

## DISCUSSION BULLETIN 5

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# REVISIONISM AND PRACTICAL WORK

Having worked in the Richmond shipyards from November, 1942 to March, 1945, I would like to deal briefly with one phase of our theoretical mistake as it was translated into life in a large wartime industry.

Extremely bad conditions have existed in the Kaiser yards since the beginning of the war and up to the present, with very few improvements having been achieved up to this time. Unjust firings, disregard of seniority, waste of manpower, waste of materials, discrimination against Negroes and women, inadequate transportation, housing problems, no in-plant feeding, poor community conditions for the workers' families such as children attending over-crowded schools on a part-time basis, shopping facilities limited, commodities over-priced, and many others too numerous to mention. All this resulted in a huge labor turnover that came close to becoming a national scandal.

During the period of shipyard expansion, many women, Negroes, and workers from the more backward sections of the country were entering industry for the first time. The Communists and progressives did some good work in some of the unions, the anti-discrimination committees and other organizations. For example, 5000 signatures were obtained on a petition requesting the Boilermakers Union to admit Negroes on an equal basis with white workers.

However, we failed to develop this type of activity fully and consistently. For instance, Local 513 of the Boilermakers Union, which has jurisdiction over at least 50 percent of the workers in the yards, has never held a single membership meeting. We failed entirely to take advantage of the deep resentment which existed, for a time at least, among the workers because of this situation, to bring at least elementary trade union democracy to these people. Likewise, no attempt has been made to follow up the recent California supreme court decision that Negroes should be admitted to the Boilermakers Union, by applying it to other shipyard unions that discriminate.

As a matter of fact, such issues have been soft-

pedaled by the progressives in the interest of "unity." I think we must ask ourselves now, was this in the interest of unity, or was it not in the interest of reaction? Did such a policy actually help to win the war, or did it hinder it? If a consistent struggle on these issues and many others had been stepped up and broadened to include the thousands of workers of both sexes and all colors who had come into industry for the first time and needed real strong working-class leadership, there is no doubt that many of these conditions could have been improved, labor turn-over would not have been so huge, the manpower problem could have been eased, and the war effort helped considerably.

Why was it that we were unable to give the kind of leadership to the workers in the yards which would have helped to solve their problems?

First, I think that our policy led us to depend too much on the capitalists. For example, there was too much emphasis, through our press and literature, on the progressive role of Mr. Kaiser. With conditions in the shipyards what they are, such praises for Mr. Kaiser fell on deaf ears as far as the workers in Mr. Kaiser's yards are concerned. While the public statements of Mr. Kaiser sound very progressive, and the workers should demand that he put them into effect, it is all too evident that the only means by which Mr. Kaiser's statements can have meaning is by a real struggle, led by the trade unions.

Secondly, we were disarmed by our idealistic postwar perspectives. Instead of coming to grips with their day to day problems, we were busy telling the workers about our dream of full employment, and how sure we were that the capitalists would keep their plants going after the war (in their own interest, of course) and that the day was coming when the workers' purchasing power would be increased 100 percent. And did the workers respond to such bright pictures of the future? They did not—but this did not seem to bother us too much! Faced with ill-planned lay-offs, cut-backs, rumors of shut-downs, sometimes followed almost immediately by frenzied re-hirings; absence of training for repair work, elimination of women from repair jobs, no assurances of continued em-

ployment to Negroes, the workers were skeptical of the outlook we offered them, and life itself is proving that they were right and we were wrong. Consequently we must admit that, as a result of a basically incorrect policy, we ceased for a time to play a real vanguard role among this particular group of workers.

Thirdly, I think the organization of our Communist movement into big clubs was a direct result of our incorrect approach, and could not be the best way to give correct Marxist guidance to the industrial workers. With such large meetings it was impossible to have the fullest participation, especially on problems affecting a particular industry.

Workers in other industries in our county, such as oil refining and chemical, relate similar experiences, but space does not permit a detailed discussion of these. Suffice it to say that the great majority of the workers greeted the Communists' postwar perspective with tongue in cheek. Many individuals asked, if wartime profiteering, bitter opposition to lifting the Little Steel formula; and encroachments on living standards was so evident in wartime, what guarantees did we have that these conditions would be improved in the postwar period.

In view of the tremendous problems facing the workers of the nation, the Communists must be equipped with correct theory and have the benefits of the best collective thinking. We can make a great contribution in helping to quickly defeat Japanese fascism and solving the problems of peace. The following proposals have been submitted by some of our trade union members through the Contra Costa County Committee:

1.—That industry-wide meetings of our members be held, to coordinate activities in certain areas.

2.—That we hold regular county conferences of our members in the trade unions, to discuss problems facing the organized workers on a national, state and local scale.

3.—Occasional meetings of our members on a plant basis, for a better understanding of the proper role of the Communists in the trade unions.

