

SPARK

A MARXIST MONTHLY

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TOWARDS A MARXIST PARTY

Magic Caps and Monsters

"Perseus wore a magic cap that the monsters he hunted down might not see him. We draw the magic cap down over eyes and ears as a make-believe that there are no monsters." (Marx, in his 1867 Preface to "Capital," suggesting how appalled Germany would be if she dared investigate her economic conditions as did England.)

Part I of this article is an appeal to rank-and-file Comrade Perseus of the CPUSA to discard his magic cap and face his monsters. Part II (which will appear in SPARK No. 5) is an appeal to expelled Comrade Perseus to discard a not unrelated magic cap and face *his* monsters.

I—COMRADE PERSEUS

Comrade Perseus was once a self-respecting credit to the Communist movement. He even made a little history, having learned from his own experience that "freedom is the recognition of necessity," (Engels' *Anti-Duhring*, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.) Now, having "learned" opportunism, but not about opportunism, he drifts about with magic cap down not only over his eyes and ears, but—things are really bad now—also over his nose. Perseus waits for comfortable, inevitable Messiahs to ease his burden of responsibility: new conditions—such as a depression—"forcing reality" on the C.P., foreign C.P.'s helping those who won't help themselves, or a mystical transformation of the National Committee from opportunism to Marxism. So, Comrade Perseus isn't free these days. Better to look, listen, and even smell. If Perseus will face the monsters and the facts, he will destroy the monsters and change the facts. When Perseus has really recognized and learned the facts and the solu-

tions, learned them to the deep point where he *must* act, must decide to *make* a little history, instead of whimpering at "inevitable" forces, then Perseus has become free and bold. If he will face the mythical monster of *split, disunity, factionalism*, if he will excavate the true facts about Lenin—how he fought for splits, damned unprincipled unity, and organized factions for the integrity of the Party—he will cease to be what Thorez calls the "mannikin" and become a real Communist. To the day he died—literally—Lenin fought hardest against opportunism and the fake unity under cover of which it worked and destroyed the revolutionary movement. In this he followed the example of Marx and Engels. Engels wrote to Bebel in 1882 (see reprints in this issue):

"Unity is quite a good thing so long as it is possible, but there are things which stand higher than unity. And when, like Marx and myself, one has fought harder all one's life long against the alleged socialists than against anyone else . . . one cannot greatly grieve that the inevitable struggle has broken out . . ."

If he will examine the mythical monster of differences of opinion within the C.P., he will find that if Browder, Foster, and Dennis have said "no," Stalin has said, "On the

contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and contests of opinion within the Party." (*Foundations of Leninism.*)

Perseus must decide to think, grant himself the right to consider those questions which hit him in the face every day. Why could Browderism have taken over so easily? Why does the *present* CPUSA policy obtain the approval of Browder (radio speech, Oct. 1946)—the approval of Browder *and you*? Why were so many Comrades expelled—the real reasons? Why is the CPUSA snubbed by the great C.P.'s of the world while its relations are not so bad with those C.P.'s which also went Browderite? (see letter in this issue from Fergus McKean). Why doesn't the C.P. publish one iota of the Marxist literature it once did? Why does the C.P. avoid teaching the question of the State—dangerous ground? WHY DOESN'T THE CPUSA HOLD ITS NATIONAL CONVENTION AS SCHEDULED? To face these questions means to discontinue the haven of the magic cap, become a renegade from *meaningless* loyalty, and understand Foster's "unity—or elses" as gibberish in the Foster-fatherhood of the orphaned revolutionary, trade-union, and progressive movements in the U. S.

What kind of superstition operates the minds of those comrades who say to us: you're right about C.P. opportunism, and our leaders are not good, but how can you attack the leadership of a Communist Party? What a Barnum and Bailey circus of dialectics this is—to accept the proof of incorrect policy and yet remain subservient to the Creators of wrong policy. Is it the

understandable fear of pioneering, of building with small forces what does not exist in the U. S. today—a revolutionary movement? We have no magic cap for that either—only determination stemming from the "recognition of necessity." There is no palatable alternative. We can take solace from the fact that this is the way it always goes until a Party really becomes a Bolshevik Party. In July 1901, Lenin wrote to an ISKRA agent, Tsederbaum, "It is incredible! After a whole year of desperate efforts, we are only beginning to group a staff of leaders and organizers in Russia for an enormous and important task: (*this staff is still terribly small, for apart from the three people mentioned, we have only another 2-3 men*) [our italics] while for the all-Russian organ we need scores of energetic collaborators (using this word *not only* in a literary sense)."

Often, when Comrade Perseus decides to fight for a real C.P., his advance towards practical action is cut off by an important opportunist hangover—the need for such prerequisites as momentary success, prestige, and respectability. He will condescend to begin with tons of upsurge only. If the beginnings have to be made by a few (as is usually the case) this bold comrade reconsiders, tries to convince himself that there is not enough of international importance to merit his attention, that there are not enough key people involved. In a word, he solemnly intones the word "premature" and again retires to toast his toes at the fireplace of party loyalty. But isn't it logical that after a chronic opportunism has destroyed all the best muscles and reflexes,

that there must of necessity be mighty little left, with which to start rebuilding. Otherwise, opportunism would have been stopped somewhere short of the annihilation of a sizable Communist, incorruptible core. The secret is that out of a painstaking "quality" (in rank-and-file and expelled Perseus) at the beginning there develops inevitably a "quantity"—a quantity not representing that transient membership and fantastic alumni, which the CPUSA has produced through the years, but rather a quantity of thinking, "all-weather" Communists, in-to-stay. So if Perseus finds the facts and develops the guts to go with the facts, he decides that a little pioneering might be rugged but wholesome—and absolutely essential.

