

SPARK

A MARXIST MONTHLY

Published by the P.R. Club, Communist Party (Expelled)
P.O. Box 34, Tremont Station, N.Y. 57, N.Y.

Vol. II, No. 5

Price: 15¢

May 1948

Editorial Board: Louis Julia, I. Jacob, Martha Samuel

THE FIGHT AGAINST OPPORTUNISM IN BROOKLYN

SPARK is devoting this issue to the presentation of the documents in the expulsion of Elwood (Woody) Griest from the Plaza Club, Communist Party in Brooklyn on Wed., May 19, 1948. SPARK is not presenting this merely as more proof of the infamy of the leaders of the CPUSA (although that too is important as long as that infamy remains unbelievable to the CP membership as a whole), but for other reasons which we mention briefly to emphasize some of the valuable material to follow.

The ever increasing frenzy of the National Committee is indicated by the "new look" in Comrade Griest's expulsion. In this case, the leadership (cautiously through the Section Organizer--with the higher dignitaries only "observing" in the manner of talent scouts) did not, as is usual, accuse Comrade Griest of Trotskyism, anti-Negro, anti-Semitic sentiments, or of connections with renegades. They expelled him simply--on their own admission--on the basis of a statement of criticism requested of him by the leadership. This bad sense can only reflect the fact that the Party "divine rightists" are more and more confronted by a rank and file criticism which they cannot countenance--a pregnant thought in the light of the sometimes approaching, sometimes receding Convention. Note the new technique of admitting anything and everything--but only as negligible errors. The game the CPUSA has made of Marxism, self-criticism, of democratic centralism emerges simply and clearly in these dire Dennis days as: to err is human (and the privilege of the leadership); to forgive divine (and the privilege of the membership).

The principled position and correct attitude of Comrade Griest mirrors his continued efforts to remain in the CPUSA but never at the expense of misleading his less aware comrades by capitulating to opportunism. It is understandable that the Party feared Griest who for over a decade has actively tangled with opportunism. We refer the reader to SPARK's footnote in the following pages which gives a slight indication of Griest's record.

This Comrade's conduct as a Communist and union organizer, as a vigilant and responsible CP member, his study of the actions of the best Communist Parties in the world as a guide to his own thinking and action are a model for the many comrades who will similarly face the heat in the immediate period ahead. Most important is his recognition of the fact that in the U. S. of 1948 being a Communist is not a formality defined by membership in a social-democratic "C.P.", but rather by a principled responsibility and understanding of the work of American Communists today--the building of a real CP worthy of the respect and support of the American working class.

I

/The following statement was written in answer to the request by the Boro Hall Section leadership that Comrade Greist state his criticism of the C.P. leadership./

Boro Hall Section
Attention Jack Fine, Organizer

April 12, 1948

Dear Comrades:

I promised you a statement of what in my opinion have been some of the more important errors into which our Party leadership has fallen during the recent period. My basic criticism is that in the instances cited, I believe that opportunism and bureaucracy have been substituted for Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism. I have tried to document my view with references from Marxist literature.

I am of course by no means the only Comrade who has developed doubts with regard to our Party's course. The National Committee has set July 30, 1948* as the opening date for our National Convention. In the interests of a strong, truly Bolshevik Party I sincerely trust, that in the pre-Convention period, the issues which I raise may be the subject of full and truly democratic discussion in the Clubs and higher Party bodies. I further hope that, pursuant to the principle of democratic centralism, the delegates elected and the Conventions decisions taken will reflect the prevailing opinions of the membership as a result of these discussions.

I must of course assume that the Party leadership is wholly sincere in its estimation that "we made these mistakes, and vacillated on a number of questions, because our Party did not always carry forward adequately the self-criticism and self-correction developed prior to and during our (1945) Convention so as to examine and improve all phases of our mass work, especially in developing an effective political struggle against opportunism." (Dennis' Report to the February Plenum, PA, March 1948, p.247.)

I feel confident, therefore, that my criticisms, despite their severity, will be welcomed and accepted on their merits as a contribution to the struggle against opportunism within our Party, a fight which must be carried on continuously as a part of the class struggle.

On November 30, 1946 at its Atlantic City Convention, the CIO approved a resolution stating that the "delegates resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party or other political parties and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the CIO. This Convention serves notice that it will not tolerate such interference".

This resolution was unanimously supported by delegates who were Party

* Now postponed to August 3-6, 1948.

members. CP members on the CIO Policy Committee helped draft it. Ben Gold supported it in the name of the CP on the Convention floor, and all this was done with the prior knowledge and consent of CP Labor Secretary Williamson, and was later approved by the National Committee. The D.W. greeted this development as a great labor Victory; "unity" had been preserved. Members who questioned it were sharply rebuked.

The adoption of this resolution, and particularly the complicity of our Party in its adoption, touched off a long train of paralyzing defeats for the Progressive forces in the labor movement. I am prepared to document this in considerable detail, but I assume that by now the facts are too well known to be questioned. Suffice to say that the voice of the Progressives has been largely silenced in most CIO unions, nearly all the Left unions have swung sharply to the right, and the "right" unions farther to the right. Many Progressives have been replaced by compromisers or out-and-out traitors to the working class. And most of the Progressives who have retained their jobs have given up all semblance of a program other than an attempt to gain back some small part of the loss in real wages caused by inflation.

I had a shocking confirmation of this regression last summer. I was a UOPWA organizer before and during the Brooklyn Trust Strike. After all Merrill had resigned, and I assumed that his opportunist line, based logically enough on the Atlantic City resolution, had gone with him. I suggested at one point (it was obvious that we couldn't "win" the strike,) that we use the struggle to try to raise the level of political understanding of the workers. The Union executive to whom I spoke, a well-known CP member, was shocked at the thought of such a thing. "That's all Brooklyn Trust needs to label it a political strike and increase the police terror", I was told. Persisting, I quoted Lenin on the importance, the necessity, of workers learning the political facts of life through their own struggles. "But," retorted the UOPWA official, this CP member, "Lenin was never a trade-unionist." True enough to be sure if "trade-unionism" is used as a synonym for economism. But mind you this "Comrade" was arguing for economism and challenging Lenin's competence in trade-union affairs.

But the rotten effects of the resolution didn't stop with the internal disintegration of the unions. In November 1946 the 80th Congress had just been elected. The reactionary tools of the imperialists were looking around for the most effective tactics to hog-tie and destroy the unions in preparing their hoped-for attack on the Soviet Union.