Mickey Beagle, Contra Costa County,

# MARXISM IS THE KEY

I have read the resolution over many times and can see no fault in it. Therefore, I'm for it. Regarding the revision, opportunism, etc., I wish to make it clear at the outset: the discussions of Foster, Minor, et al, have in no way influenced my own opinions. In fact, there seemed to be something very much disturbing from the very beginning of the new set-up. Time increased the doubts, and as educational director, I stressed the great need of a deeper understanding of Marxism, especially capitalist laws, political economy, etc. In my opinion, there had been no change whatsoever in any capitalist law. And I felt it was inevitable that a change in policy would take place. Later, a few days before the resolution was out, I became so incensed with the happenings at San Francisco and the capitalists trying to do away with all our gains of recent years, I could no longer contain myself, and stated to our club members, "that our top leadership is thoroughly permeated with opportunism." By their own admittance, I was right. Now, as to Comrade Browder's revision and opportunism, to collaborate in every possible way for a speedy ending of the war was the correct thing for us to do, but with the ending of the war another thing—an altogether different proposition. Even now, during the war, are the majority of capitalists showing much inclination toward that end? Imagine if one can, a big hungry, salivating lion not eating the nice little fat lamb. In my opinion, to reject the class struggle is to reject all of Marxism and Leninism, especially after the ending of the war, when competition between capitalists and imperialist groups will become intensified. This will be reflected in their attempt to lower the standards of living of the workers. The attempt to lower wages is being made even now. Can we sincerely collaborate with a bunch that is eternally trying to knife us? Sometimes I think I hear Marx Engels and Lenin groaning in their graves and hearing Lenin say: "No, no, it just isn't possible." Then I hear Marx and Engels say: "What is it, Comrade Lenin, what's on your mind?" "Well," said Lenin, "you've heard of transmigration, I was wondering

if the souls of Karl Kautsky, the revisionist and grand opportunist, and others had ganged up in the body of Browder. No, I suppose not. It's just coincidence."

The capitalist laws of competition, which is the impelling force driving toward monopoly, trusts, syndicates and cartels are still in force and will be until a mightier force diverts these laws into the use of the common people. I suspect that Henry Wallace understands more about imperialism than many Communists. And for that reason it becomes imperative that all Communists study more deeply Marxism and Leninism—but Marxism first—"a baby has to crawl before it can walk."

About the CP and CPA: Just why could we not have obtained as good or maybe better results in holding to the CP as we have in the CPA? If my memory hasn't failed me, it seems we went "all out" in one or two previous elections. In my opinion, we are just a people's movement and no longer a vanguard of the working class, wide open to all sorts of opportunism. It seems we are only tailing the capitalist organizations—reminds me of a rodeo

performer tailing a bull.

About ideology: When Comrade Browder goes out, he certainly does go "all out" in capital letters. A few more years such as the past one and most Communists would have to go to a dictionary for a definition of socialism.

Now about dogmatics: It seemed to me the word was used as a mental club to whip the membership and others into line. Maybe it was not done intentionally, maybe not. But in my opinion, in the future, anyone in our organization whatever its form, should be pretty darn certain of their own dialectics. The word was simply "run ragged" during the period of discussion of the new policy. Whenever one disagreed with anything about the new "set-up" it always came out—dogmatism, dogmatism.

In conclusion: we should certainly profit by the experience we are going through, and it should bring forcibly to all of us the great need of a deeper understanding of Marxism first, then on to Leninism. When we have a good understanding our mistakes will be fewer and farther between.

J. L. THOMSON, Tulare.

# Resolution of the Sacramento CPA

We urge unity among all Marxists on basic issues, this unity to be achieved by complete clarity on all fundamental questions. We feel that discussions should be continued until complete clarity is assured on theoretical questions of Marxism.

The Sacto Club is unanimous in approval on the program of action of the N. C. and the resolution of the N. C. was fully endorsed. Complete agreement on the theoretical problems, however, has not yet been attained.

Following are some of the comments of the membership:

"Criticism of the new policy should have been begun at the start."

"NO error was made in the dissolution of the C. P."

"Structure and policy was the issue, not the

name."

"The rank and file did not participate enough in the Marxist discussion, but left it too much to the N. C."

"The N. C. did not take into consideration the new group of forward-looking capitalists that have developed, as Browder showed."

"Workers feel that depression is coming and it will not be solved by the capitalists."

"Time will test the proper solution, if we stick together."

"We were following the Socialist platform in trying to collaborate, and that has always failed."

"American history proves that the role of the C. P. is not merely that of a protest party. All parties a regrouping of previous parties."