When Perseus approached snake-headed Medusa, he was warned he might turn to stone. Comrade P, if you face the Medusa of the non-existent July 4th Convention of the CPUSA to which Harry Pollitt was invited by Foster (see back cover of SPARK No. 3), will you turn to stone, and is turning to stone such a bad prospect? At a time when your leadership has turned to putty, it's a most loyal contribution for you to turn to stone.

The recent plenum of the N. C. postponed the convention to 1948 "so that the Communist Party can make its final decisions concerning the 1948 elections at the time when other political parties will be making theirs." (D.W.—July 13, 1946.)

The C.P. Constitution states a N. C. duty to call a Convention every two years. The N. C. has not deigned to even answer this point. It reminds one of the caustic at-

tacks by Zhdanov on "the practice of setting *official* discipline up against and higher than Party discipline, thus demoralizing honest Party members." [18th Congress CPSU (B)] There is a logic to regular conventions which makes the N.C. fear that a Convention might tempt some reevaluation of *deadend* policy and devaluation of *deadhead* leadership.

Until sometime (?) in 1948 is a long time on the rushed imperialist timetable of our government. What prevented the suggestion of a date—even a *tentative* date? The truth is, the N.C. has not quite decided to hold a convention in 1948. We think that if the work of forming a revolutionary core in this country accelerates, there will be no convention dared because every word of such a Social-Democratic caucus would stand exposed in the spotlight of the anti-opportunist movement outside the party and of its links inside the C.P. On the other hand, if our movement stagnates, weakens, or embarks on queer ideological journeys (which SPARK has tried to fight), it is certainly possible for a "safe," "fixed" convention to be held. What will happen at such a pre-caucused caucus will be worse than the last one at which 94 self-picked delegates elected 74 of themselves to the N.C.

But a C.P. convention is taboo now for other reasons. At this point in world troubles a CPUSA convention is a terrible magnet for world attention. Our comrades around the world know that the Duclos letter fell under eager rank-and-file eyes (as shown in the unsuccessful rebellion at the N. Y. State Convention) but into corrupt

N.C. hands, and that the corrupt hands tore out the opening eyes of the membership. They know that, in the event of another letter, Foster, Dennis and Master Switcher Stachel would again play "kitty in the corner—all change corners." The help of our foreign comrades will be most valuable to us when *we* here in the U.S. do the job. And the required beginning is a real Communist core (outside and inside), perhaps very small, but clearly Marxist. Then there will be another Duclos Day. And then there will be a C.I. because the U.S. won't be represented by a Starobin who says he would oppose a C.I. Despite all this the N.C. feels that some "renegade" party overseas would lose control and spit at our National Convention. Oh, perhaps nothing so violent. Perhaps just a brief statement in the Party press of France or Italy or of the S.U. that "A CPUSA convention has just been held. It was distinguished from the usual type of American Legion Convention in that no pianos were thrown from the upper stories of 35 East 12th St."

The N.C. intends to avoid such publicity. It hopes that a convention held in the midst of the clamor of major party conventions might attain a reasonable obscurity as it listened to a Max Weiss "ideological" report perhaps entitled "From the Leftist Fight for Security to the Non-Doctrinaire Fight for Obscurity." So, the N.C. could successfully unburden itself of a convention pretty well hidden from the world, the U.S., and its own membership.

The fact that the convention must meet at the same time as the Demo-

cratic and Republican parties exposes the parliamentary quicksands of the C.P. How can it help produce a third party if it meets late enough deliberately for it to be too late to do anything but face the "sober facts" that the C.P. must again stick with the "forward elements" within the Democratic Party. Again the C.P. Convention would be the "Tale of a Tail." The N.C. hopes that if it could not eliminate all preconvention discussion it could at least restrict it to a discussion of election candidates. The party trade union leaders would prefer not to have to expose themselves at a Party Convention. The secret of this fear that long-known Communist leaders have of exposure today is simply the frantic fear of losing lucrative jobs.

Or suppose a "renegade" comrade somehow makes the convention—and gets in his 4½ second blast. This alone is enough to set up an N.C. commission to reevaluate Marxism away from conventions.

Max Weiss, reporting on the plenum to a recent meeting of the waterfront and student sections, said in answer to questions about "no convention" that lack of finances prevented it at this time. The facts are actually that the CPUSA is bankrupt, but only ideologically—not financially (unless the current two month paid vacations for leaders have consumed the recent hoard). Have the poorest Communist parties in the worst circumstances ever made such a decision for such a reason?

Party conventions have been postponed before. For instance, in a letter to V.A. and S.N. Karpinsky in Geneva, Lenin wrote on Jan. 8,

1917 from Zurich, "On Sunday, 7th Jan. 1917, there was a meeting in Zurich of the Partervorstand of the Swiss Socialist Party. A disgraceful resolution was adopted—to postpone for an indefinite period the Party Congress which had been fixed for the 10th Feb. 1917 in Berne, especially for a discussion on the military question. Motives: high prices must be fought; the workers are not ready; there is no unanimity in the Commission and so on. Such motives merely ridicule the Party."