Our Party chose this precise moment to renounce its vanguard role, to surrender without a struggle its right to give ideological, political, and tactical leadership to the workers in the unions. In doing so it also conceded conversely that trade unions have no right to engage in politics. Joyfully the Tafts and Hartleys took their cue. The anti-Communist and anti-political expenditure provisions of the Taft-Hartley Law are merely a quite moderate extension of the very positions which the CIO with the CP in fullest accord had taken a few months earlier at Atlantic City.

No wonder the workers were confused. No wonder that it has since proven impossible (as in the Penna. by-election, etc.) to mobilize them

effectively for a fight to repeal the Act. One moment we tell the workers we have no right to try to influence their political views, and the next we are disappointed as all hell when they refuse to accept our political leadership. That's how opportunism pays off.

The resolution was acclaimed as a "fair compromise" by our press. Let's see just how "fair" it was. While it purported to put the CP and the Republicrat identical twins on an equal basis, it did nothing of the sort. First it names the CP, a minority party by name, and then, merely to give lipservice to the idea of impartiality, speaks of "other parties." It has of course been used solely against the CP; the political ideas of "other parties" are regarded as normal and unquestionable. The Republican and Democratic Parties are bought, paid for and controlled by the big industrialists and bankers. They are run by the stooges and in the interests of the capitalist class. Their function is to maintain and exercise political, and if need be physical control over the working class and its allies for the greater profits of the capitalists. These parties have unlimited resources at their command and all the channels of public information and propaganda, habitually denied the Communists, are constantly at their disposal. Moreover most Americans are already Republicans or Democrats. They have been indoctrinated with capitalist ideology from childhood. It is we not they who have the selling job to do. And so it is they not we who can well afford to rest their case behind a hands-off "no interference" bar.

As opposed to the old parties the CP is the party of the working class; the leader and defender of the masses. It has no purpose, no reason for being except to strengthen, to lead and fight for the workers, to educate, indoctrinate and increase the militancy and political understanding of the workers to the end that they will defeat and overthrow the imperialists and take state power with a Worker's and poor Farmers' Government which will build socialism.

The CIO unions are (or more exactly they should be) workers' organizations, which (except for their more limited objectives pending further education of the workers) have the same purpose as our own. And yet this miserable resolution, which the CP approved and helped to pass, denies the right of our Party of the workers equally with the capitalist parties who want to enslave them, to exert political influence in the unions. The excuse offered for this incredible betrayal was "unity." To so much as have voted "No" would have split the CIO, we were warned. No proof was ever offered, nor could it be, that such was the case. The actual consequences of surrender were as indicated above, not unity but greater disunity and a tremendous acceleration of the splitting tactics of the ACTUers and the Trotskyites who have been enabled to take over bodily or in considerable part key unions like UAW, NNU, NYNG and all too many others.

Because the "unity" excuse has since become the cover-up for a whole series of additional capitulations to the class enemy with regard to the UN veto, the Marshall Plan, the five cent fare, etc., it is worth while to examine this argument in some detail. All the great Marxists Writers have called for unity: "Workers of the world unite." But all of them from Marx to Stalin, Tito, Anna Pauker and Togliatti, have coupled this demand for unity with the warning that it must be a principled unity, unity in the workers' interest and in opposition to that of the capitalists.

It is quite apparent that in unprincipled deals to support the anti-Soviet friend of the Polish fascists, Mead; the partner in one of the largest monopoly-capitalist banking firms, Lehman; and the red-baiting, Soviet hating, labor faker, O'Dwyer our leaders have completely ignored this basic condition for workingclass unity. The same applies to our efforts to secure organic unity with the AF of L by top-level agreement, and to our incestuous wooing of the right-wing (mis-called centrist) leadership of the CIO long after the treason of Murray, Carey & Co. was plainly apparent to the workers.

Unity of such a character is actually unity with the imperialists and their labor stooges, and a knife in the back of the workers.

On the subject of false unity, Engels had this to say: "One must not allow one-self to be misled by the cry for 'unity'. Those who have this word most often on their lips are those who sow the most dissention, just as at present (those) who have provoked all the splits scream for nothing so much as for unity. (Engels might well have been writing of the Atlantic City resolution and its aftermath.) E.G.) These unity fanatics are either people of very limited intelligence who want to stir everything up together into one nondescript brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again in much more acute opposition because they are now all together in one pot -- or else they are the people who consciously or unconsciously -- want to adulterate the movement. For this reason the greatest sectarians (my emphasis E.G.) and the biggest brawlers and rogues are at certain moments the loudest shouters for unity. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and been more treacherous than the unity shouters. (My emphasis E.G.) (Letter to Bebel, June 20, 1873, Selected Correspondence).

And again Engels writes (Ibid): "Old Hegel has already said: 'A Party proves itself by the fact that it splits and can stand the split.' (My emphasis- E.G.) And indeed in striking contrast to the Atlantic City disaster, we proved the correctness of the Engels-Hegel thesis in the Isacson election. Once the Wallace candidacy forced us to break with our vacillating right-wing allies and to support a principled program for peace and the immediate needs of the workers, we found that for every defection we had gained ten new supporters among the masses.

Further pursuing the question of unity, in a later letter to Bebel, Oct. 28, 1882, Engels writes of the split in the French Party: "The issue is purely one of principle: Is the struggle to be conducted as a class struggle (original emphasis) of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, or is it to be permitted that in good opportunist style the class character of the movement, together with the program, are everywhere to be dropped where there is a chance of winning more votes, more adherents, by this means?"

Lenin too was emphatic in declaring that a powerful working-class movement cannot be forged except on the basis of agreement on sound Marxist ideology: "The proletariat can become and will inevitably become an invincible force only when its ideological unity round the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organization which unites millions of toilers in the army of the working class." (ONE STEP FORWARD; TWO STEPS BACKWARD, Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 466)

In his report to the Seventh CI Congress Dimitroff said: "In countries where big Red and reformist trade unions exist side by side, efforts must be made to secure their amalgamation on an equal footing, on the basis of a platform of struggle against the offensive of capital and a guarantee of trade union democracy." Note the conditions of class struggle and democracy which he interposes for unity. Later in his report he spoke again of the necessity to "establish unity in the trade union movement both nationally and internationally on the basis of the class struggle and trade union democracy." (His emphasis.) Today the "offensive of capital" means red-baiting and the Marshall Plan. Thus Dimitroff specifically rules out any "unity" based on the acceptance of these tactics of the imperialists or their trade union handy-men. As for trade union democracy, it was dealt a crippling blow by the Atlantic City resolution, which denied the right of free speech in the unions to class-conscious workers.

