

Mass Work Withered in Bureaucratic Soil

The membership in this pre-convention discussion is examining the revisionist line of Marxism which we have pursued, as well as the organizational forms and methods of work which flowed from incorrect policies. This is the reason why our clubs are discussing the problems of leadership as they are related to the basic issues. The discussion has already indicated what our membership expects: first, that a sharp struggle will be waged against revisionism, placing our organization once again on the correct path of Marxism, as outlined in the draft resolution; second, that we will develop a leadership which will put these policies into effect; third, that we will eliminate all evidence of bureaucratic growth which have led to a condition where fundamental changes in our program could be made without the membership having an opportunity to express itself.

We said that our organization was based on democratic centralism, but in practice it was lacking. We developed centralization without democratic methods. If democratic centralism is to be preserved, then the membership must have a voice in formulating the basic policies of our organization. It must be able to review them in periods prior to conventions, as well as have the opportunity of expressing its opinions on these issues.

This incorrect method of work did

not start 18 months ago. It has been creeping upon us for quite some time. As a matter of fact, an atmosphere was created where bureaucratic methods could be accentuated during the past period.

The bureaucratic methods which existed nationally became the pattern for the district, and as we now observe, for our whole organization. This is why the practice of self-criticism and criticism, which is basic to a Communist organization, has for all practical purposes vanished. Rather than discussing issues and reaching an agreement, even if sharp discussions were necessary, we tried to solve every problem by compromise. And today, we observe only the beginning of self-criticism. I admit it is difficult for me to analyze my work self-critically because this method has been out of use for so long a time. However, by learning to use this weapon once again, we are creating the condition for overcoming the methods and practices which have done such harm to our organization.

Let me deal more specifically with the practices with which I am most concerned. Problems of organization have been discussed and acted upon primarily with the aim of expediency. Organizational directives became the concern of one individual, in this instance myself. To every problem, we sought the immediate organizational form, ignoring the opinions of others, in order to find

a "speedy solution." Let me cite some concrete examples. The 1944 recruiting drive was very successful, especially in recruiting among the Negro people. About 40 percent of our total recruits were Negroes. Yet, at the end of the year, when we enrolled our membership, the largest loss was among the Negro members. Where did we seek the answer? We sought it in organizational forms alone. We devoted our energies to organizing our active comrades as dues collectors. The energy of these active members was directed into the narrow channel of finding an organizational solution. Nevertheless, the problem remained unsolved.

Why? Our basic policy did not tend to mobilize the Negro masses to struggle for their demands which were aggravated while the war against fascism was being fought. The club meeting was not the center where these demands were discussed and a program developed to fight for them. Here is where we could have found the reason for lack of attendance at meetings and for the losses of membership during the period of enrollment. But during the enrollment, my main energies were devoted towards narrow mobilization to visit the members without finding the basic solution without which this problem could not be solved.

In further examining our organi-

zational work, for which I bear a major share of responsibility, we find an elimination of the use of committees and collective work to hammer out a program. Of course, all these activities were not confined to one individual—this was not possible. But by eliminating committees and collective work, a situation was created where each person worked as an individual with the district secretary responsible for "checking up." Control of decisions is important, and this requires check-up. But to be effective, it can come only as a result of collective work by committees where conclusions are reached by an exchange of opinion, and each individual is then held responsible for a specific task assigned to him.

Let me cite another instance. In Cook County (Chicago) sections were eliminated, and a Cook County Council with representatives from every club was established. The County Council elected an executive committee. Since we did not find adequate methods for it to function, I recommended that it be abolished, in order to create direct contact between the district leadership and the members of the County Council.

What was the result? The section committees, or the County executives were forms in which a large circle of members participated in the leadership of the organization. There our policies were discussed

and programs of action formulated. It gave the opportunity for numerous Communists to participate in the leadership. With its elimination, we did not create a stronger tie between the district leadership and membership. On the contrary, it left a gap.

Furthermore, these committees were training grounds for developing and promoting new cadres into the leadership, as well as broadening the collective leadership comprising the Chicago organization.

