

Reprint of  
AN OPEN LETTER TO PARTY MEMBERS

I have been expelled from the Party. So that the record will be perfectly clear, it is the second time. Back in 1940 I was expelled for criticizing the Queens County leadership; this time for criticizing the National leadership. The first time I was expelled I felt mixed-up and guilty and isolated myself from all the comrades I knew. Today my understanding is much better; I at least understand that isolating myself will not do the Party any good, nor the cause of Socialism any good, nor will it do myself any good for that matter. This time I do not intend to have sectarian characters, lacking in any Marxist, human understanding, go around busily to my friends, bring them up on charges for associating with me, and advise acquaintances that I am an enemy of the working class.

My first and most effective step, I believe, is to circulate the statement which was the basis of my expulsion. It is a sketchy statement; it touches on certain facts, makes very little attempt to elaborate on their tremendous implications.

There are many more facts which are not yet stated here...but they will be..The process of exposing the corruption destroying our movement cannot be stopped despite incidents such as follows: -When a comrade raised the point that criticisms of the Party leadership, which have been raised by an honest and sincere Communist, Francis Franklin, should be answered...this was the democratic reply she received -"I'd like to stand you people up against the wall and shoot you down."

How did it happen, this expulsion? I wasn't in any conspiracy. I wasn't in any faction. For some time I had been discussing my dissatisfaction with the absence of the idea of Socialism from our approach. I felt you couldn't separate our long term goal from our immediate activities. If you did you no longer had a long term goal. I was dissatisfied with various incidents which were occurring on a National scale. I felt the lack of clarity in our Party work. I discussed these matters with comrades in my own Ravenswood Club as well as with many other friends in the Party. Most of them had grievances of their own. A few agreed with me completely. Some remained silent. There was one girl, formerly the President of our Ravenswood Club, who had many grievances. How honest she was then I don't know. But she turned out to be very dishonest indeed.

Early in February I decided to write up a statement of my criticisms and submit it to my Club for the beginning of a pre-Convention discussion. When you read in my statement about the postponed Conventions of last year you will understand why I feel that early pre-Convention discussions are vitally necessary. I showed it to a friend of mine, a comrade from the Bronx, and he wrote me a long analysis containing many criticisms of my article but agreeing at least to the extent that he suggested I should make it milder in its tone. Before I received his reply I showed it to a couple of friends in Astoria to get their reaction. The wife remarked to this effect: -'You're going to get yourself expelled again.' (Her unconscious testimony that you can't criticize our Party's leadership and remain in the Party is a sad commentary on



the low level to which the understanding of Communist democracy has fallen in our Party.) The husband advised very strongly against my making the statement. (I should like to add that since my expulsion his wife has already declared to at least one friend of mine that I made anti-Semitic statements two years ago.) Since these comrades reacted this way I decided to modify my statement as much as I could without changing the content and I watered it down considerably. Later, during my "trial" our Astoria Section Organizer "B" made much of this phrase. One of my major crimes, I presume. Astoria Section Organizer is, I believe, the office to which "B" was never elected.

A few days before the Club meeting I went to visit the Ex-President "R" of our Club, mentioned before, and having forgotten my statement I went through the various points from memory. I stated to her that I didn't know whether or not she agreed with me but I would like to see her present at the next Club meeting. She agreed with some points and disagreed with others. She told me the story of how, because she disagreed with the leadership just about one week before the Duclos letter she was about to be brought up on charges. (The same leadership is, as we all should know, in power today and illegally so, factionally expelling all who disagree.) "R" was especially incensed over one incident which, while not directly related to my expulsion, illustrates what is condoned in the Party today, in contrast to what is condemned, namely every effort to create a truly democratic Marxist movement of our Party. "R" told me the story about "M", a comrade never active in our Club as long as I could remember. She was given a grand send-off by our Club and the Astoria Section. The occasion was the departure of her family and herself to California. Her husband had been an official in a trade union and one of the firms with which he had negotiated thought so highly of him that they had given him an executive job on the West Coast. The "Comrade" is evidently in "good standing".