American exceptionalism is supposedly dead and yet, usually in a new guise, I hear it preached by a surprisingly large number of well-informed Comrades who are seeking some formula to justify opportunist revision of Marxist-Leninist principles. Not space (America vs. Europe, as with Lovestone, but time is the new catalyst which, to hear them tell it, transforms the basic truths of Marx and Lenin into their opposites and makes it necessary for us in 1948 to reevaluate principles, which while sound enough in 1848 or 1917, have lost their meaning in the post-World War II period.

Strangely though, Anna Pauker still has the same old-fashioned ideas on the question of principled unity that I have quoted from Engels, Lenin and Dimitroff. In the Cominform organ, FOR A LASTING PEACE, FOR A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, Jan. 15, 1948 she writes: "Obviously the united front (in Roumania) was not, and would not be, an idyll, for we have never worshipped cooperation for the sake of cooperation, but as an agreement on a matter of principle. An incorrect conception prevailed, not only in the ranks of the Social Democratic Party, but in Communist Party, which threatened to sacrifice principles for the sake of overlooking mistakes in order not to spoil relations. Such an attitude could only be harmful. Strict adherence to principle on questions of the united front was all the more important since the Social-Democratic Party had still to get rid of its ballast of the past." I should like to commend this analysis of Comrade Pauker's to our National Committee as a frame of reference for some of our own Third Party decisions.

Marshal Tito in his speech to the Second Congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia, Sept. 27, 1947, explained the difference between the Yugoslav People's Front and less successful ones elsewhere as follows: "It constituted a powerful monolithic unity for the very reason that it did not include wavering and reactionary party leaderships." (My emphasis-E.G.) In other words as Lenin had put it, their organizational unity was based on ideological unity.

And finally on the subject of principled unity and the dangers of opportunism I will quote Palmiro Togliatti's Report to the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Italy in January of this year. He stated that: "The greatest danger threatening us during the past two years

was, and is now, the danger of opportunism. We must know where to draw the line between the policy of unity and the policy of capitulation; and under no circumstances whatsoever can the Party decline to defend its program and its aims. (My emphasis.-E.G.)

Perhaps it was just as well that Max Weiss was unable to attend the Italian Party Congress. I can well imagine that what Comrade Togliatti and others might have told him about the unprincipled "unity" deals of our Party, not only on the Atlantic City resolution, but on the Marshall Plan, the fare hike, failure to support the French and Italian strikes and a host of other cases would have made the ears of every right-thinking Party member burn with shame; that is if they were ever reported back. As a matter of fact it seemed to me not a little strange that the State Department's failure to issue Weiss a passport (applied for about a month earlier) was never mentioned in the DW, and apparently not ever protested, until the Congress was in session. Even if the publicity had prodded the State Department into action (as happened in Magil's case) it was too late then for Weiss to have attended. Perhaps it was planned that way.

As I have pointed out, the false and utterly opportunist "unity" (with the reactionaries) dodge, once perfected at Atlantic City, has been used to justify one retreat after another. It was used at the N.Y. State CIO Convention in Sept. 1947 when the CP delegates voted to condemn the "the excessive use of the veto power" by the Soviet Union and to amend the UN Charter to prevent it. I do not propose to defend the Soviet Union to CPUSA, so I will merely state that the vote of these Comrades was anti-Soviet Union, anti-peace, anti-United Nations, since the UN of course could not survive such an amendment, and finally anti-Communist. This action was defended in the DW by members of the National Board.

It (the fake unity argument) was used at the National CIO Convention at Boston. And the CP delegates voted for an ambiguous resolution that, in the context of Marshall's speech to the delegates and the ovation which they gave him, everyone knew was actually in support of the Marshall Plan. And these Comrades voted for it unanimously. It was pure hypocrisy for them to try later to squirm out of their responsibility, on the ground that the resolution spoke of aid without political strings. The real purposes of the Marshall Plan were already well-known. They had been fully exposed by Molotov when the Soviet Union withdrew from the original Paris Conference. Is it too much to expect the CPUSA to learn that Molotov does not talk through his hat? Also congressional and administration leaders including Truman had stated in so many words that the latter would not propose, nor the former enact into law any European Aid Plan except one which would serve (they hope) to contain Communism. Again we have unity with the imperialists and their agents in the CIO at the expense of unity with the Soviet Union and the workers of Europe and the world. Foster admits in the DW that it was wrong, but Williamson gave the orders.

The same thing happened with variations at other CIO state conventions. In California Bridges had enough forces to elect his own slate of officers, but the Party members voted solidly for the Marshall Plan just the same. In New Jersey, if my information is correct, (Comrade Fine challenged this, and while I think I am right, I haven't been able to

verify it yet) a prominent Party member from District 4, introduced the resolution in support of the MP, and the Convention voted that no candidate opposing the MP could have CIO support in the elections. When despite this appeasement (or more likely because of it) the rightwing majority refused to elect Jim McLeish, the CP members walked out in high dudgeon. Here at last was a matter of "principle" that they would fight for.

The Marshall Plan is the most critical issue in the world today. Along with the atom bomb, it is the main reliance of American imperialism in its offensive to enslave Europe and the world. It was primarily to coordinate the fight against the MP that the Cominform was organized. Meanwhile CPUSA, the Party of the aggressor nation, not only refused to affiliate, but actually thumbs its nose at the Nine Party Information Bureau through the unanimous vote of its top union leaders at CIO Conventions all over the country in favor of the Marshall Plan for aggression.

~~Indeed the failure~~ of the CP to oppose the MP in fact, despite lip-service in the DW was quickly capitalized on by the State Department. Phil Murray, boasting the unanimous backing of all American labor, made a speech in which he "proved" the disinterested, humanitarian, non-political character of the MP by the simple statement: "If this were a program of enslavement of free peoples we would not support it." (PM, Dec. 8, 1947.) This speech was recorded and beamed to Europe in 23 languages by the Voice of America. Thus the unanimous vote at Boston made possible an insidious and lying campaign of misrepresentation by the State Department of the true aims of the MP to confuse and divide the workers of Europe at the very moment when the Cominform was organizing the fight against American imperialist aggression. Obviously William Green could not perform this Judas function, and neither could Murray and Carey except with our consent and loyal collaboration.

If the workers of France and Italy were deceived by Murray and Carey and thus weakened in their magnificent struggles, it was precisely because they had faith in the CP leaders in the CIO and judged the MP by their acceptance of it. So instead of the boasted "unity" at Boston, the real accomplishment has been to help disrupt the trade union movement of Western Europe and to split the WFTU.