The Daily Worker plenum summary (July 13th) stated: "With a very few exceptions, this meeting was limited to members of the National Committee—making possible a more thorough discussion of issues and keeping the body down to efficient working size." The N.C. waxes frantic and mistrusts even its own high devotees—which it has no right to do—we assure them. The necessity for safeguarding a plenum via the efficiency of excluding leading members explains how awful the prospect of a Convention must be to the N.C.

For efficiency, the N.C. called off the Convention. For efficiency, it held a restricted plenum. What efficient method does it use—unsuccessfully—to stop the flow of critical letters to the N.C., objections to and resolutions condemning N.C. policy. The method is terror, blackmail, the transformation of the C.P. into a prison. What is the dissident member threatened with? If his job can be imperiled by exposure, the N.C. hints it will expose him. If he is an alien, the leadership threatens to expose him to possibilities of deportation. If he dares take his opposition to the "free"

streets of America, he is beaten by a prepared assortment of Party thugs—not by the police or the Christian front this time—but by C.P. gangsters. If he is a veteran of the Spanish war, a Lincoln Brigade vet, he is damned as a Fascist, expelled, called anti-Negro. In the case of a Jewish editor of SPARK, he is smeared along the grapevine as a secret organizer of the German-American Bund. And in any case he is called a Trotskyite—by a leadership which has not the guts to fight the Trotskyites they run from—the Gus Tylers and the Reuthers. The C.P. leadership has lost the stomach to fight anyone but Communists—and these certainly not in the open. As for all these statements, which Comrade Perseus may find it hard to believe, he'll bump into an example one of these days—when he tests inner-party democracy. Yes, Perseus, to face all this is enough to make one very angry—enough to turn one to stone.

Shouldn't every self-respecting Communist take inventory of the United States at this late date. If he does, he will find a great danger brewing, and if he has a Communist sense of responsibility, he will see himself as also responsible—for all the corny words of misleadership he may have passed on to his non-party friends who respected him for the very word, Communist, he carried.

Comrade P, at a time when a bold offensive can save democracy, have you also been the carrier of the National Committee's disease of compromise and retreat in your union, your AVC chapter, your PCA chapter? Discount a slight hypocritical lip-movement in the D.W., judge by the facts of life—how the party

holds back strikes and the formation of a third party, how it double-talks away from the defense of brave men like Eisler, Barsky, Josephson, Fast?

Or again, when an AFL International beheaded your whole union leadership and you ran to the Party for help, what were you told, Perseus? One word: Unity. Sometimes you were given three words at no extra dues: Unity—or else. Have you wondered why spontaneous demonstrations of tremendous value (such as the UMW rank-and-file political strike against the Taft-Hartley Bill) come off only in the absence of unity-or-else Communists.

Or very simply, have you visualized what would happen if you suggested an educational in your branch on "What is to Be Done?"

If you belonged to a much better party (up through the Spanish War) do you remember that when something had to be done, you were given instructions to go out and build and produce right in your organizations? And in contrast, have you received any instructions to build the third party? You haven't. Your leadership has prohibited some of the third party leaflets you wrote, changed your May Day placards. When you have seen the Party fight, it has been only over a well-paid job held by a party bureaucrat. And what do you think when you read that Louis Weinstock, after years of leadership in the Painters Union, years in which he de-educated union members, lost—and lost to of all people, a miserable Trotskyite. Some comment on a national leader of the Party. He became as popular in his union as another Painter's disease

—lead poisoning. He did such a good job of confusion on his men that they floundered into a Trotskyite.

If you're a Vet, Perseus, think how it came to be that the progressive vets in AVC have accepted the leadership of the Bloc of Republican-Democratic - Social Democratic-Trotskyite-World Gov't careerists, everyone of whom the Party comrades have "tried to work with." And what do you think of the objection of Party whips in AVC to a chapter defending Eisler: "But Eisler isn't a Vet problem." And what do you think of the C.P. suicide advice that the AVC should stick to vets' problems in its forthcoming campaign in N.Y.C.—in the light of the Trotskyite strategy of lip-serving the C.P. one better on vets' problems and all broad issues and thanking ye lord opportunism that the Reds won't expose them where they expose easily—on the U.N., the S.U., on red-baiting, etc.

Why are the days of real Scottsboro defense of the Negro people gone? Where is a Communist carry-through on the Leftridge, and Woodard cases, on the lynchings? The lynchrope itself is built out of lip-service.

Where is the movement of national groups which could be so important today? Is it still Browderly embarrassing to the respectable, 100% American C.P. leadership which prates in court about "our founding fathers" (copyright by Eugene Dennis)? Where is the youth movement—a YCL, an American Student Union, an American Youth Congress? Why, having botched the AYD from inception, has the C.P. decided to ditch the

AYD on the campuses. The C.P. will ditch anything but opportunism when confronted with a fight. We are not interested in nominal names of empty committees whose only activity is fund raising for salaries. We're interested in facts and action.

Where is a once powerhouse women's movement? Buried in un-Marxist, reactionary theories on the woman question via Landy. Why has the cultural movement in the U.S. become a dirty, commercial sellout led by big name C.P. artist-careerists. Why is 35 East 12th St. culturally now one of the fancier suburbs of Hollywood?

Why is it that scientists, now more interested than ever in Socialism because of the terrific impact of atomic research on social thinking, won't touch the C.P. with a ten foot pole? Because they realize that if they got into trouble, the calmly expedient C.P. wouldn't touch *them* with a ten mile pole.