The night of the Club meeting at which I intended to read my statement I was too ill to attend. On the following Monday morning I ran into "R" on the train. She was quite friendly; nevertheless she had a strange attitude. I got the impression that she had something on her mind. The next day I received a letter in the mail. It was carelessly sealed in one spot about a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. The envelope had been used before. It was discourteously addressed and discourteously signed. It did not specify charges but advised that it was my responsibility to appear the next evening to face them. There was an odor of things to come.

On March 3rd, the next evening, I appeared fifteen minutes early. The trial started, in typical middle class (non-proletarian) fashion one hour and fifteen minutes later. And who was the witness? Need you guess? The girl who had complained to me of how, when she had disagreements and required clarification, she was subjected to little private factional interviews "to straighten her out". This, I should like to remark, is the worse kind of factionalism. When a comrade has problems they should not be squelched. The problems of one are the problems of all. Yes, the witness was "R", ex-President of the Ravenswood Club, long out of active service in her Club. She made her charges. I had made "statements". She misquoted me a little and mentioned several



things I have in my report.

I read my statement, comrades. The rank and file comrades had little to say. But the Section leadership (?) spat out its bile. "B" demanded respect for his position as Section Organizer (?). He then proceeded with the monstrous falsehood that a referendum had been taken on the postponements of our Party Convention in July & September 1947 until the coming summer and he deliberately confused the members of my club by stating that he himself had presided over such a referendum at an Astoria Section Meeting. I don't think a single member of my club knew about the meeting he referred to. If there had been such a discussion and vote it did not constitute a referendum. And, as ambitious as "B" is, the way Astoria goes, so not necessarily goes the nation. The National Board made the decision itself after the time for the Convention had passed. And after the fact accomplish some clubs discussed it. There was no referendum.

"Some" of my criticisms were true, he said, but...like all "self-criticism" of late no specific criticism was admitted. (Read Dennis' latest report announcing that "some" mistakes have been made, that the line...even before a preconvention discussion...has been been fundamentally correct...that he will not tolerate criticism from those who would exploit the mistakes. Dennis in practical effect makes NO self-criticism but bars all those who might make definite criticisms. This is always the way of those who hold office by fraud. Marxist criticism must be specific or it has no meaning, can then only be lip-service.)

"B" further confused the meeting with some double-talk on there being no necessity for a Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the Eastern countries because the violence had already occurred. If anything demonstrates the smashing of institutions which make up the bourgeois State it is the very "violence" he refers to. He also pointed out that Capitalism is now surrounded and I suppose at this point we might all just as well go to sleep and await the morning of Socialism.

This is <sup>of</sup> more than academic interest. I had to go on trial and be expelled to find out the present position of the Party leadership on the dictatorship of the Proletariat, but now I know. If I can only arouse the curiosity of a few Comrades on this point...and possibly on the nature of the state...and surplus value.. and what is our present position about being the consciousness of the workingclass..and yes..the class struggle...perhaps we will all learn about other changes that have been made. No doubt it will cost a few expulsions.

My criticisms were evaded, distorted and ignored. Where I made a major criticism, the minor accent was placed on my criticism and the major accent placed on my general characteristics as a scoundrel. For example, where I pointed out the simple fact that we were completely out of the leadership in the Auto workers and the N.M.U., this was stoutly denied. There was a burst of optimism for the future, an effective answer to all criticisms, and I was squelched as a no-good so-and-so who prayed ill for the working class.

Before the evening was over I was expelled twice in five minutes. First they carelessly expelled me without a reason. (A slight error?)



When I asked why I was being expelled a resolution was hastily passed. I was then expelled for factional anti-leadership and leftism. My statement follows. I am guilty of nothing but the desire to defend our Party from the corrupt leadership with which it is reeking. No matter what lies are told or what names are called, it was my voicing of the following criticisms which led to my expulsion. If you don't believe this is true, I can suggest a simple, accurate little test. Merely go to your club and raise some of these questions, or, if you don't agree with them, collect one or two of your own (there are a multitude of such unanswered questions around)...Then...See what happens to YOU!