Another problem is the need for drawing in and developing proletarian cadres. We have in our ranks many members with strong connections in the shops and trade unions. But the full contribution of these people is not felt by us. In establishing community organizations, their needs were ignored, and no special attention given them. There cannot be any serious consideration of a policy for developing new cadres for our organization without special attention to those whose mass connections serve as the base for our organization.

I have dealt with only a few phases of our organizational work. It will require much more thorough discussion by our clubs and in the press, in order to insure the best methods of improving our organization and eliminating the bureaucratic methods which have been so harmful to our Communist organization. PHILIP BART, Illinois.

Browder's Speech

(Continued from Page 3)

I must finish with some proposals on the resolution:

(1) The resolution must be referred back to committee to be completely rewritten. The Committee should be guided in re-drafting by the following points:

(a) Our policy since 1942 has been basically correct, has proved itself so in life, and has brought victories and advances in all fields to the nation and to the working class, including the matter from the change from Party to Association.

(b) We therefore reject the charge that our policy has been based upon or has included any revision of Marxism.

(c) The basic analysis of the relation of world forces contained in my speech of June 2 must be included in the resolution.

(d) The program of action for the next period must be solidly based upon the rapid and complete defeat of Japan, while simultaneously carrying forward the tasks of reconversion to a peacetime economy and full employment, and must include a rounded-out series of proposals for realizing the peace-time market, both foreign and domestic, equal in volume to the war market.

(e) There must be organized a campaign of education from top to bottom of the Association in the fundamentals of Marxism and its application to current world and national problems, combatting the simple opportunistic vulgarizations of our correct policy and eliminating them, and especially to stop the influx of Trotskyism and semi-Trotskyism which is the most corroding and destructive form of degeneration of Marxism—which is the main danger before the Communist Political Association at this time.

(2) The functioning leadership of the Association, in the Board, must be composed of members of the Association and National Committee who in their majority have not succumbed to the onslaught of ideas and fallen into panic before them in the course of the current political discussion.

Strengthen Labor-Farmer Coalition

By LEM HARRIS

The Danlos article and the National Board Resolution have highlighted the serious degree to which we had drifted away from the policy which best serves the interests of the working class. The reexamination of our policies appears to have proved that in fact, if not in so many words, we urged labor to subordinate its better judgment and instincts to the will of the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, as a natural concomitant of this policy, we were tending to lose our own reason for existence and thus were liquidating ourselves.

The aim of the correction of our policy is to swing us back into a position of effective leadership of the working class and its allies. But in making the corrections, let us not be like the inexperienced car driver who, when he sees that he is veering too close to the right ditch, gives the steering wheel a sharp turn which swerves him over into the left lane all set for a head-on crash. Rather, let us develop the experienced driver's technique of feeling the need for corrections early in the game and keeping the car steadily in its lane. Such drivers know best how to take the turns, left or right, without undue commotion.

Similarly, now as we correct our course, I feel that there are signs of leftism. The effect of our amended resolution, taken as a whole, accents and enlarges upon the forces of reaction and seems to skim over the new factors which are favorable to progress. The power and hostility of the bourgeoisie is dwelt upon; the potential strength of labor and its allies is scarcely more than mentioned.

It might be argued that this resolution, which aims to correct past errors, must enlarge on the class hostility of the bourgeoisie. This can't be denied, nor should any of the sections which describe the objectives of reaction be eliminated. But the resolution is more than a correction; it is a statement of policy. It is the rounded-out statement of "the present situation and the next tasks." As it stands, it seems to me to be unbalanced.

To give the full picture, the great possibilities for advance must be presented more fully. In a general way, the resolution does state the possibilities for defeating reaction. Thus, in the opening paragraph the resolution states:

"... great possibilities have

been opened up for the peoples to realize a long-term peace, to make new democratic advances and social program."

And in another part of the resolution:

"The anti-fascist and democratic forces of our nation can become strong enough, being the overwhelming majority of our people, to check and defeat imperialist reaction and to realize the great objectives of this program of action."

Enlarging and implementing these two sections would present a more balanced view.

Without such balancing, one gets the impression that the fine program is advanced in a somewhat hopeless manner, without serious expectation that it will be realized. This impression is further strengthened by a passage in the paragraph immediately following the program, which reads:

"It (the program) will help create the conditions and guarantees for a stable peace and for a larger measure of economic security and democratic liberties for the masses of the people."