The whole performance of our Party on the Atlantic City resolution, on the UN veto resolution and on the Marshall Plan would seem to raise pertinently the question as to whether or not we do not need desperately the advice and counsel of the Communist Parties of Europe, which are also fighting American imperialism, but on the receiving end. It is one thing if we make mistakes which impair the strength of our Party and of the American working class, although we can agree that that is a matter of the most serious concern. But it is quite something else again when by our opportunist policies we persist in throwing monkey wrenches, as in the instances above noted, which interfere with the struggles that other parties are making to maintain peace and to preserve the independence of their peoples.

I do feel very strongly indeed therefore that we should, if not formally affiliate with the Cominform, at least consult with it fully and coordinate our common fight against American aggression and war-mongering. It is plain that to date this has not been done.

spark.

I believe also that it was a major error to make the shot-gun decision not to affiliate without full consultation with the membership, without the National Board so much as tipping their hats to the principles of democratic centralism. Nor am I in accord with the reason given by the Board for its action. In his report to the 9 Party Conference last September, Comrade Zhdanov stated that: "The need of consultation and voluntary coordination of the activities of the separate Parties is ripe, especially now when continued isolation may lead to the weakening of mutual understanding, and at times, even to serious errors." His words were indeed prophetic of our own experience in the months that followed. Our failure to fulfill our obligations to the working-class in connection with the Marshall Plan, U.S. veto and the French and Italian strikes testifies convincingly to the correctness of Zhdanov's analysis.

Yet in the face of this experience our reply to the Cominform's bid to us to join has been in effect: We can't associate ourselves with the strong, incorruptible Parties of Europe in our common fight against the Marshall Plan because our imperialist masters would not approve. They would (and I quote the Board's statement), "seize upon such action as a pretext for new provocations and repressions." Sure the imperialists will like us better if we don't affiliate. Like us better because they fear us less. But will they therefore be more lenient toward us or our ideas? On the contrary they will increase their provocations as the record shows. Our craven surrender on affiliation was precisely the signal for the stepped up campaign of deportation and terrorization against alien Communists and suspected Reds. That's the way appeasement works.

The reason given by the Board, and more recently confirmed by the National Committee, is actually an argument for liquidation of the Party. If we are justified in refusing to affiliate because our refusal will assuage the wrath of the bourgeoisie, think how much happier still we could make them, and how much greater security we might buy for ourselves (we hope) were we to disband the Party altogether. It is also the argument habitually advanced by company union scabs to persuade the workers that they shouldn't affiliate with say the CIO. "The boss will be nicer to you and give you a bigger raise if you don't join that red outfit," they whine. Well the workers for the most part know better. They know that militant solidarity with other workers means greater strength and greater gains. Only the Comrades of the National Committee have yet to be convinced of this basic fact. Our affiliations, alliances, slogans, our policies and tactics must be determined, neither by the anger nor the wishes of the bourgeoisie (nor of their agents in the labor movement), but by the needs and aspirations of the workers and their allies. We cannot win the masses to our standard by crawling on our bellies. This is what Marx and Engels meant when they wrote in the Communist Manifesto whose 100th Anniversary we are now celebrating: "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.... (Such a bold assertion of the Party's independent position is not only consistent with the most energetic sponsorship of a democratic, anti-war 3rd Party, but is indeed an indispensable concomitant of any successful People's Coalition, as Dimitroff plainly stated at the Seventh CI Congress.)"

The French Communist Party has recently set up classes for the systematic political education of its Central Committee. May I suggest that our National Committee might do well to follow the French example, and that the Communist Manifesto be made required reading this anniversary year. Marx' and Engels' proud and timeless rallying-cry, "Workers of the world unite," must not be made conditional to the kind permission of the American imperialists.

Since writing most of the above I have read Dennis' and Williamson's Plenum Reports in March Political Affairs and of course Dennis' earlier report in the DW. In the remainder of this critique I shall comment on these reports, particularly with reference to questions of criticism and self-criticism which they raise. It is encouraging to learn that these leading Comrades acknowledge even if somewhat grudgingly some of the appalling errors in the Party's trade union policies during the recent period, although naturally locking the stable door at this late date cannot bring back the stolen horses. Agreement with the anti-Soviet veto resolution at the NY State Convention by the "Left forces", Williamson terms "a major mistake", in a single sentence and without other comment. The Marshall Plan vote at Boston was, on more mature consideration, he thinks, an error; but there were extenuating circumstances.

Since Comrade Dennis' report indicates that the Plenum was evaluating the period since the 1945 Convention, it is significant that neither Williamson nor Dennis even mention the daddy of all the trade union boners, the red-baiting resolution at Atlantic City. At most Williamson may be said to touch on it obliquely and in generalized form when he says: "Throughout the years, at CIO Conventions and Executive Board meetings, the Left failed to assert its own initiative and fight for its own position. There was always a fear - and wrongly so - that fighting for one's own position, and registering it on major questions by vote, would break up the coalition." Even aside from this conspicuous omission, the Williamson and Dennis reports appear to me to be very inadequate as self-criticism for the following reasons:

(1) Williamson minimizes and isolates those few specific errors which he does admit (i.e., the U.N. anti-veto resolution, and the Marshall Plan votes at the National and California State Conventions - that's all) by failing to evaluate their consequences; by failing to relate them to the worsened position of the workers in this country or to the worsened relations between the trade union movement of this country on the one hand and the European workers and the Soviet Union on the other, for which these tactics are to an important degree responsible. For the most part moreover he states the admitted errors generically, as bad tendencies, but without giving specific examples, which would permit the reader to estimate their impact on the workers' struggles. Thus he admits error in bad compromises, in failure to state and fight for our own position, and too exclusive attention to top level relations in coalitions. These things are undoubtedly true, but their admission does not constitute an analysis. It is to be hoped however that we will now be spared the nauseous exhortations to unprincipled "unity" and "unity or else" with which Dennis, Foster and Bittleman have regaled us in recent years.

(2) No one could guess from Williamson's statement that these mistakes have been a major factor in demobilizing the organizational strength and militancy of the labor movement in the face of the offensive of American imperialism. Nor that as a result of the disparity between Party preaching on the one hand and Party actions in the trade unions on the other, American workers who have looked to us for leadership have become confused, and European workers have concluded not unnaturally that American trade unionists are traitors to the working class. ("Our unionists must seem like scabs to the French and Italian workers." George Morris: DW, Dec. 7, 1947, p.10.)