Executive Committee

# REVISIONISM AND AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS

The mistake appears to have had its beginning at the eighth convention of our party in Cleveland, Ohio, in April 1934. The published results of this convention in the pamphlet "The Way Out" shows a separation of theory and practice, growing out of an incorrect appraisal of the revolutionary traditions of 1776 and 1861.

While important similarities in the struggle of 1776 do exist, which are fully applicable to the modern political struggles, and certain "traditions of '76" are carried forward by our party, it was a mistake for us to imply in the published statement of that convention that the "traditions of 1776" were the only traditions we were carrying forward.

While, in theory, we clearly aimed at socialism, which we knew required the dictatorship of the working class; in practice, we were to be modern "Jeffersonians" only fighting for the defense and extension of (capitalist) democracy.

Neglected, or at least omitted, in our 1934 policy was a clear statement of recognition of the very great differences which exist between the capitalist revolution of 1776 — extended to the southern states in 1861—and the modern working class revolution, which as Marxist-Leninists, we must also carry forward new traditions. Traditions which were unknown in Jefferson's day, and which sharply conflict with certain "Jeffersonian traditions."

Hidden by this omission, was the fact that the revolution of 1776 did establish in our country the pre-conditions for the building of the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Which dictatorship was built and now does operate behind the screen of capitalist "democracy."

The implication was made by us that a 1934 translation of the "Declaration of Independence," would, in fact, usher in the dictatorship of the working class, just as in 1776 this same Declaration of Independence had ushered in the dictatorship of Marxism-Leninism.

The tasks of the authors of the Declaration of Independence were ended in 1783 with the victory over England and the successful establishment of the thirteen colonial states as the United States of America. This was freely admitted by Tom Paine in his last "Crisis" article. (No. XIII.)

We do carry forward the traditions of 1776 and 1861 in our day, because we demand freedom for the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Because we fight to retain and extend what democracy exists

under capitalism. It was for this that Jefferson and Paine fought so well.

For these tasks alone, we ally ourselves with the heroes of 1776. But we do this in order to make it possible and easier for the working class to thus pass on to our new tasks, the higher tasks of establishing socialism in our country—and in the colonial countries as well.

It is for these latter tasks, the establishment of socialism, we must carry forward new traditions under the red banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. In the traditions of Eugene Debs, the heroes of the eight hour day, and the other great leaders of the American working class!

We cannot scientifically carry forward the traditions of 1776 all the way through the class struggles in America, because the class struggle—the need for socialism—did not arise in 1776. No one at that time could possibly have foreseen it, nor could they establish any principles in regard to it.

Our party in adopting these "traditions" in the manner presented—admittedly as a political expedient, made an error of an opportunist nature. But to the extent that it separated our practical thinking from our theory of proletarian revolution, it had the effect of paving the way for the big mistakes that followed at the 10th party convention in 1938, wherein we practically abandoned the basic principle of the Dictatorship of the Working Class. In other words the separation of theory and practice resulted in our having to revise our theory. With the way paved by four years of capitalist "traditions" in our heads, the 1938 errors—big and fundamental as is now obvious—were not discovered by any large number of comrades. Those few who had misgivings could not have realized clearly how serious they were or otherwise they could have been more convincing. Our thinking had become blunted by 1938. We were ideologically disarmed. The still more obvious mistakes of Teheran and after were bound to follow.

Precisely, the mistake of carrying forward the traditions of 1776 to a Socialist America is this: the term, "carry forward," implies that the path from a capitalist America to socialism is a smooth flow of struggle for constantly expanding and extending "democracy." By this it follows that the one runs into the other. Further then, there is no barrier between capitalist "democracy" and socialism. The result of this thinking is that socialism can be led up to and established within the

framework of capitalism.

If all this were true, then there is no need for the dictatorship of the working class. This may be why no one noticed our abandonment of this, fundamental in 1938. By that time it seemed such a logical step to take, so necessary in view of our adopted "traditions" since 1934.

Now that Comrade Duclos has aroused us from our slumbers it seems hardly necessary to state that socialism can never arise on a basis of capitalism. That capitalist "democracy" instead builds up economic and legal structures between the working class and political power. That this framework of capitalist relations in society (as we now remember)—must be smashed by the working class in order to establish socialism. It is for this task—the smashing of the capitalist economic and political relations in society—that the dictatorship of the working class is scientifically necessary in our Marxist-Leninist theory.

We can correctly say that Jefferson and Paine would help us, or more precisely, we help them, in defending our democratic institutions, and in the fight to extend democracy to the colonial countries—self determination for the colonial peoples. But how Jefferson and Paine would stand in the modern class struggle would be decided, not by principles of 1776, but by how well these gentlemen had fared under capitalism. How well they had read our Marxist-Leninist literature! At any rate the tasks for which they fought within the borders of our nation, have long since been completed. The tasks which exist today in America can only be solved by the American working class.