### A Criticism of Our Party Leadership and Organization

The following criticism is being submitted with the hope that this group will give it some serious thought & discussion & take steps to remedy the evils indicated. Our Party is not like any other party or organization. It is basically guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. During the period of Browderism we saw it become a very loose organization both in theory and practice. While it is difficult to understand to what extent we have departed in theory, I would like to list a number of glaring violations of Marxist theory and practice, which, if continued, will destroy our Party.

1. Firstly, no one can deny that the National Committee of our Party today consists of the Browder group minus Browder. If we had retained 10% of that group it would have required some tall explaining, or even 50%...but with over 90% there are no questions asked. All that is required is some breathbeating and a suitable fall-guy.

2. Since the summer of 1947 it should be clear to every Party member that the National Committee of our Party is in power illegally. Our constitution calls for a Convention every two years in both the National and State organizations. We should have had a Convention in 1947. It was illegally postponed & despite the statement of some people to the contrary there was no referendum. Furthermore, if there had been a referendum it would have been illegal. Our Constitution provides for the Convention every two years & no referendums of any kind for the purpose of postponements.\* Conclusion: The National Board decided to keep itself in power. After the fait accompli some clubs voted on the postponements after the National Board decided on it.

3. Let us look at the record of our Party leadership during these past two years. In the 1946 C.I.O. Convention, when the redbaiting resolution to "reject and resent interference" in the C.I.O. was introduced, our people did not object. In fact they concurred in the name of unity & the resolution was passed unanimously. Our press glossed over it.

4. Again in the 1947 C.I.O. Convention, not only was a vague resolution on foreign policy supported unanimously (so vague that some said it was for the Marshall Plan and some said it was against the Plan) but our people actually joined in a standing ovation to General or Secretary Marshall--altho' it was reported that some comrades kept their hands in their pockets. In effect the Party supported the Marshall Plan despite any academic apologies that may be invented. Was this the behavior of Bolshevik leaders? Would the French Communists have behaved this way?

\*CP's do have the right to postpone Conventions, but Comrade BILL is correct in thinking any CPUSA referendum a phony.--SPARK



5. And also in the 1947 C.I.O. Convention when the infamous resolution was made against the Soviet Union (not mentioned by name) for "excessive use of the veto power in the UN" our people made no opposition or counter resolution to expose it. The resolution ... was actively supported by Comrade Irving Potash. Instead of becoming a flaming issue in our local organizations, this too was glossed over. (See D.W., Sept. 6, '47)

6. ... Why did we fail so utterly in the auto workers. Why was Curran able to take over the N.M.U. so easily?

7. Let's look at our press. Should we read of important events in our press six months after they have occurred? In the August 6th issue of New Times, printed in Moscow by "Trud" it was reported that 120 persons sympathetic to the Party had been ordered deported in May. We did not read of this in the Worker until six months later--on Friday, Feb. 6, '48.

8. ... About a month and a half ago... a small paragraph in the Worker reported without comment that the Party had been outlawed in Alabama. How many comrades know about it even now? No demonstrations, no actions, not even a measly editorial. (But plenty of space for funny papers, racing forms, crossword puzzles, screen guides, etc. etc.)

9. An expelled Club in the Bronx advertized a certain newspaper in P.M. last month. Then, at the Lenin Meeting, some Comrades sold this certain newspaper. At last the Bookstore has these newspapers for sale. How many of us know today of the existence of this newspaper put out by the Cominform? How many have seen it?, or read quotations from it in our press? (Its name?--For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!!)

10. And yes, this slight detail about joining the Cominform. The decision was expedited without reference to even a portion of the rank and file, without discussion in our clubs, without discussion in our press.

11. And what has happened to Education in our Party? We have come to take for granted the presence of our mysterious guest, Mr. Apathy, that we forget to ask who invited him, who held the door open for him? Who is it that doesn't pick up a broom and sweep him out? Mr. Apathy is the best pal of Mr. Ignorance. (And Mr. Corruption also.) Education is practically non-existent in our movement. Some people believe that history is a series of unrelated events. Marxists are supposed to disbelieve in "accidents". Then why this apathy and ignorance? (Incompetence and corruption are the reasons!)

