that in such a period the main danger would be the "right danger." Safely, it was then recognized, lay in careful education and close watch in the party units. But, in fact, instead, everybody was enthused over little victories and began making extraordinary concessions for unity—so much that it became a sin to even speak of the Soviet Union, to say nothing of our hope of eventual socialism here because that sort of talk was "offensive to our new friends."

We could have thought of Marx's warning, so many years ago, in his "Critique of the Gotha Program" (quoted in Lenin, "What Is to Be Done," Intl. Pub., Book II, Vol. IV, p. 109): "If you must combine, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles; do not make concessions in theory."

But the party did make those concessions, at least, tacitly. All these tendencies worsened during the war period. And I think that a large number of leading people whose life had been in the inner party circles only or at least confined to united front organizations, were shocked to numbness when they were flung in war industry and in the armed services into the midst of a great mass of farm boys especially from the South, and even more disheartening, the unorganized proletariat or only newly and half organized groups. These comrades suffered agonies of doubt and disillusion when they met such backward masses. They would have wavered out of it and might then have done their best work because for the first time they had come to real grips with the problem—if the party had been sounder at that time. But then, just then, came Browder's program, giving them a system for wavering, a theory for yielding,

THOUGHTS FROM A SOLDIER

(This letter was received by Steve Nelson, president of the CPA of Alameda County from a member now on leave in the armed forces.)

Dear Steve and Other Friends:

I thought I'd drop you a line and let you know I'm getting along fine in the army. I'm still at Camp— in basic training, but expect to complete that in a few weeks and then ship overseas.

Although I've only had a chance to see the National Board's statement and the Duclos' article, I think the projected correction of our position is 100 percent correct. In fact, I'm very enthusiastic about it. From talking to my wife, I gather that the discussion, at least in ——— county, is very healthy with the people really digging down into Marxist-Leninist classics again. I really think this is swell, especially since I had a few minutes to refresh myself with the "History of the CPSU" over this weekend.

The impression I gather from the people I've had a chance to talk to about it, both within the army and in ———, is a real desire to build the CPA and particularly to recruit and re-recruit.

I know for myself during the past two years I have incorrectly devoted too much of my thought to union work with the tendency to let "others work out the party line." It is easy now to see that there was too much reliance on national leaders without a real effort to study and analyze as we used to do in the 1939-1942 period. Besides the correction of the line, I feel that the most important thing we can do is really develop an educational program which will introduce the basic material to our new members and re-introduce it to the rest of us.

I must close now, except I thought you might be interested to know that I was refused admission to Officers' Candidate School by the final board here after passing all other boards with flying colors. I didn't really expect to make it, but I thought I'd like to see just how far I could go. Also to see if the position of the army had changed much.

The reason for rejection by the board was fairly obvious since they spent an hour asking me questions about what I thought of the USSR, what about Mao Tse-tung's position in China and whether there were Communists in the ——— Union, etc.

With warmest regards, Soldier—.

FROM A SEAMAN

Due to the thoughtfulness of a friend, I just received a copy of the June 2 resolution of the National Board, and the article by Duclos.

I only regret that I am not there that I might participate in the discussions of these questions. However, I would like to say that the resolution has my unconditional support and approval. It is one of the healthiest examples of self-criticism I have seen in a long time.

The program outlined in the resolution commands my support by being constructive and based on a sound Marxist analysis. The criticism of past work is more than justified, both on the grounds of unrealistic social analysis, and especially on the manner in which the membership was not consulted.

This resolution fills me with enthusiasm to work and with confidence that our organization will continue to be the Marxist-Leninist vanguard.

I hope that I will soon be back where I can do more to help fulfill this program.

Robert New Jr.

Even this does not entirely explain why all the party officials—apparently with the exception of Comrade Foster only, fell for the Browder line. I think these people can best explain it themselves, and should. As for the average good party member, he saw everybody he trusted proposing this Browder program. He could only conclude they had some reason not stated, and must know what they were doing. So he went and broke his heart and perhaps his political neck in his union trying to put over this latest and grossest of revisionisms. The postwar phase was unacceptable to even the most politically uneducated of the working masses, who just didn't and do not today believe the boss means well by them.

Vern Smith, San Francisco

POLICY, METHODS AND LEADERSHIP

As an early leader in the organization of white collar and professional workers in San Francisco, and as a teacher of new members recruited mostly from these groups, I am deeply concerned over the educational deterioration within the ranks of the Communist organizations.