(3) By thus listing some but only some of the errors of trade union policy in the recent period, out of context, in a vacuum so to speak, (a strictly anti-dialectical approach which serves an anti-materialist end) Williamson succeeds in making them appear of minor importance and more or less isolated. But Dennis takes over from there. He states categorically (P.A. Mar. '48, p. 218): "No one can obscure the fact that the general political line of our Party has been and is correct", and "generally speaking there has been a correct application of the Party's line and tactics." Whatever mistakes have been made are thus mere peccadillos in the official view. Policies, now conceded to be incorrect, which have contributed to the virtual liquidation of large sections of the labor movement as instruments of the working class, are dismissed as details which in no way impugn the basic correctness of the Party line.

(4) In the final paragraphs of his report Williamson states correctly that the key to great progress in our trade union work lies in connecting the workers struggle with the building of the Third Party. But this is true only if we can avoid, both in our 3rd Party work and in our trade union activities the twin errors of tailism to the petty-bourgeoisie and failure openly to state the Party's independent position, for fear (wrongly Williamson now concedes) of disrupting "unity." However his conclusion that we "have the opportunity to make a great step forward" has an unreal and Pollyanna ring, in the absence of any recognition of the objective fact: that the trade union movement despite its numbers, has in the past two years suffered catastrophic defeats (due in no small part to bad leadership by the Vanguard Party) which has reduced its ideological and moral prestige to the level of the period before 1937.

(5) Neither Williamson nor Dennis attempts to explain how errors so plainly in contravention of Marxist-Leninist principles could have been decided upon and later approved and defended by the National Board. Lenin pointed out that revisionism is never the result of individual idiosyncrasy, but reflects rather the influence of bourgeois ideology. The members of the National Board and of the National Committee are all literate people, who have had better than an average opportunity to acquaint themselves with Marxist-Leninist theory.

(6) The errors which we have been discussing are, without exception, opportunist errors, i.e. rightist deviations from the Marxist-Leninist line. I think it is significant therefore to note that while this has been going on, Dennis, Foster, Bittleman et al have been constantly proclaiming their determination to guard against "errors either of the right or of the left". Nevertheless hundreds of comrades have been expelled as "left renegades" since Browder was unhorsed at the instance of the French Party, but none so far as I know (and at most very few) because of opportunism. If our leadership has itself succumbed to opportunism, it is of course understandable that they should be lenient with opportunists on other Party levels.

(7) In this connection it is important for us to recall that the present National Board and National Committee are the same Comrades who found it quite possible a little while back to swallow Browder's Teheran thesis of "progressive capitalism". Many or most of them a few years earlier required energetic prodding from the CI to rescue them from the Lorelei of Lovestone's American Exceptionalism. And there are also some few who exhibited their penchant for right revisionism under Gitlow. In view of the approaching Party Convention and elections, I think these facts should be given the most serious consideration and discussion by all Party members.

(8) It is not in order in a statement of this kind to attempt to define the principles of Bolshevik Criticism and self-criticism. Suffice to say that no proper definition of such criticism can be satisfied by an ex parte statement of the National Board passing judgment upon the actions and policies of the National Board. There must be independent discussion and criticism in the clubs and branches, criticism which is concretized and passed on without distortion to the higher Party bodies and finally to the National Committee to form the basis for its conclusions. In the absence of such real self-criticism, the self-evaluations with which the National Board indulges us inevitably tend to become, as in the present instance, mere apologia for the Board's conduct. And this is more certain to be the case, when as at present, Party elections are in the offing. Members of the Board and of the National Committee naturally wish to have their past actions viewed in a favorable light, their errors discussed with a minimum of critical acerbity.

(9) All of this is of course human and understandable if not Bolshevik. It seems to me however that Comrade Dennis has attempted to set up a road-block to discourage and hamper, if not to prevent, real self-criticism. First he asserts (DW Feb. 11, '48) that: "there is a correct Party line and --there has been a correct application of the Party's main line and tactics". Ipse dixit. So what is there for the lower bodies or the rank and file to discuss? The decision has been taken; the verdict is in. For that matter why hold a convention?

But for members who do not readily take a hint, he adds this further warning: "Nor are we going to tolerate for one second the efforts of a handful of irresponsible elements to exploit our errors and weaknesses for factional purposes." Naturally no one is going to condone irresponsible elements or factionalists. But by a coincidence this statement appeared in the same DW article in which Dennis announced for the first time the date of the forthcoming Party Convention, with its constitutionally decreed discussion period. "Irresponsible elements" and "factional purposes" are vague terms which can be interpreted to mean almost anything. In the context of Comrade Dennis' remarks for instance they could apply to any Comrade who subjects the Party's errors in the recent period, admitted or otherwise, to incisive criticism based on Bolshevik principles. And yet any other kind of criticism is useless. We can't afford to go easy on leaders who continually stray into the marsh of opportunism. The basic loyalty of Communists is and must be to Marxist-Leninist principles. "Leaders" who give those principles lip-service while preparing to bury them are not entitled to our support or our deference. It was Karl Marx who said: "Ruthlessness is the first requisite of criticism."

If it is not Comrade Dennis' intention to stifle in the pre-convention period criticism of the National Board's mistakes by intimidation, he owes it to the membership (1) to define the terms "irrespon-

sible persons" and "factional purposes", and (2) to tell us who is going to decide in any given case who is irresponsible and what is factional. Otherwise the threat of disciplinary action will be held over the head of every member of lesser rank than the National Committee, who may wish to exercise his constitutional right and obligation to participate in the discussion in any capacity save that of a sycophant. Since Comrade Dennis has already stated that lack of adequate criticism and self-criticism has been responsible for our recent errors, full guarantees to the membership on this point will be an earnest of his determination and that of the National Board to stamp out opportunism in the future conduct of the Party's affairs.

(10) One of the chief purposes of Bolshevik criticism is not only to admit and correct past errors but to prevent them from being repeated. To accomplish this, the individuals or Party bodies responsible must be determined and their culpability assessed. The "self-criticism" of Comrades Dennis and Williamson is notably free of any such evaluation. And for good reason too. For on whom could these leading Comrades and the National Board for whom they were reporting, pin the blame save on themselves? The grievous errors into which they have led the Party are their responsibility and theirs alone, for they have not consulted the Party membership in advance with regard to any important decision since the 1945 Convention, despite solemn pledges at the time of that Convention to do so.

(11) How serious a matter this is, and to what degree it was held responsible for the opportunism of the Browder period may be judged from the report of no less an authority than Eugene Dennis himself, then a candidate for Party office, at the time of the 1945 Convention.