In a word, Perseus, what part of what movement in the U.S. hasn't been corrupted and liquidated by the degeneration of the C.P.? Name it, and you can have it, and *all* you get is a name—a mirage. Whom can you blame but yourself. When the leaders blame your complacency, (criminals preaching about crime prevention) they don't deserve serious audience. But when you ask yourself who's to blame, how do you come off? If you sigh an honest sigh, at least sigh in the direction of your Marxist library, so a little dust flutters off. Why hasn't intercourse with your Marxist library taught you a little vigilance—or did you abstain during the Browder period? And now, do you still abstain?

Because all problems demand a non-opportunist, vanguard C.P., Perseus must first tear the tail off the CPUSA and give it instead a head and a face. The adjective Communist is applicable only to the head and not to the——!! And because there has been so much degeneration, Perseus must fight without any illusions that he can necessarily come out of this with a rebuilt CPUSA. He may more probably end with a new, truly Communist Party (whatever its name) built by the efforts of those working outside the CPUSA in coordination with those working inside. The more quickly we work, the more we can salvage.

Comrade P, pull that magic cap up from over your nose long enough to smell the CIO anti-Communist resolution written by Communists, pull it off your ears long enough to hear Churchill say the anti-Soviet war has to come quickly if it is to come at all, and lift it off your eyes long enough to study that Marxism which is now quietly taboo in the C.P.—long enough to state as a funeral service for the magic cap that "... circumstances are changed precisely by men and that the educator must himself be educated." (Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*). Then, discard your magic cap forever—constructively: sell it for rags and donate the proceeds to SPARK.

(SPARK No. 5 will carry Part II of this article which deals with problems in the anti-opportunist movement outside the C.P.—and its magic caps and monsters. Also, for the reason that it is in part an answer to an interesting letter criticizing us from an L.A. comrade, No. 5 will carry that letter.)

A LETTER FROM CANADA

Dear Friends:

I was quite favorably impressed with the first issue of your magazine, the SPARK, which I have just finished reading. I feel the magazine is the first attempt at a real Marxist publication in America in recent years and will undoubtedly, eventually achieve its purpose of rescuing Marxism from the hands of the opportunists who have falsified, debased, and discredited it during the past ten years. To a Marxist there can be no doubt about the inevitability of a bona fide Marxist Party, for the reason that Marxism is the science of social change and such change is now on the agenda of history. Without a Marxist Party a successful struggle against fascism and war would be difficult if not impossible. As for Socialism, its realization is unthinkable without a Marxist Party.

But there is the tragedy. It is precisely the two strongholds of world imperialism and of international reaction, the U.S.A. and the British Commonwealth of Nations which at this critical stage of history find themselves without Marxist Parties. Of course this is not an accident nor a contradiction because "the economic base for opportunism is imperialism." Hence it follows, it is precisely Anglo-Saxon Imperialism, which dominates and exploits the entire world, where opportunism has most completely displaced Marxism.

Having made the above observations I should now introduce myself. I first joined the Communist Party of Canada in 1932. In 1936 I was appointed district organizer

for British Columbia, and in 1938 became district secretary. With the exception of 28 months spent in a concentration camp from 1940 to 1942, I remained the provincial leader of the Communist movement in B.C. until I resigned from the Labor Progressive Party in August 1945 at which time I was burdened with the title of Provincial leader of the L.P.P.

My break with the Party arose directly as a result of the Duclos Letter, the admission of guilt of revisionism by the American Party leadership and the denial of any revisionism in the Canadian Party by the National leadership of the L.P.P. and particularly the denial by Tim Buck, who a month or so previously had characterized Earl Browder as "The Outstanding Marxist Thinker of the Western Hemisphere." Just prior to my reading of the Duclos letter the L.P.P. had contested a Federal Election in Canada under the Slogan of Liberal-Labor Coalition (i.e., that the Communist movement and the bourgeois Liberal Party should jointly form the next government and thus "preserve national unity" and "a rising level of prosperity" in Canada in the post war.)

I first made an exhaustive study of the material published in the American Communist Press admitting revisionism, and then reviewed the literature published in Canada during the previous ten years by the Communist movement. As I did so I constantly referred to the Marxian Classics and the material published by the Communist International. My studies convinced me that the

Canadian Party was guilty of more complete betrayal of Marxism and of the working class than even the Browder leadership in the U.S.A., if that were possible. The denial of "any revisionism of Marxism" in the Canadian Party proved to be the proverbial last straw. As a result of expressing the viewpoint that I "had no confidence in the majority of the National leadership" I was suspended by the provincial leadership on the advice of the National leadership. A week later I attended a meeting of the National Committee where I spoke for two hours constantly interrupted by organized heckling. After two days of denial of revisionism and a tirade of abuse directed against myself as a "factionalist" attempting to "split the Party," I was ordered to appear before a review Commission where, after a further two hours of cross examination and insults, I tendered my resignation from the Party.

There followed an unprecedented campaign of slanderous character assassination over a period of months. I was publicly denounced as a "degenerate," a "drunkard," as "an unprincipled traitor and disruptionist," etc. A small group in B.C. shared my political views and either resigned from the Party or were expelled shortly afterwards. We immediately formed a Committee "for the organization of a Communist Party" and jointly financed the publication of a book which I wrote entitled "Communism Versus Opportunism."