This, in my view, is the wrong tone for inspiring the working class

and its allies to battle determinedly for the announced postwar objectives. It sounds like battling for a lost cause. Reaction is no more invincible than was Hitler's Wehrmacht. The resolution is too much like a storm warning, a call to take cover, rather than a call to struggle, a call to do battle against an intransigent enemy.

Security and peace, the main objectives of our program, are the demands which lie closest to the hearts of the working class. This also extends to farmers and most of the non-proletarian sections of the population. It is not enough to advance the slogan; we must inspire the great forces on our side with the hope of victory. When we do this, we speak the language of the mass of the people.

The resolution makes too little reference to the 25,000,000 people who live on farms in America. Some elaboration of the brief farm plank in the program is needed to cover the need for continued governmental intervention to maintain price controls, raise rural standards of education and health, and measures to modernize the homes and field

operations of America's farms.

But, in addition to the program, the resolution should emphasize the burning need for a cordial farm and labor relationship. The threat against labor's gains by reaction's offensive should drive labor to ally itself with the similarly endangered farm population.

Farmers have bitter memories of the chronic depression that engulfed them in 1920 and blighted their lives for nearly 20 years thereafter. Their deepest concern now is whether the storms of low prices for farm products versus high prices for all they buy will once more start operating. Even the most conservative farmers fear the removal of government marketing controls and benefits because they know this would give food processors a free hand to move in and increase their spread of profit between farmer and consumer.

In short, the resolution should underline that in order for farmers to protect their own interests and in order to bring labor's coalition up to full strength there must be concerted efforts to bring about the alliance of farm and labor organizations. The fact that at present but a small portion of organized labor and farmers have such understanding is a major weakness. We are much like the inexperienced chess player who, toward the climax of the game, finds that several of his major pieces are blocked off and cannot be used to counter the enemy's offensive.

If such a coalition is not built, the very opposite may take place. Farm groups may be swayed by the siren song of reaction, whose unvarying tune is that labor has profited by the war and that unions are rackets. Through the medium of the farm papers, headed by *Pew's Farm Journal*, this reactionary poison finds its way out along the rural routes of the nation. Evidence of its effect is to be seen in the reactionary rural vote of recent elections.

Reaction urges farmers to act counter to their own real interests. Labor's progressive coalition champions farm security and prosperity. The weight of truth and self-interest should swing farmers into labor's coalition. But thus far reaction has been given virtually free and unobstructed right of way in the rural communities. This is a prime weakness as we face the inevitable sharp struggles of the postwar period.

Wofsy Hits Scurrilous Letters

By ISADORE WOFSEY

My attention has been called to the fact that a letter signed by a so-called "Wofsy Vindication Committee" is being mailed to a number of Connecticut members of the CPA.

In this, the third such letter, the CPA nationally and in the State is being attacked in a scurrilous manner.

Just as in the two previous letters, the aim in this letter is quite clear. It is to utilize the present moment of discussion in order to sow confusion, spread disruption, to weaken and destroy the party. The entire fraud is clearly evident in the fact that the letters attempt to conceal their destructive purpose by associating me first with Comrade Browder (in earlier letters) and now with Comrade Foster. Obviously, this is the work of provocateurs, agents of the enemy, inside or outside our ranks. To seek out these provocateurs, to expose them, to repudiate with disgust their machinations is the duty of every loyal and decent person in and around the party.

This attempt at disruption takes place now when the membership of the CPA is in the midst of a most serious discussion on policy and leadership in preparation for the State and national conventions. I am confident that the Connecticut membership is rallying around the Resolution of the National Committee and rejects the revisionism which Comrade Browder champions.

Discussing our errors in the full light of day through the regular channels of our organization and press, this is the method by which we Communists improve our work. In applying this Leninist method we reject and must stamp out undercover distortion and anonymous sniping which are the earmarks of fifth column activity against our party.

The Connecticut CPA will, I am sure, proceed unitedly to track down and expose the provocateurs. This will be a worthy contribution to the revitalization and strengthening now taking place in our American Communist movement. ISADORE WOFSEY.