In the ideological revamping of our Communist movement our lessons may very well include the clearing up of these "irregularities" from eleven years ago. The lesson is that our work is not sweet, nor easy, nor to be taken with immediate acclaim among the workers. That instead, it is hard work, to be done over and over again to convince the workers that hard as the tasks may be, Marxism-Leninism is the only road which can lead to the solution of the national problems given us by the crisis of capitalism in our country. The louder the clamor and howl sent up by the capitalist class, the more clearly we should set forth our real purposes and theory into the ranks of the workers. It is sweet enough for us to know that we have a scientific and certain way out, and the capitalist have none.

Homer Mulligan, San Francisco

## WANTS STANDARDS ESTABLISHED FOR LEADERSHIP

With the discussion on the Duclos article and the draft resolution now going forward and the announcement by the National Committee of the convening of a national convention of the CPA on July 26, 27, and 28 for the purpose of reorienting our Association, the question of "refreshing the leadership" becomes of grave importance.

In my opinion, the leadership of the CPA has fallen into the very error of which we accuse the bourgeoisie of underestimating the intelligence and power of the masses. This has reflected itself in methods of work which have reduced the CPA clubs and their executive boards to rubber stamps, which has permitted the suppression of vital Marxist criticism both by leading Communists in America and abroad, in spite of the fact that our members are constantly being subjected to an unending flood of the most reactionary bourgeois propaganda through the radio and the capitalist press.

The National Committee has elected a sub-committee to make a political examination of the leading cadres. I welcome this move chiefly from the point of view of making available such information about our leaders, their activities and policies which has previously been withheld from the membership at large. However, we must remember that the chief responsibility for selecting a militant leadership based on the American masses and a working class ideology will fall upon the CPA clubs in the several states where the membership is in closer contact with the masses from which our leadership has tended to divorce themselves.

I should like, therefore, to suggest certain standards for judging the qualifications of Communist candidates for election as convention delegates and to positions in clubs, on county, state and the national committee.

First of all: primary consideration should be given for future leadership to those Communists who were able to analyze Earl Browder's so-called "Teheran" policy of class collaboration as revisionist at the time of the Bridgeport speech, and who had the courage to attack this policy vigorously during the discussions on the dissolution of the

party.

2.—Each candidate should be judged on the position which he took on the Duclos article before the publishing of the draft resolution by the National Board. This is a test of his ability to recognize revisionist errors.

3.—A candidate for office should be judged as to his mass connections particularly in the trade unions but also with large organizations of the community and his record of leadership of mass struggles in these organizations.

4.—A candidate must be judged on his ability to work collectively and democratically with others; on his ability to maintain close ties with the masses and with the basic organizations and

membership of the CPA; his ability to conduct self-criticism and to profit by such criticism.

5.—Special consideration for leadership should be given to honest, militant elements from the working class and to those Communists who have identified themselves with the interests of the masses of the people.

Every candidate for leadership should submit himself to the most rigorous and critical analysis of his qualifications, which analysis, if conducted on a sound political level will strengthen him as a person and as a Communist, and will help to reorient our organization towards a militant, Marxist-Leninist party of the working class.

Mary Scott, San Francisco

## FOSTER'S LETTER AND OUR POLICY

After reading Comrade Foster's original letter of January, 1944, to the National Committee, I am more than ever convinced that, had the opportunity for free and unhampered discussion prevailed in the party, we would not have our present headache. I firmly believe that the membership as a whole could never have been convinced of the soundness of Browder's program.

Democratic centralism bases itself on a sound, well-understood line by all of our members. We know that in times of stress it is sometimes essential that our leadership make decisions without being able to involve the whole membership. But the constitution of the CP as well as of the CPA bind our membership to carry out majority decisions arrived at after the fullest possible discussion.

I am certain that the reaction of our members, on seeing Foster's letter, was unanimous. Why were we not permitted to know of this at the time of the discussion last year? It is useless now to try and fix the blame on one or the other party, according to the outlook taken by the individual. What counts, is that such a situation shall never be permitted to occur again. It's obvious that our constitutional guarantees as they stand now, are not broad enough, that they must include the right of the membership to a full knowledge of all pros

and cons, of all minority opinion, so that no top majority shall ever be in a position to withhold essential information from the membership. What had been done in our national committee last year certainly did not indicate "trust in the masses" of our own membership.

The natural result of the presentation of the whole matter of policy by our national committee was, that all opposition was cut at the root. Fear of charges of leftism silenced those who would not agree in the beginning. This is not the way democracy should work in our organization.

Had the members of our leading bodies at least followed Lenin's well-established policy of trying to find out the opinions of labor—not to speak of their own membership—they couldn't have failed to hear the rumbling of contrary opinion.