Said Comrade Dennis: "Our errors arose because in our leading committees and methods of work we have not yet established genuine democracy and collective work. We have tended to fall into the trap of formal democracy and self-adulation. We have confused the forging of firm, unbreakable Communist unity with the creation of synthetic unity which curtailed criticism and self-criticism which separated the leadership from the membership, and failed to draw most of our trade union cadres and the entire membership into the fullest formulating and executing of policies. This has played no small role in feeding and prolonging opportunism and bureaucratic methods of leadership and work". (The Worker, July 1, 1945.)

Dennis now speaks (DW, Feb. 11, '48) "of correcting our mistakes and weaknesses-AS WE HAVE BEEN AND ARE DOING". (His emphasis) Yet the admitted causes of our current opportunism are precisely the same as those to which he ascribed the Browder debacle. Just what Have we been doing?

In order to correct these mistakes, Dennis proposed in his 1945 report that: "It is essential to institute everywhere, full inner Party democracy based upon the principle of democratic centralism. For one thing it is necessary to put an end to that practice where new and major policies are suddenly and without consultation thrust upon our membership, and often upon the National Committee and the Board, as the line and settled decisions of our Association." (My emphasis-E.G.)

In the period since the 1945 Convention various important

decisions, some of them major, have been made by the Party, fateful decisions on questions of trade union policy, the decision to postpone the National Convention, the decision on affiliation with the Nine Party Information Bureau to mention only a few. In no case was the membership consulted in advance, or for the most part at all.

What a contrast between the words of Eugene Dennis, candidate, and the actions of Eugene Dennis, chief executive officer of the CPUSA! Unity of theory and practice indeed! How is it possible for the membership to continue to believe in or trust a leadership which treats with such brazen and cynical contempt its solemn promises to its members?

A real Communist Party never lies to the workers. Stalin said: "A Party that conceals the truth from the people - a Party that fears light and criticism, is not a Party but a clique of frauds, doomed to failure. (Leninism, Vol. I, p. 172). If our Party has again fallen into serious opportunist errors, is it not precisely because our leadership (the same Comrades who made the same mistakes under Browder) gave lip-service to inner-Party democracy but in practice denied it? Obviously our leadership has no confidence in the workers. It has lost faith in its own members, and continues to make the same opportunist mistakes (along with a few new ones) over and over because it will not submit to their judgement.

"The seriousness of a Party", said Lenin, "may be judged by its ability to learn from its own mistakes." If our Party is ever to become a serious Party, capable of accepting its responsibilities as the Bolshevik Party of the aggressor nation, it is, Comrades, very difficult to see how we can continue to accept a leadership, which has repeatedly proved its incompetence according to Lenin's standards.

Comradely yours,
Ellwood (Woody) Griest

* * *

Comrade Griest will be glad to hear from any Brooklyn Comrade in or out of the CPUSA who wants to join the fight for a bona fide Communist Party. He may be contacted by writing to him at 821A Union Street, Brooklyn.

June SPARK will carry the rest of the PR Club's discussion of Harrison George's "CRISIS IN THE C.P.U.S.A." We have regretted the postponement but have considered it important to present important examples of the revolt against opportunism in the C.P. SPARK will be glad to send you extra copies of the recent statements.

SPARK SUBSCRIPTIONS

() I will send SPARK \$_____ (minimum \$2) every month for:
SPARK (monthly), NEW TIMES (weekly), Cominform Organ (bimonthly)

New statements, other publications, reprints, etc.

OR: () I am sending \$1.50 for a year's sub to SPARK.
() I am sending \$_____ for NEW TIMES (weekly) @ 15¢.
() I am sending \$_____ for the Cominform Organ (bimonthly) @ 10¢.

Please make money orders and checks payable to Cash or PR Club only.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Letter to Branch Organizer

April 29, 1948

Dear Comrade:

In reply to my statement of April 12 you have requested on behalf of the Club's Executive Committee that I submit at once a brief statement as to:-

- (1) Why I wish to remain a member of the Communist Party, and
- (2) Why I submitted my criticisms prior to the beginning of the formal pre-Convention discussion period.

You also reminded me that ^{the} first thing the Party thinks of upon receiving such a communication is expulsion.

My reason for wishing to remain a member of the Communist Party is a very simple one: I am a Communist, and I have been one for a good many years. Moreover I try to act like a Communist in whatever situation I find myself. I give my full loyalty to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and I try to the best of my ability to apply those principles to today's problems, including the fight against opportunism within the Party. If that fight brings me into opposition to "leaders" who have consistently forsaken Marxism-Leninism for opportunism, under Bovesstone, under Browder, and now under Dennis, then so much the better.

Opportunists in the Party and in the labor movement are the hidden allies of the imperialists, who confuse, divide and weaken the workers, as our recent past history abundantly shows. I want to remain in the Party in order to help correct errors which have arisen, as Dennis stated to the February Plenum, because of inadequate self-criticism, and to develop (in Dennis' words) "an effective political struggle against opportunism", which, as Dennis here admits and as I have attempted to document in my report, has been lacking in the recent period.

Your second question, as to why I submitted my criticisms before the start of the formal pre-Convention discussion period, carries the implication that criticism is permissible and proper only during certain weeks at two or three year intervals.

Life does not wait upon a laggard Party to catch up with its own errors. The constitutionally decreed discussion periods are indeed a proper time for evaluation of Party policies. But nowhere in the Party Constitution or in Marxist literature can any support be found for the thesis that criticism and self-criticism should be confined to those periods. Dennis himself, in deploring the lack of adequate criticism and self-criticism since the 1945 Convention as the cause of our recent errors, completely demolished any such contention.

The 1945 Convention was, moreover, explicit on this point. "The incoming National Committee and Board, by example, and with the active assistance of the membership, (My emphasis.-E.G.) must undertake an ideological and organizational struggle to root out all vestiges of bureaucracy, and be constantly on guard against relapses to old bureaucratic methods of work and opportunistic practices, which could only obstruct the most rapid and complete correction of our revisionist errors." (Convention Resolution, Part II, Sec. 6, July 1945.) It is difficult to see how members can render this "active assistance" in

purging the Party of bureaucracy and opportunism, if it is impermissible for them to offer well-documented criticisms to the Executive Committee of their own Clubs.