The book was published in May 1946, but contrary to our expectations did not achieve the result we had hoped for in bringing together

a sufficient number of theoretically clear workers to create a real movement for a new Party based on Marxism. We learned, somewhat to our surprise, that the great majority of Party members had little basic understanding of Marxism, and furthermore, many were quite content to accept policies on the basis of blind faith. This attitude of course was the result of ten years of psychological conditioning; ten years during which the membership were taught to believe that the highest expression of discipline and loyalty was, not to participate in formulating policy but, to accept and try to understand the ready-made policies periodically handed down by the National Leaders.

At the time I wrote my book we had expected that once it was circulated and the membership realized the degree to which they had been misled fairly rapid progress would be made in winning over the honest, proletarian, left wing of the Party. However, the leadership were able to curb any such development by first of all preventing any organized discussion of revisionism and secondly by prohibiting the membership from reading the book. The result has been a steady disintegration of the Party and the disillusionment of those who believed that something could be done by "preserving the unity of the Party," and continuing to work within it in hope of affecting corrections.

In the trade unions the Party factions have degenerated into political machines whose main task has been to perpetuate in office the L.P.P. members chosen by the leadership. These L.P.P. political machines are basically no different

from the machines of the traditional A. F. of L. bureaucrats, and serve the same purpose.

Whereas in the U.S.A. the question of revisionism was relatively freely discussed, in Canada the discussion was effectively crushed. There are, of course, scores of L.P.P. members who feel instinctively there is something radically wrong with the Party but they are unable to explain wherein the Party is wrong.

Although there may have been elements of revisionism in both parties prior to 1935, it is my conviction that revisionism as a basic line of the Parties was brought about as a result of the distortion of the People's Front Policy of the Seventh Congress of the C.I. This was expressed through the medium of such slogans as: "Unity of all Progressive Forces," and "The Labor and Progressive Movement." These slogans, and others of a similar character, were utilized as a screen to completely abandon the theory and practices of the Marxian doctrine of the class struggle. The term "Progressive Forces" was then interpreted to mean or include all persons and organizations which *professed* to be opposed to fascism and war. The "Unity" cry was then utilized to attempt the formation of the most unprincipled alliances with the organizations of not only the petty bourgeoisie but even the big bourgeoisie, including as the Canadian Party leaders put it: "The decisive section of monopoly capital."

The logical culmination of the slogan "Unity of all Progressive Forces" was an electoral agreement with the Liberal Party in the On-

tario Provincial election in Canada and in the U.S.A., submerging the Party within the Democratic Party. In both countries the Communist Parties were dissolved as were the Young Communist Leagues.

Having abandoned "the theoretical foundation of Marxism, the doctrine of the class struggle," it followed that opportunism should replace Marxism in all spheres of Marxian theory. For instance, in Canada the Party's position on the National question as regards French Canada and its position of inequality within the Canadian state is pathetic, while in the U.S.A. the position of Foster, et al, on the Negro question is equally ridiculous. For instance, take the following example: "In short, the probably future growth of the Negro people in the U.S.A. is not toward further maturation as a nation, but rather toward further development as a distinct national minority." (Political Affairs, July 1946 p. 660.)

It is indeed strange how a people who have never been a nation, are not now a nation, and, it is stated, will never become a nation, will, nevertheless develop as a distinct "National Minority."

Or consider this gem of revisionism: "It is this theoretical premise that leads Marxists to recognize the *special* character of the Negro question, and *thus to avoid the Socialist Party's error of viewing the oppression of the Negro people as merely a part of the larger class struggle of our nation.*" (My italics F.M.)

This is in spite of the fact that "The proletariat," said Lenin, "evaluates every national demand, every national separation *from the angle of the class struggle of the*

workers." (Vol. 4, Selected Works, p. 265.) Again, "national demands," said Lenin, "are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle." (Ibid, p. 264.) Or this: "Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the 'labor question'" (Ibid, p. 275.) Or take Stalin: "And yet it is clear to us, as Communists, that the basis of all our work must be to strengthen the power of the workers; and only then do we address ourselves to the other question, a very important question, but subordinate to the first—the national question." (The National Question, p. 168.)

But according to Doxey A. Wilkerson, it is an "error" to "view the oppression of the Negro people as *merely* a part of the larger class struggle." Of course for those who have abandoned Marxism and the class struggle such a viewpoint is quite consistent. As a matter of fact the Negro people of the U.S.A. are not, and never have been, either a nation nor a national minority. It is not national oppression from which they suffer but racial and class oppression. Not only are they not a nation but they do not possess a single one of the five characteristic features of a nation defined by Stalin. (The National Question, p. 8.) They did not evolve historically and neither do they possess a common language (as distinct from other Americans), a common economic life, (their economic life is inextricably integrated with that of the American people as a whole) a common territory, (their largest community, Harlem, is outside of the "black belt") nor a common culture. (Their culture

is *basically* that of the American people as a whole. In fact it is probably more "American" than that of the Pennsylvania Dutch, for instance, who have been recognized as an integral part of the American nation, without question, for centuries.)

In Canada, the Party leaders likewise have a revisionist solution for the national problem affecting French Canada. Equality for this doubly exploited one third of the Canadian population they say "requires *action* by the Federal and Provincial Government." How brilliant! They further made the profound observation that the "French Canadians have political equality" but that they suffer from "economic, social, and cultural inequality"—because of Government policies." However, the national question is only one of the spheres of revisionism. It is now clear that the basic line of both parties is one of social democratic reform and class collaboration that would even shame the notorious social democratic betrayers of European labor.

As yet, a year after the publication of my book, there has been no movement of a Marxist character developed in other centres of Canada to my knowledge and here in Vancouver, B.C., we have been unable to make any real headway.