It is time that we make a two-way job of our inner pipeline, to assure that the dope doesn't only come down to us, but that it must go up as well. Bob Thompson speaks well, when he mentions arrogance of top committee members, whose only task was to see to it that the established policy was swallowed whole. Too many comrades even in lower committees followed this bright example and will do well to cleanse themselves thoroughly from it.

Fred Doyer, Mill Valley

# WANTS A RETURN TO PARTY ORGANIZATION

I would like to utilize this Discussion Bulletin to express some of my opinions on the resolution, on Comrade Browder's arguments and Comrade Foster's reply.

I believe we made a very great mistake by abolishing the party. I do not believe that by so doing we removed "communism" as an issue in the last presidential election. Who was raising such a cry? Only the reactionary, Fascist-minded in both parties, who will red-bait anyone, anytime as long as it serves their purpose. By rushing to abolish the party before the elections, in my opinion seemed to give a certain amount of credulity to some of the reactionaries' past statements. On one hand, we abolished the party and said we no longer indulged in politics as a party, yet we refused to drop the name "Communist" from the name of the Association, which seems to me to be very inconsistent.

We should have remained a political party and not run a candidate for either the President, or where there were other progressive candidates running for office. I think we would have added prestige by so doing. The people would have had a working man's party indorsing Roosevelt instead of an "Association" indorsing "free enterprise" and Roosevelt.

At the last meeting of the club it was argued that small political parties never amounted to much in the United States, that only through the re-alignment of forces were the old parties purged, and became progressive. This may be true, but the two major parties have always adopted the platforms of the small parties when they threaten to become too popular. The election of Ben Davis and Peter Cachionne had a very sobering effect on the two major parties.

I think, in California, we have an example in this session of the legislature. The assemblymen in Sacramento knew they didn't have to worry about another party drawing attention to their actions. The reactionary Democrats and Republicans, with their cross-filing can nullify the will of the majority. Many of these men had no opposition in

the final last election and consequently very little election activity took place in these districts, and the progressives could not even make known their program to the people.

It was also brought out that we wasted a lot of time and money and effort in an attempt to stay on the ballot. I do not believe this. Small parties have always been the instrument which the people use to protest their fate. This fight always keyed us up. During this past year we have not had a basic issue to keep up enthusiasm and I think a struggle to stay on the ballot would have helped our recruiting by keeping before the workers, who are increasingly becoming aware of the role of the capitalists in the war and postwar world, a militant party dedicated to their interests. This is enough on the abolition of the party.

As far as cooperating with the capitalist class, I am afraid that the capitalists were only interested in defeating German imperialism insofar as it threatened their own imperialism. The Anglo-American policy in Europe has not attempted to eradicate fascism in Europe. In fact they are doing exactly the opposite. They were the ones responsible for Italian and German fascism for without their financial aid neither of these governments could have stayed in power. The methods they used to furnish this aid are well known—cartels, etc. They were sure that they were building a bulwark against "communism," and even after they were proven wrong they tried to turn the war into a war against the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union was attacked they saw a way out of the terrible predicament they were in, and rushed to praise her, and furnish aid to the gallant Soviet people. However, there is nothing honest about capitalists. Averill Harriman is an example. While the war was on he praised the Soviet people, but as soon as it was over, he reverted to an anti-Soviet stand.

Marx, Lenin and Stalin have taught us the character of monopoly capitalism. It is not even patriotic in defense of the nation. The workers on the job know this and many are questioning how we can expect monopoly capital to sacrifice for

peace and jobs for all if they won't even sacrifice to win the war. Business men, large and small are only interested in making profits and staying in business no matter at whose expense. I have heard many workers say, "they advertise 'buy war bonds so a soldier will have a gun,' but I suppose if the money isn't put on the line the company won't part with it." This is not meant in any way to belittle the buying of war bonds. Certainly nothing should be put in the way of a complete and total victory over Japan.

Capitalism has no intention of furnishing full employment. They are very irritated at labor because it is in a position to enforce some of its demands. We know capitalism can not operate without a labor pool. It is a system based solely on fear on the part of the workers (fear of losing jobs or sickness, etc.). Lenin teaches us that capitalism always comes out of each recurring war weaker, and its contradictions sharpen and that each crisis reoccurs quicker and quicker. How Comrade Browder failed to see this is hard to understand.

I think that our experiences of last year cannot but help us even if they do just one thing—provoke discussions in our meetings. That is the reason why this error was made. I am sure that the rank and file did not agree with Comrade Browder. I did not talk with anyone who felt that this was the right policy, but rather, that Browder must have known something that they didn't and that we could "fight" capitalism later. Our members, without exception, anticipated the latest action of the National Board. It is not necessary to have factions to express an opinion in a club meeting, the important thing is to have clarity and unity when the meeting is over. I disagreed with Browder's policy from the beginning, but I made no attempt to deviate from the majority discussion. However, discussion should have been stimulated, and not discouraged.