Due to inactivity on account of ill health for the past year or so, but having been recently requested to renew my educational activities among new members, I attended a state school to bring myself up to date on the "new (Teheran) line." It was a great disappointment to me to find in use there very little of the basic Marxist theoretical material but having instead large "theoretical" doses of Teheran and "Victory—and After," presented in what seemed to me a very mechanical fashion, which lead to a very "canned" variety of discussion in the conference periods of the school. Thus, I am among those so aptly described by Philip Gardner as one who never had really accepted the full implications of the Teheran policy, but rather looked upon it as a necessary and desirable tactic developed by our National leadership to meet the new situation arising between the world powers as a result of the Teheran accord.

Thus, the Duclos letter, the first draft of the resolution and subsequent discussion caused me considerable confusion. However, now that discussion on some of the primary matters is coming last, I have become better clarified as to the revisionist errors and am glad that my recent new members class disbanded for the summer before my previous theoretical unclarity had run its course among them.

As to the theoretical aspects of our discussions, I feel that our task is still to hold the line against both right opportunism and left sectarianism, on a strictly Marxist basis as to what that line is. As Comrade Foster says: "There is great danger in our over-correcting our mistakes" and as one whose tendency in the past has been toward the left, he should be our best authority on this danger.

There is no doubt but that our American Party in its attempts to root itself in the American masses on the basis of American historical conditions, has been influenced too much in recent years by bourgeois ideology. In teaching American history, it has always been my method to teach the class character of our society, but what we need for an effective teaching of this is a thorough, timely study of American capitalism from its beginnings to its imperialist development to date, such as was done by Varga and Mendelson in their "New Data." Requiring a thorough study of such work by every American Communist would do a great deal to dispel any bourgeois illusions. We also need an elementary, but correct, text on Political Economy based on American data. It is high time that we got back to the study of our "musty old books" but we must also supplement them with all the new data available and become independent thinkers, students and teachers. However, in eliminating all bourgeois trends, corresponding bohemian habits and careless methods and in drawing into leadership men and women from the strictly working class, we must be careful to avoid the errors of "pure trade unionism" and "economism." We must also beware of anti-intellectualism.

Trade unionists, white collar workers, professional people and other middle class forces in the Association must re-study the nature of a Communist Party and fuse themselves into a solid political core of thinking, hard-working, sacrificing activists, clearing the path in the American wilderness toward our Socialist goal.

As to the resolution, we need more clarity in our analysis of the People's War of National Liberation, with particular emphasis on the Japanese phase of the war at the present time. In addition to many good proposals from discussion groups, I think we should state our position on universal military training, and have a section on "The Democratization of Education in America," to include an analysis of our school system, the bourgeois press, the radio and the movies, and take a firm, unequivocal position on these phases of our society. Many middle-class groups can be reached through this medium today and we should not hesitate to call for a cleansing of all phases of education from Fascist and undemocratic influences. We must not rely alone on our Communist press, but use every democratic weapon in the arsenal.

As to leadership, I think we are rightly subjecting to sharp criticism our leading comrades from top to bottom and it is very probable that it will be well to return some of them to work in private industry. However, we must remember that

The Meaning of Opportunism

My first reaction like that of many others, to the charge of "opportunism" contained in the draft resolution of the National Board, was one of rejection, since "opportunism" connoted to me conscious betrayal of the interests of the working class, and I felt that in the main our basic policies in the past year and a half had been in the interests of the working class.

Re-reading the "History of the CPSU" clarified this for me. Opportunism, as defined therein, means the worship of the spontaneity of the labor movement, and the belittling of the importance of Socialist consciousness and Socialist theory, and denying the role of the party of the working class in bringing an understanding of Socialist theory to the workers. This inevitably leads to the strengthening of bourgeois ideology among the workers, no matter how correct policy may be on immediate issues. The constitution of the CPA, in its preamble, its statement of purposes, and qualifications for memberships, reveals the alarming extent to which we had slipped into opportunism and forgotten the fundamental role of the Marxist vanguard.

The question remains as to why we slipped into this dangerous error with so little trouble, in spite of our long study of the vanguard role of the party, which culminated in the intensive study of "The History of the CPSU" during 1939 and 1940. I would like to deal with two of the factors which contributed to this easy acceptance.

First, I feel that the drift into opportunism took place over a long period of time, almost imperceptibly. In this connection, some examination of "Victory—and After" is very revealing. In this book, although much greater emphasis is placed on the role of labor and there is a sharp demand for centralized control of production, limitation of incomes and profits, etc., there are the germs of the opportunistic thinking that matured in the Teheran thesis.

The essence of Socialist theory is the uncovering of the contradictions of society, based on an objective, dialectical, materialist analysis of reality. In "Victory—and After" there is strong evidence of an idealistic approach which tends to gloss over contradictions, rather than to expose them.

The imperialistic elements of the war are approached to a large extent as subjective factors. On Page 47, Browder states that "the nub of the debate on 'A Short War or a Long One,' lies in 'the speed with which we transform all our thought, action, policy, to bring it into full harmony with the character of the war as the continuation of the 'peoples revolution,' i.e., the People's War of National Liberation.'"