I am very anxious to have a critical review made of my book by students of Marxism and would be deeply obligated if your group would make such a review and forward it to me. The book, with the exception of a few bound copies, sells at \$1.00 and in lots of five or more for \$.70 cents. In view of

the fact that one-third of it is devoted to an examination and criticism of the American Party you will, I hope, find it of interest. I am forwarding a copy to you and of course would be pleased to sup-

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN NCP AND SPARK

PR to the NCP: June 29, 1947.

The new issue of SPARK will be ready this week. The main article is devoted to a criticism of the NCP position. We have stated in the magazine that we will circulate any NCP reply with the next issue.

Since we will have an adequate supply this time please let us know how many copies you can use. We can deliver them by Thursday.

Thanks again for the back copies you sent.

NCP to the PR Club: July 7, 1947.

The copy of SPARK you sent us has arrived and we will take up as soon as possible the matter of what action NCP will take on your letter.

In order for us to decide what we think is best to do, we want to know exactly what your offer to us means. Do you mean, in the first place, that you will publish in SPARK a reply to your criticism? Or do you mean, in the second place, that you will merely circulate a reply that we ourselves publish? And, if the latter is the case, to whom exactly will you circulate it?

What you mean, in other words, will have a bearing on what we decide to do.

PR to the NCP: July 8, 1947.

In answer to your note of July 7, 1947—

Our note of June 29, 1947 stated that "We will circulate any

ply as many more as you might desire as we are still heavily indebted to the printer.

I hope to hear from you shortly, with comradely greetings.

FERGUS McKEAN.

NCP reply with the next issue." We meant by this, *with* the next issue. We supposed that your reply would be too long to include in SPARK. Therefore, we thought we would circulate your reply—in any form you care to give it to us—with each copy of SPARK. For any copies that get out without a copy of your answer (such as through newsstand sales or casual contact) we will insert a note in SPARK that your answer may be had on request. This, we hope, will cover any loopholes.

NCP to the PR Club: July 22, 1947.

After you printed the latest of your attacks on NCP, we wrote to find out whether or not you would also publish our reply to these attacks.

Your letter of July 8 makes it clear that you will not, in fact, publish a reply by us.

So far as this matter is concerned, then, we think there is nothing further for us to discuss.

PR to the NCP: July 26, 1947.

We are sorry that NCP has taken the attitude shown in your letter of July 22nd. We take exception to the implication that SPARK will not publish criticism. Four issues will disprove this.

In the hope that you will reconsider your position by the printing of SPARK No. 5, we again offer to circulate your answer with that issue.

A LETTER FROM FRISCO

(We are printing excerpts from the following letter. Most of the omissions deal with the organization of the SFCC about which an article was included in the first issue of SPARK.)

San Francisco, California

July 16, 1947

Dear Comrades:

Your communication of the 11th received and read at the meeting of the Working Committee of SFCC. Also, the 100 copies of the current issue of SPARK were received and are being distributed to a select mailing list.

* * *

You say you have no information on where the SFCC stands. I feel that such information is very necessary between comrades and groups scattered as we are and I think frankness and honesty in self-appraisal are essential if we are to know each other's strength and what we have to depend on in the future.

* * *

Our forces are sound: what was the revolutionary core of the nominal C.P., and are for the greater part dependable. Of course again we have what is inevitable; certain comrades who wake up suddenly and get up off their Little Lenin Libraries, skim through a volume or two, then decide they are the reincarnation of Marx and Lenin rolled into one, hence, that they are the prophets of the New Dispensation armed with the true ideological compass and any comrades on either side of them are either too far to the left or right as the case may be.

While there has been no organized discussion of the publications from New York (there should be and I advance as an excuse that to my knowledge all the active members of SFCC are people working for the masters' profit during the day—with union meetings, classes, and the Working Committee meetings—their time is pretty full,) but a large part of the membership subscribe to Dowling's Report. Acknowledging that he is not always quite on the beam, we feel that he is doing an indispensable job. The Committee did, I believe, at one of the few meetings I was absent from, endorse SPARK's "Draft Transitional Program" with one or two minor corrections. I do not have the minutes with me, so cannot say which ones. As for Dunne's pamphlet, I think, and those I have discussed it with seem to agree, it is more valuable as an expository and historical document than as a guide for action. I think very highly of SPARK and do not want to miss any issues. It seems a little thin at times though I cannot put my finger on the reason. One comrade said it seemed to him "immature" but to me it is improving. I would suggest that while criticism of another like publication is necessary *so much* of the necessary limited contents of a magazine like SPARK need not be devoted to it. If the above is frank we will expect the same from you.

Since writing the foregoing I have re-read two issues of SPARK and recognize now what I previously felt. I think the magazine has too much assurance, just a little too

much of the tone, so familiar in the "Party," of lecturing to its readers, but I may be wrong. I, personally, do not agree with SPARK on the question of members who have become convinced that the Party is petty bourgeois and counter-revolutionary remaining in it to their own corruption and degradation. To remain is to continue to finance, to swell its membership, to continue a partnership in its crimes against the working class and to become hopelessly opportunist *oneself* in the company of confirmed opportunists.

Since there is no longer any hope of re-forming the Party on a revolutionary foundation or of reclaiming the physical apparatus then the quicker the outfit goes to pieces the quicker there will come into being a genuine working class, Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist Party — such at least is my contention.