I think Duclos did a masterful job in exposing the right deviation of Browder. I am sure we will emerge as a much stronger party for admitting our mistake and moving to correct them.

J. W., Sacramento

## Disagrees With Browder

Stubborn resistance by Earl Browder to the almost unanimous reversal of opinion by the national Committee of the CPA, Duclos' statement, and to the enthusiastic acceptance of the acknowledgement of error by large numbers of CPA members as evidenced in membership meetings and club discussions, should serve as a reminder that the Communist movement has passed through crises before to emerge stronger and more unified.

Foster's statement in his article on revisionism reveals that there was intermittent resistance to Browder's policy of "unity" at any price. These attempts at reversal, such as the proposal to oppose the packing of the State Department with historical enemies of the working class, were successfully rebuffed with equal stubbornness by Browder.

There is apparent among some CPA members a sentimental, Sir Gallahad approach to the question of placing major responsibility upon Earl Browder for the un-Marxian deviation.

We cannot be too harsh in our judgment, say some club members, because we too bear responsibility. In my opinion, this is sheer breast-thumping, deliberately overlooking the "facts of life."

In the first place, leadership in the Communist movement at any time, and more so in the imperialist era, entails a responsibility to mankind that can brook no sentimentalism.

Humility before and respect for the opinions of comrades-in-arms is an uncompromising "must" overlooked by Browder when he beat down the opposition to his class collaboration theories. Browder, in my opinion, by-passed the precious heritage of Marxist thought—collective, objective deliberation and decision.

Responsibility of club members in decisions of policy made by our leadership is today unfortunately more theoretical than actual. As much as we would like to believe that deliberations of club members determine final policy in our national headquarters, the generally low level of Marxist theoretical development in our clubs precludes to this hour realization of this eventuality.

Our leadership is cognizant of this serious shortcoming and is working on an intensive program of education, state and county, part and full-time schools, etc.

In conclusion, mistakes are dangerous only when repeated or persisted in. Inasmuch as we do not intend to repeat or persist in our mistakes, I believe that our Communist movement will emerge from this discussion period stronger and unified.

Nat Yanish, Oakland

## WHAT NEXT?

By now we understand that the organization has been led into a major theoretical error in expecting that the decisive section of the bourgeoisie will collaborate with the proletariat for a long period. By now we understand that the organization has been led into a major theoretical error in renouncing its status as a political party and assuming the character of an "association"—an educational association.

The question is: what do these errors reveal about the organization that must be corrected in order for it to become the leader of the proletariat? What conditions must be created within the party to enable it to assume a truly Communist character?

In the reorganization, leaders of mass organizations (primarily unions and Negro organizations) must be brought into the leadership of the party. This must be done in the National Committee, in the State Committees, and in the County Committees. It must be done openly and frankly with the object of convincing the broadest possible groups of workers that only under socialism can their problems be solved and with the object of correctly originating and developing party policy.

This is what we should mean by the cliché "strengthening our ties with the masses," rather than meaning simply taking a sharper position on mass problems.

Conditions must be created within the party under which the leadership as well as the rank and file are thoroughly trained in basic theory and are encouraged to do original theoretical thinking, discussion, and publication. It is not sufficient for a leader of the party to be adept only at the comprehension and exposition of an established position. It is now painfully obvious that our past original theoretical thinking has been done by two or three top people and that the rest of the organization, leadership and rank and file, have only "explained" a position.

The "neighborhood club" must be abandoned as the party unit for the workers. Experience has shown that the neighborhood club is an unnatural structure for efficient party work for people whose lives are primarily related to their jobs in industry. They should be in units based on their factory or industry since their social, economic, and, in most

## Desires Greater Clarity

I have read all of the material carefully, but have not had time for the thorough study I would like to give it due to my limited knowledge of Marxism.

However, it seems clear to me that since the resolution implies that the change of organization was a mistake and was not necessary to the recent elections, it should also, according to my understanding of Communist policy, state clearly the correction that needs be made.

I agree with Mr. Browder that the question is definitely there but is sort of left dangling.

If it has been proven wrong to change from party to political association, then it should be changed back immediately.

Personally, I feel that it—the change—was necessary to the unity which elected FDR and I believe our voting weight can only be thrown unitedly by the organization remaining a political association at least for the next several elections.

The mistake of opportunism and revisionist thinking as applied to the effectiveness of the PA's leadership seems rather vague. They should be clearly stated and the method of correction clearly proposed.

I noticed in some of Mr. Browder's recent writings the rosy picture of full employment and higher living standards, but understood it as the long view of what is truly possible in our time.

Heretofore, my reading of current Communist literature seemed to always deal with the "right now."