The primary factor making for national unity is also to be found in a subjective quality, patriotism. Stating that national unity can be achieved only through compromise between the conflicting interests of various class groupings, Browder states: "The motive power behind such compromise can only be something which all parties hold in common—that is, patriotism, the common determination to win the war in order that the nation may survive." Further, Browder states that "we must depend upon the patriotism of the rich, a patriotism stimulated by their intelligence which tells them that victory over the United States by the Axis means their delivery to the tender mercies of the Hitlers, Goerings, Himmlers."

While correctly pointing out that the bourgeoisie has a class interest in the destruction of Nazi fascism, this approach tends to obscure the fundamental conflict of interests which constantly

new and untried leaders will not alone solve our problems. We must draw on the experience of our trusted and loyal leadership of the past and not engage in open rebellion, flippancy, irresponsibility and anarchy in our attitude toward them. We owe a great deal to many of them as the most courageous and consistent fighters against fascism in every form, and a sacrificial devotion to Communist responsibility that will not be easy to suddenly replace.

I personally support the healthy new developments and program, will continue to fight against all forms of bourgeois mediocrity and try to become the sort of a Communist that Krupskaya so well describes in her "What It Means to Be a Communist." I have given over a hundred copies of this Marxist gem to new members.

Rubye K., San Francisco

plagues the bourgeoisie, and which has historically made their "patriotism" a very unreliable factor.

When Browder says: "We must find a way to finance, organize, and fight this war through to victory, a way which is acceptable to the owning class (industrialists, financiers, bond-owners, with their most important hired men) and at the same time sufficiently effective for a victorious outcome. For if these persons should become disaffected and sabotage the war, they could do enormous damage, and the necessary measures to suppress their resistance would be more costly and damaging than the concessions that must be made to win them to a workable compromise," he is laying the basis for his later call upon the working class to remove "the fear of socialism" from the minds of the bourgeoisie—a call which is alarmingly reminiscent of the position taken by the German Social-Democrats after the overthrow of the monarchy in Germany, a position which served as the bridge between the Republic and fascism.

On the question of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, problems and difficulties are attributed to prejudice and misunderstanding. This approach denies the fundamental historical contradiction between capitalism and socialism, which exists alongside the fact that it is to America's national interests to cooperate with the Soviet Union in war and in the peace.

Again, red-baiting is dealt with as a subjective problem, based on prejudices, habits of thinking, etc. "Fear of communism must be dissolved," it is stated, and the implication is that it can be, once the American people have it proven to them that Communists are respectable, patriotic American citizens. The attacks of Hearst, Dies and others against American Communists are ascribed solely to Hitler's fifth column activity.

While it is correct to expose sharply the organized attempts of Hitler agents to use anti-communism as a weapon against American democracy and unity, this approach glosses over the class nature of bourgeois democracy, and denies the existence of objective anti-democratic forces within the capitalist system and within every capitalist state.

Doubtless the errors in "Victory—and After" were in themselves the result of previous errors and over-simplification of policy. This emphasizes the necessity of re-training in Marxism a whole generation of party members and leaders, particularly since both "Victory—and After" and "Teheran" were used as the primary theoretical texts for the bulk of our educational work in this period.

The second factor in our easy acceptance of opportunism lies in our bureaucratic methods of work. While our national leadership recognizes the major responsibility which it bears for this, I want to stress the responsibility of the local leadership. No one person can be a bureaucrat—as Browder himself pointed out some time ago—unless the people he is working with permit him to be.

Over the past year and a half, there have been numerous occasions when one member or another of the county committee or county staff would raise a point of doubt or disagreement, yet none of these was ever analyzed carefully and thought through fully. We were too easily satisfied with a superficial answer, and did not take the trouble to do enough independent research and thinking so that we could present our doubts or disagreements in all their implications. Similarly, in dealing with the membership, we did not give sufficient consideration to problems which our members were confronted with in their attempts to carry out the policy. Discipline in carrying out the policies of our organization in all of our practical work does not relieve us of the responsibility constantly to test our policies against reality, and to present to the leading committees of our organization a serious analysis of weaknesses as we see them. I am sure that if this had been done, we would not have slipped as far as we did into opportunism, and that we would have recognized our errors much more quickly.

Generally, I feel that this whole process of critical evaluation of our policies, our organizational forms, our leadership, and our individual work is strengthening our entire organization immeasurably. If each one of us in the local committees follows the example of self-criticism set by Comrades Dennis, Williamson and Thompson, I feel that the local leadership will be improved, not only as a result of promoting new proletarian cadres, but as a result of the growth and development of the majority of the present leadership.