Comradely yours,
Ellwood (Woody) Griest

* * *

III

? /On May 18th, Comrade Griest was informed of the meeting on May 19th. This turned out to be a trial at which Comrade Griest was expelled. Following are his notes on that meeting./

THOSE PRESENT: 19 or 20 persons, including Jack Fine, Section Organizer, two unidentified Comrades presumably from the County, and about 16 members of the Plaza Club including myself.

PROCEDURE: My case was taken up as the main point on the agenda under the head: "A Political Discussion". The chair related the chronology leading to the submission of my report. At his request I then read the report. Jack Fine stated that the report had been discussed at a Section Committee meeting in which a member from the State Office (and apparently also someone from the County) had participated. A Comrade Ad had, he stated, spent several weeks in preparing a reply, which had ^{been} un-
animously adopted. Comrade Fine then read this document which, he averred, was a definitive answer to my criticisms.

After a discussion which lasted 30 or 40 minutes, a Comrade, whom I judged to be from the County, took the floor and stated that the time for positive action had come. In a tense atmosphere he demanded that I denounce my report as an anti-Party, anti-working class document or be expelled forthwith. He put this in the form of a motion, and it was passed unanimously with me abstaining. The Section and County Comrades stood up and faced the meeting the better to detect possible back-sliders undisciplined enough to abstain.

I was then questioned as to my willingness to denounce unreservedly my report and my action in submitting it. I replied that it is quite possible that I may be mistaken as to certain facts or conclusions in my report; that I am entirely conscious of my fallibility, and am eager to make any corrections which might be indicated by a study of the Section document and a reexamination of the facts. I requested that the Section permit me to see a copy of their statement. This was denied me angrily. I must denounce and deny in toto the validity of my criticisms, and immediately, I was told. Since such a denial would have committed me to a lie, I told them that the answer was an unqualified NO. I was accordingly expelled by unanimous vote (two abstentions including my own) and was requested to leave the meeting.

THE SECTION'S REPLY TO MY REPORT - General. (I can of course only paraphrase most of the statements, since I was not permitted to see the Section document, and had to prepare my reply while taking long-hand notes.)

The main argument of the Section's answer, which required about half an hour to read, and which I was required to accept as a complete refutation of all criticisms of the Party and its leadership contained in my report, on pain of expulsion, was as follows:

Following victory of the United Nations in World War II, the unity

of the victorious powers was quickly dissipated, and the national unity which had permitted cooperation of capital and the working class in the interest of the war effort disappeared. The imperialist war-mongers soon started an all out offensive against the workers' living standards, their trade union organizations, and the civil liberties on the domestic front; and in foreign affairs to reduce the countries outside the Soviet bloc to the status of colonial fiefs, and to weaken and eventually destroy the Soviet Union. In the face of this offensive the American working class was confronted with enormous difficulties, and has naturally suffered some defeats. Due however to the correct policies (with negligible exceptions), the heroic efforts and the magnificent leadership of CPUSA, the working class has been able to maintain its positions with a minimum of setbacks, and is now preparing to advance and defeat the class enemy. A considerable part of the report consisted of this Demmesque self-adulation.

The conclusion was of course that only a conscious disrupter and enemy of the working class would submit a document ignoring the glorious struggles and epochal accomplishments of the Vanguard Party to cavil at minor, excusable errors, to falsely accuse the Party when it has been following generally correct policies, and to attempt to destroy the confidence of the Party in its great leaders, who "have been so fully tested in the fire of the People's struggles".

According to the Section the purpose of my report to discredit the Party was carried out by the following methods:

(1) By picking on some small flaw, exaggerating it shamelessly to make it appear like a mountain, and then elevating the specific error into the role of a general policy.

(2) By failing to distinguish between the Party's correct policy and incorrect applications of that policy. (All the trade union errors which I discussed belong in this category. Only a perfectionist apparently would complain of this lack of unity of theory and practice.-EG)

(3) I have no positive program for correcting the alleged errors except to remove the Party's leadership. ("I don't think I am fit to take their place", Fine shouted at me, "and I'm Goddam sure you are'nt!" While I fully agree with him on both counts, I am at a loss to understand why he should confine the possible choice of new leaders so narrowly. I reminded him of Lenin's remark in a similar situation: "It is better to have inexperienced leaders than leaders who are experienced in opportunism.") -E.G.)

(4) My criticism is completely subjective. I fail to take into consideration the objective situation, the red-baiting hysteria, the offensive of the reactionaries on all fronts.

(5) My report is not criticism at all; it is a wholly slanderous attack upon the Party and its trusted leadership, which has the sinister and political purpose of disrupting the Progressive movement.

THE SECTION'S REPLY ** SPECIFIC ACCUSATIONS.

Following are some of the specific points raised by Com. Fine. I am not sure in some cases whether the statement in question was part of the Section's document, read by Fine, or a remark made by Fine on his own.

In speaking of the "expected gap" between correct Party policies and their application, he admitted that it was wrong for the CP delegates at the Atlantic City Convention not to have disassociated them-

themselves from the "no interference" resolution. He claimed that the Party tried to get them to do so, but that it "couldn't control them." (A Comrade, who was a delegate at Atlantic City, with whom I have discussed the matter, says this simply isn't so. And further, since Ben Gold helped draft the resolution and supported it from the floor, it must be assumed that the Party can't control members of the National Committee either. Apparently too it was unable to control the Daily Worker, since it carried articles defending and supporting the Convention action.-E.G.)

Comrade Fine claimed that my unreasonable expectation that the Party should be held responsible for the actions of CP trade union leaders shows clearly that I confuse the role of the Party with that of the trade unions.

(There was one interesting point which Com. Fine failed to clear up. That is how come the Party can expel me for voicing principled criticism solely in my own branch and section, but claims to be without recourse when its trade union operatives go haywire in the unions. Whom do they think they are kidding?-E.G.)

Fine compared Williamson's "sober analysis" in his Plenum report with my "frenzied attack". (Naturally Williamson and Dennis could remain pretty calm and dispassionate in minimizing their own errors, which they hope the rank and file (or at least the Convention delegates) will forget and forgive.-E.G.)

Fine spoke scornfully of the three pages which I devoted to quotations on unity from the great Marxist leaders. Then he singled out and read out of context my quote from Engels-Hegel: "A Party proves itself by the fact that it splits and can stand the split." "You see, he chortled, "what kind of a program Comrade Woody wants; a program to split the Party and divide the workers." (How's that for dialectics? I have no doubt that if Engels were a member of CPUSA they'd have him up on charges too for daring to write such heresy.-E.G.)