I believe that the resolution should be changed and enlarged to show clearly the reasons for the change from that of the party to political association. We can not change back to party only to revert to political association for next critical elections. Now that the change has been made, it would seem to me that we should all busy ourselves with proving it right.

I. M., San Diego

cases, their political activities, are necessarily related to their jobs.

Party discipline, responsibility, and self-criticism should be resumed. Particularly self-criticism on an individual and group basis. There should be reflection and discussion in the groups on the activities of each individual. Such activities should be reorganized in line with the general reorganization.

H. M.

# DISCUSSIONS AND OUR PRACTICAL WORK

It seems to me that the question of self-criticism in regard to our organization's policies and activities may take considerable time. Our errors appear to be the result of a long accumulation of mistakes going back over an extended period of time. The fact that our movement let itself be diverted into an opportunistic policy of class collaboration, I now believe, is a result of a gradual moving away from the principles of real democracy—democratic centralism—on which our movement was founded. This permitted the adoption of a policy which, I believe, a large part of our membership never fully accepted in all its implications and were not fundamentally convinced of.

But even while our discussions continue, it seems to me that we must not overlook the necessity of immediate practical action on many pressing issues now before us. The time to begin to take action is now.

I belong to the Fillmore Club which has recruited a great many new members into the Communist movement during the last couple years, primarily Negro workers. While we have been very successful in bringing them into membership in our club, we have been far from successful, however, in bringing them into activity even to the extent of attendance at meetings. Only a very small percentage have become members of committees or taken any kind of leadership in the club. The overwhelming majority have not and do not attend our meetings or participate in our activities, such as they have been. New members, if they come around at all, come to meetings rarely.

Our active members, on numerous occasions, have tried to analyze the reasons for our failure to involve the membership of our club into activity and we laid it primarily to the fact that members were working long hours, were night workers, housewives with small children, etc., and therefore not able to participate actively. While it is certainly true that this was so to a certain extent, it does not seem to me possible that it is the full explanation why our members, old members as well as new, stayed away in droves. Another explanation must be sought.

I believe that it is in our incorrect policy and the character of our activities that we must search for an answer. During the last several months we have had innumerable club meetings on the subject of world cooperation, a subject certainly of vital concern to all, but in my opinion not to the virtual exclusion of almost everything else. Our eyes have been turned primarily to the international situation, while pressing problems of immediate and intimate concern to our membership, our community, the working class, were scarcely touched upon, if at all. I can think of at least one important community issue during recent months where action was called for and is still called for and the subject was never even discussed in our club meetings or club executive meetings. The question of postwar jobs for all, adequate social legislation such as the Murray-Wagner-Dingell bill, even the FEPC bill, have been very cursorily dealt with, if that.

In our reliance on the establishment of a world security organization which was to contribute in large part to the solution of domestic problems, we have almost completely neglected issues of paramount importance, certainly we have taken no action on them. Even our discussions of the international situation, exhaustive as they were, resulted in no action.

Is it any wonder that those who joined our movement in the expectation that the Communists had a program of action, finding no program except looking to big business (the enlightened sections of big business) to do the job for us, protested with their feet by staying away from our meetings?

New members who join our organization are not full-fledged Communists overnight. They become such through activity and education. We, I am afraid, gave them neither.

I do not say we didn't try. We had a discussion group in which some small part of our membership discussed questions they felt were near to them, but the discussions did not result in action, either there or anywhere else in the club, as far as I can see. How could they, when our organization was bound by an incorrect policy which made a virtue of inaction?

We fumbled around trying to find the organizational key to the problem, knowing something was wrong, not realizing the policy was wrong in the

first place, seeing only the results without understanding the cause. Perhaps there were those who had an idea what was wrong. I think there were. But they did not feel free to come out with it.

I feel now that, while continuing our discussions to learn what was the root-cause of our paralysis, we must go ahead immediately with a practical program—a program which will mobilize our membership and our community in support of vital issues that confront us. Reaction is going ahead with its program of mass layoffs, attacks on the unions, against the FEPC and the anti-poll tax bill. The reactionaries are doing everything in their power to stir up anti-Soviet feeling and to bring about a negotiated peace with Japan in order to use that country as a base against the rising democratic movement in China and to begin a third world war, directed this time against their real enemy—the Soviet Union and the working class and their allies of the entire world.

We can stop the drive of reaction. We have many factors in our favor—the strongest labor movement this country has ever known, a greater unity between the working class and all democratically-minded sections of the nation, the democratic and liberation movements in Europe and the world. But we can not afford to lose time, the longer we take to act, the more time we give reaction to put something over on the American people.

Our national resolution on the present situation and its tasks offers a very concrete program on which, while continuing our discussion, we can immediately take action. For example, we can start a campaign on the question of postwar employment and security. There are plenty of issues that require action. We do not need to wait until we conclude our discussion, waking up to find out that enemies have taken advantage of them to alienate us from the community and our own members.