Elizabeth Glenn, Los Angeles

Self-Criticism Should Start at Home

I agree with many other contributors to the discussion bulletin, we should have had Comrade Foster's letter of January, 1944, for a full and free discussion. Thus we may have averted our present dilemma. I still do not understand why we did not have this in our pre-convention discussions last year. If it is true that Comrade Foster simply did not want to carry it further, then, in my opinion, a great deal of the blame rests on his shoulders. Particularly when he voiced no opposition on such important matters at the National Convention. We must be eternally grateful to Comrade Duclos for bringing our errors in policy to our attention, but I deplore the fact that it couldn't have come from our own members. We must have a few Marxists in the United States, had they only spoken out. Another question I hope will be answered. How did Duclos get Foster's letter and speech of February 8 when our own membership couldn't get it? Some of his information was evidently wrong and I am curious as to how he received it.

This criticism of our leadership is all very well but what about ourselves, especially those of us who have been studying Marxism-Leninism over a period of years? I don't believe Comrade Browder or the National Committee either told us not to study Marxism any more or not to give our new members basic education the same as we received when we became Communists. I think it was simply "the easiest way out" for a lot of us. It was so much easier to play that old game of "follow the leader" instead of trying to think it out for ourselves.

For instance in my own small club alone we lost about nine of our new Negro members during the past year, they just gradually dropped out. I was asked for my analysis of this and said "we have nothing to offer them that they do not get in the NAACP and it is so much easier to belong to the NAACP." I knew what was wrong but did I do anything about it? Did I plan new members classes to teach them the difference between our

immediate aims (practically same as NAACP) and our ultimate goal of socialism? I did not, but how can I criticize our leadership for this.

It is only one example of many. I am sure our whole membership can use a little self-criticism during this period but I hope we do not lean over backward in this either. My first state meeting was during the election campaign of 1934 and being a fairly new member I was disagreeably impressed with the overwhelming self-criticism prevalent at that time. I returned home with the idea I had joined an organization whose members did everything wrong then stood up and bragged about it. We can hit a happy medium on this point also.

The club is the basic organization and is generally what the club officers make it. The laxness and looseness that has developed in attendance, check-ups, assignments, etc., we blamed on the war and let it go at that. I think much of it could have been prevented. It has resulted in nothing but alibis from many of our members and has become a habit which will be hard to overcome.

The enthusiastic discussions we are having in the Carver Club would warm the heart of Marx himself. We are not trying to blame someone but trying to prove our errors from Marx, Lenin and Stalin's writings. Our attendance is nearly 100 percent and our new members are getting a basic education that I am sure will keep them with us. We are planning on going after our "drops" of the past year in hopes we can offer them something to bring them back. It will take time to recoup our losses but by perseverance and hard work we will succeed. All in all it is a very healthy period. We will become better Marxists and I hope more independent thinkers. Just one more word: I wish our state leadership would drop the term "brothers and sisters." Surely we can be that much different from other organizations. Many of us never accepted this term and have continued the word comrade in our club. It has a real meaning as has no other word in our language.

Bessie Keckler, San Jose, Cal.

Duclos and American Problems

Duclos' article interests me more as a reflection of the state of mind of French and European Communist parties than as having any great concrete value for us. It helps us as a rough guide but does not solve our American problems.

I accept Foster's condemnation of Browder's right deviations and revisions of Marxism without endorsing his logic in toto.

The class character of imperialism will not in every situation determine its policy. Marxism is not a dogma. It is a developing theory and we have to develop it here in America and not in Europe or Asia. If the imperialists find it profitable to cease to be imperialists against their will, they will drop imperialism. But this statement means nothing, out of its context.

The peoples' will must compel them to seek and find their profits in an anti-imperialist form of capitalism. I accept our slogans of action with that end in view, and should like to have the resolution amended to state clearly that the main and immediate task is to smash imperialism at home and abroad as we smash Japanese imperialism. That would give the proper focus to our slogans of action.

I will try to make it clearer by observing that every special object our slogans of action achieve can have no other general result than that of cutting out the cancer of capitalism-imperialism. Down with imperialism, the mother of fascism!

Foster correctly criticizes Browder for opposing the demand of a cabinet post for organized labor. Then why is not this demand included in the resolution?

The resolution should single out and emphasize the urgent immediate need of organized labor to recognize its responsibility of big brother to poor farmers and small business people and to take them under its patronage. These groups are merely capitalist wage workers. They furnish their own means of production—buy their jobs—and can't make wages on the average. To urge them to org-

ganize effectively, to promote and protect their peculiar interests, without at the same time assisting them in every way possible, is mockery, short-sightedness and suicide on the part of organized labor.

These people are the most helpless groups, economically, ideologically and politically in our society. Yet it is utterly impossible for organized labor to help them without helping itself to a greater extent or degree.