About the articles in the D.W.—the writer of the first article "Jim Allan" is in reality, a character whose proper name is Von Herman

REPRINT: TWO LETTERS FROM ENGELS TO BEBEL

June 20, 1873.

... One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for "unity." Those who have this word most often on their lips are those who sow the most dissension, just as at present the Jura Bakunists in Switzerland, who have provoked all the splits, scream for nothing so much as for unity. These unity fanatics are either the people of limited intelligence who want to stir everything up together into one nondescript brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up

and is well known on the waterfronts . . . Whether he was sent as a spy by the Party or was temporarily disgruntled we do not know . . . Anyway, he did attend two meetings of the Working Committee, I am informed, at which he dropped some remarks which did not impress those present favorably. Afterward he attended the Marxist class of the Maritime comrades who were studying, at that time, "*Ancient Society*." He took issue with Engels on the "*Origin of the Family*" declaring that Engels made "lots of mistakes," so the group decided to isolate him which they did by not informing him of their place of meeting thereafter.

If you desire you are more than welcome to reproduce, in SPARK, any part or all of my criticism, always with the understanding that the criticism is my personal opinion and not at all that of SFCC or any other member of it.

Best wishes from your comrade,

H. ALLINGER.

the differences again in much more acute opposition because they are now all together in one pot (you have a fine example of this in Germany with the people who preach the reconciliation of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie)—or else they are people who consciously or unconsciously (like Muhlberger for instance) want to adulterate the movement. For this reason the greatest sectarians 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.

Naturally every party leadership wants to see successes and this is quite good too. But there are circumstances in which one must have the courage to sacrifice *momentary* success for more important things. Especially for a party like ours, whose ultimate success is so absolutely certain, and which has developed so enormously in our own lifetime and under our own eyes, momentary success is by no means always and absolutely necessary. Take the International, for instance. After the Commune it had its colossal success. The bourgeoisie, struck all of a heap, ascribed omnipotence to it. The great mass of the membership believed things would stay like that for all eternity. We knew very well that the bubble *must* burst. All the riff-raff attached themselves to it. The sectarians within it began to flourish and misused the International in the hope that the most stupid and mean actions would be permitted them. We did not allow that. Well knowing that the bubble must burst some time all the same, our concern was not to delay the catastrophe, but to take care that the International emerged from it pure and unadulterated. The bubble burst at the Hague and you know that the majority of Congress members went home sick with disappointment. And yet nearly all these disappointed people, who imagined they would find the ideal of universal brotherhood and reconciliation in the International, had far more bitter quarrels at home than those which broke out at the Hague! Now the sectarian quarrelmongers are preaching

conciliation and decrying us as the intolerant and the dictators. And if we had come out in a conciliatory way at the Hague, if we had hushed up the breaking out of the split—what would have been the result? The sectarians, especially the Bakunists, would have got another year in which to perpetrate, in the name of the International, much greater stupidities and infamies even; the workers of the most developed countries would have turned away in disgust; the bubble would not have burst but, pierced by pin-pricks, would have slowly collapsed and the next Congress, which would have been bound to bring the crisis anyhow, would have turned into the lowest kind of personal row, because *principles* had already been sacrificed at the Hague. Then the International would indeed have gone to pieces—gone to pieces through "unity!" Instead of this we have now got rid of the rotten elements with honour to ourselves—the members of the Commune who were present at the last decisive session say that no session of the Commune left such a terrible impression upon them as this session of the tribunal which passed judgement on the traitors to the European proletariat—we have left them to expend all their forces in lying slander and intrigue for ten months—and where are they? They, the alleged representatives of the great majority of the International, now announce that they do not dare to come to the next Congress (more details in an article which is being sent off for the *Volksstaat* with this letter). And if we had to do it again we should not, taking it altogether, act any differently—tac-

tical mistakes are of course always committed.

In any case I think the efficient elements among the Lassalleans will fall to you of themselves in course of time and that it would therefore be unwise to break off the fruit before it is ripe as the unity people want.

For the rest, old Hegel has already said: A party proves itself a victorious party by the fact that it *splits* and can stand the split. The movement of the proletariat necessarily passes through different stages of development; at every stage one section of people lags behind and does not join in the further advance.

* * *

October 28, 1882.

. . . In France the long expected split has taken place.* The original conjunction of Guesde and Lafargue with Malon and Brousse was no doubt unavoidable when the party was founded, but Marx and I never had any illusions that it could last. The issue is purely one of principle: is the struggle to be conducted as a *class struggle* of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie or is it to be permitted that in good opportunist (or as it is called in the socialist translation: possibilist) style the class character of the movement, together with the programme, are everywhere to be dropped where

(Continued from page 19) of association, the right to strike, etc.) which was then to be sent to the State Duma." (Ibid., p. 147.)

Thus we see at the origins of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism the same mire of opportunism in which the National committee is steeped

there is a chance of winning more votes, more adherents, by this means? Malon and Brousse, by declaring themselves in favour of the latter alternative, have sacrificed the proletarian class character of the movement and made separation inevitable. All the better. The development of the proletariat proceeds everywhere amidst internal struggles and France, which is now forming a workers' party for the party for the first time, is no exception. We in Germany have got beyond the first phase of the internal struggle, other phases still lie before us. Unity is quite a good thing so long as it is possible, but there are things which stand higher than unity. And when, like Marx and myself, one has fought harder all one's life long against the alleged socialists than against anyone else (for we only regarded the bourgeoisie as a class and hardly ever involved ourselves in conflicts with individual bourgeois), one cannot greatly grieve that the inevitable struggle has broken out . . .