12. Now on the delicate subject of expulsions. No doubt many of the people who have been expelled deserve it. Yet why is it that there is seldom a discussion of these things and when we do read of some expulsions in the press the articles are so completely emotional that it is impossible to figure out the why and the wherefore of the expulsion. The reason why a person should be expelled from our party doesn't have to be vague or mystical or difficult to understand.

13. On the subject of expulsions. It is a dangerous practice to accept expulsions without question. (Or anything for that matter.) After the Browder betrayal we should have learned a little about being vigilant to our enemies internally as well as externally.

14. Now I will pronounce a word which seems horrible to many comrades something to be avoided at all costs. SOCIALISM. That famous phrase "the people aren't ready for Socialism" has paralyzed our minds from recognition of the great truth that the people would be wild about Socialism if they only knew what it was... just as many of us were wild about Socialism and would continue to be if there were a little more of it around... in our daily work, education, and program. Lest this be misunderstood... we all understand that an immediate program has no meaning if it is disconnected from the ultimate one. We haven't talked about Socialism for years. All the great wonderful activity of our comrades



during the 30's was forgotten by the masses because the workers never had an inkling that Communists had a Socialist goal in mind...

15. Communists have gotten into the habit of deliberately losing their identities & working like Christian Martyrs, perhaps for rewards in the hereafter...We have abandoned Socialism in our press and in all our educational work...Only last month the Worker asked us to go out and shovel snow...no less..and without pay!

16. As for theory. I have actually read a mimeographed sheet put out by the Party's State Educational Department which states that Socialism can be attained without a Dictatorship of the Proletariat! ...revisionism of the worst kind. A friend of mine who was attending a county class... was told the same thing...If we are going to make such a profound departure from our Marxist theory let's come out with it and discuss it. But the gauge measures itself. For my part, the whole idea of Marxism stands or falls on this point just as it does on the class struggle which Browder nonchalantly dissolved and the Marxist theory of surplus value which isn't even background music anymore. This piece of revisionism is stealing in slowly. (Browder's technique was to revise theory. The present one is to ignore it.)

17. ...In the famous speech that Dennis never made but which was eventually published (Worker, March 30, '47) Dennis offered the UnAmerican Committee an extensive list of American Communist War Veterans...Dennis also offered a list of Communist candidates in Federal and State Elections since 1928 with the excuse that this would prove the Party's legal standing as a Party.

18. Further, of all the criminal nonsense I have ever heard of, Dennis pledged that if Congress were to pass a Resolution (a Resolution, mind you, not an amendment, or a law, or a regulation) guaranteeing the rights of Communists... then on that day every Communist in America would stand up wherever he was and reveal himself as a Communist...

19. And last May Day. Who ordered our Veterans to march in uniform..to have their pictures taken by the UnAmerican Committee? Mr. Thomas wired the war Secretary to remove all Communists (80 officers and several hundred men) on reserve. We learn of this thru NewTimes and not thru the D.

20. Then that assemblage of 400 Communist Veterans in Washington. The seriousness of the situation was minimized to such an extent that Communist Veterans smiled happily as photographs of them were taken...

The easy way is not to think. We are subject to attack so that we are inclined to ward off the truth about corruption in our movement also as an attack. We did it under Browder. We didn't think; if we thought we didn't speak. That is, incidentally, a terrible crime that can be marked up to Comrade Foster...

Nothing has been said about the sectarianism, the peculiar insistent principle of disorganization which always destroys every previous plan with a new emergency, making it impossible for a sustained action of organizing the people, or the lack of free discussion or the lack of understanding about real Marxist democracy in our Party. Where is the inspiration which got every single one of us into the movement? Why all this demoralization, apathy, inactivity? The Browders and Dennises, mediocrity and staleness in our leadership have destroyed the inspiration which is vital to our movement and the winning of the masses to our Party and to Socialism. They have removed the whole meaning of the struggle for Socialism from the movement. We have ceased to be the consciousness of the working class. Without such a consciousness we are all doomed.

Report 2-19-48 by Bill H.--Ravenswood Club, Astoria

NOTE: Unfortunately, last minute space considerations forced a little authorized cutting on pages 19 and 20.

NOTE: Articles on George book and Franklin statement in next issue.