I haven't figured out the ration, but offhand I would say there isn't a small farmer or small business man who, if he could make good wages would not spend more than twice his wages for commodities. He has already spent more than his wages by the time he gets his wages, by financing his job. These expenses plus his wages are reproduced every year—when he makes wages. What saps organized workers must be—some Communists too—not to see the significance of these obvious potentials.

By helping them, organized labor helps itself a thousand ways at once by gaining their good will. And there are a thousand ways to help them. In the rush season when poor farmers were short of help by reason of sickness or any reason, whatever, trade unionists could knock off—tell the boss to go to hell for a while—barge out into the country, pitch in and help out. Or they could go out among them, find out what legislation they wanted enacted and vote for it unanimously. A few extensions of the hand of fellowship of that type, and you can call me a liar if there wouldn't be something doing in the way of organizing poor farmers and small business people all up and down the line.

These people must have something strong and solid to tie to—to depend on—besides themselves to get anywhere in this world. Collaboration of this category is more than an addition of forces. It is a product of forces, a multiplication of their separate powers—for the good of both, instead of as now, too often to the detriment of both.

Henry Baar, Fresno, Calif.

LESSON FOR THE FUTURE

As I see that discussion of the Central Board's draft resolution is invited from all CPA members I hope it will be in order to comment on the reactions of a local club, and to make a suggestion.

The rejuvenating effect of this resolution on our club has been astonishing (and we have heard the same story from other branches). During the past year the number of meetings in our club had, as elsewhere, dropped to one a month. Attendance was sparse and dispirited and at every executive committee meeting the complaint was, "What can be done to liven up the club?" But now attendance has greatly increased and there is such a rush of discussion that it is hard for each speaker to have his say. Members who have seldom been known to say anything are coming forward with constructive criticism and practical suggestions—suggestions that, in the aggregate, might have helped to keep the CPA in a straight line if they had reached the State and National Committees during the past year and a half. Now that members feel free to speak many of them say that they have found the impossibility of making their suggestions as branch members known higher up. They welcome the opportunity to discuss and pass resolutions on the national policy now.

I would like to suggest that the effect of the discussions on club morale has been so excellent that it would be a great pity if this opportunity occurred only once. I feel that it should not be so difficult to incorporate it in regular CPA procedure. If the National Board annually drew up a draft resolution a period of one to two months could be allotted for discussion and resolution-passing on this draft in the clubs. The National Board having thus had access to the opinions of the entire membership would then frame its policy for the forthcoming year and this would be strictly adhered to.

There would be one essential without which fruitful discussions would not occur: minority opinions such as Comrade Foster's in January 1944 would have to be published and discussed, or if there was no disagreement in the National Board then criticism or modifying suggestions from rank-and-file members would have not to be frowned on during this period. Otherwise if an already worked-out and approved policy were presented to the clubs, the average member who had any objection would keep it to himself out of discipline and loyalty—to his own and his association's loss.

I feel that this procedure, although it might involve extra machinery or possibly a modification of the CPA's constitution would be tremendously repaying both to the National Board and to the membership as a whole. In the first place it would provide a fixed and authorized channel by which our leadership could get to know the opinions of the members, the majority of whom are workers in touch with everyday American life. The CPA would thus be prevented from ever again getting so far away from progressive labor opinion as it had begun to recently. In the second place this procedure would give each member a feeling of active participation in his association which he has lacked, and would be an effective way of "establishing genuine inner democracy and self-criticism throughout our organization," to quote the National Board's resolution.

Isobel Pember, Mill Valley, Cal

STEPS NECESSARY TO PREVENT FUTURE ERRORS

My contribution will deal only with the question of what needs to be done to ensure that the Party will never again commit such a major political error as the "Teheran policy."

The discussion has been going all around the point, it seems to me, and fails to hit clearly the basic point that since the Party made a serious theoretical error, we must sharply raise the theoretical level of the Party, and specifically the leadership.

We must impress our membership and leadership with the importance of theory and we must create a special apparatus to bring theory from its present low position in our movement to its proper place.

Such a special apparatus is proposed for several reasons. One, if no such apparatus is provided, the burden will fall on overburdened educational departments resulting in the neglect of the most difficult work (theory).

Two, the prestige of a special apparatus is needed because giving proper attention to theoretical work will temporarily handicap other work; for example, withdrawing members from activity for a fulltime theoretical school. Three, theory has always been held in low regard not only in the Party, but also in the American trade union movement.

This apparatus would be a temporary measure as long as the need exists. Its functions would be, first, to provide intensive training for new and old (especially trade union) leadership; second, to introduce and guide theoretical discussions on basic Marxist questions in all organizations of the Party; third, to edit a Party theoretical publication. (Yet to be created.)