We can begin now with an educational campaign based on aspects of the national resolution. There can be forums, leaflets for mass distribution, special discussion groups, speakers to go out into the community, these and/or many other forms exist. We will not be able to burst forth full-fledged in a rounded-out campaign, but we can and should make the start now without further delay. So I think.

Frances Stapp, San Francisco

## DEFEAT OF FASCIST-MILITARIST JAPAN OUR FIRST TASK

In the current discussions carried on by our members, devoted as it is to self-criticism and criticism of our functionaries and past policies, there is a risk that our attentions may be diverted from all important political tasks as stated in Part I, Section 4 of the draft-resolution. We must keep in mind before all else the first slogan: "Defeat Fascist Militarist Japan." Indeed all the tasks outlined in the resolution require our utmost attention. This we must give to them as good Americans and good Communists before any other considerations.

The overdue criticisms which we are at this time applying to ourselves, our leaders and our policies, will be healthful for our organization only if we dig out and destroy the roots from which our present difficulties grew.

I respectfully suggest to the members at large that the main roots of our troubles are to be found in our wrong application of the principle of democratic-centralism, which when properly applied—"the minority must submit to the majority, the various organs must submit to the center, and the lower organs to the higher" (history of the CPSU). This presupposes the existence of ways and means by which the membership may make their voices heard by the National Board (center) where our policies originate. At present there is no such ways and means. The gulf that now separates the National Board from the membership is theoretically bridged by, first, the Branch, County, State and finally the National Committees, the National Board being of course, part of the last named. On the State Committees there are usually one or more members of the National Committee, but even so, the National Board is so far removed from the mass of the membership as to be actually out of touch. This remoteness, if I am correct, has created a condition where the members, because most of the policies have been correct until recently, have come to look upon the National Board as infallible, to receive its directives as laws from

some Olympus without subjecting them to Marxist scrutiny and has begot an attitude on the part of our members, toward their ideological leaders, resembling the adoration reserved for saints and prophets by religious devotees. Our unscientific, anti-critical attitude in this respect has alienated many class conscious militant workers who agreed with our line and objectives, but because of their traditions of free speech and freedom of criticism, were unable to stomach our saccharine manner toward everything pertaining to our leaders. On the other hand the separation of the members from the leaders, who were constantly subjected to our hero worship, produced the inevitable result—that it did not happen before proves great strength of character. The National Board—excepting Comrade Foster—headed by our National Secretary (now president) marched into the ivory tower, the membership had built for it, and closed the door. Isolated from the toiling masses, they gradually forgot their Marxist theory. Their world view, in time, changed from dialectic to pragmatic, and opportunism replaced principle until it came about that Earl Browder would be accepted by the National Board—except Foster—and was foisted on the membership as the prophet of the postwar world who could even order the membership to abandon their ideology—the heart and mind of communism—which Browder himself has used so valiantly in the past in the interests of the working class, and persuaded us to lend our Marxist Socialist organization for the task of "helping make capitalism work."

How else can we explain that the National Board (always excepting Foster) could be brought to the point of consenting to the complete inversion of the Marxist-Leninist theory thereby emptying it of its entire revolutionary content?

How can we otherwise explain the utter contempt for the views of the membership displayed by the Board, some 18 months ago, at the time of submitting Browder's program to us for our suffering, at which time it suppressed the knowledge that the most able Marxist in America, William Z.

Foster, disagreed with the postwar perspectives of the program? Had we, the membership had that information we might not today be pouring ashes on our heads in full view of the workers of the entire world.

With a view of preventing the recurrence of such a tragic state of affairs in the future, without doing violence to the system of democratic centralism, I respectfully submit the following proposals to the membership at large:

While retaining our organizational structure common to and necessary for the functioning of Communist organizations everywhere, i.e., a **cadre of leaders equipped with Marxist theory, free from all occupation except party work, and maintaining continuity**; such cadres must continue to be at the core of all our higher committees. I suggest that we broaden and strengthen our committees, especially our National Board, by adding to it a certain percentage of trade union members recognized by their fellow workers as leaders. These supplementary members be elected for terms not to exceed (2) two years after which period they return to industry and others of like qualifications take their places.

This would continually bring new people to the National Board with new ideas born of contact with changing conditions in a changing world. They would be a belt line from the members to the leadership. In this way a greater number of theoretical leaders would be matured to take the place of old ones on retirement. Last but not least this would do much to prevent bureaucratic tendencies in the future.

I suggest that our organization publish a monthly bulletin devoted exclusively to the views, comments and constructive criticisms of the membership. **The Editorial Board to be elected from members outside the National Committee.**

Lastly, I suggest a study course devoted to Communist theory, using as text books the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, be immediately instituted throughout the entire organization.

Harold Allinger, San Francisco