Comrade Fine had a new definition of the right of criticism too. Proper criticism is to wait until the National Committee submits its draft resolution and then to suggest additions, deletions or amendments to the draft. (That ought to be a big help in policing the pre-Convention discussion and steering the Comrades safely away from "the solution of internal problems" which might prove embarrassing to the Party bureaucracy. See the Worker, May 22, 1948.-E.G.)

Comrade Fine declared that CPUSA is and has been consulting the Cominform Parties. (On the UN veto resolution and support of the Marshall Plan, no doubt-E.G.) Also he sees nothing craven about the reason given for non-affiliation; calls my use of the word slander.

To bolster further the impression that CPUSA works closely with the Cominform, Comrade Fine told how the Party pushes the sale of the Cominform organ, FOR A LASTING PEACE, FOR A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY in all the Clubs and Branches. (In my own Club I have never once seen it, and neither, I will venture, have most other Party members. And in six visits to the Workers' Bookshop in the last four months, I found a late issue on sale only once and then only one copy. An assortment of back issues three to six months old gives the impression to the casual observer that its sale is being encouraged or at least facilitated although the fact is otherwise.-E.G.)

Comrade Fine branded me "immodest, irresponsible and full of gall". Also my approach to Democratic Centralism is entirely wrong. (The little matter of Dennis' promises of full inner-Party democracy, freedom of

self-criticism, and consultation with the membership before making important decisions, made at the 1945 Convention, but conveniently forgotten, he never bothered to bring up. Apparently that's got nothing to do with Democratic Centralism, -nor with common ordinary honesty either.)

And finally Comrade Fine gave me the "individual" treatment. "You're not a worker* at all, but just a middle-class individual", he yelled at me, to clinch his case. (Funny thing, but as I looked around I saw that, except for the outside possibility of the two County gaultiters who were strangers to me, there wasn't a single manual worker in the house. Comrade Fine is a salesman.-E.G.)

CIRCUMSTANCES OF MY EXPULSION.

I was notified of the meeting only one day in advance and by word of mouth. I was told only that my report would be discussed. There were no charges against me, submitted either in writing, as provided by the Constitution, or orally. There was no intimation of the real nature of the meeting until the "political discussion" had proceeded for an hour and a half; when the meeting was abruptly transformed into a trial on the initiative of the County Comrade. Naturally there was no opportunity for me to prepare an answer or to call witnesses, as the Constitution also provides. The question of my expulsion depended solely on whether or not I would make a blanket denunciation and denial of my report regardless of objective truth.

CONCLUSIONS.

(1) The Party bureaucracy is no longer concerned with even the pretense of legality under its own Constitution.

(2) Any Comrade naive enough to take Party leaders at their word when they protest the Party's need and desire for adequate self-criticism will get the same treatment that I got. These leaders not only do not want criticism of their opportunist course; they will not tolerate it. Their protestations are for the record only.

(3) The Party's tactic is to nip in the bud any dissatisfaction with its consistently opportunist policies and leadership. Many members, although thoroughly disillusioned, justify their inaction on the ground that, if expelled, they would have no place to go. It is therefore the responsibility of the expelled Comrades to provide leadership for Comrades inside and outside of the Party who want to fight for a bona fide

*Spark would like briefly to mention Griest's background:

Participated in leadership of Consumers' Research strike and in Belvidere Jail hunger strike protesting police brutality and mass arrests (1935); was one of 25 Consumers Research strikers who helped found Consumers Union by working for \$10 a week for a considerable period (1936); organizer of Branch I, Section 1, CP, Lower West Side, New York (1938); Sec'y-Treas. of N. Y. Joint Council of UOPWA (1939-41); was the next to last of the 25 founders of Consumers Union to resign or to be fired after a six year fight to prevent CPUSA from enforcing company union policies at Consumers Union (1942); organized inter-racial social and educational club among employees at Brooklyn Army Base (1945-46); dropped from Party without charges or hearing for protesting the Party's anti-working class actions at Consumers Union (1942) and reinstated in CPUSA (1946); disclosed to newspapers that Commanding General at Army Base was firing workers because they had been (over)

CP. This leadership must not only reject opportunism, but it must also free itself of "leftist" tendencies and elements. It must work for the creation of a center to which Comrades still within the CPUSA and all class-conscious workers can turn with confidence for guidance in our common struggle to create a real Communist Party.

* * *

/From a Note to Branch Organizer on May 20, 1948/

...I want to make it clear to you and to the members of the Club that the action which you took last night will do nothing to keep me from being a Communist, acting as a Communist, carrying on Communist work, and especially fighting for an end to the chronic opportunism which has bedevilled and handcuffed the CPUSA almost from its inception, and increasingly so in recent years...

* * *

IV

/Excerpts from Comrade Griest's Appeal to State Committee/

...I hereby submit to the N. Y. State Committee my application for reinstatement.

I enclose herewith copy of a report which I recently submitted to the Section. This report, with its factual statements and criticisms based thereon is the sole bone of contention between the Party and me.

I tried to point out that the Section's statement contained obvious errors, and at many points failed even to attempt to answer my criticisms. The discrepancy between Comrade Dennis' promises at the 1945 Convention of inner-Party democracy and real Democratic Centralism, and the complete failure of the Party to implement those promises, for instance, was not even referred to by the Section. Again, the lack of unity between the Party's theory and practice...was excused on the ground that while these actions were contrary to Party policy the Party could not control its representatives at these conventions. That this is patently a falsehood is shown by articles in the DW approving and defending these same actions and signed by members of the National Committee.

It was plain therefore that if I denounced my report in toto as was demanded I would be subscribing to a lie. I asked permission to see a copy of the Section's statement, and agreed to amend my report to omit any portions to which the Section's document raised reasonable doubts. I was refused the right to see this document, or to submit any revision of my report. When I declined therefore to denounce my report and deny that it contains any valid truths or criticisms, I was expelled.

The serious errors into which the Party leadership has fallen through lack of adequate self-criticism and inner-Party democracy have been pointed out convincingly by Comrade Dennis both at the 1945 Convention, and at the Feb. 1948 Plenum. And now the question remains, is anything going to be done about it? If criticism is going to be judged by whether it is palatable rather than by whether it is true, the answer will be NO.

I think you must agree further that it is not sufficient even that a Comrade's criticism be judged incorrect and mistaken that he should be deprived of membership. That right to criticize, exercise of which results in expulsion, is not free. -- E.G.

Footnote P. 19 Cont'd: "premature anti-fascists", and was himself fired when a N.Y. liberal newspaper disclosed the source of its information (1946); was UOPWA organizer in the Brooklyn "Y" and Brooklyn Trust Strikes (1947).