Marxism is a profound science, requiring deep study before one has mastered enough of its fundamentals to reach Marxist conclusions independently. Because of pressure of work, adequate study is not a possibility for the average member of the Party and especially for the trade union leaders, from among whom we naturally hope to obtain our new leadership. Therefore we must create national full time Marxist schools with terms of three to six months.

If no separate apparatus or extraordinary organizational steps are taken to raise the theoretical level of the Party, there is good reason to believe, first, that the results will be no different than in the past when general resolutions on improving the educational apparatus have been adopted, and, second, that the leadership still fails to see clearly the need for emphasis on theory.

I would like to quote from "Mastering Bolshevism" to show what importance the Bolshevik Party gave to the question of theory. The discussion from which the quotation is taken followed the discovery that Trotskyite wreckers had wormed their way into the Bolshevik Party.

"I think that if we are able, if we succeed in giving ideological training to our party cadres, from top to bottom, and steeling them politically so that they can find their bearings with ease, in the internal and international situation, if we succeed in making of them fully mature Leninists and Marxists, capable of solving the questions of the leadership of the country, without making serious mistakes, then we can thereby solve nine-tenths of all our tasks."

After the quoted statement Stalin went on to propose the establishment of four month Party courses for all unit leadership; eight month Lenin courses for all district leadership; six month courses for the study of history and the Party's policy for all town Party leadership; and a six month conference on questions of internal and international policy. If such intensive theoretical training was required by the Bolshevik Party of 1937, it must be obvious what are the needs of our Party today

Theoretical development of our membership is basic to many other improvements which will be forthcoming from the current discussion. For example, the creation of new leadership on all levels, especially from our trade union members, must carry with it the rapid theoretical training of these members. It is not enough to merely refresh our leadership with trade union forces. Such a view, as Lenin demonstrated in "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," would tend to gloss over the distinction between the Party and the working class and deny the importance of theory. If we do not provide theoretical training for our trade union leadership what will we have? Either they will fully participate in leadership, without a sufficient Marxist understanding, thereby endangering our Marxist line; or else they will be nominally part of leadership, but will play no real part because every problem which leadership must solve is a theoretical one.

Another improvement which inevitably will develop out of this discussion, is greater democracy, in the entire functioning of the organization.

Unless we believe that a decision becomes correct merely because it is democratically arrived at, we must hold the view that greater democracy requires a stepped-up program of theoretical training. Let us all ask ourselves this simple question: Suppose the "Teheran Policy" had been democratically discussed before being adopted, how many of us would have been theoretically prepared to make a satisfactory contribution to the discussion?

All Party members are not theoretically minded. Consequently special and personal attention must be given those members who show special aptitude in the field of theory. They must be not only encouraged but also released from other activities.

Marxist theory provides a searchlight, which lights up not only the path of the Party, but also the progressive course for millions of non-Party trade unionists, middle class, professionals and even some capitalists.

Consequently the advancement of the Party's theory will do more than enhance the prestige and ability to lead of the Party as an organization. It will do the same for those who are openly known as members of the Party if their theoretical understanding proves to be of value to the trade unions and the people in their search for the path that will advance their own interests. As a matter of fact, it is not possible for the Party's program and theories, to be known to and followed by the masses of the people, unless a large portion of its membership, and its leadership, are known as Communists.

Finally, I wish to make a very basic proposal, which will also contribute to the full development of Party democracy. The proposal is that the pages of the Party's theoretical organ shall always be open to the expression of disagreement with any important Party program or position. This will serve to encourage independent thinking on theoretical questions—our greatest need if we are really to achieve Party democracy. It will strengthen, rather than weaken discipline because confidence in the correctness of our position is its backbone. Finally, it will provide a means from below to change a program or policy which becomes incorrect by reason of a changed situation, or which is proved incorrect in the crucible of our daily struggles.

There is a companion proposal which will reach into the whole Party organization. It is that we introduce a regular period of check-up and self-criticism in all meetings of the organization to determine not only whether tasks have been carried out, but more important, whether our failure to carry out our tasks was caused by erroneous policy or program, and what would be a correct program. There is obviously no better Marxist test of the correctness of a policy than the day to day struggle by which it is achieved. Without in any way excusing the theoretical errors contained in the "Teheran policy," had we adopted a truly Communist self-critical attitude toward our work, we could not have gone so long without seeing our mistake.

Aubrey Grossman, San Francisco

DUCLOS LACKS KNOWLEDGE OF U.S.

The keystone of Duclos' argument is his judgment of Teheran. But history will prove Teheran to have been no "illusion," no "mere agreement of diplomatic nature."