(All italics are in the original.)

*At the 1882 Congress of the French Workers Party, the Central Committee proposed to expel the Marxists. The minority led by Lafargue and Guesde left the Congress, the majority of which was on the side of the opportunists.

today. Only a bona-fide Marxist C.P. can destroy Trotskyism in the United States, for only such a C.P. can afford to tear the mask from the face of Trotskyism. The present leadership of the CPUSA will never do this because it fears this would mean unmasking its own treacherous opportunist position.

(Continued from Cover)

sian imperialist conduct. It rejects what it calls 'Trotskyist, American imperialist and social-democratic' opposition to the United Nations Organization!" states *Labor Action* of April 28, 1947.

In fact the characterization by the CPUSA of the anti-opportunists as both left and "semi-Trotskyite" has helped confused workers and Party members as to the true nature of Trotskyism. It has been years since the CPUSA analyzed and exposed the history of Trotskyism—and for logical reasons.

For a period of almost twenty years Lenin fought Trotsky as a vacillating right opportunist, the "neutralizer" who wished to "conciliate" the Bolsheviks with the "liquidationists."

For the past ten years, Trotskyism has been only the agent of fascism in the labor movement. It does not represent a "left" trend, a "sectarian" trend of any other kind of political trend in the working class. In "Mastering Bolshevism" Stalin says: "Can it be said that present-day Trotskyism, the 1936 Trotskyism, let us say, is a political trend in the working class? No, this cannot be said. Why? Because the present-day Trotskyites are afraid to show their real face to the working class, are afraid to disclose their real aims and tasks to it, and carefully hide their political face from the working class . . ." (p. 10).

But instead of exposing the real face and aims of the Trotskyists, the CPUSA lends credence to them by crediting the Trotskyists with the left phrases they use about it

themselves. Why doesn't the CPUSA undertake a real history and expose of the Trotskyite movement which is spreading at present? To do so would entail a forthright analysis of opportunism, liquidationism, and the kind of false unity which made Lenin speak of "Judas Trotsky," in other words *it would entail a discussion of the very treacheries of which the National Committee is today guilty.*

In 1912, when Lenin and the Bolshevik faction were fighting those who wished to liquidate the Party (as Browder did), "Trotsky and the Trotskyites took up a liquidationist stand on all fundamental issues. But Trotsky, masked his liquidationism under the guise of Centrism, that is, conciliationism" (History of the C.P.S.U., p 136). What could be more descriptive of the present National Committee which hypocritically warns of the "dangers of right opportunism and left sectarianism" but actually holds the liquidationist, right-opportunist position. Or what could more accurately describe the position of leading C.P. trade union officials than:

"Alarmed by the revolutionary spirit of the workers, the Liquidators came out against the strike movement; they called it a 'strike fever.' The Liquidators and their ally, Trotsky, wanted to substitute for the revolutionary struggle of the Proletariat a 'petition campaign.' They invited the workers to sign a petition, a scrap of paper, requesting the granting of 'rights' (abolition of the restrictions on the right

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SPARK

A MARXIST MONTHLY

FIGHTING TROTSKYISM

The CPUSA believes it has a special dispensation to lie about and slander expelled Communists. For months its main piece of slander has been the characterization: "semi-Trotskyite." The "National Board Statement on C.P. Expulsions" printed in the *D.W.* of Sept. 30, 1946, states: "These anti-Party elements have adopted a common line of struggle against the Party, a line which can be characterized as semi-Trotskyism and unprincipled Leftist adventurism."

In the *D.W.* of Nov. 5, 1946, in the article on the P.R. Club, we are accused of "carrying on disruptive anti-party activities of a left-wing sectarian semi-Trotskyist nature . . ."

Apparently, "semi-Trotskyism" is supposed to account for the fact that we are pro-Stalin Trotskyites—whatever that is supposed to mean. We repeat—whatever that is supposed to mean. Of late, however, by innuendo, even this precarious "semi" has been discarded. In the *D.W.* article of July 9, 1947, George Morris quotes a Chamber of Commerce article which speaks of utilizing "anti-Stalinist Communists." He then implies that the present anti-opportunist, expelled Communists are included in this category. The addition of the above accusation and the above implication equal: "pro-Stalinist, anti-Stalinist Communist."

Let the Daily Worker quote an

example of an "anti-Stalinist" or "semi-Trotskyist" statement from SPARK. In its recent series of articles not only was it unable to do this, but it avoided all mention of the existence of SPARK or of the ideas of the P.R. Club for fear this would arouse the interest of Party members as it has in the past.

The Trotskyites themselves know very well where we stand and they are even able to quote. In *The Militant* of Jan. 4, 1947, they state: "However, the opposition groups which are organizing in the wake of these expulsions have not broken with the fundamental policies of reactionary Stalinism. In fact, they are seeking to prove that they are the 'best' Stalinists."

Another Trotskyite rag, *Labor Action*, on May 19, 1947 states: "They differ with the C.P. only in that they wish a more militant policy in defense of Stalin's Russia than they believe the C.P. is actually carrying out."

No, the Trotskyites who hoped to find among the present expelled Communists the real renegades to the revolutionary Communist movement have been disappointed and find that we understand and see through their phony leftist phrases far better than the present leadership of the CPUSA.

"A pitiful understanding of theory, politics and history leads SPARK to approve of current Rus-

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