Teheran is real. It is here—now—at work, shaping the destiny of mankind. For it was the seed from which grew Dumbarton Oaks, Yalta, Bretton Woods, the San Francisco Conference, and the United Nations organization. It has produced the brightest hope ever to illumine the firmament of class struggle. It has begun the building of a dam to prevent the most catastrophic flood imaginable—a conflict between two world camps—socialism and fascism: a conflict whose horror no H. G. Wells can forecast.

Teheran was "dialectics" in action and resulted in an actual "unity of opposites." It was the personification of historical materialism.

Duclos' judgment of Teheran typifies his blindness toward the real nature of the present issue, so well understood by Browder. Duclos would stand by the letter of Marxism, whereas Browder, proceeding in accordance with the spirit of Marxism, elaborates and extends Marxist-Leninist science to make use of what is expedient.

Duclos, undoubtedly sincere and well-meaning, is inspired more by fervor than perception. And he is limited by his lack of intimate knowledge of conditions in the United States. If Communists in this country were to follow the course he urges, the result would be not Marxism but obstructionism.

M. C. Hermoso, San Francisco

RESOLUTION

The San Mateo-Burlingame Club of the Communist Political Association endorses, in the main, the resolution of the National Board as adopted on June 2, 1945.

However, we suggest that amendments to cover the following two points be incorporated in the resolution.

We suggest that a concrete program for youth be included in our perspective. The resolution shows a serious lack in neglecting the problems of youth.

Further, as we return to a more sound Marxist basis, it is necessary that we keep clearly before us our ultimate goal of socialism.

In our discussions of the resolution we feel that the leaders of the organization have followed bureaucratic tendencies which has seriously weakened the capacity of the rank and file to carry out the principles of democratic centralism. This tendency was responsible for the lack of free discussions in our national, state and county groups on questions of basic policy; it was responsible for the suppression of Comrade Foster's report. In the past, independent opinions have not been given their due consideration.

In formulating an incorrect program the national leadership has shown a lack of application of fundamental Marxism. The general membership, in accepting an incorrect program, has shown a lack of grounding in fundamental Marxism, this demonstrates the need for intensive and continuous study of Marxism-Leninism by all members of our organization.

In order to guarantee that there will not be a recurrence of this bureaucratic tendency, in the future a minority report should be made available to the membership in the event of differences in the National Board.

We urge that qualified members from the ranks, especially trade union cadres, be elected to leadership.

We feel that our chief emphasis should be on the "Right to Work." This is a slogan that will be understood by all workers. We feel that the slogan "60 Million Jobs" is inept because it is open to many and varied interpretations, and too easily criticised.

We wish to express our appreciation of Comrade Duclos and the French Communist Party for their constructive appraisal of our revisionist tendencies. We pledge ourselves to eliminate opportunism and bureaucracy from our ranks, and to work for the realization of our new program.

San Mateo-Burlingame Club

EFFECTS OF POLICY ON OUR WORK

If I were not at heart a Communist and I believe I was one as long as I can remember and will be to my dying day, I would not now be a member of the Communist Political Association.

I was opposed to the change of name and the change in policy, although it was plain that a revisionist policy was being formulated long before the abrupt change. I believed I was the only one who openly came out against the change in policy here in San Diego during the "open discussion" before the change.

Mass work has suffered immensely since the change in policy. I received the impression that communism was to be played down and that activity was to be curtailed. Meetings were held at greater intervals. Educations completely stopped. I for one admit I couldn't "sell" as I didn't believe it myself and hardly any of my fellow unionists believed in our policy as exemplified by Browder.

By not being a Communist Party and proudly making use of the prestige the liberation forces of Greece, France, etc. had built up at the time we did ourselves untold damage.

Effort is being made to have full discussions on this matter and it is a healthy sign. Something which I have noticed in the past and which I now notice is the reluctance of otherwise fine comrades to read and try to come to their own conclusions. They only seem to want to come to the conclusions that they think are expected of them by others higher in the organization. Following of leadership and disciplined organization is necessary for our organization but blind and ignorant following is

what leads to wrong conclusions. Leadership can only safely be followed in intelligent and democratic organization. The reason for the wrong orientation, along with a lack of informed democracy was a willingness of the rank and file membership to accept blindly the leaders' interpretation of basic theory. It is the easy way to get out of reading and study but also the easy way to wrong conclusions for an organization. It was very noticeable at meetings that members did not have the background of theoretical knowledge to interpret international and national events from the facts at hand but would express no opinions until the leaders spoke. I believe this to be the rule also of county committees as well as state committees.

I feel that a new member should be asked to read a certain amount of basic literature and should be on probation until he or she does this reading and passes an examination supervised by a committee set up for this purpose. Members should not be allowed to vote on policy unless they have had the theoretical background to know what they are voting for.

Our leadership must be critically analyzed on past mistakes as well as this one. Any member or members that may remain on the National Executive Board that supported or remained silent during Lovestone's day must be replaced. "Hell is paved with good intentions." We will have to do this no matter how much they admit their errors and their protestations that they "won't do it again." In the case of younger and inexperienced

leaders a forgiveness is in order providing they show a willingness to study. Older comrades who were in the organization during the Lovestone affair must stand for a critical appraisal of their action the last few years.

One caution is in order. Now that we are bringing our ship around to our true course we must be ever watchful that we do not (and which is very easy to do) give too much LEFT rudder. It will be very easy for us in our zeal to get on the right course to go too far to the left. We have the charts, we must follow the course. We must stay on that course if we ever expect to reach our destination. Every time we leave that course it will take us just that much longer to reach our destination. One realizes in wartime one must take a zig-zag course to confuse the enemy, but don't zig so far you confuse yourself and forget to zag and lose your destination. That is just what we did.

Comradely yours,
Don Martin, San Diego

P. S. As to the resolution of the National Board of June 2. Part 1-4 to the end I believe are constructive and in the main very good. In the opening part I believe there is a tendency to try to excuse themselves on their past action by over-emphasizing a so-called shift in Big Business. "This regrouping in the ranks of capital . . .", which they use a number of times is not explained and I do not think can be explained for this grouping has been the same for many years.—D. M.

Rank and Filer Discusses the Resolution

Everybody seems to have come out from "underground" to proclaim opposition to the Browder line. It is the irony of the situation that those who shouted the loudest for the "progressive capitalism" policy like Comrade Robert Minor did, are now referring to "Lenin's letter to the American Workers." This comrade simply vulgarized Browder's analysis (which is of course in essence nothing but revisionism) by stating from platforms here in Los Angeles that "Capitalism will give to the people a high standard of living and a lasting peace"; that "capitalism has always been progressive"; that "capitalism will get a new lease on life"; etc., etc., and "we are entering a new era."

To the writer of these lines it was always inconceivable that it is at all possible capitalism should raise our domestic purchasing power or simpler to raise the wages of American workers into double the amount just like that, voluntarily, because it is in the interest of American capitalism. No, it couldn't reach my remotest imagination. Marx has taught me, and my practical experience as a worker for over three decades has taught me that such things are, very mildly speaking, utopian; fairy tales.

In all fairness for honest discussion however,

Comrade Browder never said capitalism will grant things on a silver platter. He said there is that possibility. Of course it is a false supposition based on a fictitious theory. Comrade Minor said "they will."

Other leading comrades went a step further. From a platform a leading comrade argued that "the method of the strike has always been a primitive one," that "it rarely paid for workers to strike" for conditions, "for strikes," he argued, "are not always won." He argued further that "the government authorities like the NLRB will serve the best purpose and best interests of the workers now and after the war."

Other leading comrades went a few steps still further on the road into the "new era." This is where a wrong theory leads to. It could and it would have lead us further into oblivion. The question of capitalism sharing its profits with the workers, because according to Browder's appeal to reason (capitalist reason) that it is far better for American capitalism to keep the wheels of industry turning uninterruptedly and do with less profits, rather than plunge into a new depression and subsequently into a third world war because of overproduction and lack of markets—

this can be answered by a Marxian school boy that capitalism is doing lots of things that run contrary to its interests and lead to its end; for capitalism, a smart school boy will tell you, is full of inner contradictions.

Comrade Browder, I believe, is deadly frightened for the future. He saw capitalism at its worst. He saw fascism, that monster created by monopoly capitalism burning women and children and he despaired. He lost his greatest gift—his exceptionally clear and analytical mind. He appeals to capitalism and labor: "Unite, for the survival of civilization!" The National Committee of the former CP was caught and re-echoed: "Unite! No, we are already united! Teheran! Yalta! We are inseparable!"

Comrades, the toiling masses cannot and will not allow themselves to be completely devoured, nor crushed. For the survival of civilization, the toiling masses will resist and keep on resisting the handouts of capitalism. Thanks to Comrade Duclos; thanks to Comrade Foster; and better late than never, thanks to the National Committee for throwing overboard the revisionism, latest model, and for adopting the proposed resolution.

Joseph Mortkoff, 40th AD Club, L. A.

Literature of the hour

HISTORY OF THE CPSU
THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

by Stalin

MASTERING BOLSHEVISM

by Stalin

IMPERIALISM

by Lenin

LEFT-WING COMMUNISM

by Lenin

THE COLLAPSE OF SECOND
INTERNATIONAL by Lenin

THE TREATMENT OF DEFEATED
GERMANY by Jerome

THE UNITED FRONT

by Dimitroff

THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST
FASCISM AND WAR by Dimitroff

SOCIALISM—UTOPIAN AND
SCIENTIFIC by Engels

THE SECRET OF SOVIET STRENGTH
by the Dean of Canterbury